

# Dorset Council Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

October 2021



**Dorset**  
Council

## Foreword

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Dear Minister for Roads, Buses and Places,

It gives me great pleasure to present Dorset Council's first Bus Service Improvement Plan and set out a new future for the bus network in the County.

This is the most significant change for bus services since deregulation in 1986. By working in close collaboration with operators and local groups we have developed an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan for Dorset that seeks to put the passenger first, raise the perception of bus travel, generate mode shift away from private cars, and see decarbonisation of the local transport fleet.

As the portfolio holder for highways, travel and environment I recognise the need for immediate action to reduce our carbon emission and respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The link between what we are doing on travel and climate change is of paramount importance to me. We have to give people viable alternatives to the car if we are to tackle the climate emergency.

My aim is to create a bus network that meets the needs of people of all ages, and gives our residents opportunities to access work, education, training, health and leisure within Dorset. To get people to use the bus we must have a long-term plan and a guarantee of long-term Government funding for at least five years so we can change people's views and build their confidence to use the bus.

I view the Bus Service Improvement Plan as an opportunity to reset our bus network. We can make a real difference to people's lives by improving accessibility across Dorset and reducing rural isolation. It's also an opportunity to meet changing travel demands resulting in the dramatic shifts in the way people live and work seen as a result of the Covid pandemic. The challenges facing us in Dorset are huge, but I have every confidence that our ambitious proposals will deliver a real transformation and see growth in bus travel.

This plan is just the start. I'm greatly encouraged by the feedback from stakeholders. What they are telling me is that Dorset is being far more aggressive in its approach and pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve. Importantly they believe we have the right combination of proposals to make a difference.

These improvements are absolutely essential for Dorset. I live in a rural area and don't have a local bus service. I would love to be in a position to have a network of local feeder buses serving villages across Dorset and connecting to other buses and other forms of travel in local towns, so that we can provide the facility that meets the customer's needs, especially those that have no alternative to public transport.

Government funding is critical to enable us to deliver our ambitious proposals. Without it we don't have the means locally to bring about the transformation local people are desperate to see.



**Councillor Ray Bryan**  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder  
Highways, Travel and Environment

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## 1. Position Statement

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- 1.1. Dorset Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is a response to the Government's National Bus Strategy *Bus Back Better*, aimed at improving bus services across England.
- 1.2. This BSIP is a strategic document which sets out how the council and local bus operators will work together to improve bus services across Dorset. It will be delivered through an Enhanced Partnership, through which the council will work more closely with local bus operators to plan and deliver services. The Enhanced Partnership will begin in April 2022.
- 1.3. This BSIP sets out a future bus network the council, in consultation with the public, stakeholders and operators want to see in operation, the requisite actions to be taken to significantly grow bus use and how these actions will be delivered against targets set for 2025 and 2030
- 1.4. Many of the policies and deliverables will require further consultation. The ambitious plan and deliverables set out are all subject to funding being identified.
- 1.5. Public transport services in Dorset have been in decline for many years. A recent report on public transport<sup>1</sup> within England and Wales described a number of areas within Dorset as 'transport deserts'. It is evident within the county's geography that having limited population between principal settlements and no critical mass to provide a robust customer base means operating and planning good/high frequency commercially viable bus services is challenging.
- 1.6. Dorset is predominately rural in nature and has one of the highest levels of geographical access to services deprivation in the country coupled with an over-reliance on private car use. For those without a car, there are significant challenges to accessing local services, healthcare, work, and education, resulting in rural isolation.
- 1.7. Dorset's population is significantly older versus the national average. An ageing population presents major challenges with concessionary journeys being higher in Dorset versus the South West average, creating an over-reliance on concessionary income to support services.
- 1.8. The concessionary fares scheme has brought great benefits for older people, but the council is concerned operator reimbursement in rural areas is inadequate and operators in Dorset are losing out due to exceptionally high demand for concessionary travel. The council needs Government to recognise the significant challenge this poses in Dorset and other rural authorities by reviewing the concessionary travel scheme and make changes to the national policy to ensure it gives a fairer deal in rural areas and supports the delivery of better bus services in Dorset.
- 1.9. There is limited economic growth in many parts of the county and a strong reliance on tourism. Further growth in tourism to Dorset's world class natural environment is not sustainable without significant improvements to bus services within the county.
- 1.10. Road transport is the highest contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Dorset and car usage across the county has shown no sign of decline over the last 15 years. Getting people out of their cars and onto public transport is one way to reduce our carbon footprint.
- 1.11. Top priorities for the BSIP amongst the public and stakeholders identified through the engagement activities were additional bus routes, higher frequency, and enhanced weekend services, along with a cheaper and simpler fare structure.
- 1.12. The BSIP aims and objectives have been shaped by an extensive review of current public transport (bus, rail, and active travel) services in Dorset, the factors affecting these and a comprehensive programme of public and stakeholder engagement to inform our approach. They are as follows;

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<sup>1</sup> *Transport Deserts – The absence of transport choice in England's small towns*, Campaign for Better Transport (2020).

## Spotlight on Dorset's BSIP Aims and Objectives

**To significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset** by increasing local bus service frequencies, extending daily service times, adding additional services to better connect more isolated areas, increase bus reliability and user satisfaction, and meet new opportunities to capture sustainable travel demand.

**To increase daily service availability with a mix of fixed and flexible services across rural and urban areas of Dorset,** using new techniques in digital demand responsive transport linked to a more frequent core network to ensure that local buses and the wider public transport network is attractive, joined up and easy to use for everyone.

**To develop a range of on-demand public transport services delivered by a mix of operators** by identifying gaps in the current local bus network, understanding the population's propensity to travel by different modes and develop a tool kit of options for on-demand transport that focus on improving journey times and access to the core network.

**To continue to protect Dorset's environment by moving to a decarbonised local bus fleet** using a decarbonisation plan developed through this BSIP to ensure that we significantly reduce the environmental impact of local buses across Dorset using a progressive and partnership led roadmap with local bus operators.

**Create and maintain a comprehensive network of travel options to link up communities and reduce rural isolation,** delivered through a significantly expanded network focusing on core and feeder services with modular mobility hubs providing comfortable and safe interchange environments.

**The Dorset Council BSIP is an ambitious plan, focused on revitalising the local bus network, halting, and reversing the decline in local bus passenger use, meeting the aspirations set out by the public and key stakeholders through this process, and marking Dorset as a centre of excellence for rural transport provision.**

- 1.13. Measures within this BSIP will support the council’s Local Transport Plan (LTP) policies and the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, helping to tackle the climate and ecological emergency as well as reducing traffic congestion and improving accessibility for residents and visitors.
- 1.14. The council has set out an ambitious plan to reverse the decline in bus use, to put the passenger first, to improve rural accessibility and to build confidence in the bus network. Through the implementation of this BSIP, Dorset aims to become an exemplar of Digital DRT and rural public transport accessibility.
- 1.15. Grouped into six themes to reflect public and stakeholder local priorities, and the Government’s aspirations in *Bus Back Better*, our proposals include:

Theme	Aspiration
Better network coverage and scale	To develop, continually monitor and refine a network of buses that run more often, to more places and for longer daily periods. To deliver this policy a core network of services operating every 30-minutes between hub locations will be developed alongside a feeder service network with fixed and Digital DRT modes being tested and developed over time.
Better integration between modes	To develop and continually pursue opportunities to provide better integration between rail services and all other modes regarding timetable coordination, collective information, and ticketing. Dorset Council will work in partnership with all possible modes from walking and cycling for first and last mile trips to national long-distance networks to always integrate bus services.
Better and clearer information	To develop bus information that is consistent, accessible, simple, clear, and coordinated so that the public have a single source of truth and can confidently plan and undertake connected bus journeys across the local bus network and wider public transport system. Information will be maintained through multiple channels and will be a cornerstone of delivering Bus Back Better.
Better journey time reliability	To deliver bus priority measures that ensure buses leave on-time and remain on time while providing faster and more reliable services across the local bus network. Partnership work with local bus operators will identify opportunities alongside close working with planning colleagues to maximise funding opportunities through Section 106 schemes.
Better value and integrated fares	To ensure that simple value fares across a smaller range of products are maintained and key markets are targeted through fares designed to attract and maintain mode shift. A multi-operator EP sub-group will continually explore options for the roll-out of multi-operator, multi-mode ticketing using appropriate and cost-effective technology and processes.
Better vehicle standards and lower emissions	To deliver a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035 and ensure interim steps to green the existing local bus service fleet through options to renew older buses or upgrade their technology. Work closely with operators to create a Dorset standard configuration and better accommodate cycles on tourist focused services linked to better mobility and MaaS (Mobility as a Service) concepts.

1.16. To meet our aims and objectives for this BSIP the council will deliver in the following key areas:

Theme	Key Deliverables
Better network coverage and scale	<p>A minimum 30-minute ‘Superbus’ network by 2023 followed by selective route development to reach ‘turn-up-and-go’ frequencies by 2026 - essential in meeting our ambitious targets for mode shift and increasing the public’s access to employment, health, education, and leisure by sustainable travel.</p>
	<p>A guaranteed 7am to 7pm network and night-time buses providing additional late evening journeys until 11pm – essential in meeting our objective to create a network that the public can rely on and use with confidence.</p>
	<p>A demand led hub and spoke feeder network becoming a national exemplar for the trial of different Digital DRT solutions, drawing on best practice techniques from the UK and Europe, and leading to a network of semi-fixed and DRT services coordinated with the core bus network.</p>
	<p>Introducing ‘Dorset Connect’ - up to 5 Digital DRT services launching in 2022/23 allowing bookings to be accepted up to 60 minutes before travel. With further zones added each year to expand the network, this will meet DfT aspirations for 60-minute rural transport and feed new users into the revitalised Dorset core bus network.</p>
Better integration between modes	<p>Dorset ‘Superstops’ and Mobility Hubs providing interchange and alternative access for modes such as walk, cycle, lift-share, and taxi, supporting first and last mile trip legs. Improving interchanges is key to making our hub and spoke feeder system work seamlessly.</p>
	<p>Rail integration within Dorset and across LTA borders, including a flagship project connecting to services on the Heart of Wessex line. The revised core bus network with supporting feeder services will focus on rail connections, hub and spoke bus to bus integration and improved walking and cycling routes to the local bus network.</p>
Better journey time reliability	<p>Dorset Greenwaves – high investment end-to-end corridor improvements focusing on vehicles, frequency, passenger facilities, bus priority measures, information, and ticketing to ensure each Dorset ‘Greenwave’ maximises mode shift and passenger growth. Greenway branding and will encourage people to ‘ride the Greenwave’.</p>
	<p>Targeted bus priority improvements, working in partnership with local bus operators, including bus lanes, bus signal priority, bus gates, and parking / loading restrictions. Buses will become faster and more reliable, competing affectively with the car, and driving up further improvements in bus service quality, vehicle standards, and fares.</p>

Theme	Key Deliverables
Better and clearer information	<p>A bus stop design guide to set minimum standards for seating, lighting, and accessibility, app-based bus tracking, and real time information roll-out. Investment in bus stops, information, interchange locations, and bus driver training focused on customer wellbeing and accessibility to ensure confidence by users in the network.</p>
	<p>A review of existing bus stop information, phased rollout of RTI at major stops, targeted investments based on a bus stop hierarchy, and production of a Dorset-wide all operator and mode network map will all be initial steps in a progressive approach to network information ‘levelling-up’ and a longer-term brand identity.</p>
	<p>A new Dorset travel portal, placing public transport information across all modes in one location, and aligned with an app for accessing real time information, bus ticket purchase, and live Digital DRT bookings. This will build user confidence in the network and meet demands set by younger travellers through our engagement process.</p>
Better value and integrated fares	<p>Introduction of a Young Person’s 16-25 years old Bus Card, entitling holders to discounted fares on local buses, at all times across Dorset, supporting those in full-time education, training, apprenticeships, and full-time employment, and addressing social isolation issues amongst younger people living in rural communities.</p>
	<p>Work with operators to introduce flat fare town zones offering significantly reduced town fares, an all-operator family / group ticket and support network wide fare capping. All operators are committed to this simple approach that will open the bus network to local residents and tourists alike.</p>
Better vehicle standards and lower emissions	<p>Work with operators to deliver a decarbonisation programme over 13 years and implement pilot projects for zero emission bus conversion on core, town and Digital DRT services. Our aim is for 60% of all buses used across the network to be net-zero by 2030 and all remaining buses to be Euro VI or better.</p>
	<p>Roll-out of 20 zero-emission buses and supporting infrastructure for Weymouth town services, making Weymouth Dorset’s first zero emission bus hub. Future zero emission bus roll out will focus on trial inter-urban routes across the core local bus network, particularly with areas of poor air quality.</p>
	<p>We will work collaboratively to achieve a higher standard for buses across Dorset from 2022, focusing on comfort, safety, accessibility, ease of use, and technology including next stop announcements, USBs, Wi-Fi, exploration of on-board bicycle facilities, and potential use of dual-door buses on high volume ‘Greenwave’ corridors.</p>

- 1.17. Delivering these objectives across the life of the BSIP will require initial investment between 2022 and 2025 of £92 million with further funding required beyond 2025 for some aspects of the BSIP, though with DfT funding programmed to progressively decline.
- 1.18. Just under half of all of funding received will focus on meeting public and stakeholder priorities for more buses, to more locations and operating across more hours alongside additional priorities for lower and simpler fares, faster and more reliable bus services, and greener vehicles.
- 1.19. Once this investment in the local bus network has halted and reversed the downward trend in bus patronage, the council have longer-term aspirations for bus services across the county, building upon current aims and objectives set out in this plan to deliver continued improvements and transformations in bus service provision.
- 1.20. To ensure robust and transparent management of DfT funding received, the BSIP will be reviewed annually, and the council will publish six-monthly progress summaries reporting against the following key performance indicator areas:
  - Journey times
  - Reliability
  - Passenger growth
  - Customer satisfaction
  - Mode share
  - Greening of the local bus fleet
  - Increases in network mileage
  - Proportion of the population within 400m of a frequent local bus service
  - Number of rail connections made by the local bus network
- 1.21. Therefore, the council is seeking significant Government investment to deliver an ambitious and innovative Plan. Without access to grant funding Dorset Council would not be able to deliver these actions and innovate our local bus services.





## 2. Introduction



## 2. Introduction

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- 2.1. On Monday 15 March 2021 Government launched Bus Back Better, a new National Bus Strategy for England with aims to rejuvenate local bus services by making them:
- More attractive for passengers
  - More affordable
  - Easier to understand and use
  - Faster and more reliable
  - Greener
- 2.2. Acknowledging the decades-long national decline in bus patronage and pointing to places which have bucked this trend, it requires each authority to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to coordinate services and future investment through either an Enhanced Partnership (EP) or Franchise approach.
- 2.3. Each Local Transport Authority's (LTA) BSIP will be a strategic document setting out how local bus operators and LTAs will work together to deliver the key themes outlined through Government's National Bus Strategy. Specifically, the Department for Transport's (DfT) BSIP guidance<sup>2</sup> states:
- “the overall aim of the BSIP and its individual sections is to explain LTA ambition to improve buses and the plans and policies that will deliver them”*
- 2.4. Through the first iteration of the BSIP process, each document is required to:
- Focus on delivering the bus network that LTAs (in consultation with operators) want to see, including how to address the underprovision and overprovision of bus services and ensuring buses integrate with other modes
  - Set out how they will grow bus use
  - Set out how they will be delivered
- 2.5. The detailed narrative set out within Dorset Council's first BSIP, outlines, in as much detail as currently practicable, the LTA's ambitions, structured plans and supporting policies to improve buses (service design, delivery and vehicles) across the geographic area covered by this BSIP.
- 2.6. Working in close collaboration with a large group of stakeholders representing local bus operators, statutory consultees, community and business voices, bus passengers, and the voluntary and health transport sectors Dorset Council has developed this BSIP that is focused on delivering a future ready bus network.
- 2.7. The resultant new policies and deliverables within this BSIP address identified under- and over-provision of the bus network across the LTA area. Extensive stakeholder engagement has driven the solutions detailed within the following sections following the work identifying the current state of network provision, functionality, and shortcomings.
- 2.8. This BSIP, prepared by Dorset Council (DC) sets out ambitious targets for network growth (mileage operated); passenger growth; improved punctuality and reliability; improved accessibility; increases in the mode share of bus; and greater customer satisfaction amongst others.

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<sup>2</sup> National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans – Guidance to Local Authorities and Bus Operators (DfT, 2021, p30) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-service-improvement-plan>

- 2.9. The work completed in preparing this initial BSIP provides a traceable path of action from the current state network to that desired by the council, and that seen as a priority by the public and engaged stakeholders. The BSIP provides a series of deliverable activities aimed at to revitalising the local bus passenger market and growing network mileage, which will be delivered against targets set for mileposts in 2025 and 2030.
- 2.10. This BSIP has been finalised and submitted to the DfT in line with current BSIP guidelines. However, greater detail relating to specific policies and deliverables outlined later within this BSIP will follow the submission of this document after October 2021. Many of these policies and deliverables will require further consultation, particularly regarding bus priority schemes, and all policies and deliverables set out within this BSIP are subject to funding being identified.

### **Relationship with Enhanced Partnership**

- 2.11. The council has adopted the EP pathway, with this decision already being notified to the DfT, local bus operators and members of the public in accordance with DfT requirements by the end of June 2021.
- 2.12. The BSIP forms the first stage of the EP process, a statutory arrangement under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017), and a formal agreement between the council and local Dorset bus operators. Information relating to the creation and operation of an EP has been set out by the DfT through its guidance document<sup>3</sup>
- 2.13. Whilst the option to explore feasibility of bus franchising remains open to the council, this approach is not currently being considered.

### **Duration and Review of the BSIP**

- 2.14. As outlined by the DfT, each BSIP is a living document and as such has no formal date limits. However, each BSIP is subject to an annual review and the council will produce an update report on progress against targets on an annual basis with additional six-monthly interim updates.
- 2.15. All BSIP reviews will be reported to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee and made publicly available. Updates will also be provided to cabinet by the Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours.

### **Alignment with Wider Council Transport Policy, Strategy, and Plans**

- 2.16. To ensure the benefits of the BSIP are maximised, the council has conducted a root and branch review of national and local policy and strategy. This ensures the BSIP provides a good fit with each element and identifies any potential gaps in local policy or strategy which may need to be filled through the BSIP or reviewed and amended to ensure the BSIP's success.
- 2.17. The BSIP has been closely aligned with the joint Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan (LTP). Section 3 provides a summary of the national and local policy reviews.

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<sup>3</sup> The National Bus Strategy Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership (DfT 2021) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1002507/national-bus-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002507/national-bus-strategy.pdf)

## Area Covered by the BSIP

- 2.18. This BSIP covers the whole area within the Dorset Council Unitary Authority boundary (Figure 2.1.)
- 2.19. Whilst most local bus services outlined within this BSIP operate wholly within the Dorset Council area, a number operate into neighbouring LTA areas. As such we have consulted and worked with colleagues in neighbouring areas to ensure there is alignment and overlap with the BSIPs being developed by Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Wiltshire Council, Hampshire County Council, and Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch Unitary Authority.
- 2.20. The council has held discussions with all neighbouring LTAs concerning cross-boundary services to ensure each LTA (including Dorset Council) present consistent BSIPs. In addition, each neighbouring LTA has been invited to, and attended, the three rounds of Bus Back Better stakeholder consultation the council has conducted in developing its BSIP response to the DfT.

**Figure 2.1 – The Dorset Council BSIP Area**





### 3. Policy & Context



## 3. National and Local Policy Overview

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### National Policy Overview

- 3.1. The National Bus Strategy is one of several Government documents focused on improving public transport, drawing parallels with Bus Reform, Future of Mobility, and Net Zero policies. This BSIP draws upon references from all national policies and strategies and relates this to local level policies and strategies. A full National Policy Review is included in Appendix 1.

### Local Supporting Policy

- 3.2. Dorset has a diverse range of key local policy documents, reflecting the important role of the bus in addressing many socio-economic issues facing the county. A full review of over 30 existing local policies and strategies aligning with the National Bus Strategy can be found in Appendix 2.

### Aligning the BSIP to the Local Context

- 3.3. All policy documents provide differing levels of guidance to support the introduction of the BSIP. The council will maximise the benefit of rapid changes and developments at a national policy level, by viewing local policies holistically and amending appropriately. Policies need to better align with the National Bus Strategy and reflect how they relate to the Net Zero agenda.
- 3.4. Policies also need to better reflect how the council is working to develop seamless integration between all transport modes. There is a need to focus on high quality improved interchanges/hubs providing enhanced waiting facilities, information and security. Related policies need to ensure these hubs clearly relate to both current and proposed walking and cycling networks providing opportunities for multi-modal journeys.
- 3.5. Significantly, no bus partnership is in place across the county. This will be essential for an Enhanced Partnership process, reflecting a key element of the National Bus Strategy, within which it will also be important to ensure policies relating to CT/DRT are included, ensuring greater integration with the commercial public transport network and hubs.

### Additional Network Context

- 3.6. The BSIP guidance requires the local bus network to be framed in a wider context with three key areas - actual and perceived passenger safety (on and off bus); connection between same and different modes; and co-ordination of timetables between same and different modes.
- 3.7. Actual and perceived passenger safety both on and off local bus services across the Dorset network is very good - 77% of residents said they felt 'very' or 'fairly' safe when on the bus network and 5% felt unsafe. For visitors to the county, 87% felt 'very' or 'fairly' safe, whilst only 2% felt unsafe.
- 3.8. Connections within and between different modes has been flagged through in-depth public and stakeholder engagement as an area which needs improvement across Dorset. Productive meetings with local bus and train operating companies, Network Rail and national coach providers have identified several key opportunities and deliverables which would ensure all connections are substantively strengthened through the BSIP.
- 3.9. Proposals from Network Rail and Great Western Railway to increase the future frequency and regularity of local rail services along the Heart of Wessex line present significant opportunities for enhancing accessibility across western-central rural areas of Dorset, through the planning of new co-ordinated feeder bus services to tie-in with these proposals.



## 4. Dorset Overview

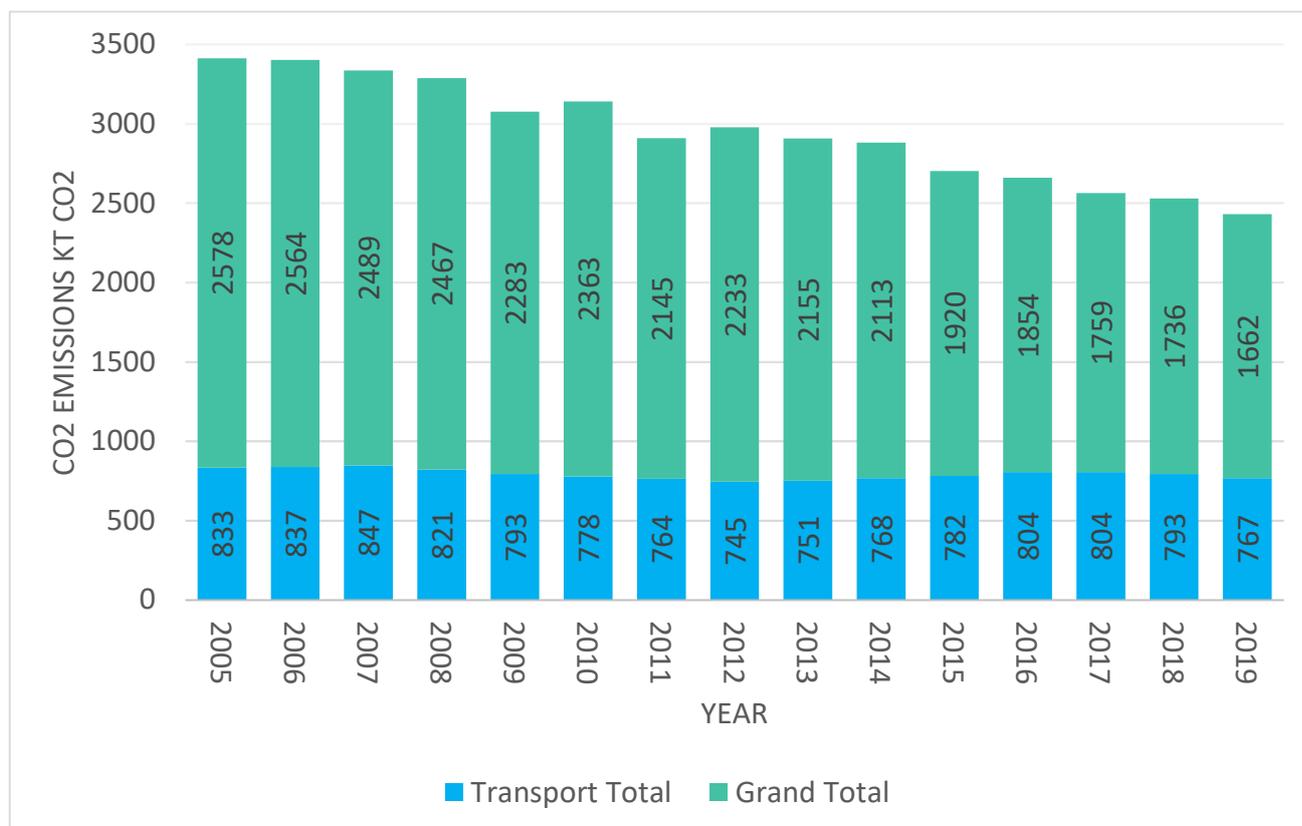


## 4. Dorset Overview

### Transport Carbon Emissions

- 4.1. Transport is the biggest carbon emitting sector in Dorset. In 2019, transport contributed 46% of the total carbon emissions or an estimated 767 kt CO<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup>. The transport proportion of total emissions in Dorset is 2% higher than the South West regional average and 10% higher than the national proportion for transport emissions (36%).
- 4.2. Emissions from transport have only marginally decreased by 8% since 2005. Despite large gains in vehicle efficiency and clean technologies, these have been offset by the increase in road traffic. Road transport is the biggest transport producer of carbon emissions, accountable for 98% of all transport emissions. In 2019, there were 4,102 million vehicle kilometres travelled in the Dorset Council area. In rural areas across Dorset, there is a greater need to travel further for work, education, training and access to other essential services, given these are not available locally.
- 4.3. In 2019, there were 283,450 vehicles registered in the Dorset Council area. Cars make up the majority, representing 79% of all vehicles registered. The growing car culture is a vicious cycle - public transport services are cut back because of reduced demand, making car use more attractive and locking people into car dependency, which further suppresses bus demand. However, there are significant opportunities to reduce dependency on cars to help tackle congestion and reduce carbon emissions by achieving a modal shift to public transport and active travel modes.

**Figure 4.1 - Carbon Dioxide Emissions, Dorset Council Area: 2005-2019**

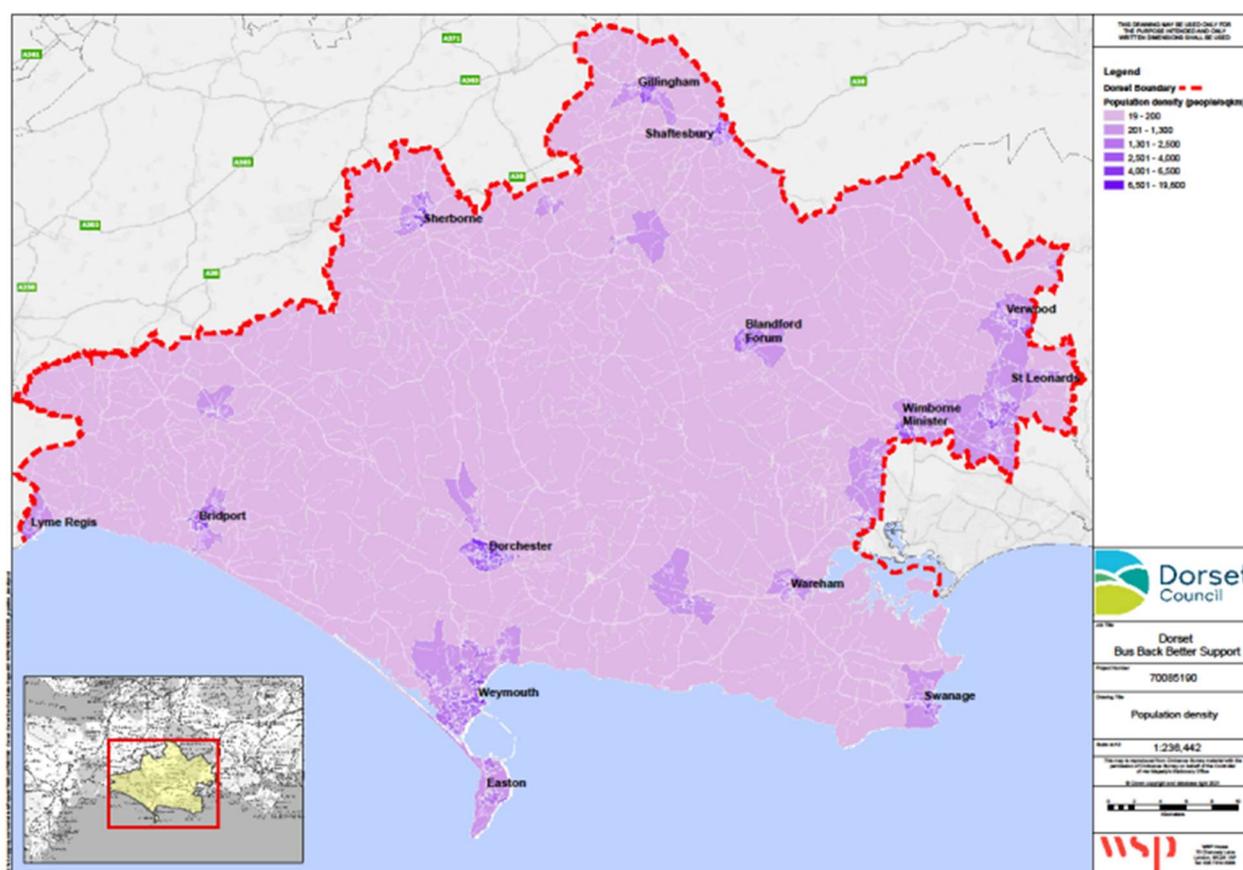


<sup>4</sup> Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy. 2021. UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics>

## Land Use and Demographics

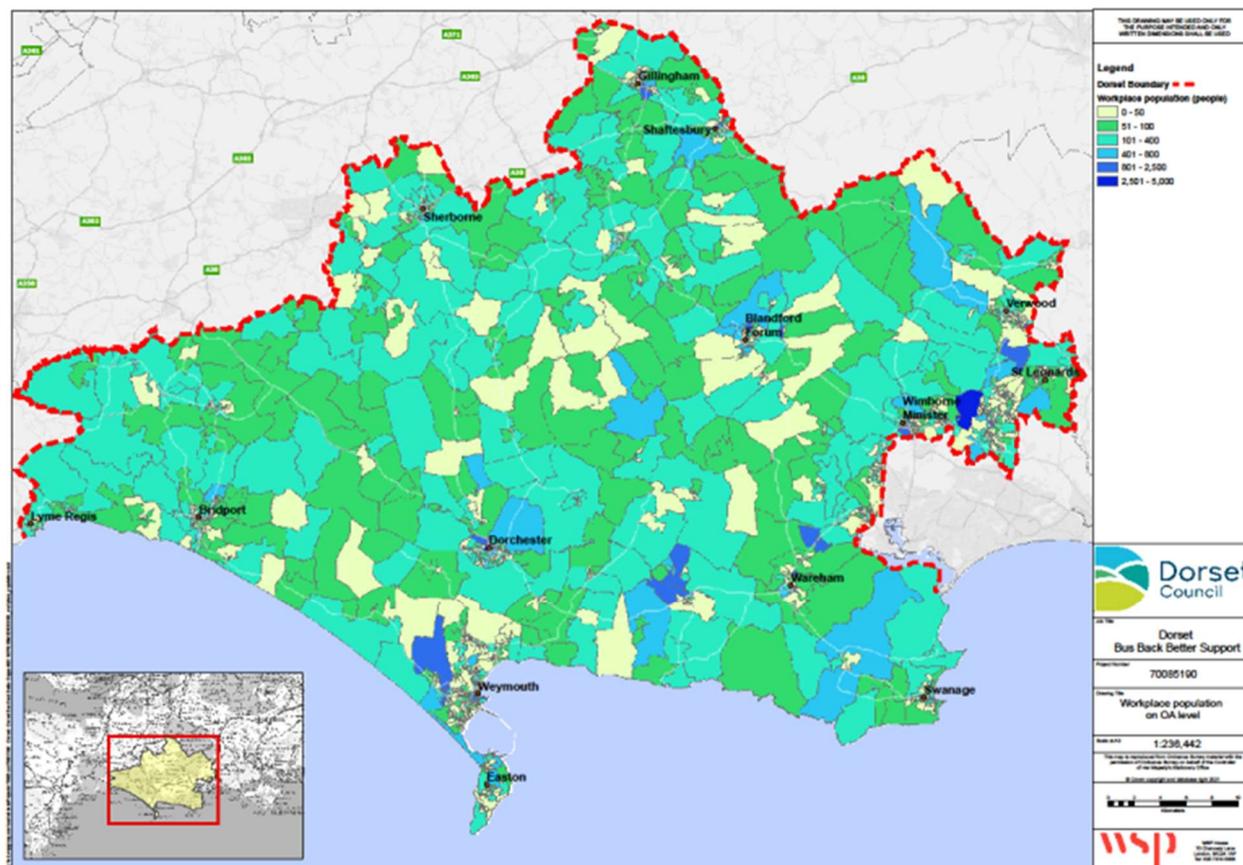
- 4.4. Dorset is predominately rural in nature with a population of 376,480. Principle urban centres include Dorchester (county town) and Weymouth with secondary centres at Blandford Forum, Bridport, Gillingham, Isle of Portland, Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Swanage and Wareham, followed by smaller centres at Beaminster, Lyme Regis, Stalbridge and Sturminster Newton. Ferndown, Verwood and Wimborne Minster are further secondary centres within Dorset's boundaries but form part of the BCP hinterland and South East Dorset travel to work area.
- 4.5. Local government reorganisation in 2019 resulted in Dorset's population density falling to 152.36 people/km<sup>2</sup>, one of the lowest in England. The population is sparsely distributed across Dorset (Figure 4.2), Weymouth being home to over 20,000 whilst Dorchester, Bridport, Ferndown, Wimborne Minster, Verwood, Blandford Forum, Gillingham and Swanage have a population of between 10,000-19,999.

**Figure 4.2 Population Density and Key Settlements in Dorset**



- 4.6. Dorset's population is significantly older versus the national average - the proportion aged 65+ in 2019 was 29% versus 16% in England. In contrast, Dorset's working age (16-64) population continues to decline, decreasing by 7,700 between 2009-2019 and a similar pattern is observed for the youngest generations (under 16s) whose population fell by 500 between 2009-2019.
- 4.7. Dorset's workplace population is well-dispersed across the county (Figure 4.3), typically concentrated in/around the main towns with notable clusters within the BCP hinterland areas, in the south east around Swanage, Wareham and Wool, the south west around Bridport, to the north around Sherborne and in areas to the south of Gillingham and Shaftesbury.

**Figure 4.3 – Distribution of Workplace Population**

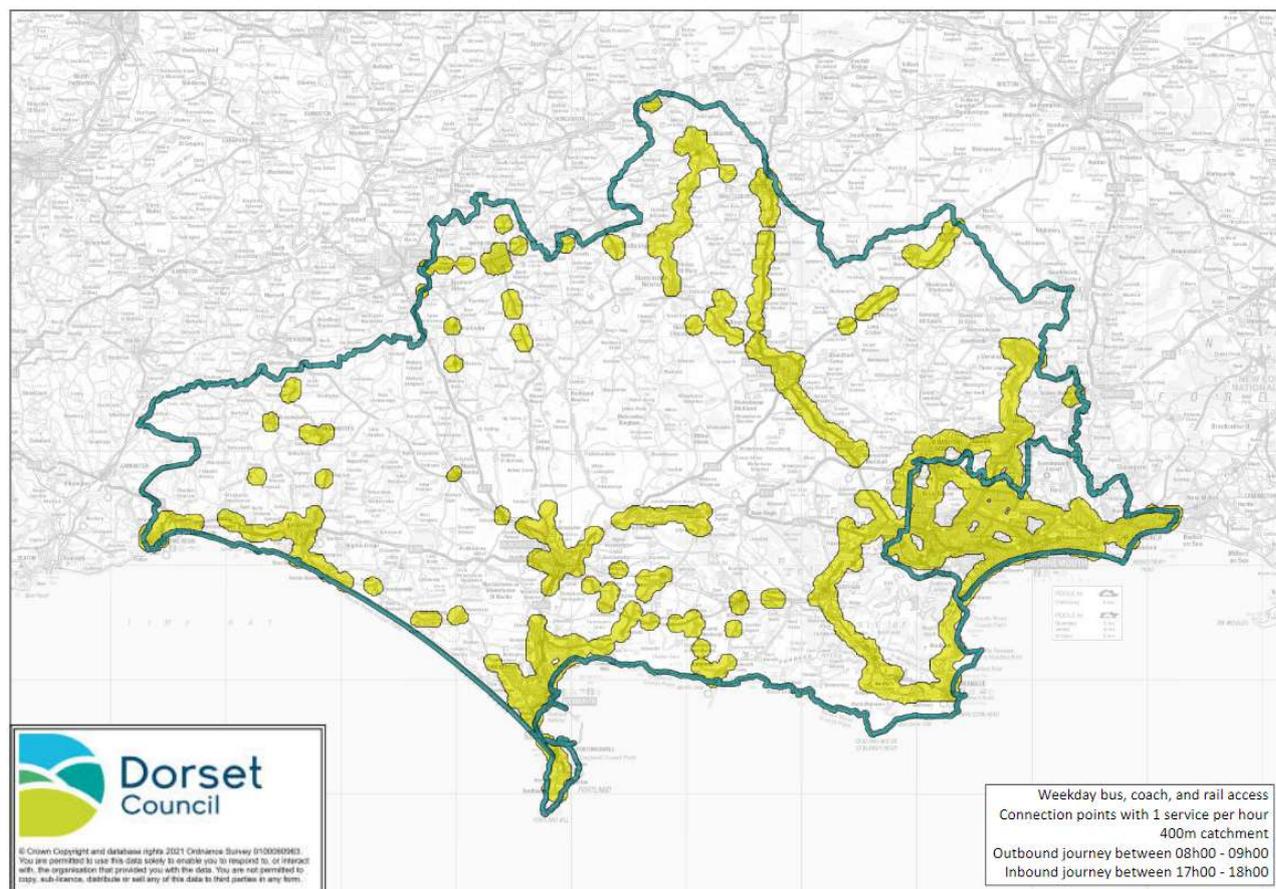


- 4.8. It is evident within the county’s geography that having limited population between principal settlements and no critical mass to provide a robust customer base effectively means operating and planning commercial bus services is challenging. The local and regional planning system can provide opportunities to improve the bus network for example the *Bridport Neighbourhood Plan 2020 -2036* includes proposals to sustainably develop the towns bus station.
- 4.9. The council are continuing to develop their current approach of promoting a core network of commercial / semi-commercial services linking major settlements by fixed route operations, and to fill in the gaps with community transport and voluntary car schemes alongside exploration of on demand services – a primary focus of this BSIP as set out in Section 9.

