

**NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY
TRANSPORT ACT 2000
ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND
SCHEME**

**DORSET COUNCIL
AGREEMENT**

EP PLAN AND SCHEME - CONTENTS

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Part 1 – Enhanced Partnership Plan

The Dorset Council Enhanced Partnership Plan for buses is made in accordance with section 138g(1) of the Transport Act 2000 by:

Dorset Council

Section 1 - Definitions

1.1. In this Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes pursuant to it, the following capitalised terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below in Table 1.

Table 1: Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme Definitions

1985 Act	Transport Act 1985
2000 Act	Transport Act 2000
2017 Act	Bus Services Act 2017
BCP	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Bus Operators (or Operators)	All Large Operators, Medium Operators and Small Operators running Qualifying Bus Services taken collectively.
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan as required through the National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better (March 2021)
CT	Community Transport
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation	<p>This comprises either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) A formal variation of the relevant Enhanced Partnership Scheme as a result of the voting mechanism set out in section 5 of the Scheme.or(b) An agreement signed by all relevant parties drawn up as a result of discussions between one or more Operators and the Council, where both sides agree to perform agreed actions specified such agreement, as set out in section 5 of the Scheme. <p>Each of which will then constitute a formal variation of the relevant scheme for the purposes of s.138E(1) of the 2000 Act.</p>

Facilities	Those facilities referred to in section 3 which shall be deemed such for the purposes of s.138D(1) of the 2000 Act.
Measures	Those measures referred to in section 3, which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138D(2) of the 2000 Act.
Passenger Charter	Document providing standards passengers can expect
RTI	Real Time Information
The Board	The committee of selected representatives responsible for considering recommendations put forward by the Forum and making decisions including specific Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations using the mechanism in section 5.
The Council	Dorset Council
The Forum	The committee of representatives responsible for making recommendations to the Board in line with the Enhanced Partnership governance arrangements referred to in section 5.
The Plan	Enhanced Partnership Plan
The Scheme	Enhanced Partnership Scheme
ZEB/Vs	Zero Emission Buses/Vehicles

Section 2 - Introduction

- 2.1. Dorset is predominately rural in nature with a population (2021) of 376,480. Dorset's population density is 152.36 people/km², one of the lowest in England. The population is sparsely distributed across Dorset; only 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
- 2.2. Principal 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 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) hinterland and South East Dorset travel to work area.
- 2.3. Around 29% of Dorset's population (2019) are aged 65+ versus 16% in England, whilst the working age (16-64) and younger generation (under 16s) populations both continues to decline. The workplace population is well-dispersed across Dorset concentrated in/around the main towns with notable clusters within the BCP hinterland areas and around Swanage, Wareham, and Wool (south east), Bridport (south west), plus Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sherbourne (north).
- 2.4. In Dorset, 46% of carbon dioxide emissions were from transport (2019), significantly higher than the total UK emissions from transport (27%). Transport emissions 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 (4,102 million vehicle kilometres travelled across Dorset in 2019). This can be linked to Dorset's dispersed nature and rurality which contributes to a lack of alternatives to private motorised transport.
- 2.5. There is currently no existing voluntary partnership or other non-statutory arrangement in place between Dorset Council ("The Council") and the local bus operators, either on an individual or collective basis. As such the Enhanced Partnership Plan ("The Plan") and Scheme ("The Scheme") represent a new level and process of formal partnership across the council area.

Section 3 - Key Objectives

3.1. The aims and objectives for the Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan (“BSIP”) are:

- 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 specifically 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 developing a toolkit of options for on-demand transport that focus on improving journey times and access to the core network and other modes of travel.
- 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.
- To 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.

3.2. Table 2 provides a brief overview of the key themes set out within the BSIP and what these mean regarding the approaches used to deliver the Enhanced Partnership.

Table 2: BSIP Themes and Enhanced Partnership Approach

BSIP Theme	EP Approach
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. The core network operating between hub locations will be developed alongside a feeder service network.
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.

Better and clearer information	To bring together information on bus journeys and the wider public transport system through an agreed front end format with all bus operators. Information will be maintained through multiple channels and partners 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 the Council to maximise funding opportunities.
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.
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.