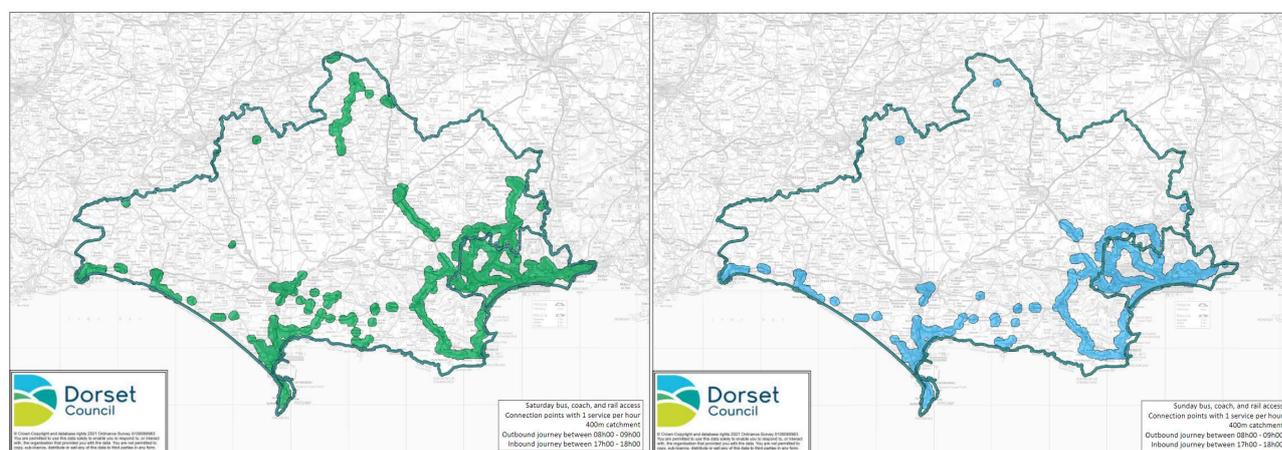
**General Public Transport Accessibility**

- 4.10. From the 2011 Census, both East Dorset and Purbeck’s top commuting outflow was into (the now) BCP area, whilst West Dorset was to South Somerset, Weymouth and Portland into West Dorset.
- 4.11. Using TRACC accessibility analysis the current midweek and weekend patterns of access to the local bus and supporting rail network have been mapped for comparison. This work identifies gaps in public transport provision and is representative of the core public transport network.
- 4.12. The corridors identified track closely to the local bus frequency mapping, outlined in Sections 5 and 9, and allow us to compare public transport access to a wider set of demographic and economic data assembled for Dorset through the BSIP. Figure 4.4 outlines midweek peak period access and Figure 4.5 provides accessibility maps for Saturday (left) and Sunday (right) during the same peak hours of 0800-0900 and 1700-1800. Initial gaps in the network are evident at this level.

**Figure 4.4 – Midweek accessibility at peak am and pm periods**



**Figure 4.5 – Weekend accessibility at peak am and pm periods (Saturday and Sunday)**

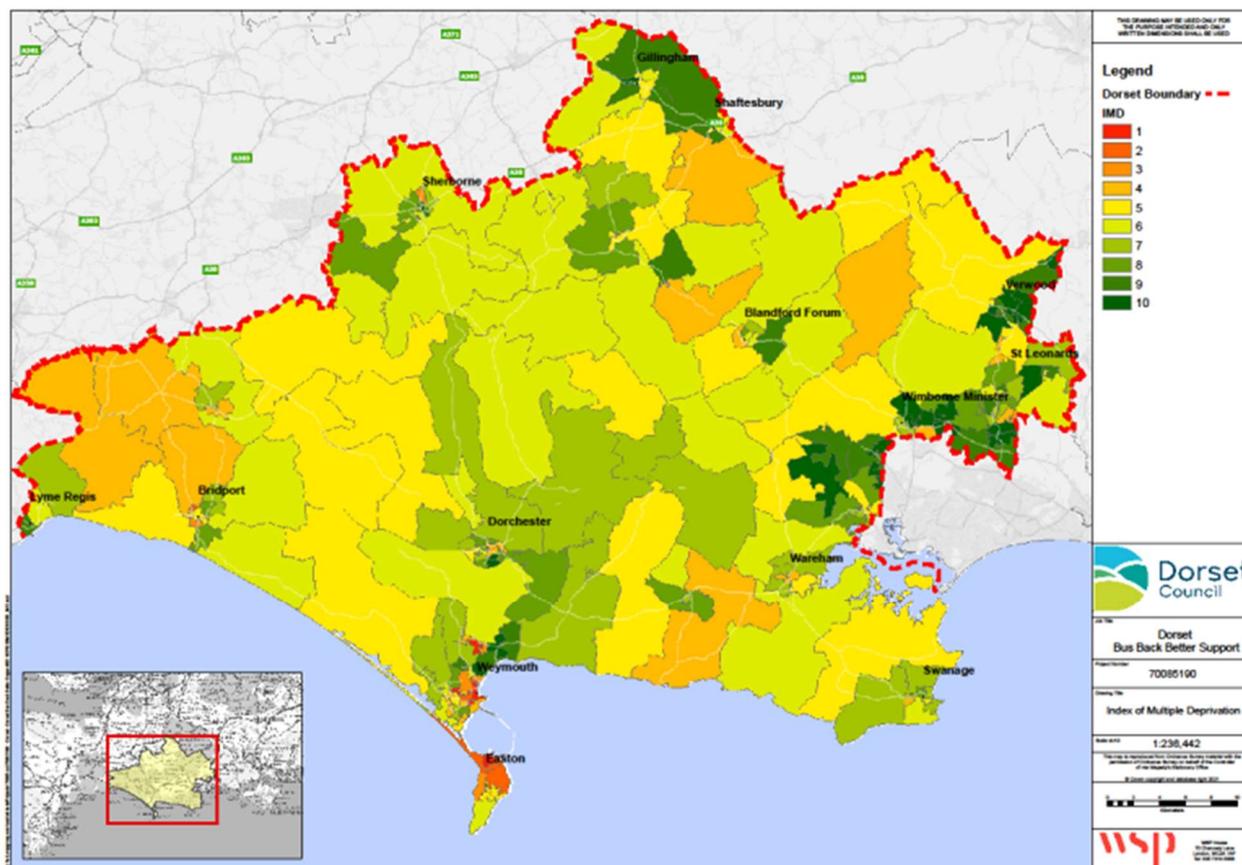


## Dorset's Economy

- 4.13. The county's economic output remains below national and regional averages, GVA per capita for Dorset in 2018 was 23% lower than the national figure (vs. BCP at only 8% lower).
- 4.14. The Dorset LEP area incorporates both Dorset and BCP authority areas. In its 2016 Strategic Economic Vision report, it was identified that as a collective LEP area it experiences '*disconnected growth with some underperforming places, communities or economies not contributing to Dorset's long-term sustainability*'.

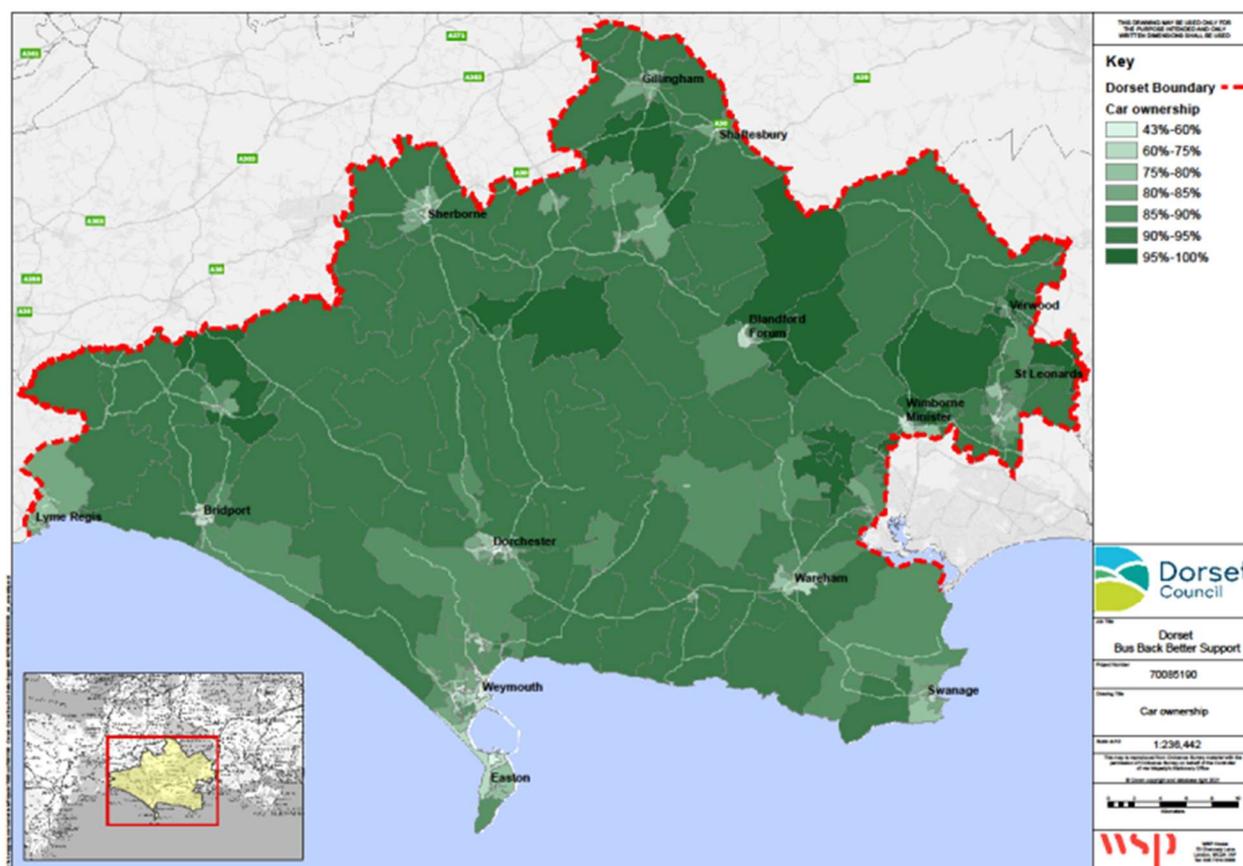
- 4.15. Outside of BCP, there are aspirations for the Western Dorset Growth Corridor (Weymouth to Dorchester) and other urban areas to support increased competitiveness in key sectors. For rural Dorset and the market towns, it was highlighted these locations must play a role in increasing competitiveness for the entire county. Improved transport and communications have been specifically mentioned as key to enabling this county-wide growth.
- 4.16. There is a wide spread of Indices of Multiple Deprivation across the county (Figure 4.4), the best IMD deciles can be found in the BCP hinterland, around Gillingham and surrounding Dorchester. The worst IMD deciles are found in/around Weymouth and Isle of Portland, with a notable pocket near Beaminster, to the north west of Bridport.

**Figure 4.4 – IMD Distribution Across Dorset**



- 4.17. The council’s Rural Mobility Fund bid identified many of its rural areas are within the top 20% most deprived for geographical access which highlights problems faced by residents in accessing services, particularly if they do not have access to private transport. Furthermore, the spread of Job Seeker Allowance claimants has notable urban hotspots in Wareham and Weymouth-Isle of Portland areas plus a distinctive ‘spine’ running through the rural heart of the county (Wimbome Minster-Blandford Forum-Sturminster Newton, in close alignment with A350-A357).
- 4.18. Providing greater access to training and employment opportunities for residents in these areas will be vitally important, especially for those without access to a vehicle. The significant role of car ownership is illustrated by 84.5% of Dorset households having one or more vehicles (Figure 4.5), compared to 74.3% in England. There is a distinction between urban and rural areas, with rural areas having 85%+ of households with at least one vehicle, whilst the lowest values (43% of households) are almost exclusively found within the towns across the county.

**Figure 4.5 – Distribution of Car Ownership (% of Households with Access to 1+ Vehicles)**



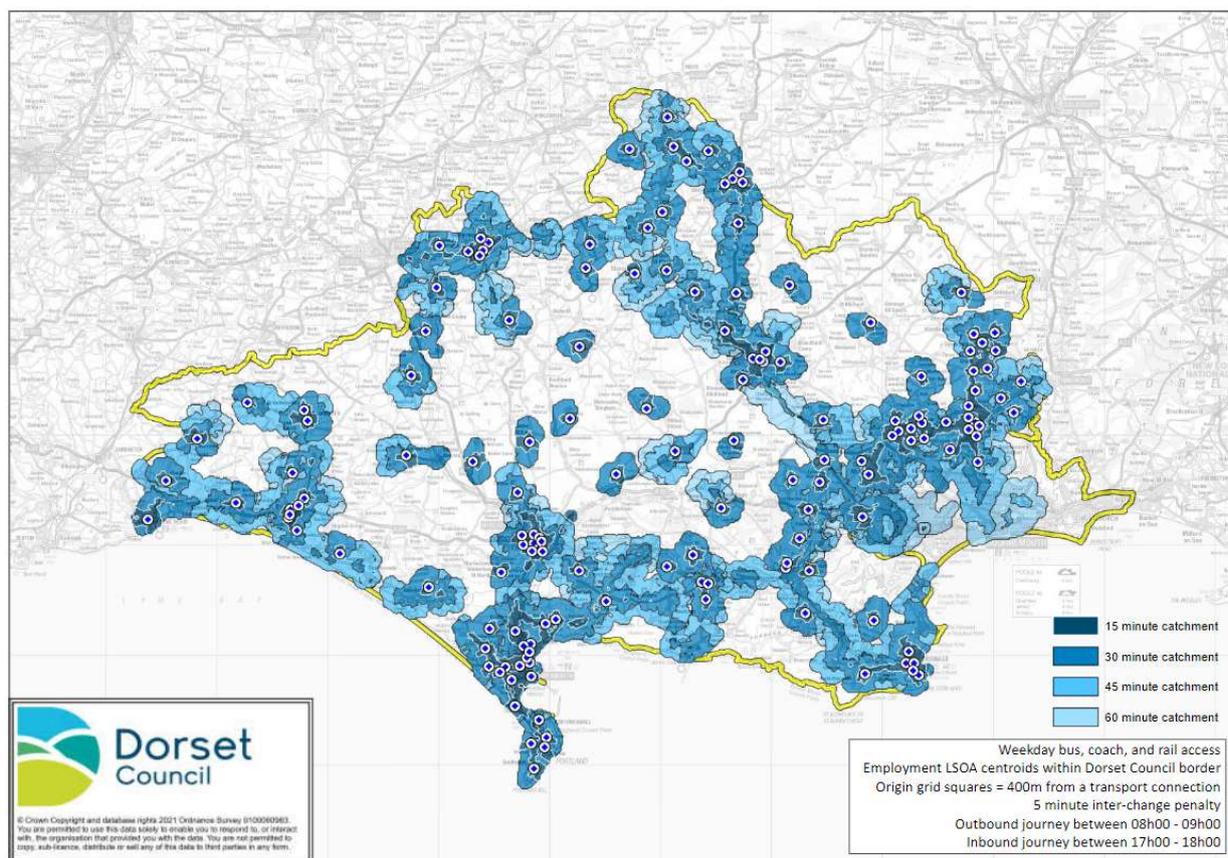
4.19. Whilst Dorset does have some of the highest car ownership rates in England, a common feature noted within rural one-car households (e.g., 50% of households in the areas surrounding Dorchester), is those who are unable to use the car as/when required face potential mobility problems due to the lack of viable alternatives. Without access to a car, social isolation can become a serious issue, however, this general reliance upon car use amongst the population may also undermine Dorset’s ambitions and policies around tackling climate change.

### Access to Employment Opportunities

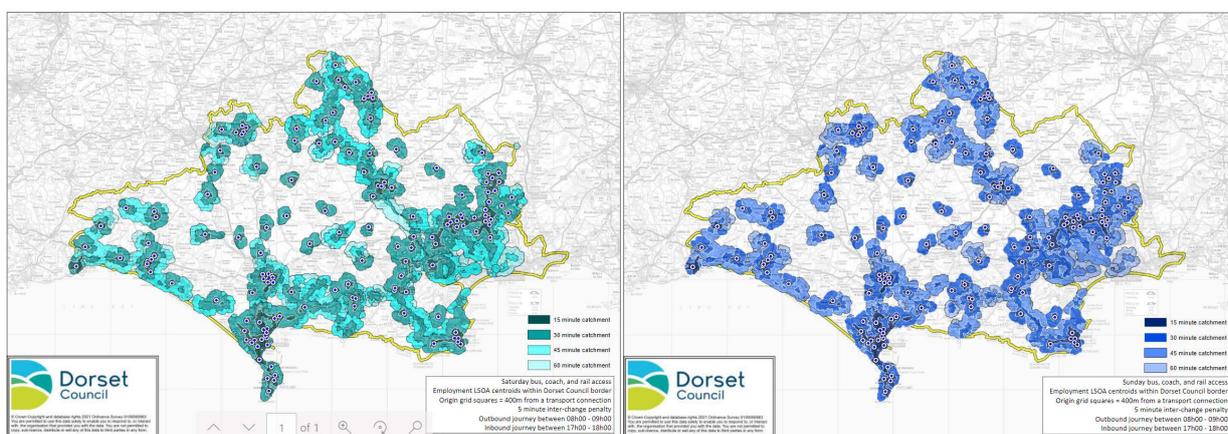
4.20. Using TRACC analysis it is possible to understand access across Dorset to employment by bus, rail, or a combination of modes, in each direction. Analysis for the midweek peak is shown in Figure 4.6 with access at weekend peak periods on Saturday (left) and Sunday (right) shown in Figure 4.7.

4.21. Whilst access remains reasonably consistent across the days analysed, with potentially good coverage across Dorset, notable gaps in accessibility are evident with uncoloured areas representing no access within a one-hour period to each employment location identified. This analysis provides significant evidence for the need of flexible (bookable) transport solutions to underpin the core local bus and supporting rail networks across Dorset, providing connectivity to the core bus network as well as direct access to employment opportunities.

**Figure 4.6 – Accessibility by bus and rail networks to employment (midweek peak periods)**



**Figure 4.7 – Accessibility by bus and rail networks to employment (weekend peak periods)**

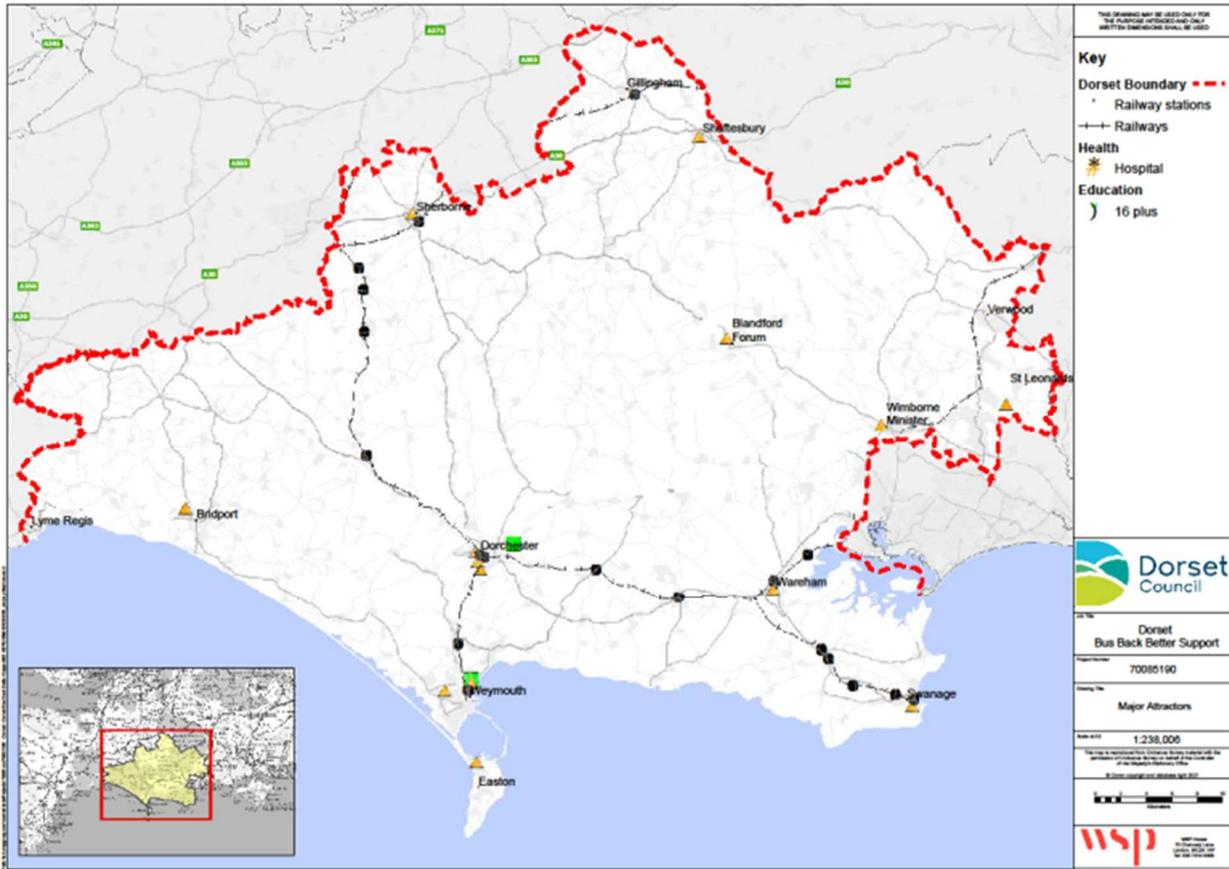


## Access to Healthcare and Education

- 4.22. Hospitals are generally located within the main towns around the county periphery, only Blandford Forum Community Hospital filling a gap within the eastern centre (Figure 4.6). The primary hospital is Dorset County Hospital, situated in Dorchester, with further primary hospitals available in the BCP area. As some hospitals are located on the outskirts of their respective town, local bus services need to provide direct links wherever possible.
- 4.23. In terms of access to further education, post-16 college opportunities within Dorset appear to be limited to just two locations in the south of the county, near Dorchester and in Weymouth (Figure 4.6), however other opportunities across into Yeovil and within BCP are also available.

4.24. Given access is confined to locations in the south of the county and in neighbouring authorities, this may restrict learning opportunities from other, more rural parts of the county unless access to a private vehicle is available.

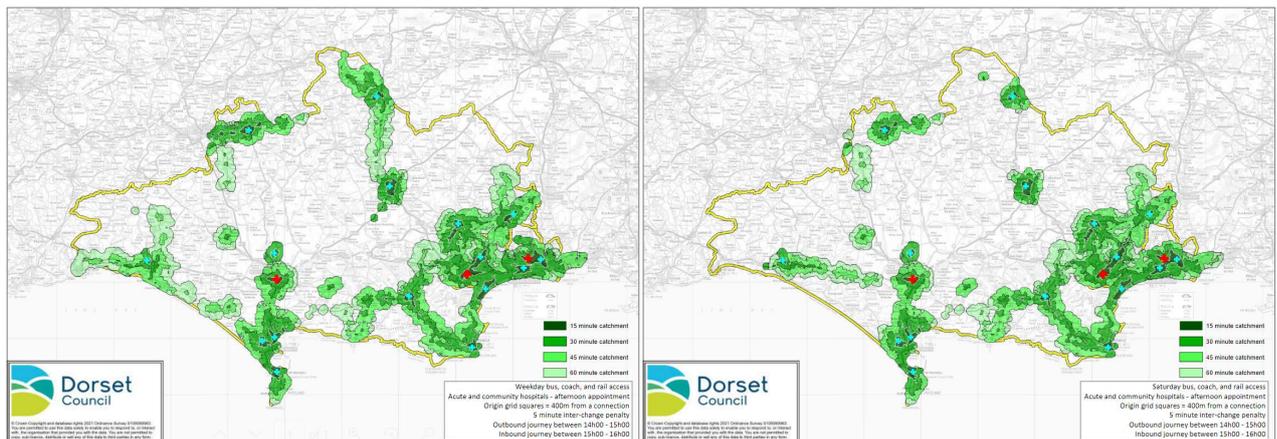
**Figure 4.6 – Location of Healthcare and Colleges within Dorset**



4.25. In the 2016 Passenger Transport Strategy, provision of bus services to support hospital journeys and meet educational (SEN and post-16 FE) needs were identified as a key concern. Not only had recent changes in post-16 education provision increased pressure on existing services, but there was a need to reduce the level of spending on bespoke transport services.

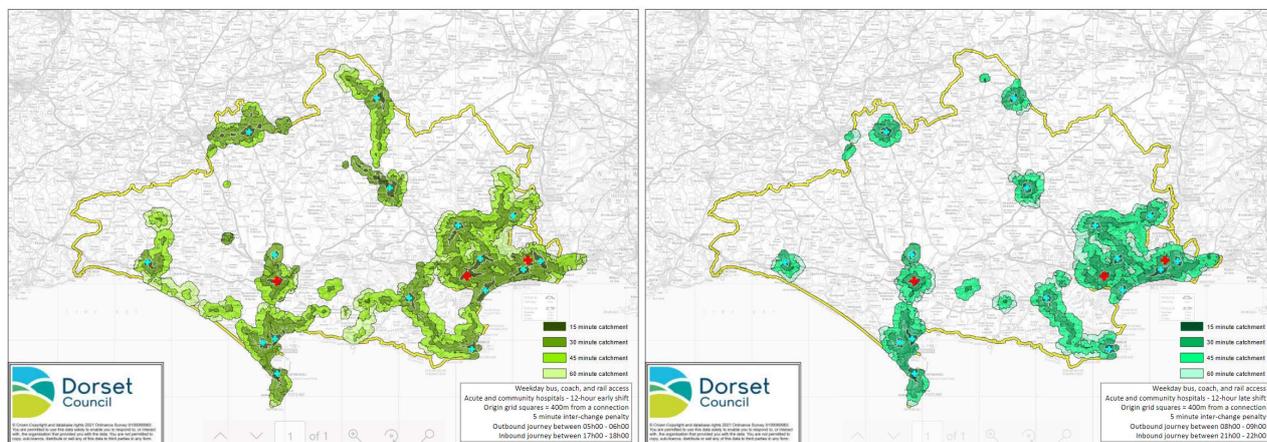
4.26. Accessibility analysis for health and education facilities across Dorset allows us to understand gaps in access and the likely requirement for additional or new bus links. Figure 4.7 contrasts access by bus and rail to afternoon appointments at local hospitals between midweek and Saturday.

**Figures 4.7 – Afternoon appointment access to Dorset Hospitals (Midweek / Saturday)**



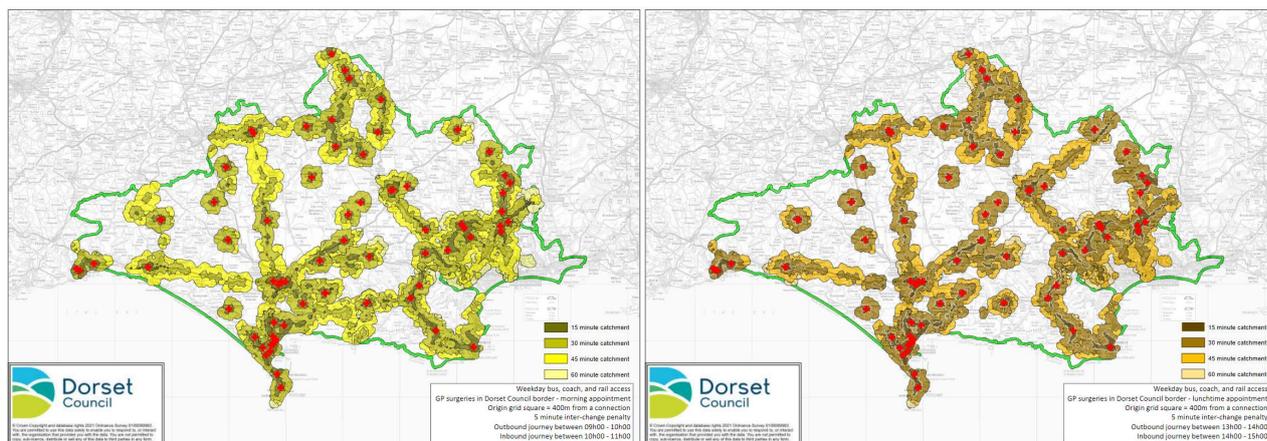
4.27. Regarding hospital access for workers, Figure 4.8 shows accessibility information and gaps for AM and PM shift patterns. Relatively poor accessibility and infrequent bus services are proven to impact on car parking at NHS sites and is reflected in the decision to build a new multi-story car park at the Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester.

**Figure 4.8 – AM and PM shift access to local hospitals across Dorset**



4.28. Access to doctors (GPs) surgeries is also important. Further analysis identifies similar gaps across Dorset (Figure 4.9) with slightly better accessibility through the central and western areas.

**Figure 4.9 – Access to GP surgeries across Dorset (AM and Inter-Peak)**

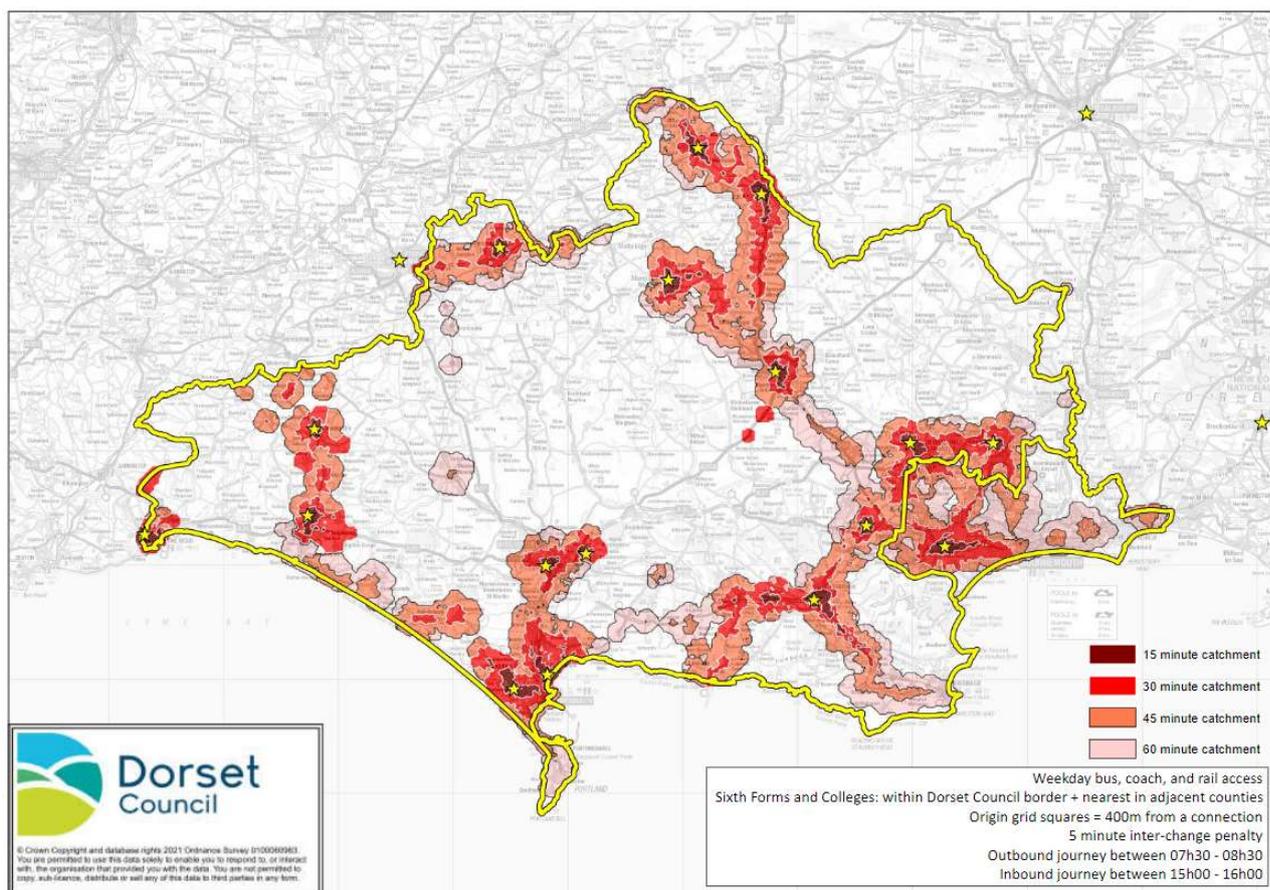


4.29. Regarding access to sixth form and further education colleges, accessibility analysis has been undertaken for general access plus morning and afternoon college periods (Figure 4.10). Stakeholder engagement identified significant issues for students during other daily periods where travel is required during non-core journey times for later lectures or mid-afternoon finishes.

4.30. As with access to hospitals across Dorset, there are significant issues for access to education establishments for those living in central and western areas of the county. While some access will be provided by additional ‘closed-door’ school and college services, these do not provide flexibility for older students who need to travel outside of core hours and are of the age to own/drive a car.

4.31. Improved regular services at high frequencies and for guaranteed periods (e.g., 7am to 7pm) would significantly increase opportunities for younger people, encourage continued use of bus and support mode shift away from private car.

**Figure 4.10 – Access to sixth form and further education colleges at core travel times**



### Rural Tourism – The Jurassic Coast and Dorset AONB

- 4.32. The economic impact of tourism in Dorset is valued by the LEP at over £1Bn per year, employing over 40,000 people across the region, providing the largest economic sector in the county.
- 4.33. The Jurassic Coast is England’s only natural World Heritage Site, running along a 95 mile stretch of globally important geology and coastal scenery from East Devon and into Dorset. Within the Jurassic Coast Partnership Plan (2020-2025), rural isolation and pockets of significant social deprivation have been identified as significant issues with many small and relatively isolated communities supported by limited access to public transport. The wider promotion of sustainable transport options to visitors is listed as a critical success factor within the plan.
- 4.34. Dorset’s AONB is a nationally important, protected landscape covering 40% of the county, stretching from Lyme Regis to Poole Harbour and reaching inland as far as Blandford Forum. In the AONB’s Management Plan (2019-2024) it is acknowledged most visitors use a car to get around (no travel survey data is available) which, whilst important to the local economy, has a significant impact on the AONB’s landscape and environment. Public transport provision has also declined for many locations, especially in more rural areas.
- 4.35. Where there are reliable bus services, a high level of concessionary fares highlights the importance of bus travel for older demographics, but it is also recognised this impacts upon economic viability and overall sustainability of services. It is also believed a significant number of people don’t visit or can’t access the AONB due to poverty and/or rural isolation exacerbated by lack of public transport.
- 4.36. The AONB call for better promotion of existing public transport, whilst also proposing Community Transport could be further developed and promoted to provide better access to the countryside.

- 4.37. Linked to the AONB, there is an ongoing separate campaign for the formal designation of a Dorset National Park which, if successful, would work to support and promote sustainable transport, including partnering with train, bus and other operators for joined-up services. The campaign points to the South Downs National Park which has secured around £9m for sustainable transport initiatives and provision, including cycle ways and bus services which have benefited rural communities as well as visitors and tourist attractions.

### **Links to Rail Services**

- 4.38. Dorset has 14 railway stations on the national rail network (served by SWR and GWR) at Chetnole, Dorchester South, Dorchester West, Gillingham, Holton Heath, Maiden Newton, Moreton, Sherborne, Thornford, Upwey, Wareham, Weymouth, Wool and Yetminster. Stations serving Axminster, Crewkerne, Templecombe and Yeovil (Junction & Pen Mill) are situated in Devon or Somerset but are important for local communities situated close to the Dorset Council boundary.
- 4.39. However, access to the rail network across Dorset is limited to areas across the south/south east (Weymouth-Dorchester-Wareham-BCP) whilst the Heart of Wessex line provides a limited service through the western centre of the county between Weymouth-Dorchester-Yeovil, generally following the A37 corridor. In the north of the county, the London Waterloo-Exeter line serves Gillingham and Sherborne within Dorset plus Crewkerne, Templecombe and Yeovil Junction in Somerset.
- 4.40. The Swanage heritage railway serves the Isle of Purbeck as a tourist line but does physically connect into the national rail network at Wareham. Restoring this link was identified in the 2016 Passenger Transport Strategy and achieved in 2017. Swanage Railway is preparing a 'Restoring Your Railway' bid to deliver a regular passenger service from Swanage to Wareham.

### **Current Barriers to Bus Use and Growth Across Dorset**

- 4.41. Several key themes (see Section 7) emerged through engagement with the public and wider stakeholders. If addressed, and improvements are delivered, the local bus network will be much more attractive to new and casual users, meeting current demands for both work and leisure travel.
- 4.42. Current barriers which limit or prevent bus use focus on a lack of available services, buses which are infrequent or take too long to reach major destinations, fares that are too high (a particular issue for younger people), and a lack of up-to-date information both at bus stops and in real-time format.
- 4.43. Integration of bus services in new and existing developments through specific bus related Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG's) and developer funding, such as Section 106 funding is fundamental to the long-term sustainable growth of the county's economy. Furthermore, a review of access arrangements for buses to existing employment and leisure sites should be carried out. Where buses are not integrated in this way, long-term barriers to service sustainability develop.
- 4.44. Additional barriers are created through an ageing population across Dorset. The number of people of working age (16-64) is falling, along with those aged 0-15 years, whilst the 65+ age group is expanding at a significant rate. Between 2009-2019, this age group grew by 27% and is projected to grow by a further 22% by 2029, meaning 34% of Dorset's population will be aged 65+ by this time.
- 4.45. Whilst the lower limit for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) pass is set to rise, the increase in the 65+ age group will create greater demand for ENCTS passes. This will add more patronage to inter-peak services, but it will not help increase peak period (higher earning) travel. It could put further strain on limited LTA support budgets and commercial revenues.

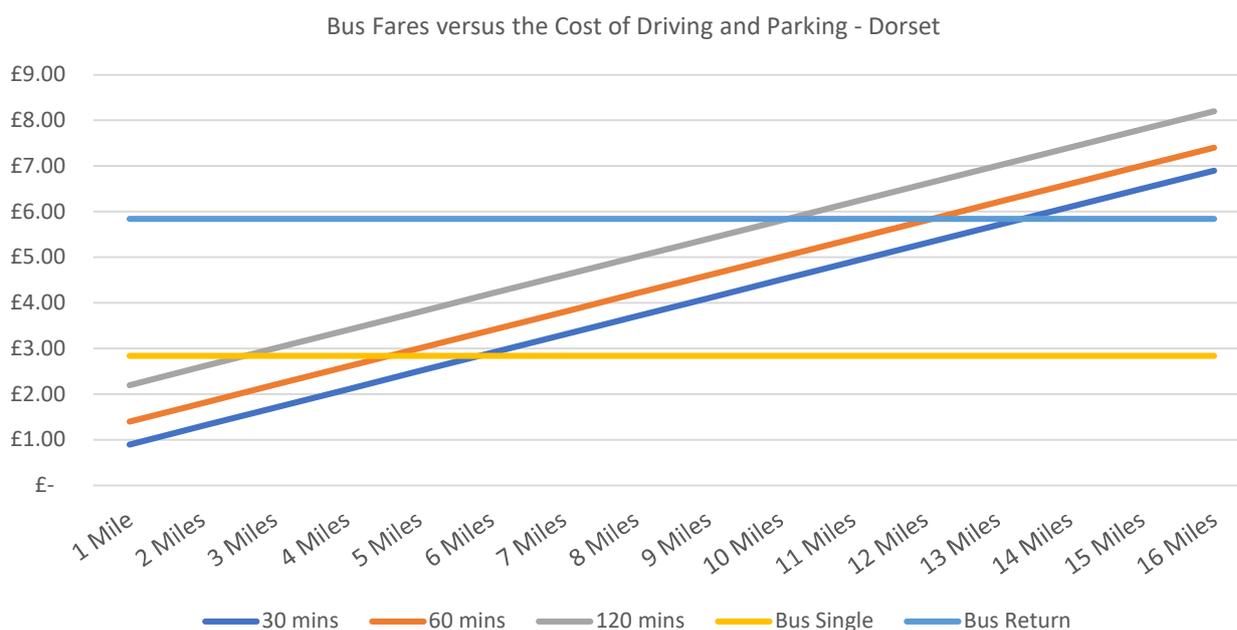
- 4.46. The ENCTS has brought great benefits for older people, but the council is concerned that reimbursement in rural areas is inadequate and operators are losing out due to exceptionally high demand for concessionary travel. The council calls on the Government to recognise the significant challenge this poses in Dorset and other rural authorities through a review of ENCTS, making changes to national policy to ensure rural areas get a fairer deal, supporting the delivery of better bus services.
- 4.47. Parking availability across the county and relative cost to car drivers is a further barrier to increased bus use. Each primary and secondary town across the county provides good car parking capacity, Table 4.1 summarises overall parking provision across Dorset (NB. not including non-Dorset Council car parks, e.g., Swanage and Portland Town Councils, National Trust facilities), demonstrating a very low proportion of free off-street parking spaces across Dorset.