- 3.3. The themes set out in Table 2 link to the priorities set out by stakeholders and the public as part of the BSIP process. They form a critical part of The Plan and link to facilities and measures that will be defined and refined over time in The Scheme.
- 3.4. The successful realisation of all BSIP themes, aims and objectives, set out in the document at a very high (aspirational) level, is reliant on funding coming forward through the BSIP process and from time to time any other formal funding allocations that may be directly awarded to the Council or successfully bid for by the Council and partner Bus Operators.

Section 4 - Supporting Policies

- 4.1. Policies regarding local bus services will support and be pursued in The Plan area. Furthermore, complementary policies regarding issues such as decarbonisation, car parking, development control and active travel will be pursued in support of the Enhanced Partnership objectives in The Plan area. These are outlined below.
- 4.2. Better bus transport represents a credible opportunity to reduce carbon emissions from the trips people make between our dispersed and rural communities, which presents a significant challenge on a decarbonisation pathway to net zero. The Council's recent climate and ecological emergency strategy contains a dedicated transport section highlighting the critical role of collective behaviour change and increasing mode share by public transport as part of the overall decarbonisation pathway.
- 4.3. Several policies, including the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3, jointly with BCP from 2011) identify linkages from east of Dorset are unreliable whilst north-south links across Dorset are generally poor, particularly for public transport.
- 4.4. Local supporting policies recognise the high level of car ownership and use across Dorset (rural areas being very dependent with car ownership amongst the highest in the country, almost 50% of households owning two cars) contrasting with the variety in bus service provision - in the more urbanised areas services are generally good, whilst in rural areas, limited provision fails to attract people away from car use.
- 4.5. The Dorset Passenger Transport Strategy (2016) sets out its vision *"To create a safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable passenger transport network for Dorset that facilitates a strong economy, gets people to where they need to be, and respects and protects the area's unique environmental assets, while encouraging alternative means of transport to the car"*.
- 4.6. A Community Transport (CT) 'Toolkit' further identifies it is not feasible for commercial bus companies to cover all of rural Dorset, so by creating improved CT schemes, alternative travel solutions can be made available to areas not covered by the main bus companies.
- 4.7. In terms of the individual Cycling, Accessibility and Health Strategies, all highlight the opportunity for a taking more integrated approach. By positioning local buses as a key enabler there is an opportunity to create and deliver a more-efficient, healthier, fairer, and inclusive society.
- 4.8. Finally, the Low Carbon Strategy seeks to continue breaking links between mobility and carbon emissions by securing a low carbon transport network which is increasingly less dependent on oil, resilient to the impacts of climate change and supports sustainable communities and quality of life.

Section 5 - Competition Test¹

- 5.1. The Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of The Plan and The Scheme made on 25th April 2022 on competition and believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.
- 5.2. The competition test shall be reviewed on each variation of The Scheme in accordance with the requirements of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.
- 5.3. The competition test is a standalone document. The above statement is included in The Plan for completeness.

¹ See section 8.38-8.39 of the main EP Guidance

Section 6 - Extent of the Enhanced Partnership

- 6.1. On 30th June 2021 the Council published a notice of intent to prepare an Enhanced Partnership (The Plan and The Scheme), in accordance with Section 138F of the 2000 Act.
- 6.2. The Plan and The Scheme will make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the BSIP and, where funding allows, will provide the opportunity to realise potential benefits to passengers using local bus services across Dorset through improved quality and efficiency of the public transport network. Where delivered, such improvements will also support the efficient use of the road network in The Scheme area and the delivery of sustainable growth, limiting the impacts of additional traffic congestion and air pollution and helping to meet mode shift and carbon reduction targets.
- 6.3. Both The Plan and The Scheme are proposed to cover the entirety of the Council area. Neighbouring Authorities who have been engaged during the production of the BSIP include Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Devon County Council, Hampshire County Council, Somerset County Council and Wiltshire Council.
- 6.4. The Plan and The Scheme are proposed to extend throughout the full administrative Dorset Council area within its boundary (Figure 1) and changes to this boundary at any time will represent a variation to The Scheme.