**Table 4.1 – Off-Street Car Parking Statistics for Dorset**

Area	Total Parking Spaces	No. (%age) of Charged Spaces	No. (%age) of Free Spaces	Stay 0-2 hrs average (%age)	Cost for 30 mins (Ave)	Cost for 60 mins (Ave)
Dorset (UA)	13,734	13,437 (98%)	297 (2%)	63%-70%	£0.50	£1.00

- 4.48. However, data suggests up to 70% of all parking is between 0-120 minutes, mostly short stays in town centres for personal business, shopping or social activity. As such, low average parking costs of £0.50 for 30 minutes and £1.00 for up to 60 minutes are typical, compared to average single and return adult bus fares of £2.84 and £5.56 respectively.
- 4.49. Not only is the cost of car parking very attractive, but by incorporating average cost per mile to run a car (£0.40, all of England), Figure 4.11 demonstrates the distance thresholds and parking durations required to make bus a more attractive travel choice versus the car at current costs in Dorset.

**Figure 4.11 Car Costs (driving and parking) compared to average single and return bus fares**



Note: Bus Fares based on all data averages, fares may be graduated on some services by distance.

- 4.50. For the bus to become competitive on price alone with the private car, journeys across Dorset for single trips must be over three miles for two-hour parking and six miles for less than one-hour. When a return trip is considered, this distance increases to ten miles or over 13 miles respectively. Thus, to attract shorter trips either bus fares must decrease, or parking charges increase.
- 4.51. Dorset Council is proposing to transform the way it charges for parking in council-owned car parks from January 2022. The council has worked closely with residents, Town and Parish Councils, plus community and business representatives to propose standardised car parking prices and a new three tier pricing structure across the county (Table 4.2). Tiers differentiate between rural, coastal and town locations plus those car parks popular with visitors, extending parking charge periods to 0800-1800 across the entire week.

**Table 4.2 – Proposed Car Park Pricing (from January 2022)**

Level	Description	Season	30 min	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	All day
<b>Level 1</b>	Smaller, rural car parks	Low	£0.50	£0.70	£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£4.00
		High	£1.00	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	£4.50	£5.50	£10.00
<b>Level 2</b>	Market towns and shopping destinations	All year	£0.50	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£3.00	£4.00	£6.00
<b>Level 3</b>	Visitor destinations	Low	£0.50	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£3.00	£4.00	£6.00
		High	£1.00	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	£4.50	£5.50	£10.00

- 4.52. As part of these proposed changes, and to stimulate a post-pandemic economic recovery, two new car park permits are proposed for drivers living and working in Dorset, replacing a myriad of 76 different car park permits currently available across the county.
- 4.53. The ‘Pop & Shop’ permit is for use in short stay car parks and aims to support residents and businesses. The permit costs £78 per year and allows the holder to park for up to two hours per day. A second option is the ‘Work and Leisure’ permit which can be used in long and short car parks to support residents and workers, at a cost of £25 per month or £260 per year.
- 4.54. The council is taking a progressive approach to reviewing and expanding the parking charge period and tariff across Dorset. It is fully recognised that future parking policies will have a significant positive or negative impact on the use of local buses and so the council will continue to work to ensure parking charges are not set so that people choose to drive rather than using a more sustainable form of travel.
- 4.55. To provide an approximate comparison, an Adult monthly ticket for use only across all First Dorset services costs between £75-£88 depending on the method of purchase (mTicket by Direct Debit through to on-board cash/card sale). This equates to £900-£1,056 per year, an extra outlay of £640-£796 versus the higher-priced ‘Work and Leisure’ annual parking permit.
- 4.56. However, applying the average cost of vehicle use (£0.40/mile) to the potential savings returns a break-even point between 1,600-1,990 miles driven by car. Compared to an estimate of the average number of miles driven by cars (and taxis) across Dorset (in 2018) at 9,718 miles, this would imply savings could be made with existing ticketing products if a more attractive bus network could be provided, as discussed in the following section.



## 5. Current Network





- 5.6. In terms of wider connectivity, integration with the rail network could be improved significantly and rail operators have indicated a roadmap to achieve this. This could help stem a 22.5% decline in service mileage over the last five years, significantly faster than the 14.4% across England.
- 5.7. Dorset requires an ambitious plan to reverse the decline in bus use, becoming an exemplar of rural public transport accessibility. Transformative plans to create a core network operating at 30-minute frequency with a support network of Digital DRT services to connect at identified 'mobility' hubs are identified in this BSIP.

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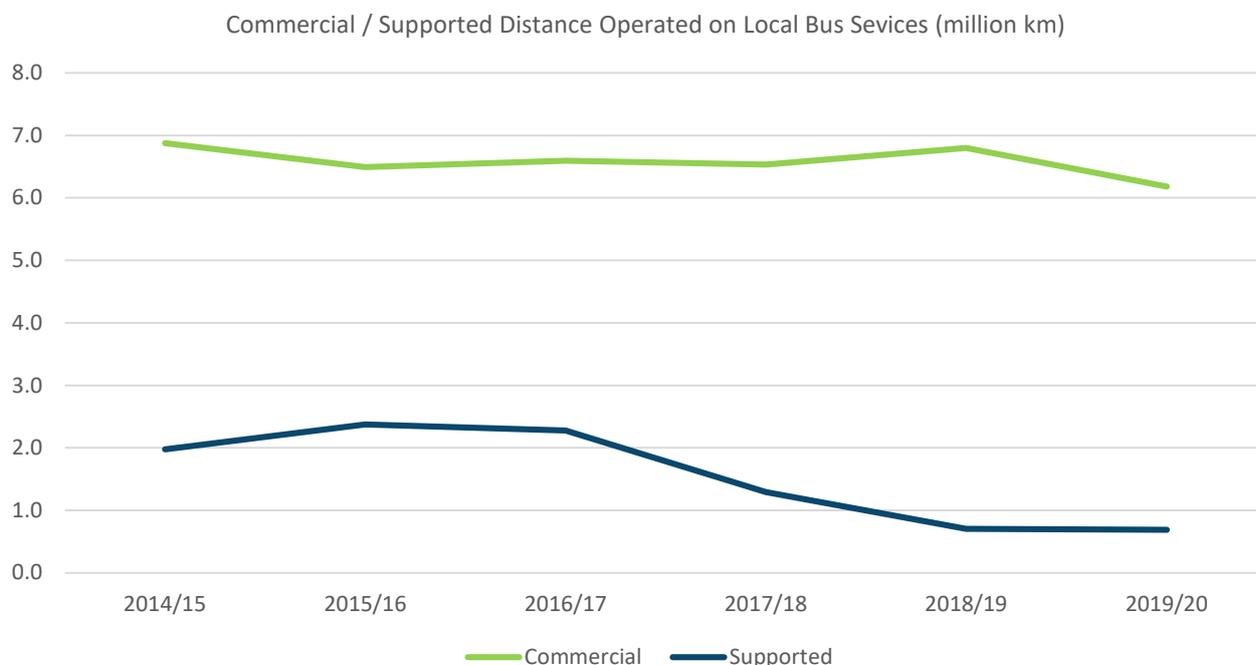
\* Routes 30, 31 and 70 only run during summer \*\* Open top buses are not always guaranteed and in some circumstances will be replaced by a standard bus

### Distances Operated and Roads Served

5.8. A total network of 6.9m kms (4.3m miles) operated in 2019/20 - 6.2m km operated commercially plus 0.7m km operating with subsidy support.

5.9. The commercial network has remained stable (annual average decline of 2%) compared to the marked decline in the supported network, which has seen a 65% fall since 2014/15 (Figure 5.2.)

**Figure 5.2 – Changes in Distance Operated on Local Bus (Commercial & Supported) Services**



5.10. Ratios for commercial to supported km have changed significantly over the last five-year period. This was 8.9:1 in 2019/20 but had fallen from an average of 2.8:1 between 2015-2017 as there was a sharp contraction in supported services against the backdrop of a steady state commercial network.

5.11. Regionally and nationally, these ratios are 5.1:1 and 7.1:1 respectively. Dorset's higher figure of 8.9:1 suggests a strong commercial network, but overall distances travelled are lower than the regional/national averages. This suggests a small core commercial network exists across a large area, masking rural isolation and hastened by a contraction in the supported network.

5.12. Total mileage operated in Dorset by local bus services is 616.5 miles, across 24.2% of all roads. Table 5.1 summarises distances travelled on each road classification across Dorset and highlights most local bus services operate on 'A' roads. Given the largely commercial nature of the local bus network this is not surprising. It also suggests the commercial network remains viable due to a focus on linking primary-secondary towns at higher speeds as a result.

5.13. 12.9% of C and U roads served reflects the significant decline in supported services which previously operated in lower density rural areas and the propensity for commercial services to focus on strategic links.

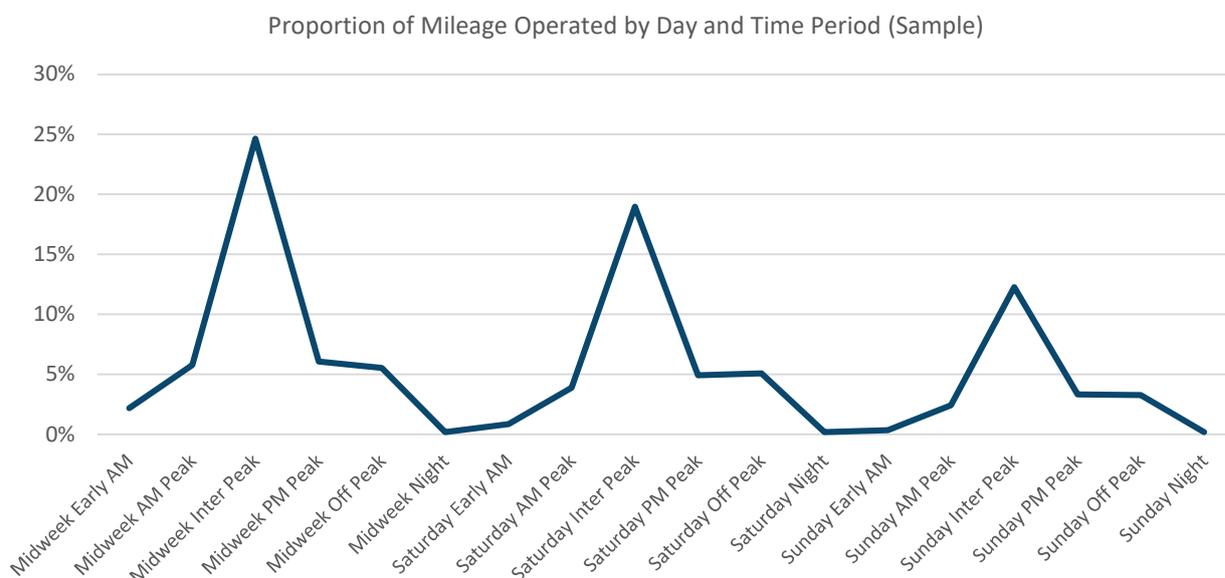
**Table 5.1 – Local Bus Distance (miles) by Road Class across Dorset**

Road Class	Dorset Total (miles)	Road Type Percentage	Bus Routes Total (miles)	Bus Routes (miles) %age	Roads with Bus %age
Motorways (All Types)	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
A-Roads (Urban & Rural)	270.9	10.7%	216.4	35.1%	79.9%
B-Roads (Urban & Rural)	238.6	9.3%	137.2	22.3%	57.5%
C & U Roads (All Types)	2,033.2	80.0%	262.9	42.6%	12.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,542.7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>616.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>

Note: Figures include roundabouts and slip roads by road class

- 5.14. The Dorset road network differs in some respects to the English average. Dorset has no motorway network and a far smaller proportion (0.5%) of urban A-roads compared to the English average (3%). Dorset has significantly more rural B, C and U classification roads (72.2%) versus England (50.1%), which highlights the highly rural nature of Dorset.
- 5.15. Data from local bus operators shows the breakdown of mileage operated, each weekday seeing c.15.5% (c.77.5% of all mileage is operated during the week) with Saturday and Sunday mileage at c.13.4% and c.9.1% respectively. Further GTFS data (commercial and supported services) shows the mileage split per daily period (Figure 5.3).

**Figure 5.3 – Proportion of mileage operated by day and period**



- 5.16. There is a peak in mileage operated during interpeak (0900-1600) periods for all days. Highest in the midweek, indicating a large demand for essential shopping and personal business trips, supported by over 45% use of concessionary pass holders. Similar, but smaller peaks during Saturdays and Sundays reflects on the more limited operations across the network, particularly on Sundays.

5.17. A low level of mileage is currently invested at peak times (c.5%) which aligns with the low proportion of travel to work by bus (Census 2011). There are clear opportunities to be had if peak period and weekend mileage levels can be raised to increase the core bus network and provide a more consistent offer which is attractive to a wider user base.

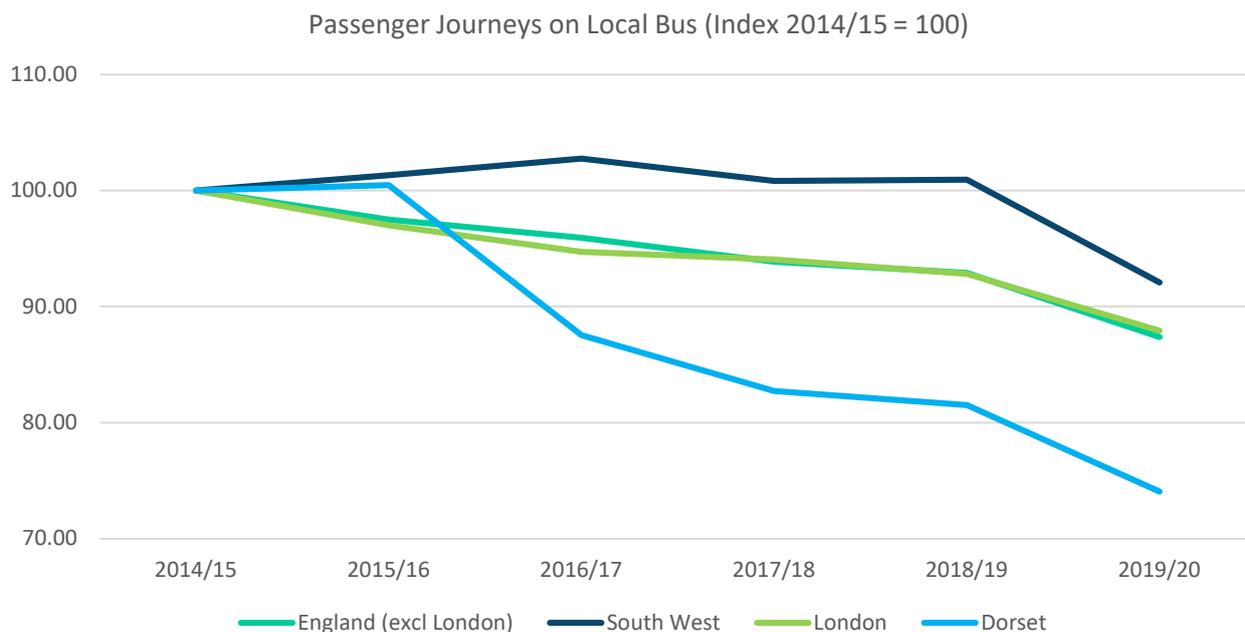
### Local Bus Network Passenger Volumes

5.18. With an estimated 7.6 million bus journeys across Dorset (2019/20), the LTA has the third lowest journeys per head in the South West and has seen a 20.4% decrease in trips since 2009/10. 45% of bus journeys were made by concessionary passengers, this suggests there is now an over-reliance on concessionary income to support the remaining mix of services.

5.19. The number of bus trips in Dorset has been falling, from 10.0m (2014/15) to 8.2m (2018/19) then 7.6m (2019/20), when the pandemic started to influence travel, particularly from March of 2020.

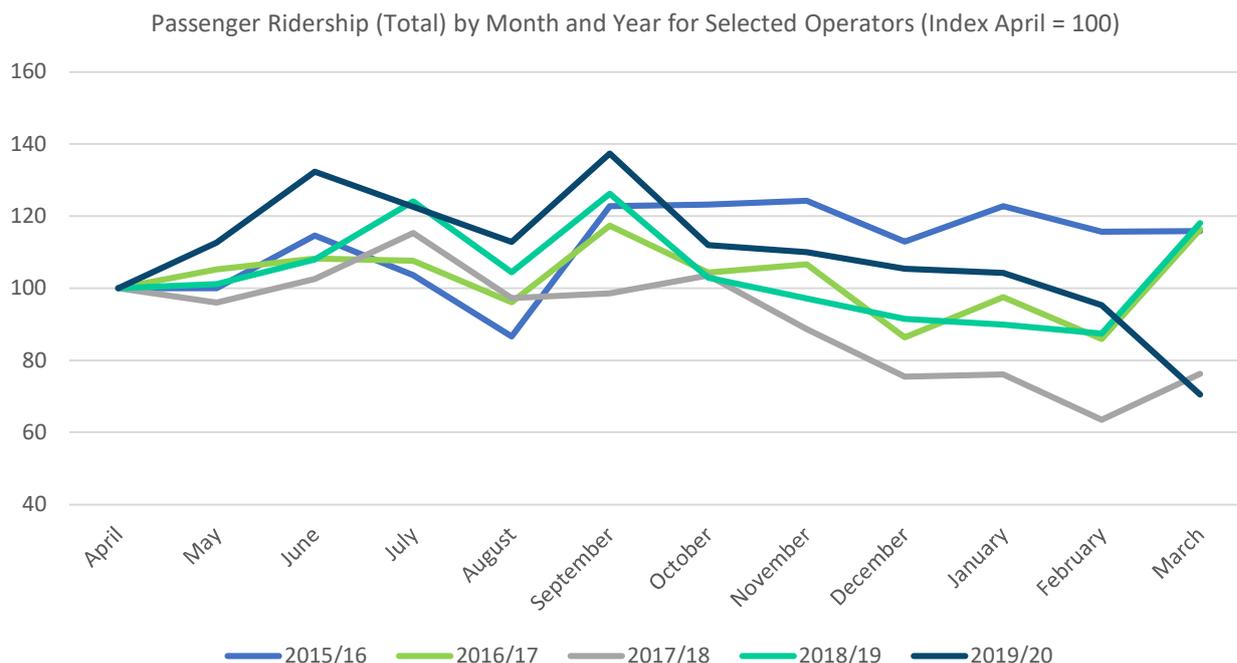
5.20. As an index, patronage in Dorset has fallen by c.26% over the last five years, a faster rate of decline versus England, London and the South West (Figure 5.4). This is despite a relatively stable commercial network. Dorset residents also make fewer bus journeys (20.8) on average than residents in South West (38.9).

**Figure 5.4 – Passenger Journeys on Local Bus Services (Indexed) 2014/15 to 2019/20**



5.21. Data from a large sample of bus operators demonstrates similar monthly (seasonal) trends in bus passenger use, with upturns in March-May and August-October and downturns in July-August and November-February (Figure 5.5). Such fluctuations are primarily due to student demand on public bus services and the effects of off-peak tourism use of local buses. Of further note is the impact of the pandemic on passenger trends (March 2019/20).

**Figure 5.5 – Dorset Global Passenger Trends 2015/16 to 2019/20**



- 5.22. Of the 7.6m journeys (2019/20), the top five performing routes carried 56.9% of all trips (c.3.3m journeys) and the top ten routes carried 76.1% of all trips (c.4.4m journeys). A small change between the top five and top ten routes demonstrates the inherent strength of the core network.
- 5.23. The best five performing bus routes are all found in the south and east around Weymouth, Portland, Swanage and Wimborne plus stronger links to BCP. These are all commercially operated by First Bus or Go-Ahead; indeed, the top 25 performing services are operated by these two companies, either commercially or with some level of de minimis/subsidy support.
- 5.24. Table 5.2 shows the percentage of total passenger volume by day and period, suggesting daily interpeak flows perform at the highest level (Monday-Sunday) whilst the midweek morning and evening peaks combined only account for 25% of the overall market.

**Table 5.2 – %age Total Passenger journeys by flow (day, period - bi-directional) 2019/20**

Time Period / Day Type	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
0400-0659	1.23%	1.23%	1.23%	1.23%	1.23%	0.57%	0.32%
0700-0859	2.27%	2.27%	2.27%	2.27%	2.27%	1.80%	0.58%
0900-1559	8.89%	8.89%	8.89%	8.89%	8.89%	7.44%	3.74%
1600-1759	2.16%	2.17%	2.18%	2.17%	2.17%	1.83%	1.13%
1800-2359	1.44%	1.44%	1.44%	1.44%	1.44%	1.75%	0.85%
0000-0259	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%

5.25. When figures are broken down by flows per hour (Table 5.3), volumes appear broadly consistent across the periods. This demonstrates core travel demand is found across the daytime, supporting proposed improvements for a core 7am-7pm network.

**Table 5.3 – %age Passenger journeys per hour by flow (day, period – bi-directional) 2019/20**

Time Period / Day Type	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
0400-0659	1.59%	1.59%	1.59%	1.59%	1.59%	0.74%	0.41%
0700-0859	4.41%	4.42%	4.41%	4.41%	4.41%	3.50%	1.13%
0900-1559	4.94%	4.94%	4.94%	4.94%	4.94%	4.14%	2.08%
1600-1759	4.21%	4.22%	4.23%	4.22%	4.22%	3.55%	2.20%
1800-2359	0.93%	0.93%	0.93%	0.93%	0.93%	1.14%	0.55%
0000-0259	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%



## Local Bus Network Frequency

5.26. The local bus network across Dorset is defined by a limited core network of higher frequency corridors (generally 30 to 60-minute headways), interlaced with a lower frequency rural network and seasonal services during peak holiday times.

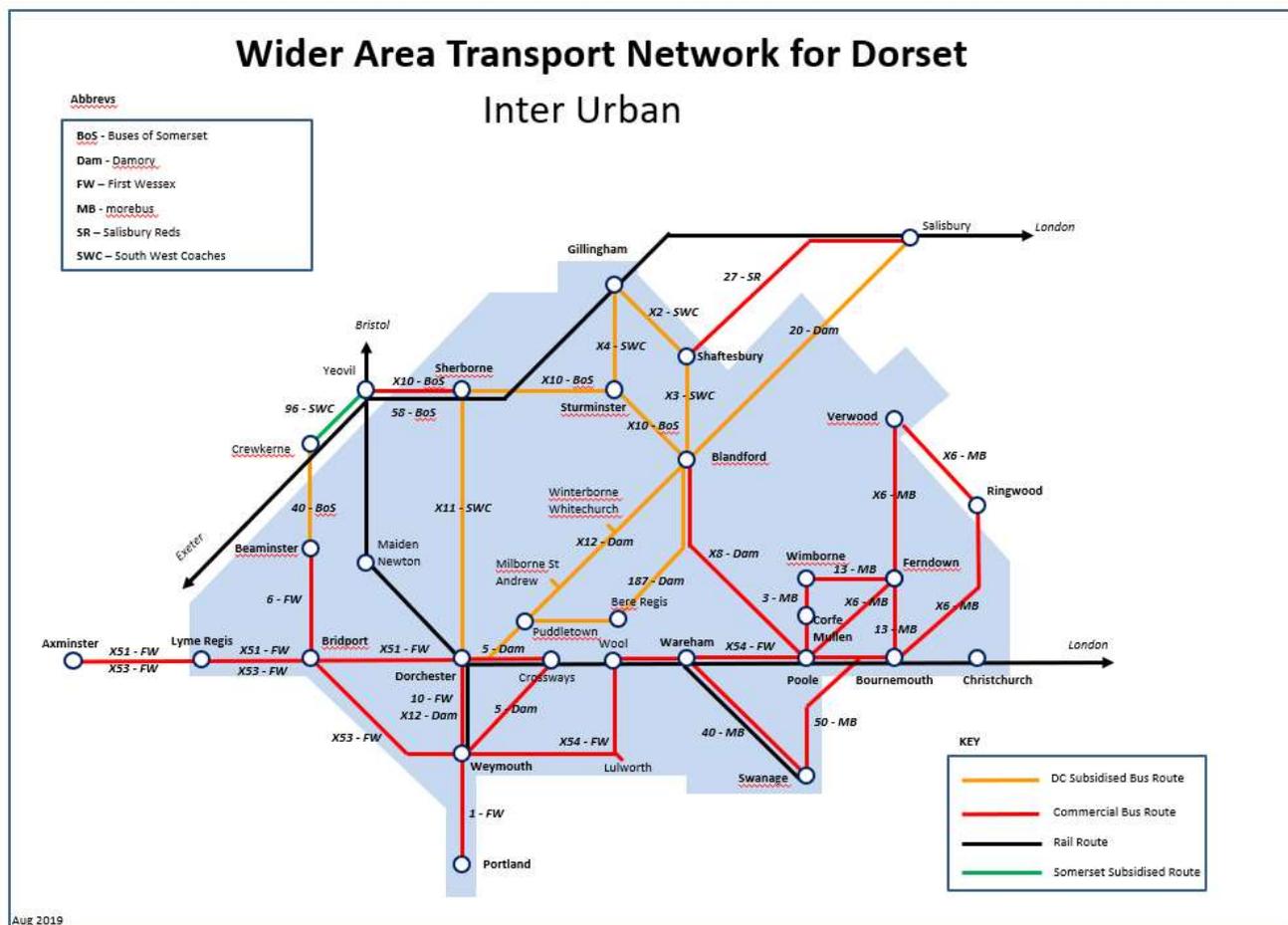
**Table 5.4 – Strategic services (2019/20) across Dorset (midweek) ranked by frequency**

Route Alignment	Route Number	Operator	Approx. Freq.
Weymouth - Portland	1	First	15
Weymouth - Littlemoor	2	First	15
Weymouth - Preston	4	First	20
Weymouth - Poundbury	10	First	20
Gillingham - Shaftesbury	X2	SW Coaches	30
Weymouth - Chickerell	8	First	30
Wimborne – Ferndown -	13	More	30
Wimborne – Corfe - Poole	3	More	30
Dorchester Town Service	6	Damory	30
Poole - Wimborne	4	More	30
Swanage Town Service	D5	More	30
Weymouth Town Service	206	SW Coaches	40
Weymouth – Waterside	503	First	40
Weymouth - Westham	3	First	45
Weymouth – Littlesea Holiday	502	First	55
Swanage – Wareham - Poole	Breezer 40	More	60
Swanage – Studland -	Breezer 50	More	60
Blandford Forum - Poole	X8	Damory	60
Dorchester Town Service	2	Damory	60
Dorchester Town Service	1	Damory	60
Lyme Regis Town Service	71	Damory	60
Lyme Regis – Sidmouth -	9A	Stagecoach	60
Poole - Ferndown - Verwood -	X6	More	70
Beaminster - Bridport	6/6A	First (BoS)	85
Salisbury - Shaftesbury	29	Salisbury Reds	90
Yeovil – Sherborne -	58	First (Bos)	120
Shaftesbury - Blandford	X3	SW Coaches	120
Sturminster -Gillingham -	X4	SW Coaches	120
Yeovil – Sherborne -	X11	SW Coaches	120
Blandford Forum –	X12	Damory	120
Dorchester - Axminster	X51	First	120
Weymouth - Axminster	X53	First	120
Yeovil – Sherborne –	X10	First (Bos)	120
Weymouth - Poole	X54	First	140
Salisbury – Blandford Forum	20	Damory	150

\*Services operated by First Hampshire & Dorset (some services provided by First Buses of Somerset (BoS))

5.27. The strategic core network is shown in Figure 5.6, this demonstrates all main corridors between primary and secondary towns are served, including those into neighbouring areas. However, it also highlights significant gaps across rural areas of Dorset and given the low frequency nature of the network, the strength of these core links in driving substantive passenger growth is questionable.

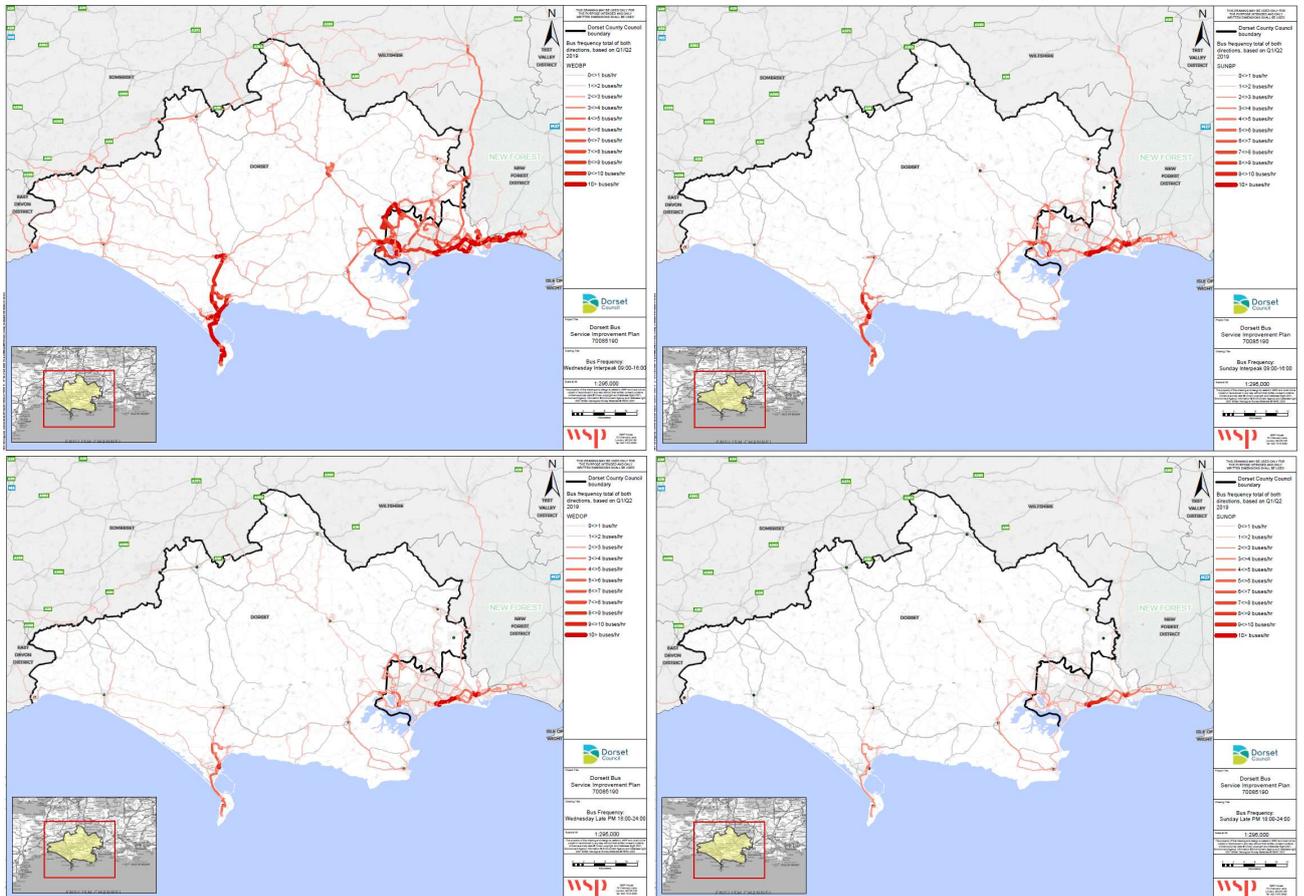
**Figure 5.6 – Current Dorset Core Bus Network**



- 5.28. Two routes are close to a turn-up-and-ride status – services 1 and 2 operated commercially by First Bus between Weymouth and Portland/Littlemoor. Both are short range and by virtue of their routing provide additional connectivity between the town centre and residential areas.
- 5.29. Service 2 runs past the Weymouth Park and Ride site, however, the timetable does not allow buses to run directly into the site, instead using a nearby on-road bus stop. Section 9 proposes to create a bespoke Park and Ride service using zero emission vehicles with an improved headway.
- 5.30. Analysis of the wider network presents limited opportunities to coordinate services and create better combined headways under existing resource, for example Weymouth–Dorchester and Sherborne–Yeovil corridors. However, due to the marginal nature of the local bus network there is currently very little overlap between service providers on key corridors.
- 5.31. Across Dorset, only Dorchester, Weymouth, Swanage (Seasonal only) and Lyme Regis have a formal town service. Of these, the Dorchester network is the most developed with three routes (only one operates better than hourly). The remaining town services operates at an hourly level whilst local ‘town’ services elsewhere are provided by routing longer-distance interurban network services through each town.

- 5.32. A lack of town services slows down the interurban network and any delays on the wider network impact on local town journeys. Hence there is an opportunity to increase the network of dedicated town services to alleviate both these issues.
- 5.33. In addition to the core network, there are limited services on strategic links between Salisbury-Shaftesbury (Salisbury Reds service 27) and Blandford Forum–Dorchester (Damory service 187). Both these links, in addition to those connecting Dorset and East Devon, require strengthening as they are of strategic importance. Route 187 has potential as a Trans-Dorset express service connecting Salisbury-Blandford Forum-Dorchester-Weymouth and limited stop services connecting Exeter (city and airport). East Devon employment centres and Dorset should be long term aims.
- 5.34. When considered with ideas raised by local bus operators to improve the Shaftesbury–Blandford Forum–Poole corridor, the opportunity arises to coordinate with the proposed Trans-Dorset service at Blandford Forum. Section 9 outlines these plans.
- 5.35. Figure 5.6 also shows the three rail routes operating throughout Dorset, including the north-south ‘Heart of Wessex’ service. The local bus network provides little-to-no connection with this line, particularly at Maiden Newton. Section 9 provides the foundations for increasing bus frequency to local rail interchanges.
- 5.36. The council has produced a suite of bus service frequency ‘heat maps’ to demonstrate network density and highlight gaps in the bus network, across various days and times. Each map is a cumulative total of bus frequencies and shows the number of buses per hour in a combined two-way direction. Figure 5.8 compares Midweek 0900-1600 (top-left) with Sunday 0900-1600 (top-right) and Midweek 1800-2400 (bottom-left) and Sunday 1800-2400 (bottom-right).

**Figure 5.8 – Comparison of Bus Network Frequency by day and period**



- 5.37. A complete set of maps covering all periods (0700-0900, 0900-1600, 1600-1800, and 1800-2400) for all days (Midweek, Saturday, and Sunday) are in shown in Appendix 3.
- 5.38. Comparing the maps reveals stark differences in provision during daytimes (0900-1600) for a typical midweek and Sunday operations. All maps clearly identify missing links in the central areas of Dorset including within the Dorchester-Blandford Forum-Sherborne triangle. Equally, areas to the north of neighbouring BCP together with those across western Dorset exhibit very low levels of service away from the main network.
- 5.39. Furthermore, comparison between the maps also demonstrates the significant fall in network provision on Sundays. While some strategic links can be seen to still operate on a Sunday daytime (0900-1600) their coverage and frequency is significantly reduced, and no supporting services exist to connect people living beyond these corridors.
- 5.40. Indeed, there is no formal Sunday network across Dorset during daytime or evening hours except services along the south coast, between Portland, Weymouth and Dorchester plus those connecting Blandford Forum, Swanage, and Corfe into BCP. These services all focus on the Dorset AONB, but the network omits the equally important Cranborne Chase area to the north east of the county. Given the desire to increase tourism and leisure travel, a strong emphasis will be placed on better weekend services with increased access to and within the Dorset AONB and additional areas such as Cranborne Chase – see Section 9 for proposed plans.
- 5.41. Maps on the bottom row outline the changing pattern of network frequencies across evening/night times for midweek and Sunday operations. As shown, there is a very limited post-1800 midweek network. Further timetable analysis shown nearly all services (commercial and supported) have last outbound journeys (from main towns) between 1800-1900 with almost no returning inbound journeys for evening leisure access. First Bus services do operate into the evening in/around Weymouth but to reduced frequencies versus daytimes.
- 5.42. The Sunday evening network is significantly worse, running across only three alignments: Swanage/Corfe-BCP, Weymouth-Dorchester and Blandford Forum-BCP. Most services run hourly at best and finish between 1800-1900, except those around Weymouth which can sustain a 30-minute frequency and run later into the evening.
- 5.43. Thus, there are three key issues to address: 1) the very low density of the overall bus network across Dorset; 2) the large disparity between core routes and other services; 3) a notable drop in services during evenings and at weekends, all removing the ability for the network to attract a wider customer base for social and leisure activities which may then generate further bus use.

### **Catchment Population**

- 5.44. The number of bus stops within Dorset is 2,019. To calculate an indicative network catchment population, a 400m buffer zone was applied to all stops to capture the total number of households within this distance. This was multiplied by the council's average household occupation level (2.23 people) to give an estimate of the number of Dorset residents within 400m walking distance of the network
- 5.45. Using this approach, it is estimated the number of people within 400m of the network is 267,039 (70.3% of the total population).
- 5.46. With services planned to increase in frequency at many bus stops through this BSIP, we will be developing a bus stop design guide and bus stop hierarchy to ensure investment in bus stop facilities is targeted at locations where frequency improvements occur and weighted by bus stop population catchment. This is outlined in Section 9.

## Dorset Community Transport Schemes – Case Study

### Beaminster Town Council – Service CB3

A key aim for Dorset Council is to enhance accessibility across the whole county and help reduce social isolation. Developing a holistic approach to bus service provision will help meet these aims, to be achieved by promoting a core bus network of fixed-route services linking major settlements, supported by community transport and voluntary car schemes plus exploration of on-demand services, all of which will feed into the core network. Such an approach will help to extend coverage and availability of the bus network, especially in smaller towns and to rural localities.

One such example is the CB3, a Saturday-only service operated since June 2018 by Beaminster Town Council. The route connects Crewkerne – Beaminster – Broadwindsor – Bridport and surrounding villages with up to seven return journeys (at the time of writing) operating at a mix of hourly or two-hourly intervals through the daytime (NB. some journeys do not operate between all locations across the entire corridor).

First arrivals (at the time of writing) into both Bridport and Crewkerne are pre-1030, with a final departure at 1730 from Crewkerne running through to Bridport to provide a last departure from there at 1828. This provides customers with ample opportunities for making shopping and leisure trips, as well as making onward connections to other key destinations, including at Crewkerne rail station (London Waterloo-Yeovil-Exeter line).

The CB3 is an excellent demonstration of partnership working between council and community. Dorset Council donated a minibus from its fleet which was surplus to requirements to help Beaminster Town Council launch the service. Dorset Council also helped to train the drivers who are all community volunteers.

Beaminster Town Council were also able to apply for a community transport grant of £5,000 from Dorset Council to help with the overall running costs of the CB3. An item in the Bridport News from June 2019 affirmed the success of the service after its first year alone, some journeys reported to be operating at capacity and having to turn people away because the bus was full.



## Bus Vehicle Speeds

- 5.47. Typical local bus planning speeds for town/urban areas are 12-14mph (19-22kph), increasing in suburban and rural areas to reflect lower traffic levels and greater bus stop spacing. Using data gathered from a selection of operators, the following planned average speeds (in kph) for each day type and period have been derived (Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5 – Average Bus Speeds by Day and Time Period (2019/20) in kph**

Time Period	Midweek	Saturday	Sunday
Early AM (0400-0700)	27.1	25.9	29.1
AM Peak (0700-0900)	26.3	26.9	26.8
Inter-Peak (0900-1600)	25.2	24.2	22.7
PM Peak (1600-1800)	24.3	23.2	22.9
Off-Peak (1800-2400)	27.9	27.5	25.9
Night (2400-0400)	31.6	31.6	31.6

- 5.48. This suggests a consistent approach to planned bus speeds across the Dorset network, in part reflecting the high level of rurality. Bus speeds drop in the peak periods and there is a progressive slowing from 0400 to 1800, which is consistent for all days.
- 5.49. Based on this finding, the level of bus priority intervention required across the network will need to be very targeted and will focus on primary and secondary town areas along with bespoke issues such traffic queues on the Dorset side of the Sandbanks Ferry crossing – see Section 9.

## Bus Average Journey Times

- 5.50. The same data also allows average planned journey times for each day type and period to be derived (Table 5.6). Average end-to-end journey times across the network are typically under an hour with only those in the midweek inter-peak plus the inter-peak and PM peak period on Sundays deviating from this by no more than 16% (c.10 minutes).
- 5.51. Journey times for early morning and night-time periods are taken from service 1 (Weymouth), the only route running at this time. Analysis shows end-to-end routes operate at attractive planned journey lengths and resources are cycled efficiently. This gives significant confidence regarding proposed enhancement of the current core network to every 30-minutes as planned in this BSIP.

**Table 5.6 – Average Journey Times by Day and Time Period (2019/20) in hours**

Time Period	Midweek	Saturday	Sunday
Early AM (0400-0700)	0.75	0.58	0.43
AM Peak (0700-0900)	0.95	0.83	0.94
Inter-Peak (0900-1600)	1.05	0.99	1.16
PM Peak (1600-1800)	0.99	0.93	1.03
Off-Peak (1800-2400)	0.80	0.82	0.80
Night (2400-0400)	0.46	0.46	0.46

5.52. Analysis of routes across the core Dorset network using Bus Open Data (BOD) shows that across the week and all time periods an average of 14% of bus journeys operated later than 5 minutes. Problems occurred during midweek and weekend periods after 0900 and journey times for routes operating in the Weymouth were hardest hit.

5.53. Using the data in a combination of ways, the performance of the core network across Dorset can be used to inform strategies for network redesign (resources and frequencies) and interventions (bus priority strategies for key locations). Figure 5.8 summarises the outputs for example core routes

**Figure 5.8 – Summary Data for On-Time Performance (Dorset Core Bus Network - 2019)**

First Wessex, Dorset & South Somerset bus routes	Late % Weekdays							Late % Saturday							Late % Sunday						
	24hrs	Early	AM	BP	PM	OP	Night	24hrs	Early	AM	BP	PM	OP	Night	24hrs	Early	AM	BP	PM	OP	Night
<b>Overall</b>	16%	5%	12%	19%	18%	18%	1%	18%	8%	12%	18%	14%	33%	25%	16%	6%	10%	17%	13%	21%	2%
1: Southlands to Southwell	30%	4%	27%	37%	25%	34%	1%	29%	8%	13%	27%	22%	57%	25%	21%	14%	13%	25%	8%	22%	2%
2: Weymouth to Littlemoor	10%	1%	5%	11%	26%	8%	-	10%	0%	0%	11%	15%	14%	-	11%	0%	33%	11%	4%	2%	-
3: Weymouth to Westham	2%	0%	3%	2%	2%	-	-	2%	0%	0%	4%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4: Preston to Preston	5%	1%	0%	7%	9%	4%	-	20%	0%	2%	24%	26%	24%	-	5%	0%	0%	8%	7%	0%	-
6: Beaminster to Bridport	11%	0%	15%	12%	3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6A: Broadoak to Dottery	21%	27%	0%	23%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6B: Bridport to Misterton	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8: Weymouth to Chickerell	1%	2%	5%	1%	0%	2%	-	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	-	6%	-	5%	8%	1%	-	-
10: Weymouth to Poundbury	14%	15%	9%	13%	14%	26%	-	18%	23%	34%	7%	7%	60%	-	11%	0%	0%	1%	0%	36%	-
10A: Weymouth to Dorchester	0%	0%	0%	1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
501: Weymouth to Portland Bill	13%	-	18%	16%	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	0%	-	-	4%	-	-	6%	0%	-	-
502: Lanehouse to Weymouth	19%	-	10%	21%	18%	-	-	14%	-	5%	20%	3%	-	-	10%	-	13%	11%	3%	-	-
503: Overcombe to Weymouth	21%	-	5%	26%	11%	-	-	28%	-	12%	35%	14%	-	-	18%	-	0%	22%	13%	-	-
A1: Broadoak to Lyme Regis	2%	10%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A2: Holditch to Lyme Regis	3%	9%	2%	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A3: Bridport to Lyme Regis	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B1: Frampton to Beaminster	1%	0%	0%	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B2: Beaminster to Poundbury	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B4: Holywell to Beaminster	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B5: Misterton to Beaminster	30%	0%	35%	37%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C1: Weymouth to Bradpole	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C2: Dorchester to Bradpole	2%	0%	11%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
X51: Uplyme to Weymouth	9%	1%	4%	10%	15%	8%	-	13%	0%	0%	15%	13%	18%	-	1%	-	1%	2%	0%	0%	-
X52: Weymouth to Bovington Camp	14%	-	5%	18%	3%	0%	-	19%	-	17%	23%	6%	0%	-	35%	-	3%	39%	49%	0%	-
X53: Bradpole to Axminster	13%	4%	10%	17%	21%	6%	-	13%	4%	20%	19%	7%	0%	-	6%	0%	11%	5%	14%	0%	-
X53: Bradpole to Axminster	13%	4%	10%	17%	21%	6%	-	13%	4%	20%	19%	7%	0%	-	6%	0%	11%	5%	14%	0%	-

5.54. Further analysis of several core routes helps identify late-running ‘hot spots’ and consider targeted mitigation measures. Figure 5.9 exemplifies the issues in the PM peak heading northbound between Southwell and Southlands on service 1 (First Bus). The route operates to time/early from Portland but then a third of journeys become delayed outside the acceptable window within Weymouth. This suggests a range of bus priority measures may assist in Weymouth, enabling existing PVR levels to be retained to meet the advertised timetable.

**Figure 5.9 – Example of Analysed Output for Flagged Routes across the Core Network (2019)**



## Ticket and Fare Volumes

- 5.55. Data for ticket volumes by type (Table 5.7) show an overall bias towards single tickets across the network but the dominant firm, First Bus, has an even split between single and return ticket types.
- 5.56. There is a reasonable distribution of fares across the Dorset network with some take-up of period passes of varying durations. The significant level of day passes found on Yellow Buses services is due to these being part of the wider BCP area network. ENCTS tickets dominate ticket volumes for all operators, the 2019/20 figures showing greater use (52.5%) versus 2018/19 (40%).

**Table 5.7 – Typical Ticket Sales Volumes by Type for Area Selected Operators 2019/20**

Operator / Ticket Type	Single	Return	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annual	ENCTS
First Bus	16.6%	14.8%	0.2%	5.2%	6.9%	0.0%	56.2%
Yellowbuses	38.4%	2.4%	24.1%	2.2%	0.7%	0.0%	32.3%
Stagecoach	23.1%	5.1%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	69.0%
Average	26.1%	7.4%	9.0%	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	52.5%

Note: Yellowbuses represent South East Dorset patterns and Stagecoach West Dorset patterns

- 5.57. Data for Dorset-specific travel products (Table 5.8), including network tickets through subsidised and commercial networks, suggest a low take up of these ticketing products across all operators. Student and Family/Group tickets are the only products to feature, the latter being sold across all operators sampled.

**Table 5.8 – Specific Ticket Sales Volumes by Type for Area Selected Operators 2019/20**

Operator / Ticket Type	Flexible / Carnet	Multi-Operator	Family / Group	Flat Hopper Fares	Student Tickets	Through Tickets
First Bus	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%
Yellowbuses	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Stagecoach	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Average	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	0.00%	0.59%	0.00%

Note: Yellowbuses represent South East Dorset patterns and Stagecoach West Dorset patterns

- 5.58. When considering all targeted ticketing products, the results support the introduction of an all-operator youth fare (16–25 year olds) and further products focusing on group travel (including families). These will be an important deliverable of the BSIP (see Section 9). Development of said ticket types are supported by stakeholder and public engagement where consensus was to simplify fares, lower costs of travel and focus on target markets, particularly younger age groups as the future generation of bus users
- 5.59. Ticket sales data (Table 5.9) suggests a general fare increase in the order of 1% between 2018/19 and 2019/20, less than half the current rate of inflation. Whilst child fares and adult weekly passes have risen more significantly, findings suggests adult single and return fares have remained largely static in their value – providing some confidence for regular travellers.

**Table 5.9 – Average Core Ticket Prices Across the Dorset Local Bus Network 2018-2020**

Ticket Type	2018/19		2019/20	
	Adult	Child	Adult	Child
Single Fare	£2.81	£1.94	£2.84	£2.06
Return Fare	£5.68	£3.77	£5.56	£3.44
Day Pass	£7.17	£4.44	£6.64	£4.32
Weekly Pass	£22.24	£18.00	£24.82	£18.00
Monthly Pass	£0.00	£51.86	£0.00	£58.33
Multi-Operator	£11.16		£11.52	
Family / Group	£16.60		£15.41	

- 5.60. Average adult fares are slightly higher in comparison to national averages – this was £2.33 in 2017, broadly rising 5% every two years (TAS); applying further increases means this is now c£2.57. Figures for Dorset suggest a +£0.27 difference. However, adult and child return fares are +95% and +67% compared to single fare equivalents, meaning only a 5%-33% saving on two singles.
- 5.61. Return tickets are unattractive and day tickets represent better value with savings being made versus single fares by the third trip. This supports fare capping as proposed in this BSIP.
- 5.62. Weekly tickets provide savings for regular adult travellers with the ticket offering better value for money by the fifth day of use. Thus, if used for an existing daily commute, weekend journeys are made for free, supporting the case for investment in more weekend services. The child equivalent does not represent as good value and should be reduced to bring this in line with adult equivalents.
- 5.63. In comparing levels of on-bus cash fares against cashless sales (Table 5.10), whilst all operators provide cashless payments, the use of cash still dominates with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all sales. More efforts are needed to promote cashless options to maximise benefits for bus dwell time and ease of use.

**Table 5.10 – Typical Ticket Sales by Method – Cash/Cashless 2019/20**

Ticket Type	Cash %	Cashless %
Adult Daily Pass	45.07%	54.93%
Adult Return Fares	91.99%	8.01%
Adult Single Fares	59.41%	40.59%
Adult Weekly Pass	79.57%	20.43%
Child Daily Pass	99.32%	0.68%
Child Monthly Pass	100.00%	0.00%
Child Return Fares	53.71%	46.29%
Child Single Fares	62.32%	37.68%
Child Weekly Pass	91.67%	8.33%
All Ticket Average	75.90%	24.10%

## Concessionary Travel

- 5.64. Approximately 81% of eligible Dorset residents hold an ENCTS travel concession pass which is higher than the estimate for England as a whole (76%). This represents approximately 109,528 (2017/18) Dorset residents, around 25.8% of the population (2017). Figures for 2018/19 are unavailable due to the county being split into two unitary authorities.
- 5.65. Across the last four years, c.4.1 million bus trips were made per year using ENCTS passes, but in 2017/18 this fell to 3.8 million bus trips. At c.45.5% (2017/18) of all local bus journeys, Dorset sees a higher rate of ENCTS use versus regional and national proportions (25.5% and 18.2% respectively).
- 5.66. The council's spending on concessionary fares has fluctuated over the last five years (allowing for inflation) and in 2019/20 was £3.1 million (£28 per pass holder and £4 per head of population). When compared to regional and national figures (indexed to 2014/15) Dorset's spending is now 66% and 69% lower than regional and national average spend per year respectively. The most recent falls were due to the council becoming a unitary authority and separating from the BCP area.
- 5.67. Through Dorset Council's ENCTS scheme, a companion pass is offered to disabled people if the primary holder is unable to make a journey without assistance. However, except for those with visual impairments, Dorset residents are not entitled to free travel before 0930 or after 2300 on weekdays (in line with minimum scheme requirements but different to some neighbouring LTA areas). Furthermore, reduced / free bus travel is not provided for groups, including older people below the eligible pension age, young people, apprentices or unemployed people.
- 5.68. Use of ENCTS passes on some community transport routes is permitted, however it is the council's view that there would be no benefit financially to extend the use of ENCTS passes beyond the scope of the current Government parameters.



## Dorset Mode Share and Trip Purpose

5.69. Data from the 2011 Census (Table 5.11) shows across Dorset approximately 4,286 people travel to work by bus, numbers varying dependent on the area in which travellers live.

**Table 5.11 – 2011 Mode Share to Work by Area Designation**

Method of Travel to Work	Dorset	Urban	Rural
Train	2,064	1,030	1,034
Bus, minibus, or coach	4,286	2,820	1,466
Taxi	429	292	137
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	1,888	1,136	752
Driving a car or van	111,328	59,735	51,593
Passenger in a car or van	8,023	4,703	3,320
Bicycle	4,476	2,861	1,615
On foot	22,410	12,810	9,600
Other method of travel to work	1,376	649	727
TOTAL	156,280	86,036	70,244
% share bus (2011)	2.7%	3.3%	2.1%
% share car (2011)	76.2%	74.8%	78.0%

Source: 2011 Census (Office for National Statistics - <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs701ew>)

- 5.70. The results suggests an average mode split in Dorset of 2.7% for bus versus 76.2% for car. Compared to a national average mode share (including London) of 7% by bus and 68% by car.
- 5.71. Further analysis shows bus mode share for commuting is highest in former Weymouth and Portland District Council area (6.5%-10.8%) which corresponds to this area having a greater density of routes and higher frequency services.
- 5.72. The Weymouth Cordon Survey (2019) provides more recent evidence of a higher mode split by bus, accounting for an estimated 20% of journeys. Cordon surveys were not undertaken in 2020 due to the pandemic, but annual survey data will be available for 2021 onwards for Weymouth and Ferndown, providing a valuable source of data to monitor the mode share of bus.
- 5.73. As noted, in more urbanised and metropolitan areas commuting makes up a substantial part of the bus passenger market (7%), and operators can use revenue generated to provide more frequent services across more of the day. The relatively smaller size of the bus commuter market in Dorset (c.2.7%) makes it more challenging for commercial operators to run substantive services at other times of the day to the same extent or at the same frequencies.

## Local Bus Mileage

- 5.74. The low frequency commercial network is stable alongside a sharply declining supported network operation. Figures for 2019/20 suggest only 10.1% of Dorset’s local bus network is supported, lower than the regional average of 16.3% and slightly lower than the national average of 12.3%.
- 5.75. With commercial service distance standing at 89.9%, these figures alongside PVR information suggest limited resources are deployed on strategic routes - evidenced by low frequency levels. Mileage shown for a selection of commercial services across Dorset on an annual basis is shown in Table 5.12 with each’s routes proportion of all mileage operated shown.

**Table 5.12 – Example data for 2019/20 for the Top 15 Services by Mileage Across Dorset**

Operator	Service Number	Annual Distance (Miles)	%age of ALL services
First Bus	1	806,223.6	15.9%
First Bus	10	578,855.2	11.4%
First Bus	X51	469,497.6	9.2%
First Bus	X53	326,736.8	6.4%
First Bus	2	293,883.2	5.8%
Go-Ahead	40	270,000.7	5.3%
Go-Ahead	13	230,588.6	4.5%
Go-Ahead	X6	221,076.9	4.3%
First Bus	8	193,667.8	3.8%
Go-Ahead	X8	161,158.2	3.2%
First Bus	4	154,968.3	3.0%
Go-Ahead	X12	138,169.1	2.7%
Go-Ahead	50	133,997.8	2.6%
First Bus	X54	126,206.1	2.5%
Go-Ahead	3	86,302.9	1.7%
Totals	15 Services	4,191,332.7	82.5%

- 5.76. This demonstrates over 80% of all service mileage across Dorset is operated across just 15 services, several of which originate in BCP and focus on towns in south-east Dorset. With most mileage operated, and peak vehicle resource used across these key services, the residual mileage and fleet is spread very thinly across the rest of Dorset, leading to significant issues regarding social isolation and access to employment, health and education for those residents in widespread rural areas of the council area.

## Existing Bus Priority Measures

5.77. Bus priority measures are currently limited to a single southbound bus lane at the north end of The Esplanade (B3155) in Weymouth, c.300m in length, a single northbound bus lane on Rodwell Road (A354) in Weymouth, c.300m in length, and a short westbound bus lane along North Quay, c.50m in length.

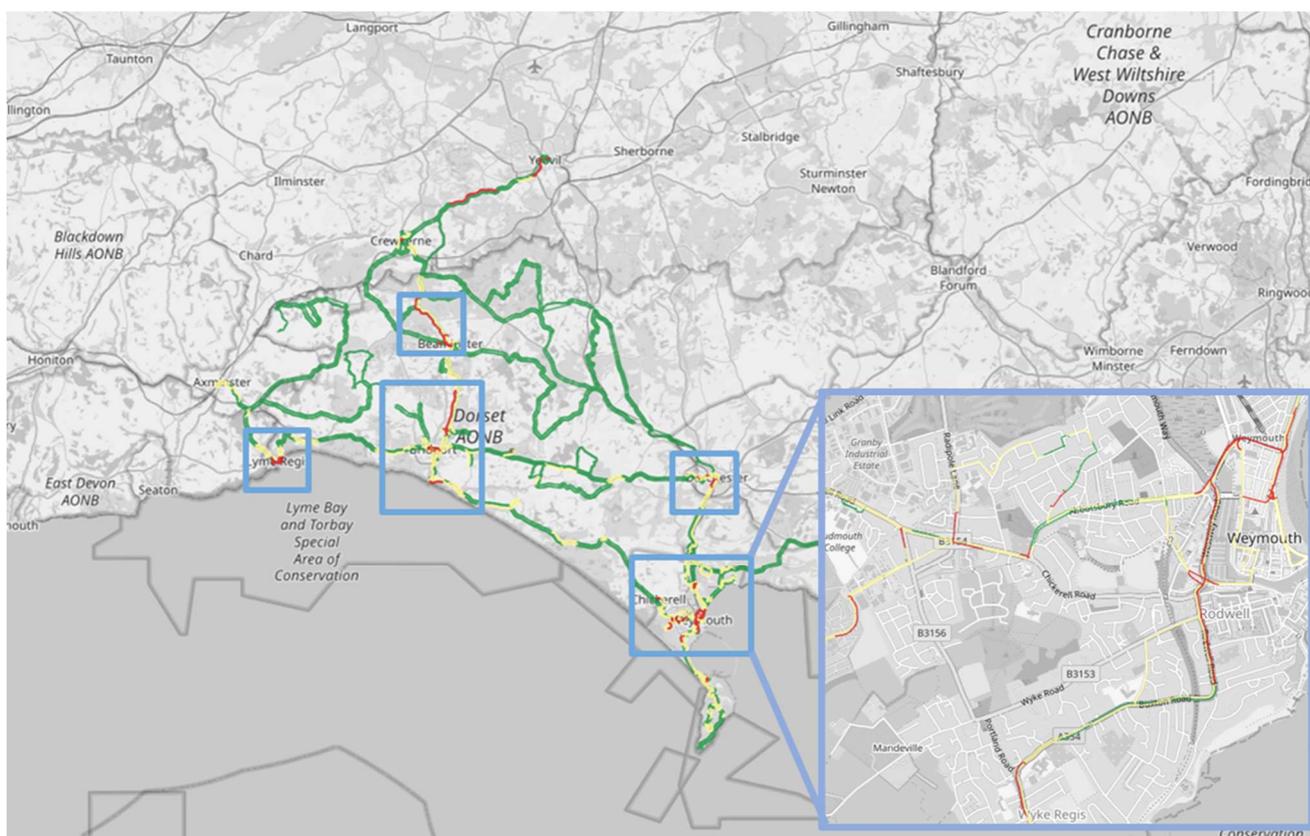
## Traffic Congestion and Local Bus Network Performance

5.78. Estimates of bus punctuality across the last eight years saw a gradual rise to a three-year period at 80% or more (from 2014/15-2016/17) before a notable drop to 70% (2017/18) which has stabilised at 69% (2018/19). This is substantially under both regional (81.9%) and national (83.0%) levels.

5.79. Traffic flows have a significant effect on local bus service punctuality in urban areas and increasing traffic levels puts further pressure on local bus operators to run reliably and punctually.

5.80. First Bus provided analysis of their overall Dorset bus network which identified areas where congestion and localised constraints affect punctuality of the current network (Figure 5.10).

**Figure 5.10 – Dorset Identified Congestion Hotspots (2019/20) with Weymouth Insert**



5.81. Without remedy, these locations will require an increase in operational resources to maintain existing services, or frequency contraction to maintain commercial viability. Deliverables focusing on bus priority improvements are outlined in Section 9. Based on these deliverables Table 5.13 summarises the potential number of each BSIP intervention to be further investigated per location.

**Table 5.13 – Summary of Locations and Potential Intervention Types**

Location	Bus Lane (including Cycle Lanes)	AVL / Traffic Light Priority (Greenwaves)	Parking / Loading Provisions	Junction / Kerb Line Remodelling	Bus Stop Relocation / Consolidation	Total
Beaminster	0	1	0	0	2	3
Bridport / West Bay	2	1	0	0	1	4
Dorchester	0	3	0	0	0	3
Lyme Regis	0	2	2	0	0	4
Sandbanks Ferry	0	0	0	0	5	5
Weymouth	1	5	3	1	1	11
Total	3	12	5	1	9	30

- 5.82. From Table 5.13, potential bus priority measures focus on AVL systems creating ‘Greenwaves’ for services in towns across the county, plus a number of potential bus stop relocations. These two elements alone account for 70% of the potential priority measures in the first wave of improvements identified through the BSIP. However, quicker wins defined by junction remodelling and parking amendments will also have a significant impact on initial bus service performance and reliability.
- 5.83. Introduction of bus priority measures within Weymouth and Dorchester is an objective of First Bus, who have identified potential measures including road space reconfiguration, AVL signal control, and junction priorities to speed up services on all approaches to the towns.
- 5.84. Discussions with Go South Coast have also identified the Sandbanks Ferry as a location where bus priority measures would greatly benefit. In previous years, at the height of the tourist season the ‘Purbeck Breezer’ services experienced delays of up to four hours, diminishing the tourist experience and causing inconvenience for local passengers in both Dorset and BCP.
- 5.85. Through initial discussions with the ferry operator and landowner, marking out a series of bus refuges with CCTV monitoring to enable buses to ‘leapfrog’ any traffic queues could rapidly help alleviate this situation.

### Availability of Comprehensive Passenger Information

- 5.86. The council has engaged widely with formal stakeholders, local bus operators and the public to prepare the BSIP document. The council conducted an online survey, with phone support and in-person support provided at key locations across the county for those unable to complete by themselves, for four weeks between Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August. In total 1,845 surveys were completed, of which residents made up 96% of the sample and visitors the remaining 4%.
- 5.87. Regarding barriers to bus use, a lack of information ('awareness of what's available') was low down the list of issues, only ranking 6<sup>th</sup> as a reason. Related to this finding, only 12% of residents and 22% of visitors stated making information 'easier to obtain' would in fact encourage them to make more bus journeys in Dorset.
- 5.88. This would suggest making improvements to information, whilst a key element of promoting bus services, is not an immediate priority which is reflected in the main findings that respondents first wanted to see more buses running on a more frequent basis across the county.
- 5.89. Concerning the question as to where respondents sought their bus information, Table 5.14 below shows the breakdown of answers (more than one option could be selected).

**Table 5.14 – Public Search Types for Public Transport Information Sources**

Information Source	% of Residents	% of Visitors
Paper timetable	21	46
Timetable at the bus stop	32	61
Telephone enquiry	6	9
Traveline SW	14	22
Council website	12	20
Bus company website	61	70
Another website	9	10
Google	42	41
App on mobile phone or tablet	27	25
Word of mouth - e.g., friend / relative / other	15	12
Other source not listed	3	1

- 5.90. The results demonstrate there is a clear gap between awareness/utilisation of the operator-specific websites and the journey planning functionality within Google (Maps) versus the Traveline SW and Dorset Council websites.
- 5.91. There is a good proportion of respondents who also continue to rely upon static information sources, particularly amongst visitors who were almost as reliant upon timetables posted at bus stops as they were on the operator-specific websites. Nearly half of visitors also consulted paper timetables which could present a new marketing opportunity, if bus timetables were perhaps incorporated into tourism literature.

- 5.92. Mobile apps use sits toward the lower end of the ranking, with a quarter of both cohorts referencing its use. Whether a reflection of the generally older demographic of the Dorset population or a lack of mobile coverage/smartphone use across the county, this could help dictate how beneficial further efforts to roll-out additional app-based functionality (e.g., QR codes at stops) might prove to be. Finally, telephone enquiries came lowest of all the publicly available information sources.
- 5.93. The availability of comprehensive passenger information is provided through a wide mix of sources including online information, printed information (at stop or as a leaflet), and information dispensed by telephone enquiry service.
- 5.94. Conducting a general search on the council homepage for 'bus' and 'buses' presents the user with a range of pages. The [Travel Dorset](#) portal provide links for journey planning, timetables, and maps, re-directing the user over to the [Traveline SW](#) page.
- 5.95. The 'Travel Dorset' presents a multi-modal range of links but requires a refresh to reinforce messaging about travelling sustainably. Links to the related cycle and walking pages are much more comprehensive with maps for various parts of the county provided. No information is provided on rail services (timetables, maps, tickets) throughout the county nor are there any links to NRE or individual TOC websites.
- 5.96. Currently, the level and range of information provided on the council website is somewhat limited and mostly signposts/redirects users to external websites (Traveline SW) to plan a bus journey. A list of all bus operators across the county is available to help users find specific information on services, should they know the operator they need, but this does not facilitate finding comprehensive information about all potential options for a given journey.
- 5.97. The regional First Bus website is provided in the standard First Group format with comprehensive information available for all services, including individual service timetables, a range of route maps and key town/county network maps. Ticketing information is also comprehensive however there is no mention of onward rail services other than listing bus stops at/near stations is provided.
- 5.98. Morebus (including Excelsior/Damory) provide timetables and network maps for the Purbeck 'Breezer' network of services connecting Swanage/Wareham to BCP and Dorchester/Weymouth plus Damory Buses timetables and route maps (also included on the Excelsior website) covering various areas of central and eastern Dorset. Similarly, Yellow Buses extend into Ferndown and Wimborne Minster, the website providing timetables, network maps plus ticketing.
- 5.99. The remaining bus operators across Dorset all provide varying degrees of detail regarding the local bus services that they operate. Most provide hyperlinks to timetable pages for each service they operate, some with downloadable PDFs.
- 5.100. For rail services across Dorset, each train operating company provides standard timetables, journey planning, maps and ticket information functionality. PlusBus is available at Weymouth (including Portland) whilst Bournemouth/Poole also covers Ferndown and Wimborne Minster. Through ticketing is (supposedly) available from the National Rail network to destinations such as Bridport and Lyme Regis, but information is harder to find, and such products are not well publicised.
- 5.101. It is difficult to ascertain through the disparate information sources if timetables are fully co-ordinated within or between modes. For example, whilst the Weymouth PlusBus provides an integrated ticketing option for local bus services, the nearest bus stops are situated around 6-8 minutes' walk from the station, so it is unlikely services are planned in a co-ordinated manner.
- 5.102. Given the council website mostly redirects to the Traveline SW website, this is likely to be the primary source of multi-modal information along with the likes of Google Maps.

## Local Bus Operators

- 5.103. The highly rural nature of the county makes it difficult and unattractive to serve, with few local bus operators in the market and commercial routes remaining successful mostly in the south-east where demand to neighbouring BCP supports a strong network of intensive corridor services.
- 5.104. Bus services across Dorset are provided by a mix of operators. The largest (by fleet, mileage and services operated) is First Bus with its operations split between First Hampshire and Dorset (majority of Dorset) and First Somerset Buses (small number of cross-boundary routes to/from towns in Somerset).
- 5.105. Go South Coast (Go-Ahead Group), operating fewer buses and half the mileage of First Bus within Dorset, but provide nearly as many local bus services as First Bus through their Damory Coaches and Morebus subsidiaries. This suggests First Bus routes operate at either a higher frequency, over longer distances, or as is the case, a mixture of both across the Dorset area.
- 5.106. Other local bus service operators include Yellowbuses, South West Coaches and Stagecoach (South West) in addition to several community bus and voluntary car scheme operations.
- 5.107. Dorset has a relatively small pool of companies holding licences to operate local bus services, with most operators working only in the education contract sector. As a result, several supported local services are run by the Community Transport sector including both fixed route local bus services (under S22 permits) and several bookable dial-a-bus services under Section 19 permits. These services support the local bus network and cover 60% of Dorset by landmass. Appendix 4 maps all Community Transport initiatives and the county's DRT coverage.
- 5.108. Across Dorset's commercial and subsidised routes there are 68 registered local bus services in addition to 'closed door' education services and scheduled express coach services (none of which are registered) (Table 5.15)

**Table 5.15 – Dorset local Bus Services by Type**

Local Bus Service Type	Number	Proportion
Commercial	40	58.8%
De minimis	1	1.5%
Subsidised (Includes Cost & Subsidy)	9	13.2%
S106 Funded	1	1.5%
Non-DC Subsidised Routes	17	25.0%
Total	68	100%

Note: A further 9 school services operate as school transport (Children's Services Budget)

- 5.109. Of note is the split between commercial and subsidised service provision, at a ratio of 1.4:1. When considered with the kms-ratio of commercial to supported services (8.9:1), this suggests commercial services operate at a higher intensity and over longer end to end distances whilst the supported network uses fewer resources and operates fewer miles per service, providing a very limited network for essential access purposes.
- 5.110. With the pandemic causing a shift in bus use away from essential shopping and commuting, this then raises questions regarding the relevance of such targeted 'safety net' essential services with

limited frequency and reach, and if resources may be directed towards more flexible service offerings e.g., Digital DRT and feeder services which better co-ordinate with a core bus network.

5.111. 10 PSV 'O' Licence holders provide a mix of 72 commercial, subsidised and education services across Dorset (Table 5.16). The largest operator across all categories is First Bus (27 services, 37.5% market share) followed by Go-Ahead (25 services, 34.7% market share).

**Table 5.16 – Local Bus Network Operators, Service Type / Quantity, and Market Share**

Operator	Commercial	De minimis	Subsidised	Total	Market Share
First (All)	19	1	7	27	37.5%
Go Ahead (All)	16	0	9	25	34.7%
South West Coaches	3	0	5	8	11.1%
Dorset Community Transport	0	0	5	5	6.9%
Fromebus	0	0	2	2	2.8%
Stagecoach South West	0	0	2	2	2.8%
Yellowbuses	2	0	0	2	2.8%
Beaminster Town Council	0	0	1	1	1.4%
TOTAL	40	1	31	72	100%

Notes: First Bus includes Hampshire and Dorset and Buses of Somerset Divisions

5.112. 40 commercial services are operated by four operators, again the largest being First Bus (19 services, 47.5% market share) then Go-Ahead (16 services, 40.0%). The remaining 5 services are operated by South West Coaches and Yellowbuses, thus 55.6% of the overall market is operated commercially by four operators. One service operates with de minimis support. While this may be considered part of the commercial network, without the support it would be likely to fail completely.

5.113. The remaining 31 services are operated on a subsidised (tendered) basis by seven companies. In contrast to the commercial network, the dominant tendered provider is Go-Ahead (nine services, 29.0% market share) and then First Bus (seven services, 22.5% market share). South West Coaches and Dorset Community Transport both running five services each (16.1% market share).

5.114. Up to 60% of the Dorset Council area is covered by dial-a-bus (Plus-Bus) services, providing low frequency coverage between rural areas and primary towns by a range of Community Transport providers both operating the buses and supporting booking services. Customers must pre-register to use these services, with journeys requiring pre-booking at least 24-hours in advance of travel. Most services only operate Monday-Friday between 0900-1500, running in-between school contract commitments representing an example of integrated service planning where existing resources have been made available to the wider community.

5.115. Furthermore, services are operated as part of Dorset Community Transport's charitable objectives, in partnership and with support from town and parish councils, thus are neither statutory, commercial nor conventional 'supported services'.

## Local Bus Fleet

5.116. The local bus fleet operating across Dorset is of mid-level standard. Only two buses are one-year old or less (both with South West Coaches) and there are currently no zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) in operation across the county. At present, 9% of buses meet the latest Euro VI diesel low emission standards with a further 52% at the Euro V standard.

5.117. First Bus has a fleet 67 buses, predominantly transferred from other areas of the UK with an average age of 11 years old. The remaining companies have a combined fleet of 53 buses with a more diverse mix of types, which have either operated from new or been bought second-hand. These also have an average age of 11 years old. The key characteristics of the entire Dorset local bus service fleet is shown in Table 5.17.

**Table 5.17– Dorset Bus Fleet Characteristics**

Key Metric	Dorset Fleet Proportion
<3 yrs old	2%
<8 yrs old	30%
Euro 6	9%
Euro 5	52%
Euro 4	20%
<Euro 3	19%
Upgraded	0%
Single deck	66%
Double deck	34%
Single door	100%
Dual door	0%

5.118. Table 5.18 shows the vehicle fleet by operator, noting quantity of buses, average age, emission standards and potential to green the fleet through retrofit upgrades to Euro V/VI.

**Table 5.18 – Dorset Bus Fleet Analysis by Local Bus Operator**

Operator	Fleet Total	Average Age	Euro VI	Euro V	Euro IV / less
First Hampshire & Dorset	67	11	6	39	22
Go-Ahead (Damory /More)	28	11	0	13	15
South West Coaches	15	11	2	5	8
Yellowbuses	4	9	3	0	1
Dorset Community Transport	5	10	0	5	0
Beaminster Bus	1	13	0	0	1
Total	120	11	11	62	47

Note: Some additional vehicles operate from the First Buses of Somerset fleet (average age 13 years and Euro IV/V)

5.119. The fleet and operational data also provides additional insights regarding average daily use and fleet efficiency (Table 5.19). There is a 25% drop in peak vehicle requirement (PVR) utilised across weekend periods for all local bus services compared to midweek levels. This demonstrates potential to significantly increase weekend and evening provision across the county without the addition of extra vehicles to the fleet.

**Table 5.19 – Average PVR per route by Operator per Day 2019/20**

Average Route PVR	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Yellowbuses	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
First Bus	4	4	4	4	4	3	2
Dorset CT	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
Beaminster Bus	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
SW Coaches	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
All Operators	3	3	3	3	3	2	2

5.120. To better understand the level of efficiency per PVR, a measure based on average miles operated per vehicle has been derived. From this, it shows commercial operators are working vehicles around 22% harder versus smaller independent firms on the subsidised routes. This suggests smaller firms, have scope to significantly increase their output leading to a higher level of service frequency and/or coverage in a revised feeder network to the core commercial corridors. Section 9 outlines the council's plans for a new feeder service network across the county containing a mix of fixed and Digital DRT services.

5.121. Where operated, buses on Saturdays and Sundays also work harder versus those during the midweek. This indicates resources are being worked to minimise requirements for providing a base level of service, highlights the pressure on local bus operators regarding weekend driver coverage and the need to work buses harder to accommodate this.

5.122. The higher Sunday figure demonstrates the possibility to increase provision across the weekend period but with fewer resources deployed than midweek periods.

## **Partnership Views on Provision Compared Regionally and Nationally**

- 5.123. In close dialogue and partnership with local bus operators and wider public transport providers, the council understands the Dorset bus network faces a number of significant challenges and requires a fresh approach in order to reverse several years of decline and raise performance to a higher level, comparable to the regional or national situation. This is evidenced by Dorset having the third lowest bus passenger journeys per head figure in the South West region and having seen a decrease in bus journeys of 20.4% over 2009/10 figures.
- 5.124. The evidence presented within this baseline section is very clear, the bus network in Dorset does not provide an attractive and easy to use alternative to the car.
- 5.125. The focus of this BSIP must be on strengthening the core network, enhancing coverage of the wider network to provide greater connectivity from rural areas, and extending hours of operation to include later evening journeys and better weekend services.
- 5.126. It is the view of the council and all formal stakeholders that significant improvements are needed and a reverse in historic patronage decline is possible. Through detailed stakeholder engagement process, analysis of public feedback and numerous meetings with local bus and public transport providers from all sectors, the council has gained significant insight into the deficiencies and opportunities relevant to the bus across the county and beyond.
- 5.127. Section 7 outlines the collective views of stakeholders and the public through the engagement process and Appendix 5 includes a full stakeholder analysis report alongside supporting anecdotal evidence of bus user priorities from initial stakeholder meetings pulls together a range of data, analysis, and supporting material to demonstrate the in-depth understanding that has been gained through the BSIP process.
- 5.128. Challenging deliverables have been set through Section 9 and are backed up by strong policies and a fresh approach to the EP process which will see a wider range of key partners from various Dorset Council teams join forces with local bus operators, train operating companies and passenger representative groups to drive forward the BSIP and hold all partners accountable for its progress.
- 5.129. Through significant investment, the council feels it can and will transform the local bus network, deliver an exemplar model for rural bus service design and delivery, thus developing into a regional centre of excellence for integrated rural DRT and multi-modal travel opportunities.

## Dorset Council Supported Bus Routes – Case Studies

### X2 Shaftesbury to Gillingham

The X2 service is subsidised by Dorset Council, connecting Shaftesbury-Gillingham and offering access to the rail network at Gillingham station for Shaftesbury residents. It also provides students across this rural area of the county with transport to secondary schools in both towns.

There has been an established bus service along this corridor for several years and in May 2020, Dorset Council used S106 funding from new housing developments across Shaftesbury to purchase two brand new buses. The timetable was also enhanced so the service now provides a link from the new developments into Shaftesbury Town Centre before continuing to Gillingham.

The revised timetable has also improved connections with the trains. Allowing for the impact of the pandemic on travel demand and behaviours, initial passenger numbers are encouraging and with limited parking at the station, this service provides a sustainable alternative to the car for Shaftesbury residents when accessing the rail network.

### D5 Swanage to Durlston Country Park – The ‘Durlston Explorer’

Durlston Country Park is situated on the outskirts of Swanage, approximately 1.5 miles from the town centre. Access by car involves navigating through the town’s narrow streets, whilst for pedestrians there is a steep climb up to the park.

In 2012, Dorset Council used LTP funding to provide a seasonal daily shuttle bus between the town centre and the Country Park. The service has been enhanced over the years, operating daily at a 30-minute frequency between 1000-1630 in 2021. Although currently still operating on a summer seasonal basis, the service is supported by the Country Park and Swanage Town Council.

The route of the D5 has been adapted to serve a wider area of the town which includes a valuable link to the local hospital. Single, return and group tickets are available to encourage groups and families to use the service and ENCTS passes are also accepted.





## 6. LTA Duties & Structure



**Dorset**  
Council

## 6. LTA Duties and Organisational Structure

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- 6.1. Dorset Travel and the Transport Planning team hold responsibilities for the planning and delivery of public transport services in Dorset. Both teams are situated within the Place Directorate as part of the responsibilities of the Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Infrastructure. Separate Parking Services and Highways Improvements teams both sit within the Highways services area and Planning Services (also part of the Place Directorate).
- 6.2. The council received two tranches of Bus Capacity grant funding to provide additional resources. An additional officer has been recruited to the Dorset Travel Public Transport team whilst external consultancy support has been brought in to produce and deliver this BSIP plus provide on-going support to develop the EP, working with all key stakeholders.
- 6.3. At the time of writing, the Transport Planning team is undergoing a restructure and will increase in size to enhance its strategic planning capability. This will include an additional Transport Planner to lead on strategic public transport planning, bringing total personnel within the Transport Planning strategy and policy team to six FTE.
- 6.4. The current commercial network has been well-established for a number of years. Commercial service and network design is undertaken by the individual operators adhering to the statutory liaison process, whilst the council only has direct influence over subsidised routes. The overall value of the public transport budget for 2021/22 is £1.3M, providing support for nine supported and one de minimis bus route (details provided in Appendix 6).
- 6.5. The council do not publish printed timetables but ensure public transport information is made available via the Travel Dorset portal and provides links to Traveline South West website for bus timetables and journey planning.
- 6.6. There is some limited route branding across the county, examples include the Jurassic Coaster services (X51-X54, X52 seasonal), Portland Coaster (501, summer seasonal), Purbeck Breezer (services 40 and 50 to/from BCP) and the Durlston Explorer (D5, summer seasonal).
- 6.7. Regarding multi-operator ticketing, there have been various historic arrangements put in place. However, apart from ENCTS passes, the council currently have no existing all-operator ticketing/coordination arrangements in place for regular local bus service passengers.
- 6.8. First Wessex do provide ticket bundles, day rovers and season tickets for travel across the county whilst South West Coaches also provide season tickets for their services only. On Damory services, ABC zone tickets are valid between East Dorset (Blandford Forum and towns in the BCP hinterland) and BCP, which are part of the Morebus (Go-Ahead South Coast) operations with seven, 30-day, 90-day, and annual tickets options, available on the Morebus app or 'theKey' smartcard. Yellow Buses' zone AB tickets cover their cross-boundary services, also available as seven, 30-day, 90-day options.
- 6.9. The council do not currently host a formal all-operator forum. There are different arrangements in place with the various operators, including monthly meetings with First Wessex and termly meetings with all mainstream school service operators. All other contact with the smaller/independent operators are conducted on an ad-hoc basis. The council will seek to use the EP process, following publication of the BSIP, to create a Bus Advisory Board comprising local bus operators, train operating companies, transport, highways and planning authorities and bus passenger representation.