Figure 1: Dorset Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme Area



- 6.5. The Council already liaises with neighbouring authorities regularly to discuss cross-boundary bus issues. An Enhanced Partnership covering part, or all adjacent local authorities to formalise the process has been considered (e.g., South East Dorset-BCP), but will not be taken forward at this time. However, by keeping dialogue open with neighbouring authorities we will be able to ensure Enhanced Partnerships are aligned as far as is practicable and particularly with regard to cross-boundary services to ensure coordination, timetabling and performance is consistent.
- 6.6. Regarding joint or amended geographical area Enhanced Partnerships, the current partnership may consider this desirable in the future, for example if a neighbouring authority is proposing an Enhanced Partnership, or in relation to cross-boundary bus services or development, and the partnership would wish to avoid a patchwork of inconsistent standards.
- 6.7. Neighbouring authorities wishing to engage with the Dorset Enhanced Partnership will/would do so initially on a similar non-statutory basis through the Dorset Enhanced Partnership Forum.
- 6.8. All operators running bus services in the Council area have been invited to participate in the preparation of The Plan and The Scheme. The Scheme will come into effect from the 25th April 2022.
- 6.9. The Plan will be in place for 10 years from adoption (25th April 2022 to 31 March 2032). A full mid-term review of the effectiveness of The Plan (including its extent, objectives, and partnership governance) and The Scheme (including measures and facilities provided, and requirements imposed) and compliance of both with competition legislation will take place during the 12 months prior to 31 March 2027.
- 6.10. Any changes to The Plan will follow the formal variation procedures as set out in Section 138L of the 2000 Act. The Plan may have different review arrangements to The Scheme.

Section 7 - Bus Network Overview

7.1. The Dorset Enhanced Partnership can be transformational with the right level of funding and the improvements will:

- Deliver a step change in bus provision for current new bus users
- Provide a high-quality alternative to car travel

Operators and the market

7.2. Market share based on the number of local bus services operated is dominated by both First Bus (37.5%) and Go-Ahead subsidiaries (34.7%). Table 3 outlines the current (2021) market share.

Table 3: Market Share by Number of Local Bus Services Operated in DC

Operator	No Subsidy	De-minimis	With Subsidy	Total	Market Share*
First (All)	19	1	7	27	37.5%
Go-South Coast	16	0	9	25	34.7%
South West Coaches	3	0	5	8	11.1%
Dorset CT	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%

*Market share based on the total number of local bus services operated

- 7.3. Market share can also be expressed by the proportion of weekly bus miles operated across Dorset on local bus service work (Table 4). Through this, First Bus are dominant operating 58.21% of all local bus mileage.

Table 4: Market Share by Local Bus Mileage Operated across DC

Operator	Annual Miles	%age of Total
First Bus (All)	3,152,138	58.22%
Go-South Coast	1,844,136	34.06%
South West Coaches	373,058	6.89%
Yellowbuses	36,291	0.67%
Stagecoach South West	8,000*	0.15%
Fromebus	718	0.01%

Notes: * approximate figure provided by the Bus Operator

- 7.4. There is currently low-level competitive activity between operators on routes wholly operating within the Council area. Some competition occurs on cross-boundary services between Dorset and Somerset, and those operating to/from the BCP unitary authority area.

Local Bus Fleet

- 7.5. The total size of the local bus fleet across The Plan area is 120 vehicles (based on peak vehicle requirements) with an overall average age of 11 years.
- 7.6. First Bus operate 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 vehicle types, which have either operated from new or been bought second-hand. These also have an average age of 11 years old.
- 7.7. The local bus fleet across Dorset is of mid-level standard. Only two buses are one-year old or less and there are currently no zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) in operation across the council area. At present, 9% of buses meet the latest Euro VI diesel low emission standards with a further 52% meeting to Euro V standard. Table 4 summarises the key characteristics of the local bus fleet.

Table 4: 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%

7.8. Table 5 shows the bus vehicle fleet by operator and indicates potential to green the fleet through retrofit upgrades to Euro V/VI for around 40% of the fleet.

Table 5: Dorset Bus Fleet Analysis by Local Bus Operator

Operator	Fleet Total	Ave. Age	Euro VI	Euro V	Euro IV or less
First Hampshire & Dorset	67	11	6	39	22
Go-South Coast	28	11	0	13	15
South West Coaches	15	11	2	5	8
Yellowbuses	4	9	3	0	1
Dorset CT	5	10	0	5	0
Beaminster Bus	1	13	0	0	1
Total	120	11	11	62	47

Factors affecting the local bus market

7.9. There are several factors which are considered will affect, or have the potential to affect, the local bus market over the life of The Plan:

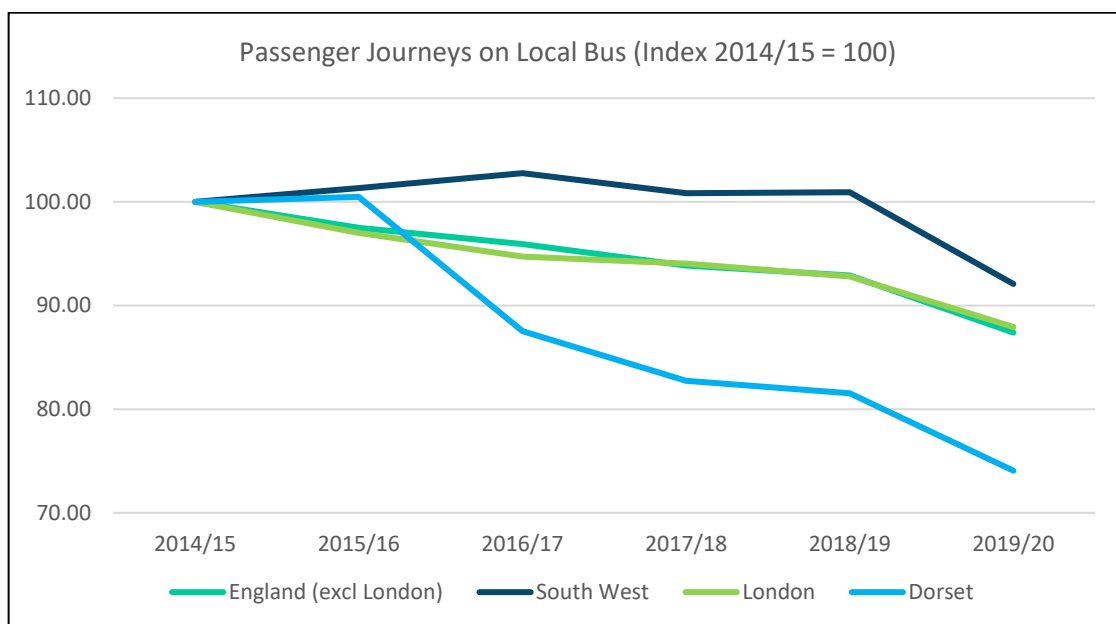
- Population density of 152 people/km² is one of the lowest in England.
- A rural council with a highly dispersed population of 367,480 over 2,491km².
- Many rural communities are within top 20% most deprived deciles for geographical access to essential services.
- 84.5% of households have access to one or more cars (vs. 74% in England).
- Dorset has the 3rd lowest bus use per population in the South West region.
- There has been a 20% decline in local bus patronage over the last 10 years.

- 46% of local bus passenger journeys used concessionary travel passes.
 - 9km operate commercially for every 1km supported (England is 7:1).
 - Only 3% of commuter journeys across Dorset are made by bus (vs. 76% car).
 - Around 55% of local bus distance occurs between 9am and 4pm.
 - The top five performing routes carry 57% of all local bus passenger journeys.
 - Dorset's aging population puts pressure on local service commercial viability
 - Average parking charges are low making bus travel financially unattractive
 - A complex fares and ticketing system set against the low parking charges
 - A requirement to continue to decarbonise and modernise the bus fleet
 - A requirement for bus services to connect better with rail and coach modes
 - A requirement for bus services to connect new housing and job opportunities
 - The cost of transport being a barrier for young people in deprived communities and/or low paid jobs, particularly if seeking work or starting new employment
- 7.10. There are several primary and secondary towns situated across Dorset, mostly around the periphery of the council area surrounding a deeply rural heartland. These towns are generally well connected by the highway network (all A roads given Dorset has no Motorways) and provide an opportunity for a core local bus network to develop along key axes. However, there is a notable influence of the BCP urban network on services within South East Dorset and the BCP hinterland towns relative to the more rural areas across the wider Dorset area.
- 7.11. The local rail network is somewhat limited and operates along the northern, western, and southern edges of the council area. The current local bus network could do more to provide regular and reliable connections to the rail stations across the Council area and which provide strategic links to locations across the South West and England.
- 7.12. Congestion levels are high in several town centres and this is forecast to increase over the lifetime of The Plan, justifying bus priority interventions planned in the BSIP.