## 7. Engagement Process



## 7. Stakeholder and Public Engagement Activities

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- 7.1. To fully understand the key issues and priorities for the BSIP, it was important to engage with as many different organisations and user groups across Dorset as feasible under the BSIP timeframes. This was approached using a three-stage engagement plan.

### Preparation Activity

- 7.2. There is currently no formal all-operator group meeting, nor any public transport forum held between the council and respective groups. In lieu of any formally organised bus user forum, an initial scoping exercise was undertaken to identify a wide and diverse range of stakeholder organisations and, where possible, obtain a named contact within each.
- 7.3. These organisations were categorised into four main stakeholder groups, defined as follows:
- All public transport providers, ensuring a holistic overview of local ‘bus’ aims, aspirations and needs were captured including multi-modal integration opportunities. Given the rural nature of Dorset it was vital to incorporate the Community Transport (CT) sector from the outset.
  - Council representatives, bringing together Town/Parish/District Councils, various internal council teams with a link to transport provision (e.g., Social Care, Planning, Highways), and neighbouring LTAs to address the importance of not working in isolation as a transport team.
  - Bus user and campaign groups, both locally across the county as well as regional and national bus users and public representation organisations.
  - Business and other special interest groups, covering a range of user needs from key attractors and targeted passenger groups such as the FE Colleges, local businesses, equality and diversity groups, the youth sector, and support agencies.

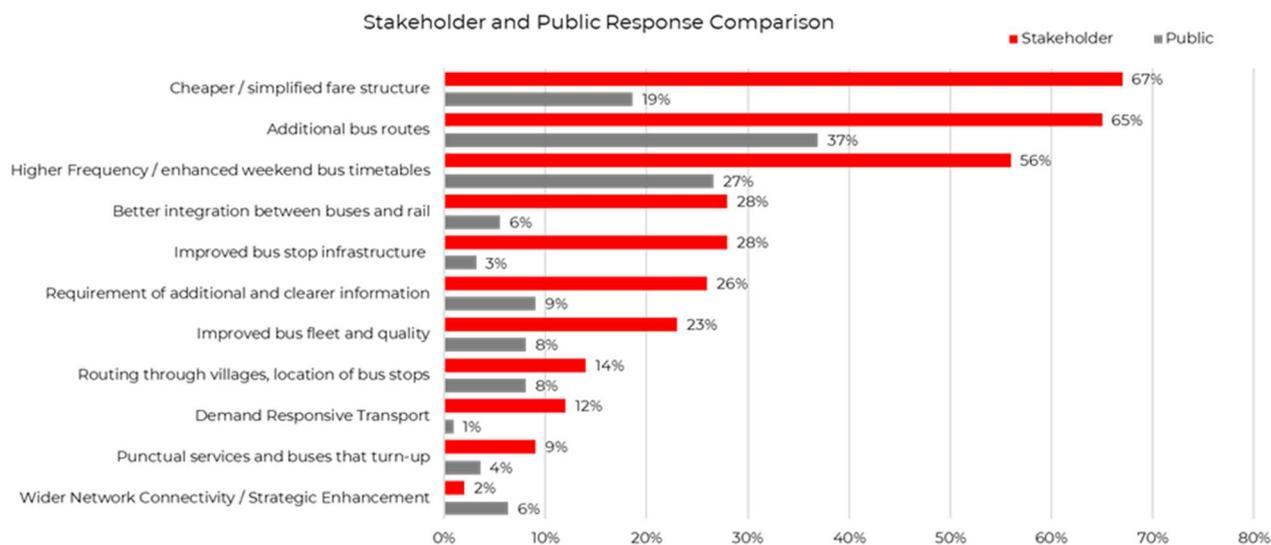
### Stage One – Context Setting and Data Gathering

- 7.4. An introductory briefing session provided each cohort of stakeholders with an understanding of the wider Bus Back Better policy context and the key requirements and expectations on the council for producing the BSIP.
- 7.5. Upon conclusion of these sessions, a stakeholder survey was circulated to all invited organisations. This was presented in a straightforward open-text response format, designed to enable respondents to present any ideas and all suggestions relating to their local buses.
- 7.6. All written responses were received which were analysed and coded to generate a set of priority areas to be considered in the council’s BSIP.
- 7.7. The council also designed and hosted an online survey to capture the wider views of the public. The public survey was live from Friday 30th July to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August and returned 1,845 responses (96% were resident in Dorset). A full analysis of the survey is presented in Appendix 7.
- 7.8. In addition to a series of closed questions on various aspects of the local bus services, there was an open text question offering the same opportunity to give more-detailed comments on specific issues. Over 1000 open text responses were subsequently analysed and coded using the same set of categories as used in the stakeholder feedback. This provided the council with a rich dataset encompassing a diverse range of views and issues to help inform the key priorities for the BSIP.

### Interim Findings (Between Stage One and Two)

- 7.9. From the public online survey, only 29% of respondents were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their local bus services.
- 7.10. The top three issues preventing increased bus use were identified as ‘Service frequency’ (41%), ‘Buses not going to places people want them to go’ (14%) and the ‘Cost of fares’ (12%).
- 7.11. Regarding measures to encourage greater bus use, the top three all related to the previous barriers of buses not operating where/when were necessarily required – ‘Buses that run more often’ (67%), ‘Buses to more places’ (50%) followed by ‘Earlier morning/later evening buses’ (30%).
- 7.12. Turning to the qualitative analysis of open text responses, based on the common categories identified through the coding process, the top five priorities for stakeholders in the BSIP were ‘Cheaper/simplified fare structure’ (67%), ‘Additional bus routes (65%), ‘Higher frequency/enhanced weekend bus timetables’ (56%), ‘Better integration between buses and rail’ (28%) and ‘Improved bus stop infrastructure’ (28%).
- 7.13. In comparison, the three top categories amongst the public open text responses were similar to the stakeholder views, with ‘Additional and clearer bus service information’ (9%) and both ‘Improved bus fleet’ plus ‘Routing through locations’ (8%, joint-fifth) making up the top five.
- 7.14. Figure 7.1 shows the priorities for each cohort and highlights where the two are in general agreement.

**Figure 7.1 – Public and Formal Stakeholder BSIP Priorities (Ranked by Stakeholders)**



### Stage Two – Report in Data Gathered and Define Priorities

- 7.15. Following on from stage one and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative feedback, stage two sought to take a deep dive into the various priorities to steer the final direction of the BSIP.
- 7.16. Based on the priorities understood from stage one, a series of key bus improvement attributes were derived. Within each, a sub-series of specific improvements were presented through an online *Mentimeter* interactive feedback platform.
- 7.17. Participants were asked to give their views on each proposed improvement using a five-point Likert Scale, where 1 = ‘Not Important’ through to 5 = ‘Very Important’. Improvements were considered on their own merits and not ranked in order of preference against other proposed attributes outlined.

- 7.18. Feedback sessions were conducted with each of the four stakeholder groups in separate sessions to allow for any substantial differences in opinions to be identified and considered, as well as producing a final collective opinion score for each attribute identified.
- 7.19. Overall findings are discussed in greater detail within Appendix 8 and key points for each are briefly discussed here:
- General support for a Youth Fare, extending the eligibility up to a maximum of 25 years old. In comparison, extending concessionary travel before 0930 was viewed less favourably. Having fewer ticket types and an associated reduction in overall costs was also found to be important.
  - There was consensus on having more urban and rural services by adopting feeder routes into a core network. However, opinions were divided regarding the use of DRT in urban areas plus more 'Park & Ride' options, both generally less favoured versus enhancing rural provision.
  - There is a preference for adopting a 'hub and spoke' feeder model with greater use of DRT in rural areas. The ability to book DRT services in real-time with an app was preferred over a telephone booking option with a wait time of up to 60 minutes found to be agreeable.
  - There is strong support for a core 0700-1900 network throughout the week coupled with a reduction in journey times to provide a fast and convenient bus service across the county. Extending services until midnight during the weekdays was found to be more popular than at weekends.
  - There is high preference for better serving rail stations by bus and the provision of real-time information at rail stations, but less support for aligning bus timetables changes to the rail sector periods. Development of the mobility hub concept and improving active travel links to bus stops scored well whilst bike share schemes in towns were viewed as less important.
  - Improvements to bus stops had the most divided opinions. Overall, there is a preference for better shelter conditions and environs, plus better accessibility and improved seating and lighting. Bike racks at key stops, QR codes and informal P&R locations were lower down the list.
  - There is strong support for improving all aspects of bus information, especially maps and timetables at bus stops, real-time displays and on-bus announcements. Bringing all information onto a single web portal was generally popular but the provision of a county-wide app divided opinions, indicating a 'one size fits all' approach won't capture all relevant passenger markets.
  - The introduction of zero emission buses and use of (bio)diesel vehicles with latest engine standards were very popular proposals.
  - Consultation on proposed network/service changes were very important, whilst requiring people to walk further to access higher frequency services was preferred to any rationalisation of the network to directly serve fewer locations.
  - Additional routes and higher frequency/enhanced weekend timetables remain popular overall, clearly demonstrating a desire for more buses in general across the county and beyond.



## 8. BSIP Targets



## 8. Dorset BSIP Targets

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- 8.1. This section sets out targets for improvements to bus services and how they will be monitored. These have been agreed with operators in advance of submission to the DfT. Although targets have been agreed with operators in principle and indicate aspirations for buses across the council area, these will be subject to change through the establishment of the EP.

### Targets for Key Performance Indicators

- 8.2. As a minimum these are - journey time, reliability, passenger growth, and customer satisfaction and targets will be reported against and published at least every six months.
- 8.3. To ensure the council remain focused on delivering this BSIP's aims and objectives, a range of targets have been set for bus service performance across the council area.

### Targets for Journey Times and Reliability Improvements (T1– T2)

- 8.4. Journey time targets will cover the whole Dorset Council area initially. Later, through the EP, we will set additional targets for journey times focused on specific corridor upgrades and improvements.
- 8.5. Targets for reliability will be based on overall timetable adherence across the network.

### Targets for Passenger Growth (T3)

- 8.6. Discussions and feedback from operators suggest that this target should focus initially on restoring passenger levels to pre-Covid levels and that this will likely take 12-18 months following the introduction of the EP in April 2022. Deliverables achieved through the BSIP will significantly aid and hasten this period of re-building.
- 8.7. Once levels return to pre-Covid levels we will look to jointly set passenger growth targets with local bus operators. These will include corridor / DRT-Feeder area specific targets so that we can track the success of targeted investment and exemplar project areas, as well as network wide targets and these will likely be in the region of 3-7% growth per annum.

### Targets for Customer Satisfaction (C1 – C11)

- 8.8. Customer satisfaction changes will be monitored annually through the council's inclusion in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) satisfaction survey. A series of targets (C1- C11) have been outlined.

### Additional Targets (T4 – T8)

- 8.9. The council have also set additional targets. These relate to changes in mode share, greening of the local bus service fleet, increases in network mileage (as an indicator of increase scale and scope), changes in the proportion of the population within 400m of a frequent local bus service, and the number of rail connections made by the local bus network.

## Dorset Council Strategic BSIP Targets

8.10. To remain focused on delivering this BSIP's aims and objectives Table 8.1 outlines targets for bus operation using 2019/20 as a baseline (representing the pre-pandemic period across England).

**Table 8.1 Dorset Council BSIP Targets (October 2021)**

KPI	Target Description	2019/20 (Baseline)	By 2025	By 2030
<b>T1</b>	Reduction in journey times on the core bus network	<b>Route Dependent</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>-10%</b>
		Average peak journey times to urban centres on core bus corridors.		
<b>T2</b>	Bus Punctuality & Reliability	<b>66%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>85%</b>
		% of buses operating on time (-1 minute to +5 minute window).		
<b>T3</b>	Number of people travelling by bus in the Dorset area	<b>7.6 million</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>15%</b>
		Short: Return to pre-Covid pandemic levels of patronage by mid-2023. Medium long: 3% growth per annum 2025-30.		
<b>T4</b>	Bus mode share	<b>20%</b> (Town Cordons)	<b>22%</b> (Town Cordons)	<b>25%</b> (Town Cordons)
		Mode share of peak time journeys to urban centres taken from annual cordon surveys undertaken for Weymouth and Ferndown.		
<b>T5</b>	Local bus fleet – better standards and lower emissions	<b>0% ZEB's</b> 9% Euro VI	<b>20% ZEB</b> 40% Euro VI	<b>60% ZEB</b> 40% Euro VI
		Percentage of vehicles in the bus fleet which are Euro VI or zero emission buses. All new buses from 2025 to be zero emission. Zero emission bus fleet by 2035.		
<b>T6</b>	Core network mileage operated	<b>6.9 million kms</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>120%</b>
		Distance operated on core bus network (Commercial & Supported) Services. The network will double by 2025 with the introduction of the 30-minute frequency core bus offer and then see further minor growth associated with targeted corridor enhancements.		

KPI	Target Description	2019/20 (Baseline)	By 2025	By 2030
<b>T7</b>	Accessibility of local bus network through DDRT	<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>
		Proportion of the Dorset local population within a 400-metre walking distance of a core bus and DDRT service. Phased expansion of DDRT services across Dorset providing 100% network coverage by 2030.		
<b>T8</b>	Rail services connected by bus	<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>180</b>
		Better Integration Between Modes. Timetabled connections arriving or departing within 15 minutes.		

### Customer Satisfaction Targets

8.11. All targets reported through the NHT satisfaction survey process on an annual basis. Table 8.2 summarises the customer satisfaction themes and metrics that will be measured through Dorset's BSIP.

**Table 8.2 – Dorset Customer Satisfaction Targets (Annual)**

Theme	KPI	Metric	Baseline	2025	2030
General	<b>C1</b>	With bus services	51%	62%	68%
Punctuality	<b>C2</b>	With buses arriving on time	60%	64%	70%
Frequency	<b>C3</b>	With bus frequency	50%	65%	75%
	<b>C4</b>	With the number of bus stops	64%	70%	80%
Information	<b>C5</b>	Amount	55%	60%	65%
	<b>C6</b>	Clarity	57%	60%	65%
	<b>C7</b>	Accuracy	59%	62%	65%
	<b>C8</b>	Ease of use / finding	52%	57%	62%
	<b>C9</b>	Reliability of RTI	54%	59%	64%
Travel Cost	<b>C10</b>	Fares	50%	55%	60%
Safety	<b>C11</b>	Perception of Personal Safety	68%	70%	72%



## 9. Future Offer to Bus Users



## 9. The Future Bus Offer to Users

- 9.1. Following detailed analysis of the current local bus network across Dorset, an in-depth stakeholder engagement process that has sought the views of a wide range of formal stakeholders in addition to over 1800 members of the public, the council have developed a set of key deliverables and policies (Table 9.1) to revitalise the local bus market across Dorset and put the passenger first in terms of accessibility and confidence in the network.
- 9.2. In seeking to reverse decades of local bus passenger decline and move Dorset out of the bottom five LTA areas in terms of passenger journeys per head, these ambitious deliverables and policies outlined in this section focus on making the network more attractive, expansive, easy to use, direct and affordable.
- 9.3. All deliverables are underpinned by a strong set of aims, objectives and targets, working in parallel with equally ambitious plans to decarbonise the local bus fleet, bring parking and planning development in line with local bus network design and deliver the BSIP progressively through a new EP approach with multiple partners representing a wide range of interests.

**Table 9.1 Summary Table for Dorset BSIP Theme, Deliverables and Policies**

Theme	Deliverable	Outcome
Better network coverage and scale	Minimum 30-minute 'Superbus' network by 2023	A core network with service frequencies every 30-minutes by Year 2 followed by selective route development to reach 'turn-up-and-go' frequencies by 2026.
	Guaranteed 7am to 7pm network and night-time buses.	All core network services to operate 7am to 7pm every day, and providing additional late evening and night-time buses
	Rural 15-minute frequency test-bed corridor	Test the impact of coordinated corridors between the main towns of Dorchester, Weymouth, Yeovil, and Sherborne.
	Demand led hub and spoke feeder network	To become a national exemplar for the trial of different Digital DRT and feeder service solutions, to create a network of semi-fixed and DRT services coordinated with the core bus network.
	Digital DRT – introducing 'Dorset Connect'	In 2022/23 launch 3-5 'Dorset Connect' services allowing bookings to be accepted up to 1-hour in advance of travel, with further zones added each year to expand the network across Dorset.
Better integration between modes	Dorset 'superstops' and Mobility Hubs	Creation of 'superstops' and mobility hubs providing interchange and alternative access modes such as walk, cycle, lift-share, and taxi can be supported for first and last mile trip legs.
	Integration with rail across Dorset	Providing links to rail stations within Dorset and across LTA borders, and a flagship project connecting with the Heart of Wessex line as frequency enhancements occur from 2021-2026.

Theme	Deliverable	Outcome
Better integration between modes	Confidence in bus services and waiting facilities	A bus stop design guide to set minimum standards for seating, lighting, and accessibility. App-based bus tracking and real time information roll-out.
Better and clearer information	The Dorset Travel portal	A new Dorset Travel portal in 2022/23, placing public transport information across all modes in one location and link with an app for accessing real time information, bus ticket purchase, and live bookings and tickets for DRT.
	The Dorset bus information & branding strategy	Review of existing at-stop travel information levels, phased rollout of RTI at major stops/stations and interchanges, production of a Dorset-wide network map incorporating bus operators and rail routes.
Better journey time reliability	Progressive increases in bus priority measures	Targeted bus priority improvements, working in partnership with local bus operators, including bus lanes, bus signal priority, bus gates, and parking and loading restrictions.
	Dorset Greenwaves – High investment corridors	End-to-end corridor improvements focusing on vehicles, frequency, passenger facilities, bus priority measures, information, and ticketing to ensure each Dorset ‘Greenwave’ maximises mode shift and passenger growth.
Better value and integrated fares	Youth fare for 16-25 year olds across Dorset	Introduction of a Young Person’s Bus Card, entitling holders to discounted fares on all local buses at all times across Dorset and into neighbouring LTA areas.
	All operator day ticket, group ticket & daily fare cap	Work with operators to introduce flat fare town zones offering significantly reduced town fares, an all-operator family / group ticket and support network wide fare capping.
Better vehicle standards and lower emissions	Dorset local bus network - decarbonisation plan	Work with operators to deliver a decarbonisation programme over 13 years and implement pilot projects for zero emission bus conversion on town and park and ride services, a trial inter-urban route and new Digital DRT feeder services.
	Zero Emission – first steps	Roll-out of 20 zero-emission buses and supporting infrastructure for Weymouth town services, making Weymouth Dorset’s first electric transport hub.
	Dorset local bus network – vehicle standards	Through the Enhanced Partnership create a minimum standard (accessible, smart, safe, and clean) for buses across the Dorset local bus network.

## Bus Back Better - Dorset Policies

### **Better network coverage and scale**

To develop and continually monitor and refine a network of buses that run more often, to more places and for longer daily periods. To deliver this policy a core network of services operating every 30-minutes between hub locations will be developed alongside a feeder service network with fixed and Digital DRT modes being tested and developed over time.

### **Better integration between modes**

To develop and continually pursue opportunities to provide better integration between rail services and all other modes regarding timetable coordination, collective information, and ticketing. Dorset Council will work in partnership across all modes from walking and cycling for first and last mile trips, to national long-distance networks to always integrate bus services.

### **Better and clearer information**

To develop bus information that is consistent, accessible, simple, clear, and coordinated so that the public have a single source of truth and can confidently plan and undertake connected bus journeys across the local bus network and wider public transport system. Information will be maintained through multiple channels and will be a cornerstone of delivering Bus Back Better.

### **Better journey time reliability**

To work hard in exploring opportunities and processes that ensure buses leave on-time and remain on time while providing faster and more reliable services across the local bus network. Partnership work with local bus operators will identify opportunities alongside close working with planning colleagues to maximise funding opportunities through Section 106 schemes.

### **Better value and integrated fares**

To ensure that simple value fares across a smaller range of products are maintained and key markets are targeted through fares designed to attract and maintain mode shift. We will lead a multi-operator EP sub-group to continually explore options for the roll-out of multi-operator, multi-mode ticketing using appropriate and cost-effective technology and processes.

### **Better vehicle standards and lower emissions**

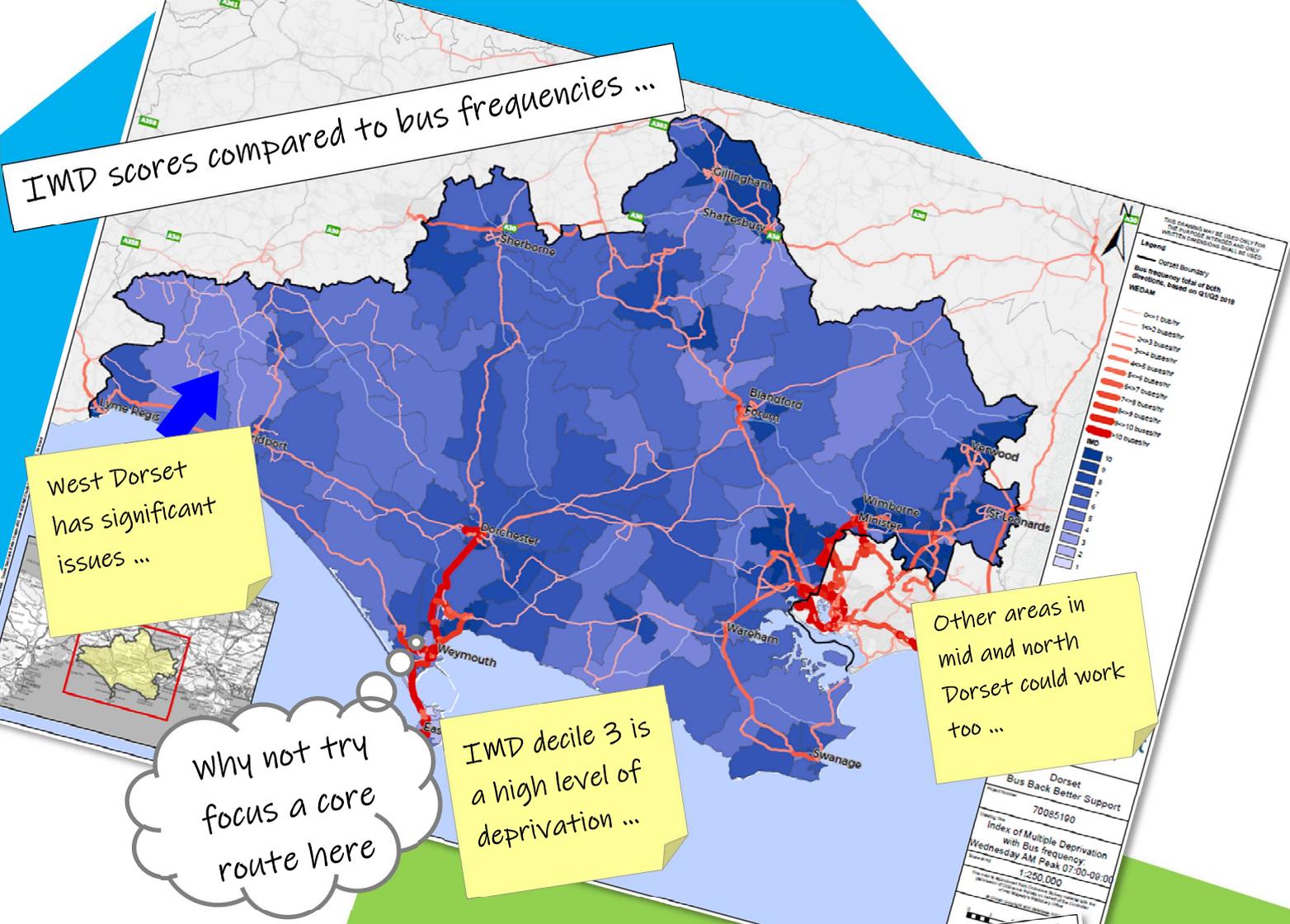
To deliver a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035 and ensure interim steps to green the existing local bus service fleet through exploring options to renew older buses or upgrade their technology. Work closely with operators to create a Dorset standard configuration and better accommodate cycles on tourist focused services linked to better mobility and MaaS concepts.



# Better Network Coverage & Scale



IMD scores compared to bus frequencies ...



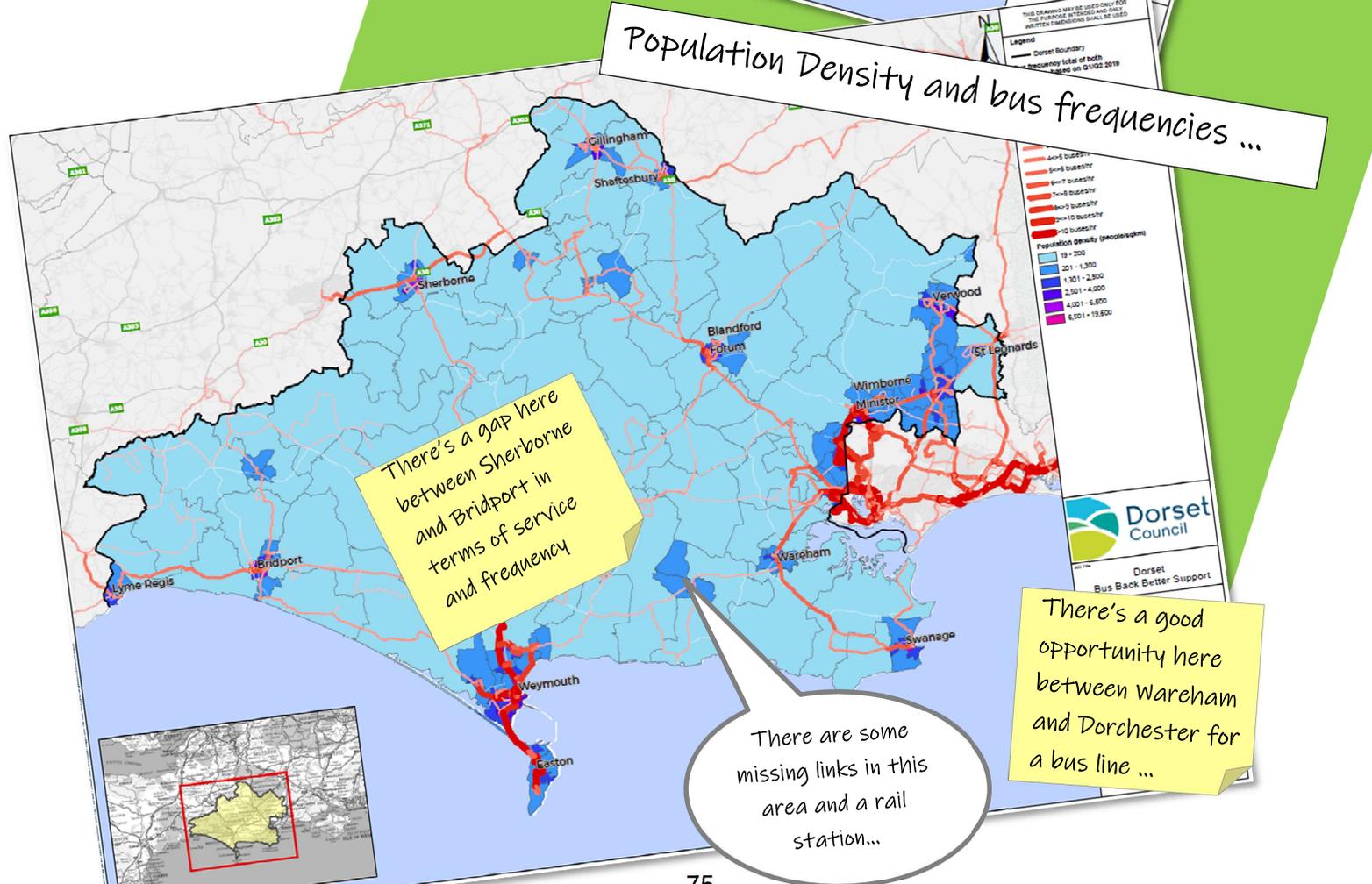
West Dorset has significant issues ...

Why not try focus a core route here

IMD decile 3 is a high level of deprivation ...

Other areas in mid and north Dorset could work too ...

Population Density and bus frequencies ...



There's a gap here between Sherborne and Bridport in terms of service and frequency

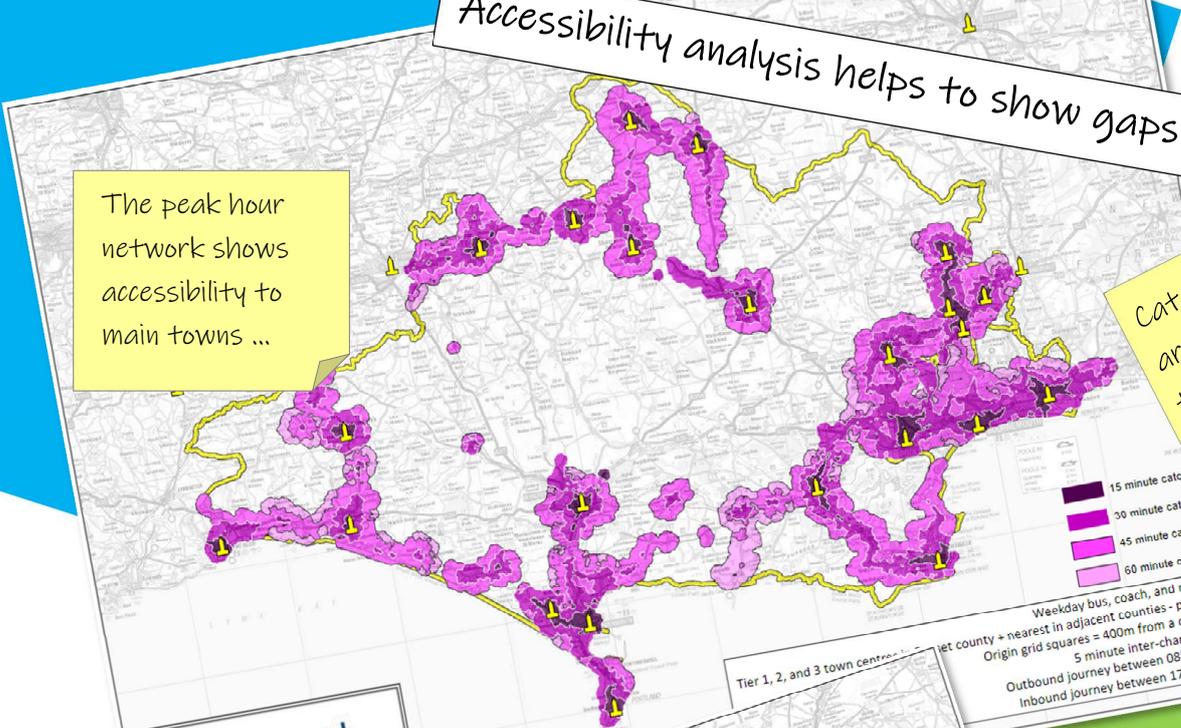
There are some missing links in this area and a rail station...

There's a good opportunity here between Wareham and Dorchester for a bus line ...

Accessibility analysis helps to show gaps ...

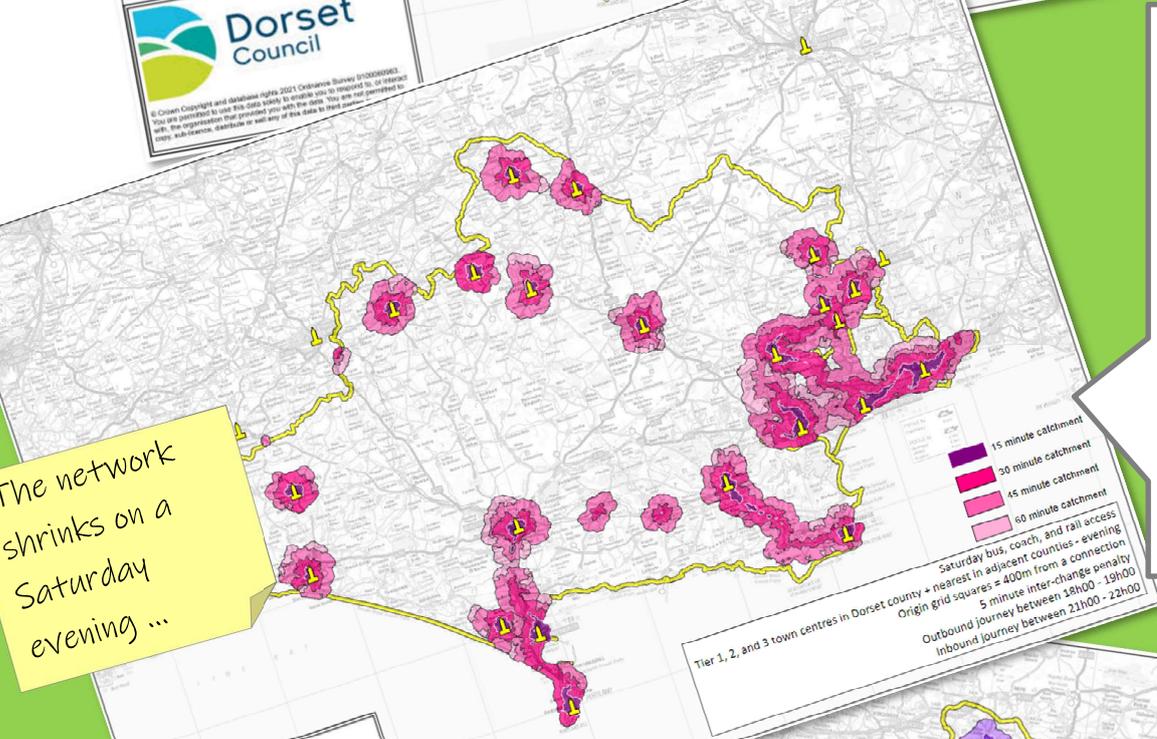
The peak hour network shows accessibility to main towns ...

Catchment areas are very close to towns though - no rural access ...

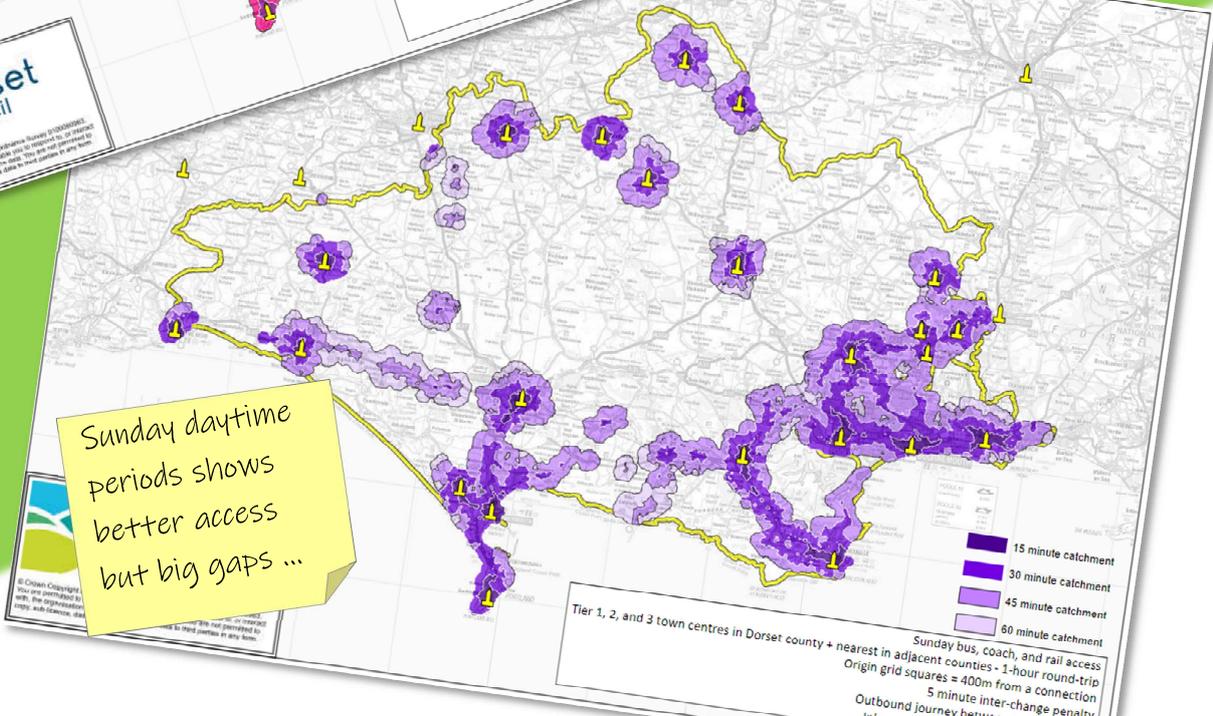


The network shrinks on a Saturday evening ...

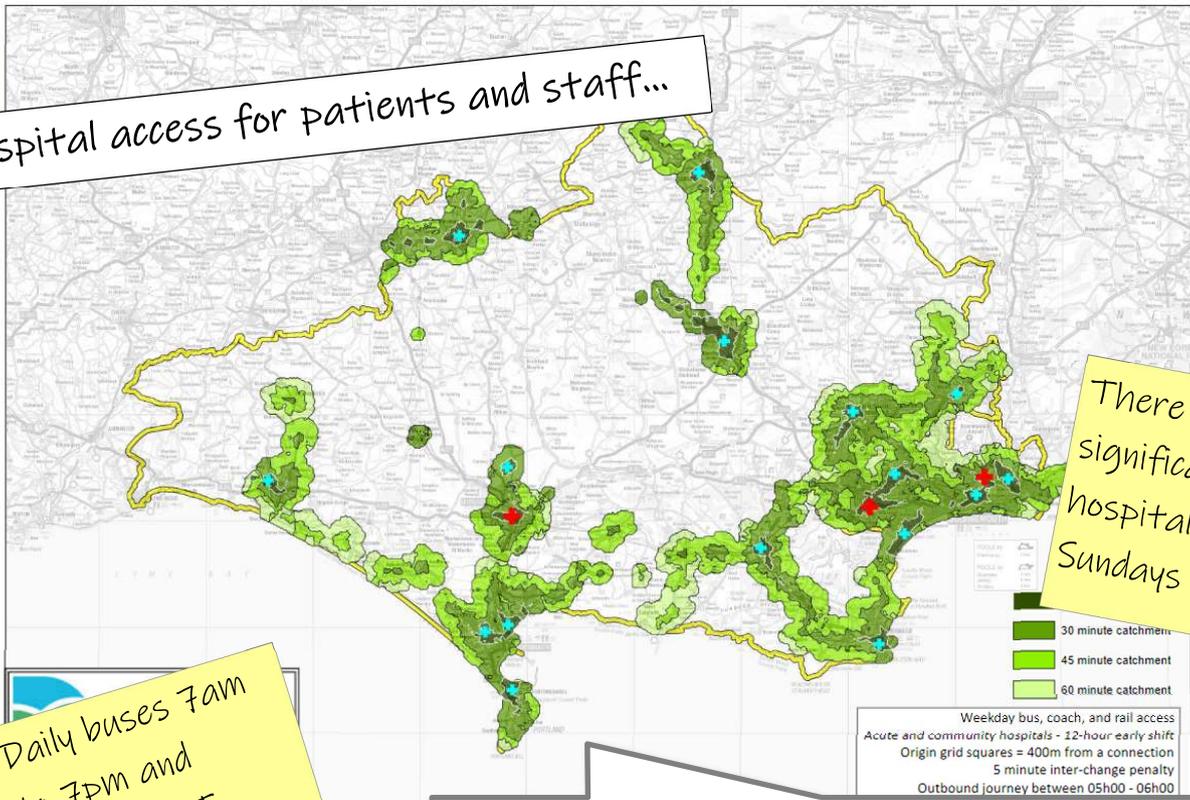
**To Do List ...**  
 Review gaps and consider Digital DRT  
 30 min frequency on core routes across the week  
 Run between 7am and 7pm everyday  
 Ensure much better connections with rail services to extend reach



Sunday daytime periods shows better access but big gaps ...



Hospital access for patients and staff...

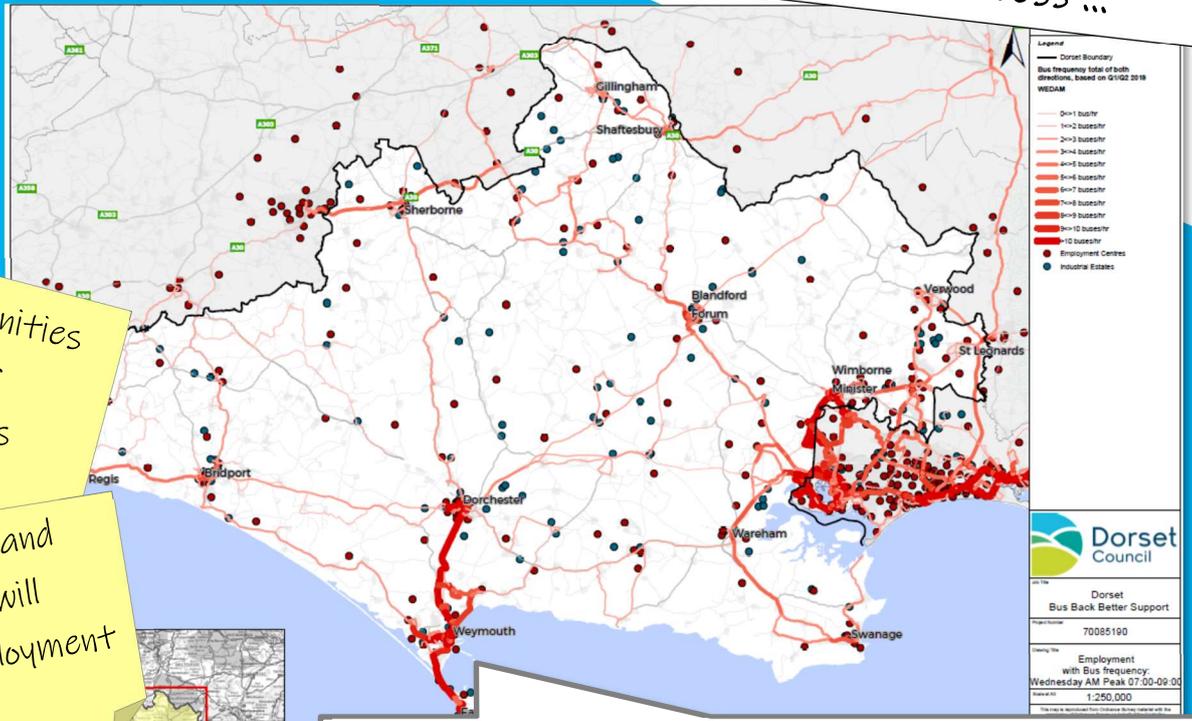


There are also significant gaps in hospital access on Sundays ...

Daily buses 7am to 7pm and Digital DRT would fill gaps ...

**Key actions ...**  
 Even during midweek peaks there are large access issues to local hospitals. A Superbus network supported by Digital DRT will significantly increase access for all ...

Local economy and employment access ...



Opportunities to better target bus services ...

Core network and Digital DRT will support employment locations ...

**Key action ...**  
 Better connect employment locations through the Superbus and Digital DRT networks as many locations are not connected to the local bus network currently ...

## Deliverable 1a:

### Minimum 30-Minute 'Superbus' Network By 2023

- ✓ DfT objective for more intensive services and investment
- ✓ Our aim is to create and maintain a comprehensive network of travel options to link up communities and reduce social isolation
- ✓ Public and stakeholder priorities for buses that run more often and to more places

24%

Decline in local bus passengers over the last five years across Dorset ...



65%

Of current core services will double or more in frequency in Dorset through this approach ...

Our plan is to re-examine the current network and re-balance corridor provision across a wider geographical area, providing much needed bus links to strategic locations including Dorchester, Shaftesbury, Blandford Forum and across the border to Yeovil, Exeter, and Salisbury daily.

Across Dorset there are currently very few high intensity local bus services connecting primary locations. Higher frequency routes, where they do exist, operate in the south-east of the council area on corridors to BCP towns as well as in the Weymouth area. These services run at circa 30-minute headways, whereas the wider Dorset core network operates 60-minute headways at best.

Our primary objective is to significantly increase the core network frequency across Dorset to levels not seen for many years. This 'Superbus' network will be essential in meeting our ambitious targets for mode shift and increasing the public's access to employment, health, education, and leisure opportunities by sustainable low-cost travel.

#### ... What we will do

Dorset's **ambitious plan** is a core **daily** Superbus network operating at minimum clock-face headways ranging from 15-to-60-minutes in Year 1 with development of all 60-minute flows to **every 30-minutes by Year 2** followed by selective route progression dependent on demand in following years to reach '**turn-up-and-go**' frequencies by 2026. A few new links will be created whilst others will be strengthened, and the network will be renumbered to make it easy to use.

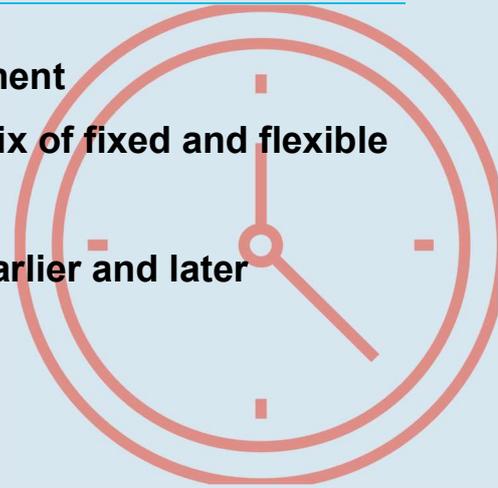
#### Replicating National Best Practice

Learning from Transport for Cornwall's 'Superbus' network that includes increased frequency of core services coupled with low fares, bus priority measures designed increase reliability and speed up journeys, plus better integration with the local rail network we will take a similar network approach through our BSIP.

## Deliverable 1b:

### Guaranteed 7am To 7pm Network and Night-Time Buses

- ✓ DfT objective for more intensive services and investment
- ✓ Our aim to increase daily service availability with a mix of fixed and flexible services across rural and urban areas of Dorset
- ✓ Public and stakeholder priorities for buses that run earlier and later



90%

Of local bus services stop running by 6pm or earlier across Dorset ...

4.5/5

Average importance score amongst stakeholders for a core network from 7am to 7pm ...

Our plan to meet the DfT's aims for a more inclusive local bus network that appeals to more user groups, promotes social inclusion, creates leisure and social travel opportunities, and assists lower paid shift worker patterns centres on the provision for the core network during a guaranteed 7am to 7pm period.

Many local bus services across Dorset stop running between 6pm and 7pm, with only a few notable examples running for longer periods in the south and south-east of the council area and between Dorset, BCP and Devon. This creates significant issues for shift workers, hospital visitors, further education students and those wishing to use the bus for leisure and social journeys.

Our objective is to create a network that the public can rely on and use with confidence. Central to this is a core period of operation supported by additional night-bus travel and by a flexible feeder network.

#### ... What we will do

Dorset's **ambitious plan** is to provide a network guarantee for core services to operate **7am to 7pm every day**, addressing the significant gaps in **services at weekends**, supporting DfT aims for more inclusive services, empowering younger people to travel independently and providing **additional late evening and night-time buses**.

#### Learning from local best practice

First Bus' local service 1, operating between Weymouth and Portland provides an all-day 15-minute headway with services extending into the night every 30-minutes and last departures outbound at 2315 and inbound at 2342. The success of this service is based on a high frequency clock-face timetable with extended running to provide convenience and user confidence – the wider network improvements planned in this BSIP will replicate this approach.

## Deliverable 1c:

### Rural 15-Minute Frequency Test-Bed Corridors

- ✓ DfT objective for radial routes and turn-up-and-go corridors
- ✓ Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset
- ✓ Stakeholder priority for direct and higher frequency buses



66%

Of stakeholders feel that buses should be more frequent ...



70%

Of public responding to a survey would use the local bus network more if it was higher frequency ...

Part of our approach will be to coordinating services to provide a near turn-up-and-go headway on certain corridors, e.g., between the principal towns of Dorchester and Weymouth along the A354, and between Yeovil and Sherborne along the A30. This will build on current lower frequency service provision and make efficient use of bus resource at route extremities away from the coordinated corridor section.

Currently little if any coordination occurs across core corridors and where two services do operate there is no attempt to coordinate provision, marketing, or fares (e.g., Wimborne / Verwood to BCP)

Creating a Dorset exemplar 15-minute corridor outside of the south-eastern corner of the council area will enable us to learn lessons about high frequency rural focused routes and the linked development of feeder services using a variety of tools and approaches.

With an average maximum wait time of 7 minutes through and beyond a core 7am to 7pm period, this corridor will also open new tourism and leisure connections as well as those for younger people seeking further education, employment, and apprenticeship opportunities.

#### ... What we will do

Introduce higher frequency services between **Dorchester and Weymouth**, and **Yeovil and Sherborne** and coordinate these with existing services between these towns. The service will grow multiple markets with seasonal service additions whilst the core corridor will allow interchange to the wider bus network. **Each corridor will be branded and see common ticketing and low fares.**

#### National Best Practice

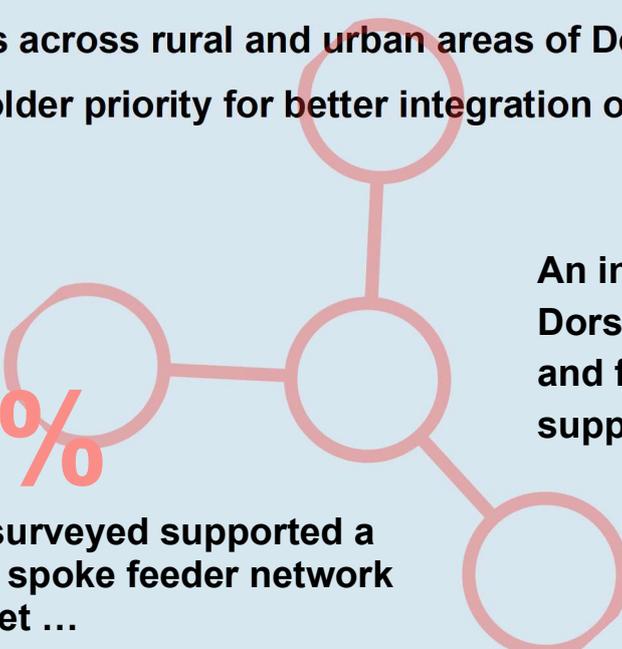
The East Kent 'Triangle' services connect Canterbury, Whitstable, and Herne Bay at a 20-minute frequency throughout most of the week, including Sunday daytime, providing convenient links for commuters and visitors/tourists.

## Deliverable 1d:

### Demand Led Hub and Spoke Feeder Network

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- ✓ **DfT objective for hubs and spoke systems and branch routes**
- ✓ **Our aim to increase daily service availability with a mix of fixed and flexible services across rural and urban areas of Dorset**
- ✓ **Stakeholder priority for better integration of buses and other modes**



**78%**

**People surveyed supported a hub and spoke feeder network for Dorset ...**

**An increase in direct services across Dorset with the use of a core network and feeder service offer was supported by ...**

**80%** of people

Central to Dorset's plans is a flexible approach to feeder service provision that is directed by population levels and people's propensity to use public transport. This will meet the DfT's vision of community service levels set in partnership with residents and local bus operators and will be a step change in feeder service provision with the traditional shackles of once-daily fixed bus services broken through a fresh approach seeing several interchange locations outside of main towns and more flexible feeder service solutions.

Using a mix of strategic connection points and town centre hubs, Dorset's feeder network will synchronise with core network frequencies, and ensure networks are designed to minimise journey time and encourage interchange – recycling feeder bus resources faster than traditional once-daily services.

This approach will see Dorset develop into a regional centre of excellence for rural DRT / Feeder planning.

#### **... What we will do**

Dorset's **ambitious plan** will provide a **network of semi-fixed and DRT feeder services** coordinated with the core bus network and providing late evening and night connections in addition to services across a **daily period of 7am to 7pm**. Interchange locations will be developed, and infrastructure re-designed to enable safe and easy interchange – with some towns becoming mobility hubs in addition to rural locations.

#### **Dorset - A National Test Bed**

Dorset will become a national testbed for the trial of different Digital DRT and feeder service solutions, drawing on best practice techniques from the UK and Europe, conducting a state of the art review of hub and spoke systems to feed into the UK's Bus Centre of Excellence and applying differing techniques to benchmark service styles and their application to rural areas.

## Deliverable 1e:

### Digital DRT – Introducing Dorset Connect

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- ✓ DfT objectives for increased use of DRT and rural provision
- ✓ Our aim to specifically develop a range of on-demand public transport services delivered by a mix of operators
- ✓ Stakeholders priorities for on-demand services and public's priority for buses to more places

# Over 75%

Of people support the use of Digital DRT across rural Dorset, with 80% supportive of a mobile App trip request process ...



Was the maximum booking window required to make DRT attractive and viable for stakeholders ...

A significantly improved local travel offer across Dorset providing a step-change in all areas of promotion and provision and focusing on new and emerging technology is needed to inspire a new generation of bus users, improve access to current users, and create a bus system in tune with new daily demands and expectations.

Introducing Dorset Connect, our first fully operational on-demand bus service offering real-time booking and tracking, book to trip times of under 1-hour, connections to the 30-minute core bus network and operation through community transport and local bus operators offering a blend of skills and excellence to our passengers. Ensuring a minimum hourly rural DRT network, we will meet DfT aspirations for rural transport through this BSIP and feed new users into the revitalised Dorset core bus network to grow ridership.

#### ... What we will do

Create a **Digital DRT service** feeding to the core bus network that matches the daily operational span of the core network and provides additional evening and night-time journeys. We will aim for Dorset Connect to run hourly, allowing **bookings to be accepted up to 1-hour in advance** of travel through the Dorset Total Travel Portal and supported DRT travel app.

#### Learning from National Best Practice

Lincolnshire Call Connect is an on-demand bus service serving hamlets, villages and market towns in Lincolnshire and neighbouring counties since 2001. A network of semi-fixed and flexible services connects to the core timetabled routes at key locations. Journeys which can be booked online or by phone from one hours' notice up to seven days in advance. Dorset will emulate this service level.



## Deliverable 1a and 1d – A New Concept for Dorset

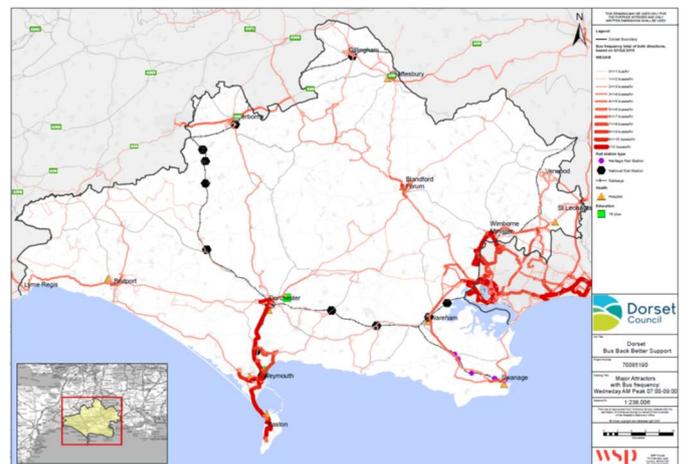
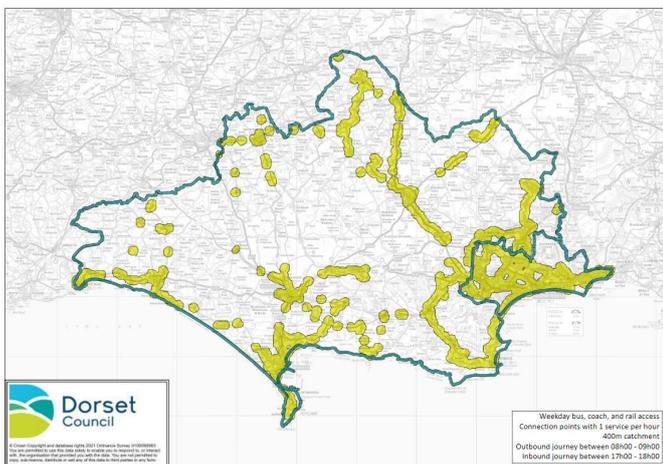
### Purpose of the Deliverables ...

After extensive public and stakeholder engagement the council is required to develop a revised network outline for core bus services to deliver against the top three priorities for a revitalised network:

1. Buses that run more often
2. Buses that run to more places
3. Buses that start earlier and finish later

### ... The Problem

The Dorset bus network has seen significant decline and has the third lowest passenger journeys per head of population in the south west. To reverse this decline and create a high level of mode shift the local bus network needs to become more convenient, easier to use and more expansive. Accessibility, even in the midweek peak is poor with TRACC analysis and the current network frequency maps demonstrating this:



### ... Strategies and Actions

The core network faster point to point journeys will run every 30-minutes daily, better than DfT rural expectation for hourly, and meet our objectives for increased weekend services, between 7am and 7pm. It will be supplemented by evening and night time services operating every 60-120 minutes until last departures at around 2300 each night.

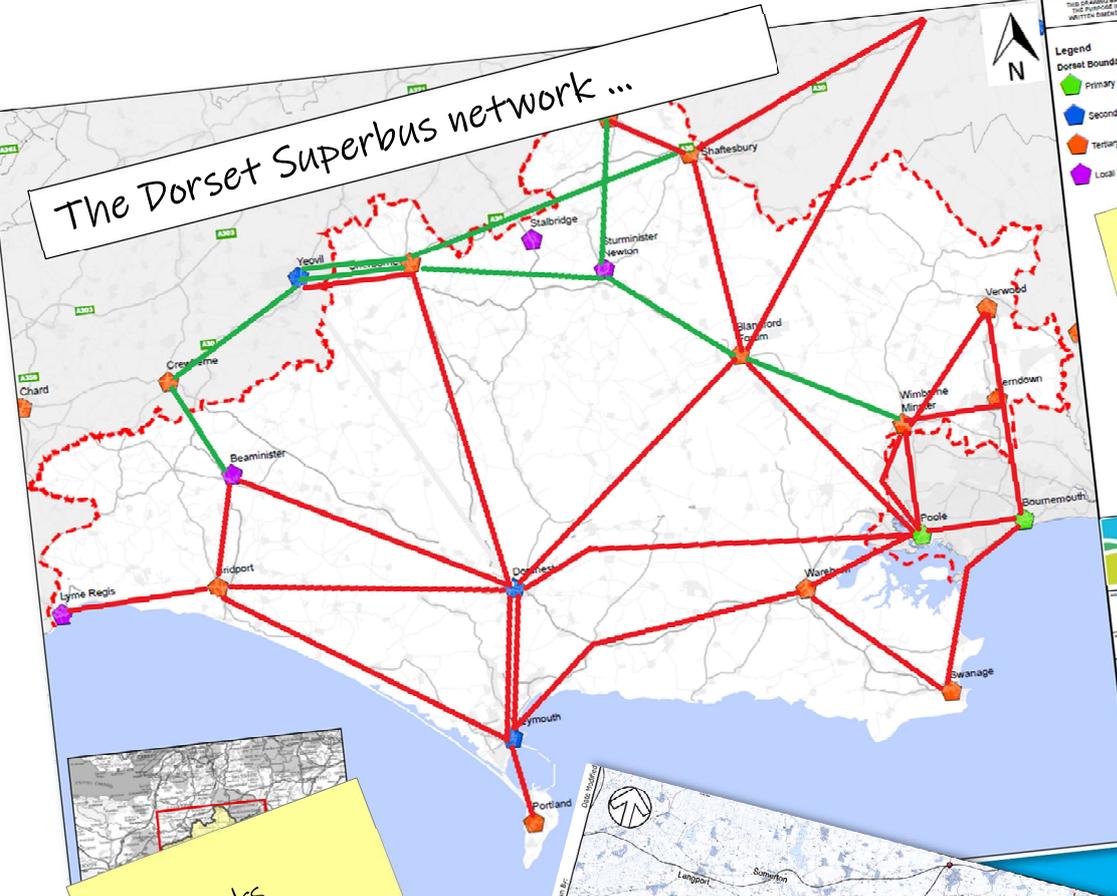
The network will be delivered in the first year by a mix of direct award, deminimis, and tendered contracts through close partnership work with all local bus operators.

The design creates spokes that feed hubs within 'time windows' across the network, either in town or local centres where mobility hubs can be developed to encourage first/last mile trips by bike or on foot e.g., Blandford Forum, and Wimborne Minster.

Digital DRT in several guises will be used to feed the hub and spoke network, with the time from booking to travelling being based on population levels and clusters of built demand being used to target longer term fixed feeder routes.

Connections to rail stations will be a primary focus for both internal and cross-boundary services and the Digital DRT feeder network with a cornerstone project being connectivity to the Heart of Wessex Line as frequency of services are increased from less than 2-hourly to every hour by 2026.

# The Dorset Superbus network ...



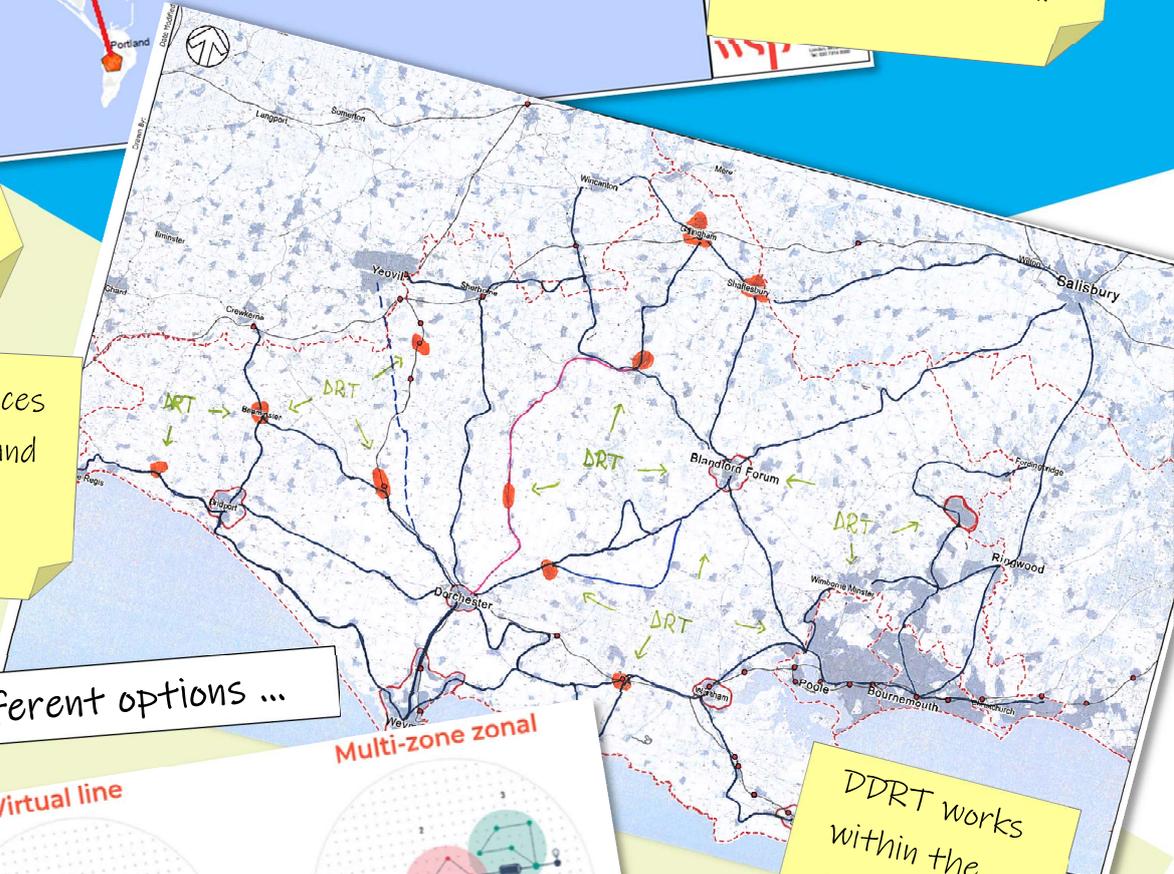
A revised Superbus network could look like this - 30-minute headways, gaps for DDRT ...

Cross boundary services agreed with Devon, Somerset, and Wiltshire LTAs and jointly funded through the BSIP ...

Some links combine to make 15-minute headways ...

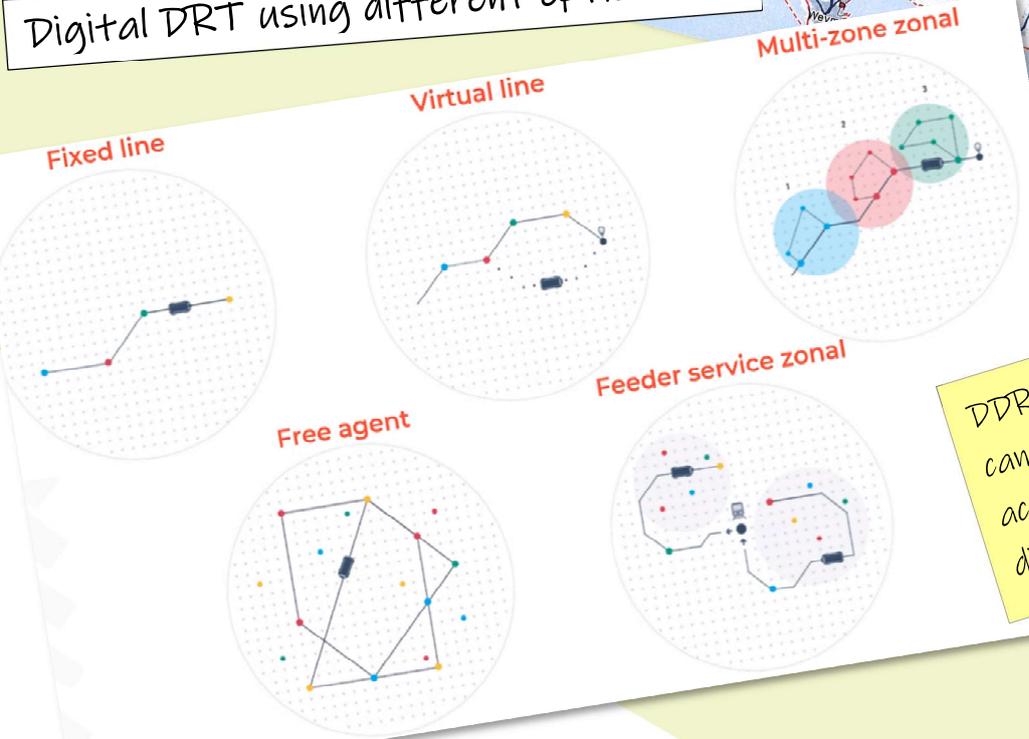
New town services for Gillingham and better cross boundary links ...

# Digital DRT using different options ...



DDRT works within the gaps and feeds hubs ...

DDRT models can be applied across Dorset in different ways ...



## Deliverable 1e – Introducing Dorset Connect

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### Purpose of the Deliverable ...

A flexible Digital DRT service that provides an integrated travel solution for rural areas that currently either have no public transport services or where public transport does not provide a viable daily travel option. These services will provide rural communities with a practical alternative to the car which enhances the opportunity of residents to access employment, healthcare, and other services, and enables greater social inclusion.

### ... The Problem

Rural social isolation is often associated with a feeling of being cut off and loneliness. It affects people of all ages, and not just older people. It is associated with people more frequently visiting a doctor or accident and emergency (A&E) department and being admitted to hospital. Loneliness is also associated with poorer workforce performance and reductions in productivity.

The Digital DRT (DDRT) services will enable rural areas to benefit from greater connectivity and access to essential services. Good public transport is essential in rural areas to enable mobility and access to resources that are often not available locally to people without cars and provide a viable travel choice that can reduce car dependency.

### ... Objectives

- **Improve rural bus network coverage, and flexibility** – provide rural communities in Dorset with access to a flexible service which will operate throughout the day and facilitate early morning and late evening services for commuter travel.
- **Deliver a high-quality service** – provide a high-quality flexible and innovative service, that will stimulate patronage growth, particularly commuter trips, and integrate with the wider transport network, offering connections for onward travel.
- **Focus on community needs** – A service that will give customers more control, flexibility to travel when and where they wish, no longer constrained by a fixed timetable.
- **Reduce inequalities, poverty and exclusion** – provide vital access to employment, health, leisure and tourism, helping to sustain our rural communities.
- **Promote sustainable travel** – provide an attractive alternative to car travel thereby, reducing congestion, carbon emissions, and improving air quality.
- **Support national, regional, and local policies** – provide a smart, affordable, sustainable local public transport system, and makes Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

### ... Strategy

There is a strong case to invest in a flexible DDRT service in Dorset to better meet the current and future travel needs of rural communities.

The services will be designed to address demand for commuter trips, improving access to workplaces, health trips to GPs and hospital appointments and meeting other travel to essential services. The service will be integrated with the inter-urban bus and rail networks to ensure that the services complement each other and provide easy interchange to maximise travel opportunities. It also ensures that the new service is viewed as part of the wider public transport network.

The service will use mini or midi buses (up to 20 seats). The smaller vehicles are more manoeuvrable and better suited for use on the narrow rural roads typical of the local area. All vehicles will be fully DDA compliant and built to PSVAR standards.

The service will innovate using digital applications. A technology supplier will be procured to provide web and smart phone applications to make and manage bookings. They will also be expected to provide alternative services to provide customer support to those people that don't have access to digital technology or who are not able to use these platforms.

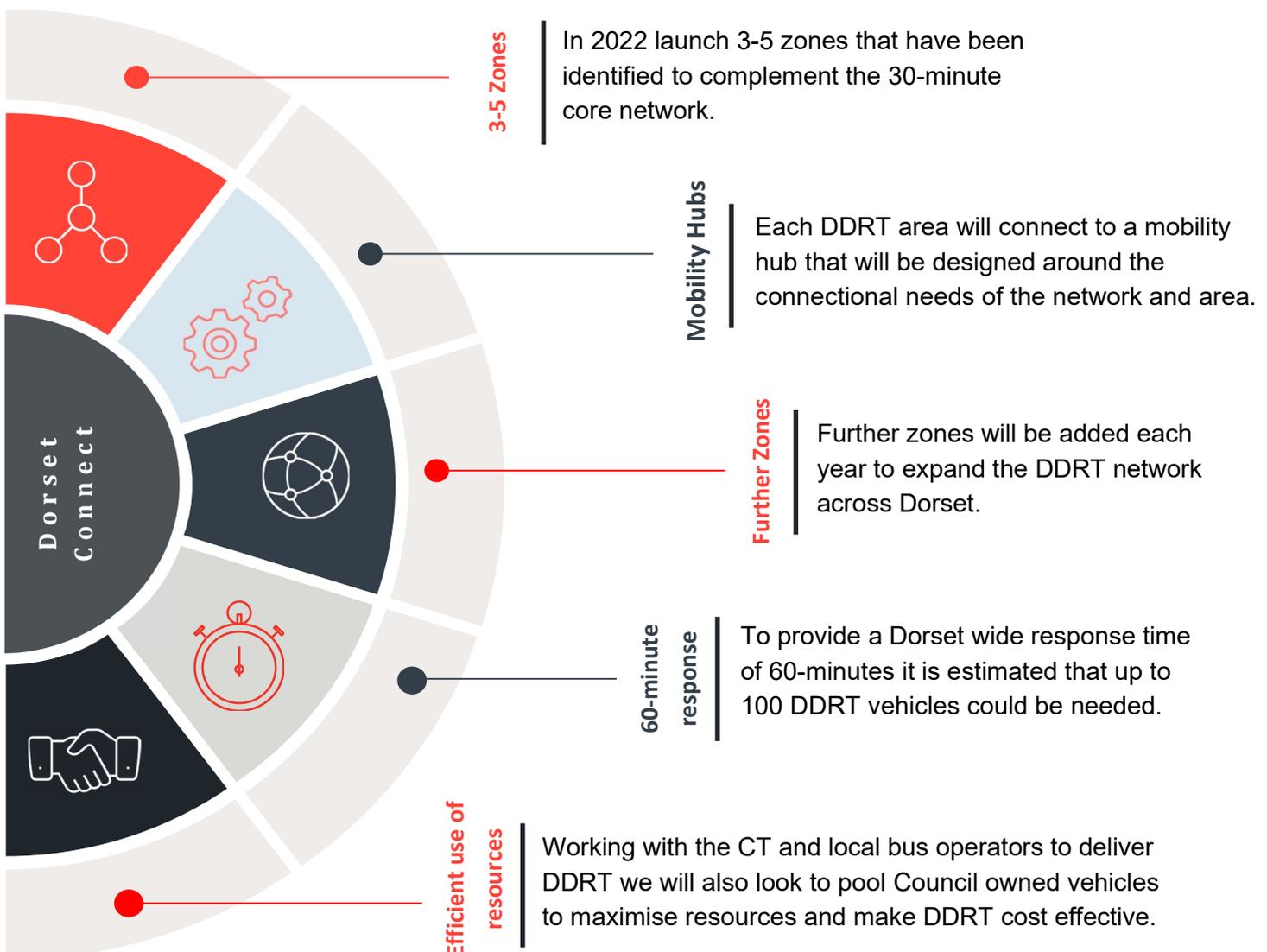
Sustainability of the service will be based on delivering value for money and a wider consideration of the projects social, environmental, and economic impacts. These wider impacts include:

- Stimulating patronage growth
- Minimising cost
- Reducing health sector costs
- Improving access to economic opportunities
- Boosting the local economy and supporting the sustainability of local towns
- Improving sustainable travel routes to tourism destinations and local visitor attractions

In considering DDRT's sustainability, it's important to recognise that many rural bus routes require subsidy.

### ... Actions

Through the BSIP the Council is seeking funding to deliver an ambitious and innovative project. The funding will deliver investment in digital technologies, bus operations, marketing and promotion, and professional services. Without access to grant funding Dorset Council would not be able to deliver such a service and innovate our rural transport services. Our plan will deliver the following:



## Deliverable 1e – Verwood Digital DRT Example

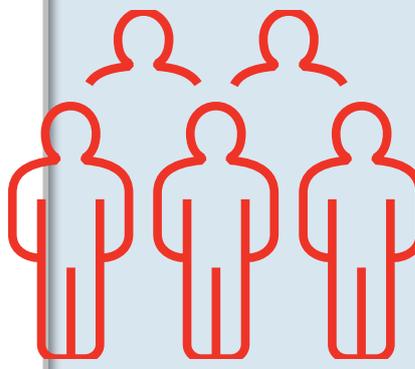
Two minibuses already available within a partner operator's fleet will be used on Digital DRT services from 0600 until 1900 Monday to Saturday with additional night-time provision also operated.

The area served is shown within the red circled zone in the map below:



No more than 60 minutes from booking to travelling ...

- Key markets will be:**
- ✓ Ferndown Industrial Estate between 0600 and 0830, and 1500 and 1900 to facilitate shift workers and day-time staff.
  - ✓ Free roaming DRT from 0830 until 1500 within the 'zone' and/or travel to and from Castlepoint and Royal Bournemouth Hospital for appointments or shopping.



- Digital DRT will ...**
- Group passengers to ensure efficient journeys.
  - Allow people to travel as they need to with low book to trip times.
  - Connect into the Dorset Superbus and rail networks.
  - Allow customers to manage their bookings, payments, and journey planning through the Dorset Travel app.



# Better Integration Between Modes



## Rail integration ...



Key stations to connect with through Dorset ...

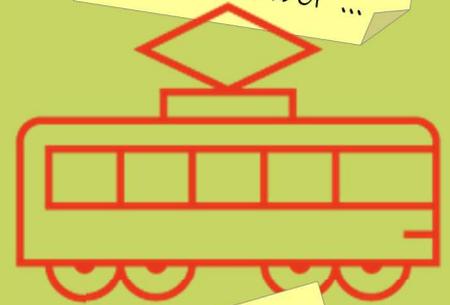


The rail frequency could increase to hourly by 2026 ...

Bus services linking West Bay, Bridport (Town Centre and local hospital, Sir John Colfox School, Melplash and Beaminster currently have poor access the rail network at Crewkerne. (Operations in this area are challenging due to local issues such as: the road tunnel on the A3066 north of Beaminster and the dispersed local population). Currently First Wessex service 6 operates only 3 journeys each way to Yeovil via Crewkerne station. However, service 6 does operate almost every hour on the southern section of the route, linking Bridport to Beaminster.

A branded and coordinated "Brit Valley Shuttle" service operating every 30-minutes could be operated to Crewkerne by conventional single deck buses at peak times, smaller midi buses, Monday to Saturday during the day connecting with the rail services and potentially using DRT for Sunday and Evening journeys. Trains arrive from Exeter and depart to Waterloo at 19 minutes past the hour and arrive from Waterloo for Exeter at 49 minutes

Current bus/rail connections are low frequency and few in number ...



Ideas for better rail connections...

Digital DRT has a major role to play in linking residents to local rail services particularly at rural stations. Work with Community Rail Partnerships in other areas of the UK can often provide the foundations for such services.

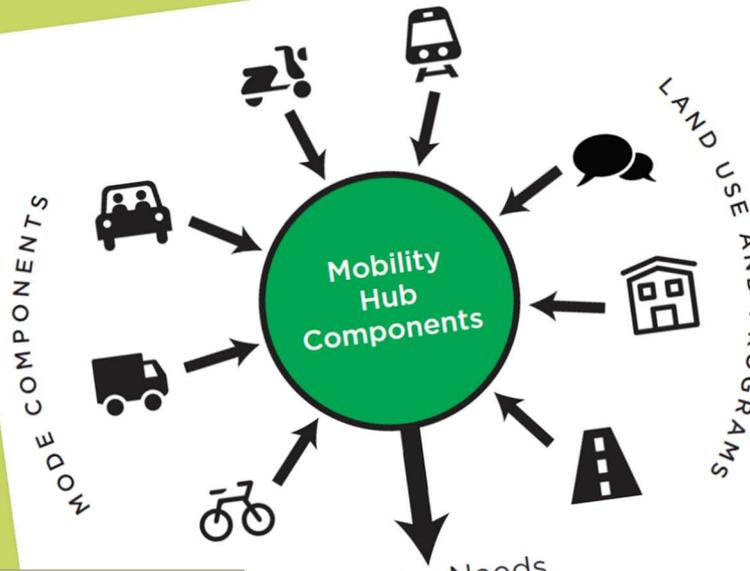
In terms of Tourism in the area Friday is known locally as "change over day", if several journeys per day on Friday operated to West Bay, returning via Burton Bradstock this would provide a direct link to Waterloo for the accommodation, including two large holiday parks on this section of the coast.

### We plan to ...

Connect to each Heart of Wessex Line station using Digital DRT and some fixed feeder services - increasing services as rail frequency increases.

Connect core network routes to main stations to encourage interchange for final leg travel - e.g., X54 every 30 minutes from Weymouth to Wareham for rail connection to Poole.

# Mobility Hubs and Superstops ...



**Traveler Needs**  
Safe, reliable, affordable,  
easy to navigate, enjoyable

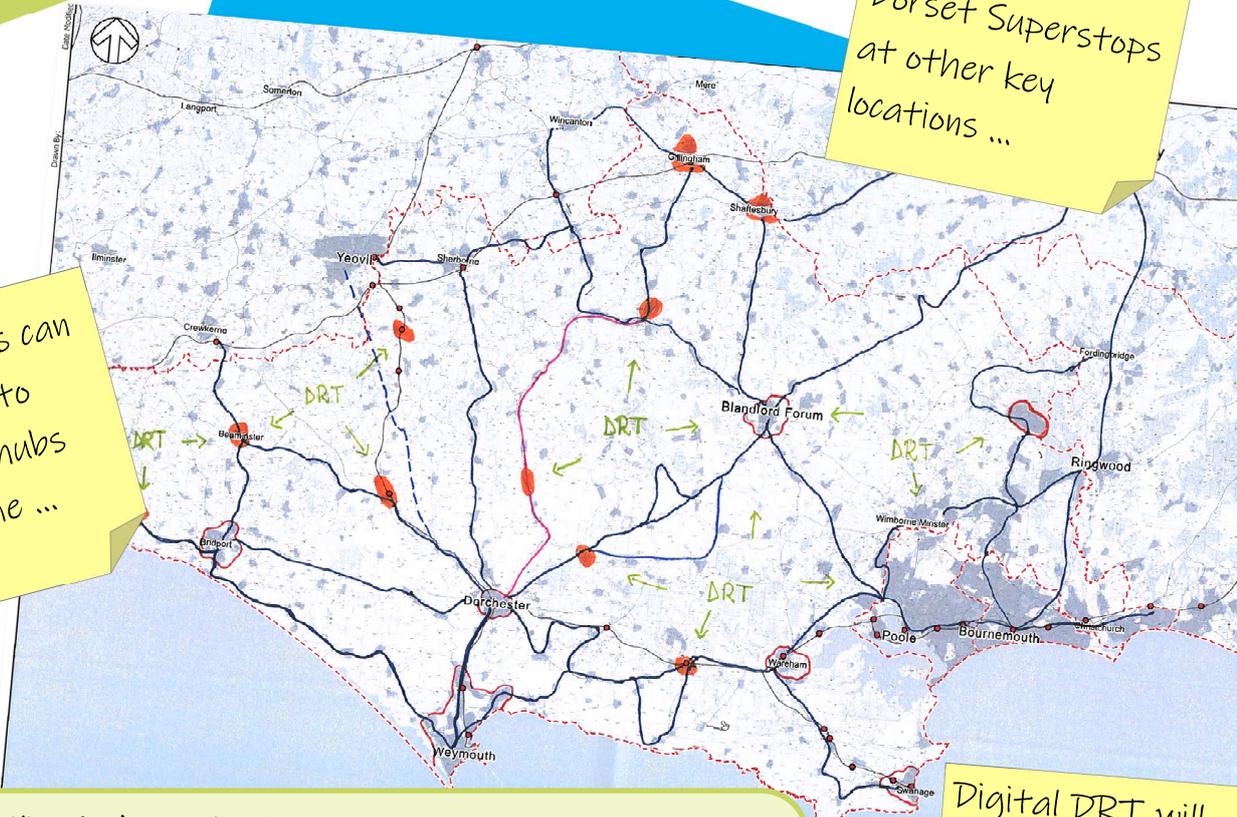
Develop mobility hubs at key locations for interchange ...

Make sure hubs allow multi-modal interchange and aid tourism ...

Use a kit of parts to make each hub bespoke ...

Develop new Dorset Superstops at other key locations ...

Superstops can develop into Mobility hubs over time ...



**Where can mobility hubs go in Dorset ...**  
Work on the core network has identified a few locations where this concept could be trialled, these include:

- ✓ Blandford Forum
- ✓ Wareham
- ✓ Dorchester
- ✓ Verwood

Superstop locations will be defined in the final network plan.

Digital DRT will feed into mobility hubs and Superstops ...

We will work hard to accommodate bikes on buses

## Deliverable 2a:

### Dorset Superstops and Mobility Hubs

- ✓ **DfT objectives for clear information and mode integration**
- ✓ **Our aim is to create and maintain a comprehensive network of travel options to link up communities and reduce rural isolation**
- ✓ **Stakeholder priorities for better information, interchange and waiting facilities**

78%

Of stakeholders supported the use of mobility hubs across Dorset ...

6 new

mobility hubs will be created through this BSIP, each tailored to network and area needs ...

Existing interchange provision is poor across Dorset outside of main towns. This is largely due to the local bus network being geared towards lower frequency direct links between primary towns and a range of very low frequency 'socially necessary' services providing some links from rural areas into the nearest town.

A step change in local bus provision across the council area will see the requirement of interchanges to make the hub and spoke feeder system work. These interchanges will be a mix of roadside stop improvements to turn some into multiple bus 'superstops', whilst others will be designed around the concept of mobility hubs, supporting a wider range of access modes and providing purpose-built facilities using a 'kit of parts' approach to relate each mobility hub to its network and community function.

#### ... What we will do

Reshape the core and feeder bus network to identify locations for '**superstops**' and **mobility hubs** where services can provide **interchange** within 'time-windows' and where **alternative access modes** such as walk, cycle, lift-share, and taxi can be supported for **first and last mile** trip legs alongside the local bus and rail networks. The council have identified 6 mobility hub locations and 20 superstop locations to develop progressively through this BSIP.

#### National Best Practice

The Go-Ahead group has recently published its vision for interchange – 'Future Mobility Hubs' in partnership with Arup. This report sets out a vision for Mobility Hubs and details the best practice approaches in developing hubs in partnership with local communities and public transport operators. Go-Ahead is a key partner to Dorset Council BSIP and are keen to use the county as a testbed for their work.



## Deliverable 2b:

### Integration with Rail Across Dorset

- ✓ DfT objective for integration with other modes
- ✓ Our aim is to create and maintain a comprehensive network of travel options to link up communities and reduce rural isolation
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for increased intermodal integration

# 14

Rail stations across Dorset on the national rail network as well as stops on the Swanage Railway heritage line ...

# 84%

Stakeholders and members of the public would like to see more modal integration by the local bus network ...

With 14 national rail network stations across Dorset, local bus services can significantly integrate rail. The three lines across Dorset provide north-south and east-west connections with the north-south route being the Heart of Wessex line which is subject to progressive frequency improvements over the next 5-years to be delivered by Network Rail and GWR. Currently few bus services attempt to provide rail connections and there is little dialogue between local bus companies and the train operating companies.

Through the preparation for this BSIP productive discussions have taken place with train operating companies and Network Rail to understand the level of coordination that is possible, and the service and infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate interchange.

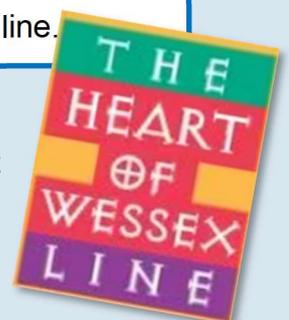
As a direct result of these discussions and the work completed to achieve a revised core bus network with supporting feeder services our new approach will focus heavily on rail connections, bus to bus integration through the hub and spoke concept, guarantee hourly rural connections, and improve walking and cycling routes to the network.

#### ... What we will do

Our plans include a local bus network **focused on rail connections** at several stations across Dorset, providing links not only within the council area but also across LTA borders. We will examine and improve station forecourt accessibility for buses and passengers to achieve **full integration** as well as guaranteeing connections to rail including a flagship project connecting with services along the Heart of Wessex line.

#### Local Opportunity for Best Practice

The Heart of Wessex Line provides important rural links to primary towns across Dorset as well as links to mainline rail services to the west, midlands, north of England, and London at locations such as Yeovil, and Bristol. With plans to increase line frequency from under 2-hourly to every hour by 2026 the local bus network has an important role to play in connecting passengers to the line.



## Deliverable 2c:

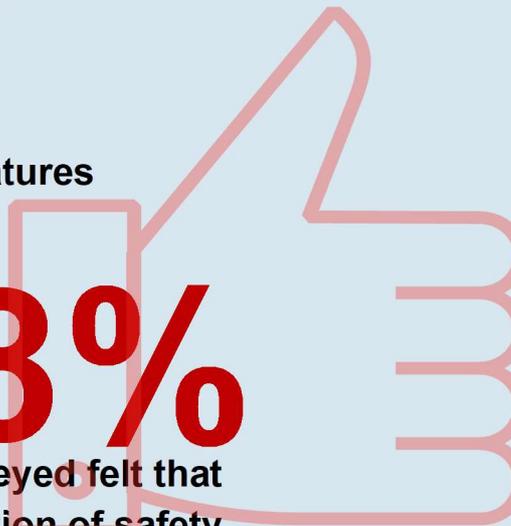
### Confidence in Bus Services and Waiting Facilities

- ✓ DfT objective for safety and perception of safety
- ✓ Our aim is for a safe and comfortable network
- ✓ Stakeholders aim for better bus stops and safety features



**22,000**

People travel on the Dorset bus network every day ...



**68%**

Of people surveyed felt that safety, the perception of safety and supporting infrastructure could be improved ...

Dorset has over 2,000 bus stops in use every day across the council area ranging from the busiest bus stop in Weymouth town centre to a myriad of small rural bus stops where no formal facilities may currently exist. Within the 2020 National Highways & Transport Survey, 'Personal safety on buses' scored 68% and 'Personal safety at bus stops' scored 63%, both of which are on par with the national average.

However, there is still some room for improvement. Providing a safe, secure, and accessible bus network improves overall perception of bus travel and stimulates growth and confidence amongst all user groups.

To achieve this, we propose investment through the BSIP in bus stop facilities, information availability, interchange locations, additional bus driver training focused on customer wellbeing and accessibility, and feeder services that get closer to people's door and provide door to door night time travel.

#### ... What we will do

We will focus on passenger confidence in the network, its facilities, services, and user perception by:

- Viewing the network from a **passenger perspective** to understand challenges and barriers.
- **Increased** evening, nighttime, and weekend services.
- A **bus stop design guide** setting minimum standards for seating, lighting, and accessibility.
- A **bus stop hierarchy** to ensure investment is targeted correctly at each stop based on use.
- App-based bus tracking and QR Code weblinks meeting the **needs of younger people**.
- A review and upgrade of bus **terminals** and town centre **interchanges** where required.
- **RTI roll-out** to increase information and provide confidence in isolated locations.
- Rural area DRT schemes providing **door-to-door services** after 1900 each day.
- Requiring **minimum bus standards** including on-board CCTV and space for bicycles\*
- Review **walking and cycling routes** to bus stops and provide bike facilities at key locations.

Note: \* on some buses that operate tourism routes where design allows and appropriate feeder services.



# Better and Clearer Information



## Deliverable 3a:

### The 'Dorset Connect' Travel Portal

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- ✓ **DfT objective for clear information and a single bus system**
- ✓ **Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset**
- ✓ **Stakeholder priorities for easier access to simpler bus information**

**55%**

**Of current local bus passengers are satisfied with public transport information ...**

**70%**

**Of stakeholders supported the introduction of a single Dorset Travel App through the BSIP ...**

Learning lessons from other LTA areas the council is keen to establish a single source of public transport information that will allow new and existing public transport users to plan journeys in confidence and receive live service updates.

Currently, bus service information needs to be improved. Across all eight individual benchmark indicators relating to local bus information, Dorset scored lower than the national average, indicating a reasonable level of passenger dissatisfaction and work required to build user confidence in the network.

Stakeholders strongly support an all-Dorset bus app, but less importance was placed on creating a single network brand/identity across Dorset at this juncture. The functionality of this app will allow bus travellers to check service performance in real time; purchase bus and rail tickets for contactless travel; create an e-purse for tap-on/tap-off use and period ticket products; look up timetables at each bus stop; plan future public transport journeys; save information to their own profile; and see how busy approaching buses are.

#### **... What we will do**

A new '**Dorset Connect**' portal will be created and launched through year 1 of the BSIP. This will place all public transport information across all modes in once location and have functionality to link with accessing real time information, ticket purchase for local bus network services, and live bookings and tickets for DRT.

#### **Local Best Practice**

Go-South Coast has developed an App for its successful Morebus operation covering BCP and areas in south-east Dorset The App makes journeys easier and features journey planning, bus tracking, live bus times, ticket purchase, and the ability to customise the app to show favourite stops, trips and tickets. This model will be reviewed and rolled out across Dorset with partner bus operators.



## Deliverable 3b:

### The Dorset Bus Information and Branding Strategy

---

- ✓ **DfT objective for clear information and a single bus system**
- ✓ **Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset**
- ✓ **Stakeholders aims for clearer bus information and network recognition**

**<1%**

**Of current local bus stops are equipped with Real Time Bus information in Dorset ...**



**50**

**New RTI smart flags will be installed at key bus stops across Dorset as part of a first wave from 2022 ...**

With over 2,000 bus stops across the Dorset bus network there is significant opportunity to make a real difference to bus travel through better information tailored to each stop based on its level of priority. Therefore, through the BSIP the council plan to create a **Bus Stop Design Guide** and **Bus Stop Hierarchy**.

Stakeholders also tell us that better bus and rail integration with better information at rail stations and links between different services are critical. The council will work with network rail and train operating companies to review information at rail stations, strengthen interchange facilities, and connect buses to rail services.

Once the core bus network has been revitalised and established, moves to introduce a more consistent network branding will be explored, building on existing local identities.

A new public transport information strategy is proposed to help address the shortcomings in existing information provision, increase RTI provision across Dorset, and develop a brand for information and network identity ensuring that the passenger feels they are travelling on one, single system.

#### **... What we will do**

A review of existing at-stop travel information levels, **rollout of RTI** at major stops/stations and interchanges as a first wave, produce a **Dorset-wide network map** incorporating bus operators and rail routes. A second wave of RTI roll-out in conjunction with a network wide allocation of QR codes for every bus stop, continued work to strengthen bus/rail interchange and information and development of a **Dorset wide travel brand**.

#### **National Best Practice**

Hertfordshire County Council introduced the Intalink website as part of efforts to improve bus services, working in partnership with all operators. This provides a one-stop shop for all bus and rail information, plus QR codes (symbols scanned by a mobile allowing access to RTI Information) on all bus stops.

## Deliverable 3a and 3b – Plan on a Page

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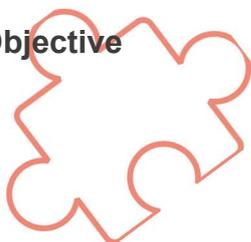
### Purpose of the Deliverable ...

Ensuring better information across a broad range of media is essential to passenger growth across the Dorset local bus network. Through the BSIP we will investigate and develop a range of information tools to ensure that we can promote bus as a sustainable mode and provide real-time information regarding timetable and performance information.

### ... The Problem

Information for local bus services is located in several locations and in various formats. While multiple formats ensure the information is accessible, much of the messaging is inconsistent. A review of each bus operating company's website has demonstrated a mixed approach to information provision with the Go-Ahead website as an exemplar. Information at bus stops can be inconsistent also, with many stops not containing any printed information.

### ... Our Objective



The council will bring all local bus and wider public transport information together in one single location – the Dorset Connect Portal. Through the BSIP the council will develop this portal further to include App based technology that allows real-time tracking of buses, bookings for Digital DRT services and e-purse payment.

Supporting this approach will be the development and use of a single brand to identify network infrastructure, information, a new network map, and passenger messaging. This will complement the Dorset Connect approach and will transcend all media and channels used for passenger communication from 2022.

### ... Strategies and Actions

To support the plans for improved information we will be upgrading bus stops using a hierarchical approach linked to bus flows and catchment population. Top tier stops with the largest footfall will be equipped RTI screen, but all stops will be equipped with information displays for paper timetables and branded bus stop flags.



To ensure that all bus stops can provide real-time information, we will place a QR code at each site. This will allow smart-phone users to access real-time information as well as bus timetables for journey planning.

A key element will be promotion of the bus network to tourists, across Dorset and along the south coast. To ensure this, all bus stops will show accurate and consistent information and the Dorset Connect app will host all operator timetables to allow passengers to plan connected journeys and first and last mile travel by other modes such as bike, walk, or lift-share.



# Better Journey Time Reliability



## Deliverable 4a:

### Progressive Increases in Bus Priority Measures

---

- ✓ **DfT objective for significant increases in bus priority**
- ✓ **Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset**
- ✓ **Stakeholder priority for more buses and services that run on time**

**69%**

**Of services on the Dorset local bus network currently operate on time ...**



**90%**

**Of buses running on time across the Dorset local bus network is the target by 2025 ...**

Current bus priority measures are limited. However, several delay hot spots have been identified by local bus operators working with the council through the preparation of this BSIP. These have been summarised under this deliverable and will be the basis of initial funding requested from the DfT for bus priority measures across Dorset through this BSIP.

An overarching policy will guide future bus priority improvements as a progressive activity through the BSIP. Coupled to bus network frequency improvements, buses will become faster and more reliable, competing with the car, and driving up reciprocal improvements in bus service quality, vehicle standards, and affordable fares and ticket products.

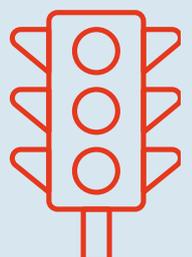
Together with this overarching Dorset wide approach, we will also launch the 'Dorset Greenwave' programme of targeted end-to-end corridor improvements.

#### **... What we will do**

Dorset will tailor bus priority improvements to bus network enhancements, working in partnership with local bus operators. Priorities will be designed-in to new land developments and funding sought through S106 schemes to deliver planned interventions. The 'right tools' will be used for the right jobs and a holistic view of the network will be taken. Bus lanes will have the biggest impact and will be considered based on recorded delays weighted by passenger use. Traffic light triggers for approaching buses will be generally unseen but will have a considerable impact on a bus' progression through peak time traffic where applied.

#### **Local Best Practice**

In neighbouring BCP work is already underway to ensure that all buses can connect with the urban traffic control centre to influence the phasing and cycle of traffic lights as the bus approaches a critical junction. This local experience will be carried forward in partnership with operators and BCP in the EP.



## Deliverable 4a – Potential Priority Corridors

The table below outlines an initial list of potential bus priority interventions for the BSIP to tackle:

Location	Current Delay Location	Potential Intervention (to be explored and consulted on)
Weymouth (Central)	The Esplanade-Kings Statue (Weymouth's 'bus station')	Review of stopping arrangements and co-ordinating timetables
		Review car park provision along Swannery Bridge and Commercial Road to explore conversion of some areas to create a formal bus station for the town
	Abbotsbury Road-Swannery Bridge-Rail Station	AVL/SVD at key signalled junctions
	A354 Westwey Road-Rodwell Road / Westham Road (one-way section)	Feasibility study for a one-way bus-only link across existing Westham Bridge, requires removal of car parking, consideration of existing active travel linkages, creation of new junction at the western end of bridge with A354
	Westham Road	Enforce parking restrictions on north side of road to improve traffic flows
		Rationalised crossing points and open bend leading onto The Esplanade
	Newstead Road-North Quay	AVL/SVD at major junction with A354
	Foods Corner roundabout	Review/replace short-term parking bays along Portland Road (n/bound) with bus lane (c.90m), check if parking bays are associated with local health centre and library and provide alternative provision if necessary
		B3156 Lanehouse Rocks Road – AVL/SVD at signalled junction
	B3154 Chickerell Road junctions	B3158 Radipole Lane – AVL/SVD and/or possibly a left-turn bus lane onto B3154 at junction (requires a remodel and enforcement cameras)
Abbotsbury Road – need to prioritise right-turn from Abbotsbury onto B3154 with remodelling or new road markings to change flow of junction		
Haven Littlesea Holiday Park	Review traffic access/egress via industrial estate roads with on-street parking	
Dorchester (Central)	Weymouth Avenue (Queen's Ave – Prince of Wales Rd)	AVL/SVD at junctions with B3147/Maumbury Road, Brewery Square/Dorchester South Station, Great Western Road/Prince of Wales Road to provide bus greenwaves
Bridport & West Bay (West)	B3162 East St-West St	AVL/SVD at West St/South St signalled junction;
		Sections of bus lane might be feasible where road widens but could require pavement space to be given over to road plus reallocation of parking bays
	Bradpole, A3066 Beaminster Rd	Explore new bus lane
West Bay	Station Road – new series of passing places and enforce parking;	
	Relocation of George Street bus stop/shelter to a central location on main through route to reduce running times	
Lyme Regis (West)	Park & Ride Provision	Extend the seasonal P&R between Charmouth-Town Centre-Holmbush to all year operation (an option for ZEBs)
	Pound Street	Review/relocate parking bays on north side of road to help smooth flows
	Silver Street	Review/relocate parking bays halfway down hill, explore change to a one-way.
Broad Street-Bridge Street-Church Street	Narrow historic streets through town centre, add AVL/SVD to traffic light-controlled priority sections	
Beaminster (West)	The Square	Review bus stop locations and parking provision - N/B bus stop is 'buried' within parking bays, reallocate bays to create a formal bus stop area; S/B bus stop straddles a side road junction by Red Lion PH, relocate stop slightly further north to be opposite memorial and keep buses on main road
	A3066 – Tunnel Road, Beaminster tunnel	Add signals at each portal with AVL/SVD
Studland (South East)	Ferry Road approach to Sandbanks Ferry Service	A need for (seasonal) bus priority lane on the Dorset side approaching the landing jetty. Subject to ownership/access, utilise the 'Boat Yard Only' lane, introduce box junction to allow buses to cross over and run 'wrong way' for a short distance (c.200m) once departing traffic has passed to then join front of the queue in a dedicated bus area

Estimates for the intervention measures outlined above in addition to North Dorset and Dorset Greenwaves will be presented in the supplementary BSIP funding form required for submission by the DfT.

## Deliverable 4b:

### Dorset Greenwaves – High Investment Corridors

- ✓ DfT objective for significant increases in bus priority
- ✓ Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset
- ✓ Stakeholder priority for more buses and services that run on time

12%

Fall in average bus speeds between peak and off-peak periods in Dorset ...

80%

Of stakeholders wanted to see faster bus journeys ...

The council plan to continually review the potential for bus priority measures across Dorset following adoption of the EP and submission of the BSIP, and also identify several key corridors where an approach that combines a number of factors will create the opportunity for faster mode shift and help to increase passenger numbers significantly.

The Dorset Greenwaves programme will see a partnership approach between local bus operators, neighbouring LTAs (where required), the council's highways, planning and Dorset Travel team to introduce measures including increase headways, new buses, updated infrastructure, improved information, fare caps and e-purse ticketing, bus priority interventions and increased connectivity to the wider bus, rail and national coach networks.

#### ... What we will do

The council will use a tool kit approach to **end-to-end corridor improvements** to ensure that each **Dorset 'Greenwave'** provides the opportunity to maximise mode shift and passenger growth. Measures will include:

- Route review to identify delay hot-spots and increases in frequency to 'turn-up-and-ride' operation.
- Development of intervention options including bus lanes, bus gates, and advanced traffic light control.
- Consideration of dual-door double deck operation to maximise capacity and limit bus stop dwell time.
- Upgrade of buses to ultra-clean diesel or zero-emission operation with assessments made regarding opportunity charging requirements.
- Upgraded bus stop and waiting facility infrastructure including new shelters, longer raised kerb bus borders, and at stop RTI and printed material.

## Deliverable 4b – Focus on Greenwaves



Dorset Greenwaves will use a combination of measures to maximise mode shift and passenger growth potential.

Focusing on vehicles, frequency, passenger facilities, bus priority measures, information and ticketing these corridors will receive an end-to-end treatment through partnership working by a range of delivery partners.

The theme is based around Dorset’s coastal nature the council’s move toward a green and sustainable local bus network. Routes will receive Greenway branding and will encourage people to ‘ride the Greenwave’.

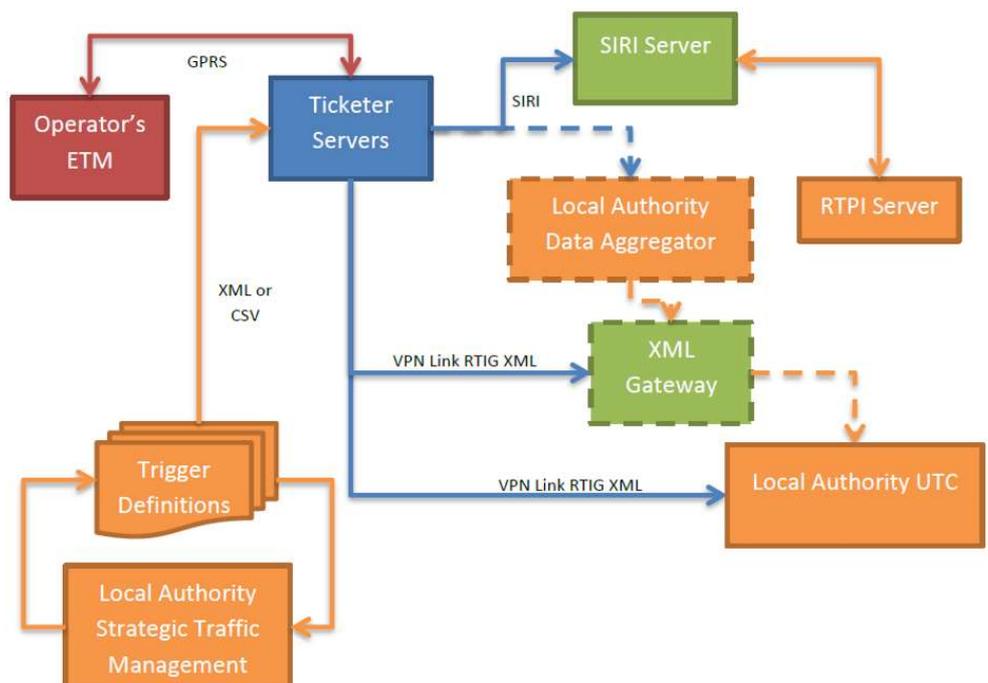
Targets for bus speeds and punctuality and reliability will be set to measure the performance of each Greenwave.

Greenwave investment will see capital and revenue investment prioritised on the most intensively used bus corridors to deliver tangible improvements for the greatest number of passengers in terms of infrastructure, facilities, and on-board product across the wider Dorset network. Operators will invest in vehicles and additional frequency if the BSIP can secure investment for bus priorities, bus stop infrastructure, and extra passenger facilities on-board buses (e.g., next stop announcements) and a conversion of buses to zero-emission operation.

One key area for investment, which will see low-cost infrastructure yield significant journey time improvements will be the use of advanced traffic light control. Using Ticketer ETM’s equipped with GPS receivers reporting each bus’ location relative to virtual trigger points via a GPRS / 3G connection to the Ticketer server the system can request traffic light priority at critical junctions.

Across Dorset most town centre and urban area traffic signals are connected to a central urban traffic control (UTC) computer which facilitates flow on an area-wide basis. A local priority request would either have to override the UTC control, potentially disrupting flows across a wide area; or wait for the signal controller to pass the request to the UTC system for granting or rejecting.

The system uses virtual trigger points which are supplied to the bus operators through the Ticketer ETM. These triggers are based on the junction in question and the service that’s running and finally the movement it’s making. The Ticketer scheme diagram below provides an overview of the data flow through the system for TLP functionality within the Ticketer model. Depending on the circumstance, it will hold a green or rush the cycle.





# Better Value and Integrated Fares



## Deliverable 5a:

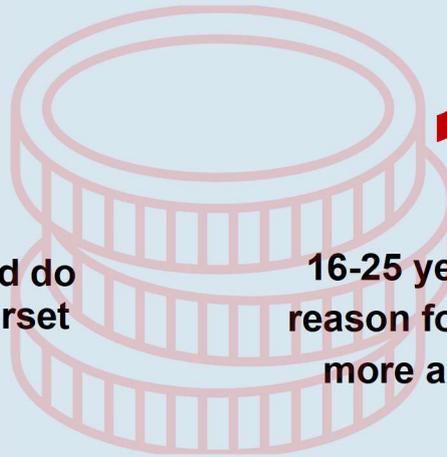
### Youth Fare for 16-25 Year Olds Across Dorset

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- ✓ DfT objective for lower and simpler fares
- ✓ Our aim to significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset
- ✓ Stakeholder priorities for simple to understand bus fares

18%

Of young people surveyed do not use local buses in Dorset



15%

16-25 year olds say cost is the reason for not using local buses more across the Dorset area

Cheaper and simplified bus fares scored highly in both the formal stakeholder and public survey feedback, with 84% of stakeholders supporting the move towards an all-operator Dorset wide youth ticket for 16-25 years old travellers. This suggested that measures to address the existing fare's structure should form a key part of Dorset's BSIP.

Such a ticket is needed to support those continuing in full-time education, training, or applying for apprenticeships and those seeking/commencing full-time employment. The ticket will also help to address issues surrounding social isolation amongst younger people living in rural communities by providing an affordable, independent means of mobility when coupled to the ambitious plans to significantly increase Dorset's core and feeder bus networks.

In the 2020 National Highways & Transport Survey, satisfaction with 'Bus Fares' in Dorset scored 50%, below the national average. Targeted approaches are seen as the best way to increase satisfaction levels and attract new users to the local bus network.

#### ... What we will do

Introduce a **Young Person's Bus Card**, with a 3-year validity and administered by an annual charge. The card will entitle holders to **discounted fares** on all local buses, at all times across Dorset, and into neighbouring LTA areas when routes cross LTA area boundaries. Eligibility checks during registration would be required, plus a photo card to prevent fraudulent use and avoiding any issues with drivers challenging young people on their age. The pass may be digitised as part of the Dorset Travel app.

#### National Best Practice

Schemes such as the Merseytravel 'Apprentice Travelcard (19-24)' and Go North East's suite of '5 to 25' discounted fares will be explored to identify suitable options for the Dorset market.



## Deliverable 5b:

### All Operator Day Ticket, Group Ticket and Daily Fare Cap

- ✓ DfT objective for low flat fares and fare caps in towns
- ✓ Our aim to create and maintain a comprehensive network of travel options to link up communities and reduce rural isolation
- ✓ Stakeholder priorities tickets that can be used on all buses

29%

Of cash fare tickets sold across Dorset currently are single direction tickets ...



42%

Of all passenger trips are currently made on Town services across the Dorset bus network ...

Provision of significantly reduced bus fares across Dorset towns is another area of our BSIP as this will drive change across wider agendas on social mobility, accessibility, and decarbonisation.

First Buses operating in Dorset has indicated a willingness to conduct a trial of reduced flat fares on town services in Weymouth which could be further expanded through additional funding / subsidy based on patronage growth to other towns including Dorchester and Bridport.

A further approach will be the development of a common family/group ticket accepted by all operators across the Dorset network and funded by local operators following agreement of the remuneration mechanism through the EP. All operators are committed to this simple approach that will open up the bus network to local residents and tourists alike.

Daily fare caps are becoming common place, particularly in urban areas across England. The significantly increased frequencies planned across the Dorset local bus network will provide the opportunity for increased daily travel by bus users. 79% of stakeholders agree that a general reduction in the cost to travel by bus is important across Dorset and will increase bus use if well publicised. Through the EP the council will harness the power of new ticket machine and app technology to provide daily fare caps across the network with an initial funding pot (limited to 3-years) available through the BSIP funding mechanism.

#### ... What we will do

Introduce flat fare town zones offering significantly reduced within Weymouth (e.g., £1 round town fare) before expansion to Dorchester, Bridport, and a new Gillingham town service to trial the effect on bus demand across the core and feeder networks through a **4-year trial**, with a view to becoming commercially sustainable on or before year 4 with open book accounting used to measure results.

We will also work with operators to agree the mechanisms for an all-operator family / group ticket and provide an initial funding pot to support network wide fare capping to drive up passenger use with support funding for publicity of this approach.



# Better Vehicle Standards and Lower Emissions



## Deliverable 6a:

### Dorset Local Bus Network - Decarbonisation Plan

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- ✓ **DfT objective for decarbonisation and mode shift**
- ✓ **Our aim to continue to protect Dorset's environment by moving to a decarbonised local bus fleet**
- ✓ **Stakeholders priorities for modern zero carbon emission buses**



**4.3m**

**Miles of local bus services are run currently across Dorset per year**

**13** YRS

**The number of years to convert the Dorset local bus fleet to zero-emission operation ...**

Dorset plans to set minimum vehicle emission standards through its contractual level service network from April 2022, requiring all new contracts to be operated with a minimum Euro VI bus standard.

In parallel, the LTA will work with local bus operators to deliver a progressive zero-emission standard to buses across Dorset, beginning with services operating on the Weymouth town services network (including a new Weymouth Park and Ride bus) and a trial inter-urban route to test zero emission technology across a longer distance service.

The current local bus fleet of 120 vehicles contains 19% Euro III, 20% Euro IV, and 52% Euro V buses with only 9% operating to the highest Euro VI standards. The ambitions plans for core and feeder network expansions will see the number of buses operating across Dorset rise sharply and the decarbonisation plan take account of this within its calculations.

The full decarbonisation plan will take 13 years to complete, starting in 2022/23, based on current estimates and will be reliant on centralised support through funds such as the BSIP, ZEBRA and any emerging funding sources.

#### **... What we will do**

Dorset alongside its local bus operating partners will deliver a decarbonisation programme over 13 years, starting with minimum Euro VI standards from 2022 for all buses brought into the network under contract with the council. The decarbonisation strategy will have progressive steps, focussing initially on removing the 19% Euro III and 20% Euro IV buses within the wider Dorset fleet through 2022/23 and 2023/24 before starting work to replace current Euro V and Euro VI vehicles with zero-emission technology by 2035.

We will create pilot projects for zero emission conversion in Weymouth (town and park & ride services) as well as on one trial inter-urban route and several of the new Digital DRT feeder services were plug in electric MPVs will represent a cost effective and rapid conversion of low-density routes to zero emission operation.

## Deliverable 6b:

### Zero Emission – First Steps

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- ✓ **DfT objective for decarbonisation and mode shift**
- ✓ **Our aim to continue to protect Dorset's environment by moving to a decarbonised local bus fleet**
- ✓ **Stakeholders priorities for modern zero carbon emission buses**

**120** buses

Currently operate on local bus services across Dorset every day ...

**86%**

Of the public and stakeholders want to see cleaner and greener buses operating across the Dorset bus network ...

The Dorset decarbonisation plan for the local bus network will see a number of vehicles replaced across the network each year as part of a progressive plan to move the fleet to zero emissions by 2035.

Dorset would like to see its first zero emission buses operate on a revamped Weymouth town network, including a dedicated Park & Ride service that will include lower fares and a 12-minute winter / 8-minute summer frequency. Use of the Park & Ride and town services will be helped by the progressive stance now being taken on parking charges by Dorset Council, now able to control parking across Dorset as a unitary authority and systematically moving parking charges to a three-tier system, with tourist hot-spots (such as Weymouth) seeing the highest charges across the summer season to deter tourist car traffic.

Following on after Weymouth, future zero emission bus roll out will focus on trial inter-urban routes across the core local bus network (likely route 10 or X53/54). These routes will be decided through the EP process and will depend on operator readiness to adopt zero emission technology and feasibility studies of each operating depot and route topography.

However, in towns such as Weymouth there is the opportunity to think bigger regarding electric propulsion with the transport interchange facility able to be upgraded to an electric charging hub to support electric cars, feeder buses and an e-bikes scheme across the town that will support first and last mile trips to the local bus network.

#### ... What we will do

Our exciting plans roll-out of **20 zero-emission buses** and supporting infrastructure for a Weymouth town services, including a new dedicated Weymouth Park & Ride service, with lower town services fares will commence preparation in 2022 ahead of a 2023 launch. The buses will significantly reduce noise and air pollution while increasing mode shift. Weymouth will become Dorset's first electric transport hub.

## Deliverable 6c:

### Dorset Local Bus Network – Vehicle Standards

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- ✓ **DfT objective for decarbonisation and mode shift**
- ✓ **Our aim to continue to protect Dorset’s environment by moving to a decarbonised local bus fleet**
- ✓ **Stakeholders priorities for modern zero carbon emission buses**

**76%**

**Of stakeholders support the use of smaller buses / MPVs on deeper rural services ...**



**62%**

**Of stakeholders would like to see bicycles carried on-board buses across the Dorset network ...**

We have listened to stakeholders, the public and local bus operator views around a range of issues affecting vehicles and standards of operation. To start the process, the council will only re-tender local bus services to Euro VI standard emission buses. Mechanisms to manage this equitably will be explored through the BSIP and may include a range of options from the council buying vehicles and leasing them back to operators – such approaches may mitigate any uplift in current contract service budgets and provide a better recovery position should contracts be poorly performing or are returned early.

The Enhanced Partnership approach provides the best opportunity to work collaboratively together to achieve a higher common standard for buses across Dorset from 2022. The Enhanced Partnership will be able to strongly influence operator vehicle choices and mandate minimum vehicle standards regarding facilities, comfort, safety, accessibility, ease of use, and technology.

Key focus areas will include on-board next stop announcements, exploration of bicycle facilities on core and feeder network services, potential use of dual-door buses on high volume Dorset ‘Greenwave’ corridors and the use of electric MPVs on feeder service networks with enhanced on-board facilities including Wi-Fi and USB ports.

#### **... What we will do**

Through the Enhanced Partnership process, we will create a minimum standard for buses across the Dorset local bus network. These buses will be accessible, smart, safe, and clean.

We will set dates for roll-out of next-stop announcements, CCTV, and app-based tracking and mandate standards on configuration, access, and levels of comfort for each type of route. We will also work with operators and manufacturers to explore the options for bicycle storage on buses used across the network, targeting feeder and tourist routes as well as key corridor services.

Buses will be a minimum standard of Euro VI for all newly contracted routes from April 2022.

## Deliverable 6a, 6b and 6c – Plan on A Page

### Purpose of the Deliverable ...

The plan for decarbonising the Dorset local bus fleet is set out below. There are currently 120 buses used across the local bus network and these are split between First Bus, Go-Ahead, Yellowbuses and a small number of local independent bus operators. The DfT require ambition plans for decarbonisation and long-run plans to make all buses 100% zero emission.

### ... The Problem

The current local bus fleet across Dorset has a high average age of 11-years. Most buses have been bought in by bus companies as second or third hand vehicles and only 9% are running at the higher emission standard, Euro VI. The majority of buses are Euro V and this provided a good opportunity to commence a fleet replacement now without losing too many serviceable years for each bus.

### ... Our Objective

To deliver through the BSIP a staged fleet replacement programme between 2022 and 2030 ensuring that 60% buses, including additional buses required as part of the network upgrade, will be operating as zero emission vehicles by 2030. We have prepared a replacement profile as shown:

Miles/PVR Ave	Qty	Age	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Euro III	23	17	20	3					
Euro IV	24	13		5	8	11			
Euro V (VU)	62	8				5	16	19	19
Euro VI	67	3							
Total	176	--	20	8	8	16	16	19	19

Note: Current fleet is 120, core network changes will see a further 56 buses added to the fleet (as shown)

This transition plan (including infrastructure costs) is set out in the BSIP Funding Form required by the DfT.

### ... Strategies and Actions

The transformation to a zero-emission bus fleet will begin with Weymouth's town and Park & Ride service and will be followed by conversion of a trial core network inter-urban route. This will allow us to evaluate how zero emission vehicles perform in short urban and longer-distance rural environments.

Progressive replacement of diesel buses with zero emission vehicles will see the average fleet age decrease and will enable progress with the vehicle standards deliverable regarding vehicle configuration and on-board passenger facilities (e.g., next stop announcements).

Fleet replacement strategies will also focus on AQMA areas, and routes running through these zones in Dorchester, and Chideock will be prioritised.

Work will commence in 2022 following introduction of the EP on feasibility studies for each local bus operator regarding their depot capability for conversion to zero emission bus operation so that barriers can be identified early in the process and mitigation measures put in place. To deliver the zero-emission bus fleet, BSIP funding will focus on infrastructure and the difference in cost between a diesel and zero emission bus, the BSIP picking up the shortfall whilst the partner operators match fund through the cost of an equivalent diesel bus.

## **Deliverable 6a – Draft Decarbonisation Plan**

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Fleet data from First Bus, Go South Coast (Damory and Morebus), South West Coaches, Yellowbuses, and Dorset Community Transport and Bridport Town Council has been analysed in order to set out this draft decarbonisation plan. This is presented in the table further below.

### **Background**

It has been clearly established that despite recent investment in Euro VI vehicles an extensive fleet replacement program will be necessary to achieve the significant level of decarbonisation proposed by current government policy. To align with policies and strategies such as the National Bus Strategy, the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the BSIP will require considerable funding from a variety of sources to purchase, lease or rent replacement vehicles and infrastructure. In addition, it will be necessary to have a robust and well-structured implementation programme, with clear and achievable targets.

### **The Capital Cost of Fleet Replacement**

Calculating the true cost of fleet replacement is not an exact science and can be affected by a wide range of factors. This view is reinforced by a report commissioned by the Transport Scotland - Zero Emission Bus Financing Ideas Pack.

Transport Scotland reflected on a wide variety of leasing and purchasing arrangement open to operators, whilst providing indicative costs for electric and hydrogen powered buses and additional infrastructure costs necessary for fleet replacement in comparison to diesel vehicles.

This report has also used other sources of information to provide what are currently estimated costs. This included information from other industry sources, such as established zero carbon bus schemes across a range of bus manufacturers.

It is also important to recognise that as this is a relatively new market with technological advances rapidly coming on stream, including advances in battery manufacturing, range and lifespan. Therefore, any costs can only be indicative in this draft plan. Only when EYI are submitted to suppliers for vehicle manufactures and installers of charging and service equipment will a more accurate cost be available. For example, installation may not be possible at some operator sites and may even involve the operator relocating. There will also be a cost incurred in training service staff who will require statutory health and safety training and equipment to maintain zero emission vehicles. The cost of both these issues can vary considerably.

### **The Proposed Programme - Fleet Replacement Costs**

It is proposed that the following phased programme be considered:

#### **Phase One**

The council will commission a specialist fleet management consultant to produce a bespoke fleet replacement action plan for each bus operator through the EP process. This will be based on best practice across the industry along with lessons learned from other sectors such as logistics, local authority fleets and utility fleets. Resultant action plans will ensure that existing and future fleets are operated as efficiently as possible minimising both fleet emissions and fuel use (where diesel) and minimising energy consumption and maximising regenerative charging through enhanced driving standards (where zero-emission).

Each operator will be able to establish several working practices including:

- A strong evidence-based fuel management programme.
- Monitoring and targets (e.g., anti-idling targets and an mpg league tables for drivers and vehicles).
- Driver training, skills, and support systems for maintenance and driver management teams.
- Vehicle specification and allocation analysis.

This phase will also strengthen the engagement with the bus industry and as a result have much broader benefits in terms of land use planning, environment, and marketing of both commercial and supported services. This process will also provide the council, local communities, and a wide range of stakeholders with the confidence that all types of services are operated as efficiently as possible, minimising environmental impact.

A two-year programme, running concurrently with phase 2 is costed within the BSIP Funding Form [£85,000] and form the foundations the medium to long term zero emission programme.

### **New Vehicle Allocation Policy**

It is also important to understand how best to maximise the benefits in terms of carbon reduction in local communities. For example, new vehicles should be targeted in:

- areas of poor air quality (e.g., built-up town centres)
- areas with frequent bus services operating along core corridors
- town centres where lower mileages allow cheaper overnight charging to take place

The areas where air pollution is particularly poor and the impact on health is considerable such as the counties Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA). In Dorset these are:

- High East Street, Dorchester
- Main Street, Chideock

East Road, Bridport has also exceeded levels of NO<sub>2</sub> in previous years but is presently not an AQMA.

A number of services use High East Street, Dorchester. One example is the First Bus Service 10 linking Poundbury (the large Duchy of Cornwall's residential housing development) to Dorset County Hospital - Dorchester town centre and Weymouth. This service with approximate Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) of six buses has the potential for zero emission buses. Furthermore, the new town of Poundbury is anticipated to be completed by 2025 and will have a population of 6,000 residents, potentially a growing market for local bus ridership.

In terms of frequent corridors, two services in Weymouth each operate on a 15-minute headway with the potential for further improvement towards a turn up and go service. These are service 1 Weymouth to Portland (eight buses) and service 2 to Weymouth to Littlemoor (four buses). Both services have potential for conversion to zero emission operation.

Finally, interurban services may include the X51/X53 currently operating through all of the AQMA's on a two-hourly basis. The service also serves Dorset Hospital and Poundbury. Again, this service has the potential to be converted to zero emission buses either as whole or in part. There is also a small depot at Bridport which could house zero emission charging/refuelling infrastructure, in contrast with the other options above which would require the use of Weymouth depot.

## Electric Bus Conversion

Several fleets have begun to convert existing diesel buses to EVs, schemes such as:

- e -trofit - from Germany based on existing MAN single deck buses and replacing the existing ZF Axle with an electric axle and hub drive motor
- Linkker - A LinkDrive conversion kit - a traction system produced in Finland

Here in the UK, Magtec have converted several buses to EV operation, the most recent of which are five full size single deck buses for Diamond Travel.

Although costs can vary it is likely that the conversion costs will be considerably lower than the cost of a new vehicle and consequently this approach may be used to accelerate the zero-emission programme for Dorset after approval by operators through the EP process. However, it is important to ensure such conversions are carried out on vehicles that still have several years remaining of operational lifecycle. In some cases, particularly as EVs vehicles in general have longer life expectancy, other refurbishments may be needed to maximise the life of the asset and the value to the operator of the conversion.

## DECARBONISATION SCHEDULE FOR DORSET –BASED ON CURRENT FLEET (120 BUSES)

The schedule below demonstrates the numbers of vehicles by Euro emission standard in the current Dorset fleet which would require progressively upgrading. Through the required DfT funding request form DC has outlined an ambitious plan to convert up to 60% of all buses by 2030 to zero emission operation, with all remaining buses being Euro VI or better by the same point. This plan also targets 20% zero-emission buses and 40% Euro VI by 2025.

Operator	Vehicle type	Euro Standard
		<b>EURO III (14-18 years old)</b>
<b>First</b>	Single Deck (44str)	8
	Double Deck (69 str)	3
<b>GO Ahead</b>	Single Deck (29-31 str)	4
	Double Deck (80-73 str)	5
	<b>Total EURO III</b>	<b>20</b>
		<b>EURO IV (14 years old)</b>
<b>South West Coaches</b>	Single Deck (23-40 str)	8
<b>Beaminster Bus</b>	Single Deck (25str)	1
<b>Go Ahead</b>	Single Deck (31-39 str)	4
	Double Deck (76 str)	2
<b>Yellow Bus</b>	Double Deck (78 str)	1
<b>First</b>	Single Deck (35 str)	1
	Double Deck (65-74 str)	7
	<b>Total EURO IV</b>	<b>24</b>
		<b>EURO V (7-14 years old)</b>
<b>South West Coaches</b>	Single Deck (28-40 str)	5
<b>Dorset Community Transport</b>	Single Deck (16 str)	5
<b>Go Ahead</b>	Single Deck (30-39 str)	8
	Double Deck (76-79 str)	5
<b>First</b>	Single Deck (35-41 str)	27
	Double Deck (65-73 str)	12
	<b>Total EURO V</b>	<b>62</b>
		<b>EURO VI (0-6 years old)</b>
<b>Yellow Bus</b>	Double Deck (73-74 str)	3
<b>South West Coaches</b>	Single Deck (45 str)	2
<b>First</b>	Single Deck (37 str)	6
	<b>Total EURO VI</b>	<b>11</b>



# 10. Long-Term Transformation



## 10. Long-Term Transformation

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- 10.1. Once the downward trend in bus patronage has been reversed, the council have longer-term aspirations for bus services across the county, building upon current aims and objectives set out in the BSIP to deliver continued improvements and transformations in bus service provision.

### Medium Term (Up To 2025)

- 10.2. To significantly increase the number of people using local buses across Dorset will require any proposed uplift in services levels to be maintained and then further enhanced as/when future demand dictates.
- 10.3. On the core network, current proposals for a minimum 30-minute frequency will be revisited periodically with continued efforts made to secure further agreement and funding to increase key routes to 10- or 15-minutes (or better) in partnership with the operators (supported through the EP) by 2025. This will be supported by greater provision of bus priority measures in key delay 'hotspot' locations as presented earlier in this BSIP, which will be realised to a similar timeframe.

### Longer Term (To 2030)

- 10.4. Building upon the current suite of bus priority improvements, further opportunities to increase punctuality and reliability will be explored, such as the feasibility of dedicated bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes into key urban areas and to transport interchanges. This would include potential partnership working with neighbouring authorities to understand where joint opportunities for creating a wider BRT network may exist.
- 10.5. Addressing climate change and protecting Dorset's environment and air quality will continue to be at the forefront of all agendas. Whilst the push for greater modal shift will help deliver on these aims, moving to a fully decarbonised local bus fleet will also be imperative. The council will continue to work with its local bus industry partners to determine the application of suitable alternative fuels, including BEVs and Hydrogen fleets, and where these technologies are best suited to serving the county's diverse geography. The overall aim is to convert 60% of buses across the county to zero emissions by 2030 with all remaining buses running at Euro VI or better.

### Future of Transport: Rural Strategy

- 10.6. The 'Future of Transport: Rural Strategy' call for evidence outlined key pillars for the consultation. The council may wish to develop further proposals around these pillars helping to identify where the 'bus' of the future can integrate into a holistic transport service. These could include:

### Increasing Use of Active Travel Modes & Micromobility

- 10.7. Linking to an increase in active travel networks across the county, this strand would explore initiatives such as joint ticketing opportunities between bus, cycle hire and any future micro-mobility schemes, in addition to better cycle parking provision at/near key bus interchanges.

### More Effective Integration of Journeys

- 10.8. The council seeks to become an exemplar of how flexible bus services can increase rural accessibility, helping create and maintain the comprehensive county-wide network of options to link up all communities and reduce rural isolation. Efforts will continue to increase overall network coverage (routes and hours of operation) with the proposed mix of fixed and DRT services, as part of the development of mobility hubs and MaaS (Mobility as a Service) provision.

## Digital Models for More Effective Services & Data/Digital Improvements Unlocking Market Knowledge

- 10.9. A Dorset-wide travel app could provide the platform for integrated ticketing products and facilitate tap-on tap-off contactless payments via NFC on mobile phones and other smart devices. By working with other key stakeholders, such services could be expanded to give discounted rates/savings for bus users at key tourist locations and other suitable businesses/attractions across the county, all facilitated via a single platform, to help encourage further bus use and support the local economy,

## New Modes of Transport

- 10.10. The call for evidence notes recent advances in autonomous vehicle systems for rural locations, which could prove themselves to be a cost-effective solution in the more sparsely populated areas across Dorset. Whilst this would form part of a longer term (2030+) discussion and potential aspirations, the council will continue to take learnings from national and international pilots (e.g., The Human Drive project and <https://www.rolandberger.com/en/Insights/Publications/Reconnecting-the-rural-Autonomous-driving.html>), the adoption of AVs could provide a further tier in the overall network hierarchy.

## Rural Community Identity/Links

- 10.11. In addition to developing a 'Dorset Bus' brand identity, through the use of DDRT and links with the wider CT sector, there may be potential options to be explored around revisiting the previous 'Total Transport' pilots and better utilising digital technologies to help support rural businesses in terms of workforce accessibility but also in transporting goods.





# 11. Bus Passenger Charter



## 11. Bus Passenger Charter

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- 11.1. A Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) enables passengers to hold both LTAs and operators to account for delivering against the BSIP.
- 11.2. In producing a draft BPC for Dorset, a review of existing BPCs has been undertaken to identify best practice and exemplar charters from which this first BPC version has been derived, to align with the BSIP guidance.
- 11.3. The formal approval and publication of the final BPC will be the responsibility of the Bus Advisory Board, in agreement with both council representatives and the local bus operators.
- 11.4. The following sections provide the skeleton of the BPC that the council will produce through the EP process.

### Draft Dorset BPC Document

- 11.5. **Geographical area**

This Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) has been produced for the **Dorset Council** area as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. It covers all scheduled bus and coach services provided by all operators across the commercial and council-supported networks, including any services operated on a flexible or demand-responsive basis, or provided by community transport operators through Section 22 operations.
- 11.6. **Date and validity of this Charter**

This BPC was ratified by all partner organisations and published on DD/MM/YYYY and is valid for a period of 365 days. It will be reviewed every three/six months (90/180 days) to ensure it remains in line with current legislation.
- 11.7. **Statement of Commitment**

This charter sets out a collective commitment from Dorset Council and the bus operators to work together to provide bus services which meets passenger needs across the entire area. It also sets out the rights passengers have under EU and UK legislation but does not affect your legal rights.
- 11.8. **Your Rights**

You can request appropriate and comprehensible information about your rights when you use regular bus and coach services. These are included in the Conditions of Carriage produced by each individual operator.
- 11.9. **Passenger entitlements**

Every time you choose to travel by bus in the Dorset Council area, you are entitled to a journey which is reliable and safe, on vehicles which are clean, comfortable and accessible to all (wherever possible).
- 11.10. **Reliable Services**

Operators will strive to provide enough buses and staff to run timetabled services as advertised under normal circumstances. When factors beyond either the Council and/or the operators' control result in it not being possible to run a full service, collectively we will do all we can to minimise inconvenience and keep you informed. If you are waiting for a bus at a stop without a real time display, disruption information will be provided via **[insert suitable options]** and passengers on board the bus will be kept informed by the driver. All operators aim to provide their services to meet standards set by the Traffic Commissioners - 95% of journeys will operate within a window of one minute early to five minutes late. Please do consider this when planning/making a journey.

**11.11. Clean travel environment**

Operators regularly clean and maintain the interior and exterior of all their vehicles. Dorset Council monitor buses, bus stops, and bus stations to ensure they are clean and tidy.

**11.12. Comfort**

Operators check their vehicles to make sure the heating, cooling, and lighting systems are working as intended. All drivers are professionally trained to operate their vehicle to provide passengers with a safe and comfortable ride. Where suitable, Dorset Council will provide shelters, seating and adequate lighting at bus stops and other key waiting facilities.

**11.13. Safety & Security**

Safety of passengers and staff is of highest priority. We will do what we can to discourage unreasonable behaviour by other passengers on the bus. Each individual operator will manage their activities and co-operate with other bodies such as the police, to make your journey safe.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the individual needs of passengers while maintaining a reliable service. All (customer-facing) staff will undergo ongoing disability awareness training.

**11.14. CCTV**

When passengers are recorded on any CCTV systems, each organisation will follow the CCTV code of practice as published by the Information Commissioner's Office.

**11.15. Information**

All information provided for passengers will be as accurate and relevant as possible.

**11.16. Timetable Information**

We will provide timetable information through the following channels:

- A new travel portal hosted by Dorset Council
- Through Traveline SW tel: 0871 200 22 33 or at <https://www.travelinesw.com/>
- On our website at [URLs]
- Updates to information will normally be made available at least two weeks in advance
- All websites adopt the principles of accessible web design
- The driver of your bus can provide further timetable information for your journeys

**11.17. Fares**

Operators will provide fare information on their website, including details of discounted tickets and seasonal passes which can be used across the county and across administrative borders where arrangements are in place. On buses, please ask the driver for the best fare details for your journey(s) as there may be day tickets or other suitable options available.

**11.18. Information in Accessible Formats**

Dorset Council and the operators will help to provide timetable and fare information in accessible formats on request. All information will be made available in large print, on audio cassette or in translation. This information may take time to produce and there may be a cost. Requests can be made by email at XXXXX or by post at YYYYY or by calling ZZZZZ (service available from/to XXXXXX).

**11.19. Information Displays on Buses**

All buses will clearly display a route number (or letter) plus the service destination or other indication of where they are going, at various points on the vehicle.

#### 11.20. **Code of Practice & Complaints Procedure**

When you forward us comments, complaints, or suggestions regarding services, we will collectively use them to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement. We will respond in the following manner:

1. All complaints are forwarded to the relevant Managing Director of the organisation;
2. For all complaints, an initially written reply will be sent within 10 working days;
3. If it appears that a reply cannot be sent in 10 working days, the complaint will be acknowledged within two working days and an expected timescale for a further response given;
4. Where either Dorset Council or an operator fall short of the high standards set through this BPC, you will receive an apology and, where appropriate, relevant compensation will be sent
5. A copy of the full complaints and comments procedure is available from the Dorset Council office and from individual operators.
6. If you remain dissatisfied with how your comment has been dealt, you can contact the Bus Appeals Body, who will take an independent view of the matter. We agree to abide by any decision or finding.

#### 11.21. **If you wish to contact us**

Dorset Council and all operators welcome feedback on bus service performance – good or bad. You can contact us by email, by post or on by phone. We aim to give you a response within 10 working days. If we are unable to do so within that timescale, the relevant organisation will contact you to outline expected response time.

#### 11.22. **Independent appeals**

If you disagree with the response received to any complaint, you have the option of approaching Bus Users UK ([www.bususers.org](http://www.bususers.org) or 0300 111 0001) who will try to resolve the issue for you. They may refer your complaint to the Bus Appeals Body ([www.busappealsbody.co.uk](http://www.busappealsbody.co.uk)). Dorset Council and all operators agree to abide by the Bus Appeals Body's recommendations.

#### 11.23. **Your rights**

In addition to our commitments above, you have a right for your complaint to be dealt with if it concerns any of the matters covered by the sections headed "Your rights" in this charter, provided you submit it within three months. We must respond to these complaints within one month of you submitting them and give you a final reply, stating whether your complaint is substantiated or rejected, within three months. You have the right to appeal these complaints to Bus Users UK if you disagree with our response. Bus Users UK is subject to a three-month time limit for dealing with appeals and must refer unresolved complaints to a Traffic Commissioner. If they fail to refer your complaint promptly when the time limit expires, you have the right to refer it to the relevant Traffic Commissioner yourself.

#### 11.24. **Bus Users UK**, Terminal House, Shepperton, TW17 8AS.

Tel: 0300 111 0001, Email: [enquiries@bususers.org](mailto:enquiries@bususers.org)



## 12. Reporting



## 12. Reporting

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- 12.1. The BSIP will be reviewed annually so that the council's plans remain relevant, are working as intended, and can be amended to ensure greater success for the following period. The council will complete this process from April 2022 with the first formal review being completed by the end of Q4 in 2022/23.
- 12.2. The council confirms its understanding that BSIPs are designed to be living documents. As such the BSIP will be altered and republished if the council and partner local bus operators feel that this is necessary.
- 12.3. Additionally, progress against the targets set out in Section 8 will be published every six-months from April 2022 with performance being made available through a variety of media to ensure full accessibility to all audiences, user groups and the public.
- 12.4. As a minimum, progress will be available on the councils website on the following page:  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/transport-planning/bus-service-improvement-plan>
- 12.5. Internally, progress will be reported through the EP Board to the council's Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee annually in conjunction with the culmination of the formal annual review process.
- 12.6. Meetings between the council and its EP partners, including local bus companies will be scheduled for quarterly as a minimum, however, the schedule for these meetings will be agreed as the EP is formulated through Q3 and Q4 of 2021/22 along with facilities for special interest groups and sub-groups to focus on key performance areas and specific network issues and areas of interest.





## 13. Overview Table



## 13. Overview Table

13.1. This section summarises the key outputs of the BSIP, how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy and provides an overview of the commitments in the BSIP which the council and its partner local bus operators will work towards to improve local bus services.

Name of authority or authorities:	<b>Dorset Council</b>
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	<b>Enhanced Partnership</b>
Date of publication:	<b>31 October 2021</b>
Date of next annual update	<b>31 October 2022 (Year 1 Review after 6-months in April 2022)</b>
URL of published report:	<a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/transport-planning/bus-service-improvement-plan">https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/transport-planning/bus-service-improvement-plan</a>

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each target will be measured (50 words max)
Reduction in journey times	<b>Route Dependent</b>		<b>-5%</b>	Average peak journey times to urban centres on core bus corridors.
Bus punctuality and reliability	<b>69%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>75%</b>	% of buses operating on time (-1 minute / +5 minute VOSA window).
Number of people travelling by bus	<b>8.2m</b>	<b>7.6m</b>	<b>+5%</b>	Short-Run: Return to pre-Covid levels of patronage by mid-2023. Medium / Long Run: 3% growth per annum 2025-30.
Bus mode share	<b>21%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	Mode share of peak time journeys to urban centres using annual cordon surveys at Weymouth and Ferndown.
Local bus fleet emission standards	<b>0% ZEV</b> <b>4% Euro 6</b>	<b>0% ZEV</b> <b>9% Euro 6</b>	<b>20% ZEV</b> <b>40% Euro 6</b>	Percentage of vehicles in the bus fleet which are Euro VI or zero emission buses. All new buses from 2025 to be zero emission. Zero emission bus fleet by 2035.

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each target will be measured (50 words max)
Core network distance (km)	<b>7.5m</b>	<b>6.9m</b>	<b>+100%</b>	Distance operated on core bus network. The network will double by 2025 by the introduction of the 30-minute frequency core bus and then sees further growth associated with targeted corridor enhancements.
Accessibility of local bus network	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>	Proportion of the Dorset local population within a 400-metre walking distance of a core bus and DDRT service. Phased expansion of DDRT services across Dorset providing 100% network coverage by 2030.
Rail services connected by bus (number of services)	<b>65</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>120</b>	Better Integration Between Modes. Timetabled connections arriving or departing within 15 minutes.
Satisfaction: Overall Customer	<b>51%</b>		<b>62%</b>	Based on annual results from the National Highways and Transport Survey (NHTS)
Satisfaction: Punctuality	<b>60%</b>		<b>64%</b>	
Satisfaction: Bus Frequency	<b>50%</b>		<b>65%</b>	
Satisfaction: Number of Bus Stops	<b>64%</b>		<b>70%</b>	
Satisfaction: Information – Amount	<b>55%</b>		<b>60%</b>	
Satisfaction: Information – Clarity	<b>57%</b>		<b>60%</b>	
Satisfaction: Information – Accuracy	<b>59%</b>		<b>62%</b>	
Satisfaction: Information – Ease of use	<b>52%</b>		<b>57%</b>	
Satisfaction: Information – RTI	<b>54%</b>		<b>59%</b>	
Satisfaction: Travel Cost / Fares	<b>50%</b>		<b>55%</b>	
Satisfaction: Personal Safety	<b>68%</b>		<b>70%</b>	

Delivery – Does this BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (50 words max)
<b>Make improvements to bus services and planning</b>		
<i>More frequent and reliable services</i>		
Review service frequency	<b>Yes</b>	Outlines plans for a ‘Superbus’ network of 30-minute frequency services or better across the county.
Increase bus priority measures	<b>Yes</b>	Sets out targeted investment plans based on operator feedback for town specific bus priority measures.
Increase demand responsive services	<b>Yes</b>	Introduces Digital DRT services to the LTA area for the first time and allows Dorset to test different delivery options and become a national testbed and exemplar for rural transport operation.
Consideration of bus rapid transit networks	<b>No</b>	No corridors in this very rural county are suitable for BRT at this stage. Instead, the focus is to move the core network to a turn-up-and-ride model by 2026.
<i>Improvements to planning / integration with other modes</i>		
Integrate services with other transport modes	<b>Yes</b>	Targets and plans relate to increasing connectivity to national rail with specific infrastructure enhancements and information improvements planned at all rail stations, a focus on the Heart of Wessex rail line, and better coordination between bus and rail timetables / connections.
Simplify services	<b>Yes</b>	Core network of local bus services running every 30-minutes or better between 7am and 7pm with routes made more direct and communities connected to the network using a new hub and feeder network.
Review socially necessary services	<b>Yes</b>	Focus on developing a Digital DRT hub and spoke feeder network that moves lightly used fixed route services into more efficient on-demand services, extending reach and scope of services and increasing the frequency of these through better vehicle recycling and mobility hubs.
Invest in Superbus networks	<b>Yes</b>	Plans initially focus on a core network of 30-minute (or better where already operated) local bus services by 2023 with further work to develop some corridors to turn-up-and-ride by 2026.
<i>Improvements to fares and ticketing</i>		
Lower fares	<b>Yes</b>	Focus on low fare products across all operators to target mode shift and ridership in certain markets. Initially developing a 16-25 years old 33% youth fare discount, £1 around town fares for all primary towns in Dorset and a focused family / group ticket to encourage leisure / off-peak travel.

Simplify fares	Yes	See above – lower fare products will also simplify the fare offer as they will be available across all operators.
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport modes	Yes	See above – fare products will be available across local bus operators and detailed discussions with rail operators has developed plans to create tap-on/tap-off fare capping between. There will be a continued focus and policy regarding ‘no-fuss’ multi-operator ticketing.
<b>Make improvements to the bus passenger experience</b>		
<i>Higher spec buses</i>		
Invest in improved bus specifications	Yes	Minimum standards for all new buses and minimum standards for contracted buses to be Euro VI from April 2022 as contracts are renewed where needed. Minimum specifications will include on-board technology, consideration of bicycle storage and increased use of double deck vehicles across the core network (e.g., Dorset ‘Greenwaves’).
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	Yes	A key tenet of Dorset’s BSIP is the largescale rollout of Digital DRT using accessible MPVs that get closer to people’s doors, connect to the core network at mobility / connection hub locations and operate for longer daily periods.
Protect personal safety of bus passengers	Yes	Rollout of a bus stop design guide and hierarchy tackling personal safety issues, ensuring high quality / secure waiting facilities, digital tracking through the Dorset Connect portal, RTI via QR codes at every bus stop and improved vehicle standards (see above) coupled to higher standards of driver training.
Improve buses for tourists	Yes	New: Corfe Park & Ride linking to heritage rail and coastal tourist loop buses; doubling of Breezer tourist focused services; Later buses between Dorset and Devon along south coast ‘honey pot’ locations, Trans-Dorset services from Weymouth to Salisbury (Wiltshire); connections to all Heart of Wessex stations.
Invest in decarbonisation	Yes	An ambitious plan to decarbonise 60% of the increased Dorset local bus fleet progressively by 2030. Initial exemplar projects will prove the concept for ZEVs on Weymouth town services and P&R alongside two inter-urban routes and in addition to electric MPVs operating Digital DRT across rural Dorset.
<i>Improvements to passenger engagement</i>		
Passenger charter	Yes	An outline passenger charter is included in this BSIP submission and will be further developed during the EP stage.
Strengthen network identity	Yes	Dorset Connect brand rolled out to all information / communications and exploration (via EP) of a consistent brand developed for core bus services as demand increases. Digital DRT will adopt the new brand from their inception.

Improve bus information	<b>Yes</b>	A priority for stakeholders is the improvement of local bus information, including at bus/rail interchanges and stations. The Dorset Connect portal will be developed and launched to include a bus passenger app for real-time information, journey planning, e-purse ticketing, and Digital DRT bookings.
<i>Other</i>		
Any other measures?	<b>No</b>	As the EP progresses the BSIP will be updated to maximise new opportunities through a collaborative process, meeting the priorities of stakeholders for more buses to more places and operating longer hours at lower fares and with cleaner buses and a focus on hub and spoke multi-modal operation.



## 14. Letters of Support



**Dorset**  
Council

## 14. Letters of Support

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- 14.1. Letters of support have been received from a range of local bus operators, community groups, and network rail. The letters are shown on the following pages (including insert below from the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership).

**Figure 14.1 – Note of BSIP Support from Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**



PCRPP is keen to see the sustainable integration of public transport for the local community. The current proposal by Dorset Council as part of the Bus Back Better scheme is one we believe works well to meet the needs of the local community and develop an effective transport system which is sustainable and effective. We are pleased with the proposals in the Bus Service Improvement Plan and look forward to the implementation of the ideas they propose.



Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

283 Empress Road  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
SO14 0JW

22 October 2021

Dear Sue,

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

First are delighted to provide this letter of support for the Dorset BSIP. We have been involved in the preparation of the BSIP through close and regular dialogue with yourselves as the BSIP has been drafted. We appreciate this high level of engagement and openness with bus operators.

We are pleased that the BSIP shows a high level of ambition for how Dorset Council and local bus operators will work together over the coming years to deliver a step-change in the quality and reliability of bus services. Such a step-change can best be achieved through sustained investment as part of the planned Enhanced Partnership, being developed by the end of March 2022 and continued close partnership working.

We welcome the highly achievable goals of the BSIP, and we wholeheartedly endorse its' strong focus on supporting and enabling modal shift by offering people an attractive and viable alternative to the private car.

This investment will help support a more sustainable economic recovery as we emerge from the pandemic and will enable people to access jobs and services more easily and quickly by bus, making a significant contribution towards tackling congestion and making more efficient use of available road space. Crucially, bus priority and tap-on tap-off will help to achieve faster journey times.

We are looking forward to working with Dorset Council as we develop the Enhanced Partnership together. We are confident that the Dorset BSIP and EP will enable us to deliver an ambitious and comprehensive programme of investment in improvements that will achieve a virtuous cycle of sustained bus passenger growth and improving customer satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Lewis".

Jonathan Lewis  
Commercial Manager  
First Hampshire, Dorset and Berkshire

## Bournemouth Transport Ltd



Dorset Council  
FAO Tim Reynolds

Sent by email

25 October 2021

Dear Sir,

### Letter of support for Dorset Council Enhanced Partnership BSIP Bid

Bournemouth Transport Ltd t/a Yellow Buses is now approaching its 120th year of continuously serving the conurbation and the wider South East Dorset area. We are a locally owned and managed independent bus and coach operator, employing some 330 local workers, with a fleet of around 130 buses and coaches, operating from our purpose-built depot near Castlepoint in Bournemouth.

As one of the local bus operators serving the Dorset Council area, we fully support the Government's National Bus Strategy to put buses first as part of the "build back better" initiative post-Covid, this also ties in neatly into the de-carbonisation strategy as the country seeks to cut its emissions and become a greener economy.

The Strategy is delivered through an enhanced partnership between Dorset Council and the bus operators, building on the successes of the past, but tackling those issues deemed too hard to change in the past, the key to increasing passenger numbers is fundamentally speeding up bus journeys, at the expense of other traffic, this in turn also delivers huge benefits in service reliability and punctuality, the biggest issues amongst both current and future customers.

We all know that the Bournemouth and the surrounding journey to work area, regularly appears in the top ten lists of worst towns and cities for congestion. Now, in the post-covid World, congestion continues to reach levels that in many cases are worse than before, this is not sustainable, which is where the Bus Service Improvement Plan agreed locally will deliver.

We fully support this initiative and are pleased to both support Dorset Council through the enhanced partnership approach and assist in delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan for 2022 onwards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Squire".

David Squire FCILT  
Managing Director





**RE Support for Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan**

25<sup>th</sup> of October 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

I write this letter to express our full support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan. I am pleased with the vision that Dorset have created and am very excited to work alongside them to create a core service network revolving around a minimum of a 30-minute frequency.

I feel that this BSIP is imperative to the future of bus services in this rural environment and fear that without the support of this BSIP, we will see the gradual but inevitable decline in public transport in this area. For too long, rural communities and their transport requirements have been left out in the cold, with public support and funding being focused on the more lucrative town and city markets.

If you require any help in making this happen, please don't hesitate to ask.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Fairey', with a small black dot to its right.

Peter Fairey

Operations Director

*South West Coaches Limited*

Southgate Road • Wincanton • Somerset • BA9 9EB • Tel: 01963 33124  
11 Oak Way • Lufton Business Park • Yeovil • Somerset BA22 8HS • Tel: 01935 475872  
Unit 17 • Tradecroft Industrial Estate • Portland • Dorset DT5 2LN • Tel: 01305 823039  
Hazeldene • West Pennard • Glastonbury • Somerset • BA6 8NH • Tel: 01458 830935  
[www.southwestcoaches.co.uk](http://www.southwestcoaches.co.uk) • e-mail: [info@southwestcoaches.co.uk](mailto:info@southwestcoaches.co.uk)

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Towngate House  
2 - 8 Parkstone Road  
Poole, Dorset  
BH15 2PR

Tim Reynolds MPhil  
WSP  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Kings Orchard  
1 Queen Street, Bristol  
BS2 0HQ

25 October 2021

Dear Tim

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Council Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Go South Coast, trading as morebus and Damory Coaches, is delighted to provide this letter of support for the Dorset BSIP. We have been involved closely in the preparation of the BSIP through close and regular dialogue and regular meetings with Dorset Council as the BSIP has been drafted, and we appreciate this high level of engagement and openness with bus operators.

We are pleased that the BSIP shows a high level of ambition for how Dorset and local bus operators will work together over the coming years to deliver a step-change in the quality and reliability of bus services. Such a step-change can best be achieved through sustained investment as part of the planned Enhanced Partnership, being developed by the end of March 2022 and continued close partnership working.

We welcome the ambition of the BSIP. We wholeheartedly endorse its strong focus on supporting and enabling modal shift by offering people an attractive and viable alternative to the private car.

We fully support the BSIP's proposals for:

- Investment to give buses greater priority through congestion hotspots, which will reduce delays to buses, improve reliability and accommodate predicted new trips from planned housing and jobs;
- Support for the bus network in the post-Covid recovery period;
- Improved inter-urban services;
- Redeployment of buses freed up as a result of faster journeys to increase service frequencies on bus routes that have high potential for achieving passenger growth;
- Investment to accelerate the roll out tap on/ tap off ticketing across Dorset, helping simplify ticket purchase, providing customers with reassurance that they will not pay more than the daily fares cap for single-operator travel;
- Initiatives that will help make the bus network easier for customers to understand including clear information at bus stops, presenting the bus network as a single entity on maps and jointly marketing travel by bus;
- Investment in high quality bus shelters and continued roll-out of real time information;
- Improved integration of buses with other transport modes, including local mobility hubs;
- Cleaner zero-carbon and accessible buses;
- An improved range of innovative ticketing products that meet the needs of bus passengers;
- Complementary policies on car parking charges and on the location and layouts of new developments to ensure that these support and encourage bus use; and
- A Dorset Bus Passenger Charter.

This investment will help support a more sustainable economic recovery as we emerge from the pandemic and will enable people to access jobs and services more easily and quickly by bus, making a significant contribution towards tackling congestion and making more efficient use of available road space. Crucially, bus priority and tap-on tap-off will help to achieve faster journey times. This will enable us to redeploy our peak levels of vehicle and driver resource to improve frequencies on routes that have strong passenger growth potential.

We are looking forward to working with Dorset to build upon our existing highly successful voluntary partnership arrangements which have served us so well up to this point, as we develop the Enhanced Partnership together. It is therefore essential that the ambitions of the Dorset BSIP are delivered through early implementation in the EP and enable us to deliver an ambitious and comprehensive programme of investment in improvements that will achieve a virtuous cycle of sustained bus passenger growth and improving customer satisfaction.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wickham  
Managing Director

OFFICIAL



Sue McGowan  
Head of Travel Dorset, Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1XJ

Jaime Rockhill  
Lead Strategic Planner [Wessex], Network Rail  
Waterloo General Offices  
Waterloo Station  
London  
SE1 8SW

25 October 2021

## **Dorset Council Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Dear Sue,

Thank you for giving Network Rail the opportunity to be involved in the development of your response to the Government's 'National Bus Strategy' initiative.

We welcome the recognition of the importance of better integration between bus and rail services. This is something that Network Rail and our Train Operating Company (TOC) colleagues are keen to work in partnership with you on.

The importance of better integration between bus and rail as a means of providing a sustainable whole journey opportunity for passengers is something that we in Network Rail are highlighting ourselves in the yet to be published 'Dorset Connectivity Strategic Study'.

We look forward to continuing to work with you, in partnership, on any relevant schemes that seek to align bus and rail travel in the Dorset area to provide our passengers and Dorset residents with a simple, efficient, and sustainable whole journey.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jaime Rockhill".

Jaime Rockhill  
Lead Strategic Planner [Wessex]

cc.  
Andrew Ardley, SWR  
Gordon Sneddon, Dorset Council  
Jonathan Cowe, Network Rail  
Owen Clark, Dorset Council  
Tim Reynolds, WSP

Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Dear Sue,

As Chairman for the Dorchester Transport Action Group, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for development of the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan.

I commend the survey and consultation towards the BSIP but regret that there has been no opportunity to comment on the Plan itself, so I can only support the process rather than the content of the proposal. I look forward to the opportunity of continuing to work with Dorset Council and supporting the delivery of the BSIP, particularly with regard to the needs of Dorchester and its surrounding villages.

Yours sincerely,

Stewart Palmer  
Chairman  
Dorchester Transport Action Group

Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

**Address:** Town Hall, Shaftesbury

**Date:** 26/10/2021

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Dear Sue,

As Chair for North Dorset transport action group letter of support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan.

I am pleased that the BSIP has been developed through regular engagement and that the plan addresses the priorities of our local communities. I look forward to the opportunity of continuing to work with the Council and supporting the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Beer  
Chairman  
North Dorset Transport Action Group

Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

26 Oct 2021

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Dear Sue,

As Chair of the Purbeck Transport Action Group I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan.

I am pleased that the BSIP has been developed through regular engagement and that the plan addresses the priorities of our local communities. I look forward to the opportunity of continuing to work with the Council and supporting the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours sincerely,

*N Ward*

Chair  
Purbeck Transport Action Group

Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

**Address:**

**Date:** 27 October 2021

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

Dear Sue,

As Chairman of the Sherborne Transport Action Group, I am responding to your request that we provide a letter of support to the proposed Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan.

I regret that I am unable to do so as I have not seen the Plan and cannot therefore judge whether and to what extent it takes account of our priorities. I commend the survey and consultation towards the BSIP but regret that there has been no opportunity to comment on the Plan itself. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council in delivering a BSIP which takes into account the needs of rural areas.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Keatinge  
Chairman  
Sherborne Transport Action Group

**WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION  
GROUP (WATAG)**

**Website: [www.watag.org.uk](http://www.watag.org.uk)**

**email: [watag@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:watag@hotmail.co.uk)**

Sue M McGowan  
Head of Dorset Travel  
Dorset Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1 XJ

27 October 2021

Dear Sue,

**Letter of Support for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**

As Chairman of the West Dorset Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG), I am responding to the request that we provide a letter of support for the development of the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Whilst we are delighted that Dorset Council is preparing its BSIP and has held 3 'Stakeholder Engagement' sessions, to date we have had no sight of the Plan itself and therefore feel unable to make comment or judgement until such time as it is made available.

In the meantime, we look forward to working with the Council in delivering a BSIP that fully addresses the needs of our area, namely the townships of Lyme Regis, Bridport and Beaminster and their surrounding hinterlands.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Driscoll  
Chair

**Chair:**  
Bob Driscoll

**Treasurer:**  
Guz Tidy

**Admin:**  
John Collingwood



## 15. Appendices



**Dorset**  
Council

## 15. Appendices

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The following list of Appendices are contained in a separate technical annex

- Appendix 1 – Review of National Policy for Bus Back Better
- Appendix 2 – Review of Dorset’s Supporting Local Policies
- Appendix 3 – Dorset Bus Network – Frequency Heat Maps
- Appendix 4 – Dorset Community Transport Coverage
- Appendix 5 – Dorset Initial Stakeholder Workshops: Key Points and Common Emerging Themes
- Appendix 6 – Supported Bus Services in Dorset
- Appendix 7 – Dorset Council Bus Survey Report
- Appendix 8 – Dorset Stakeholder Preferences (Stage Two Workshops)



**Email your comments regarding this Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to:**

[busbackbetter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:busbackbetter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**or write to us:**

c/o Transport Planning, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ.