Patronage

- 7.13. The number of bus trips in Dorset has been falling consistently over several years, from 10.0 million (2014/15) to 8.2 million (2018/19) and then 7.6 million (2019/20), when the Covid-19 pandemic started to influence travel.
- 7.14. On average, Dorset's residents make fewer bus journeys per year (20.8) versus the South West average (38.9).
- 7.15. As an index, patronage in Dorset has fallen by c.26% over the last five years, at a notably faster rate of decline versus England, London, and the South West, despite enjoying a relatively stable commercial network. Figure 2 suggests the local bus market in Dorset needs significant revitalisation.

Figure 2: Journeys on Local Bus Services (Indexed) 2014/15 to 2019/20



Source: Bus Statistics Gov.UK (Table BUS0109)

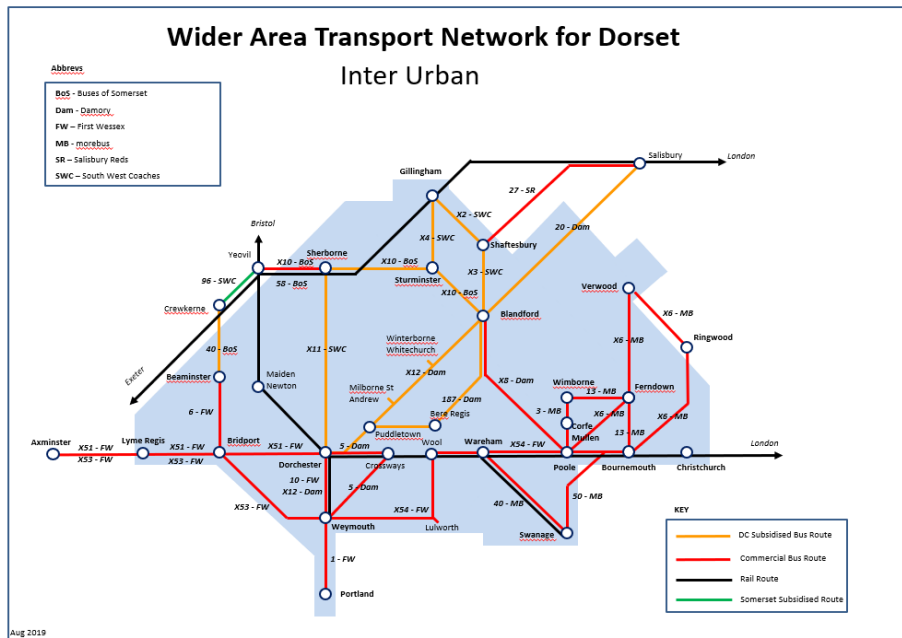
- 7.16. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on bus patronage and all other forms of transport as several restrictions on movement and social interaction were implemented by Government to protect public health.
- 7.17. Patronage has progressively improved as of September 2021 but nationally only sits at most 80% of normally observed levels based on local DfT data.
- 7.18. Continued uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic is still affecting the industry and has seen longer term changes to former established patterns. Across The Scheme area it is felt that local bus passengers will not return to pre-pandemic levels for another 12 to 18 months. As such, The Plan and The Scheme will take account of this and see actions to quickly attract former and new passengers back to 'bus'. Much of this will be dependent on future BSIP funding in addition to any further revenue support mechanisms put in place at a local or national level. Where provided, however, these would provide a strong platform for achieving our shared ambitions for long-term sustainable growth through the Enhanced Partnership.

Network offering

- 7.19. Detailed analysis of the bus network across Dorset has been undertaken to understand:
- Relative provision of bus services and levels of service (frequencies and spread of operation by day); and
 - Accessibility to a range of destinations including town centres, health, education, employment, and essential services; and the provision and adequacy of passenger infrastructure.

7.20. The core corridor bus network (Figure 3) connects primary and secondary towns with direct bus links, albeit at low frequency levels. Across these corridors and other new alignments there is potential to grow passenger numbers where a strong bus offer is delivered. Figure 3 outlines this current network.

Figure 3: Current Core Corridor (Low Frequency) Bus Network Across Dorset



7.21. Aligned to the Government's ambition for bus priority schemes, there is a programme outlined to deliver targeted improvements to prioritise bus within main Dorset towns with a focus on two aspects:

- **Facilities** to make it easier for buses to travel into and through these towns, which could be physical, for example junction improvements and the introduction of bus lanes, or digital, for example giving buses priority at traffic signals; and
- **Measures** to improve passenger experience, for example improved waiting environments and real-time information underpinned by a Passenger Charter setting out expected standards of delivery.

7.22. This investment package is a fundamental component of the BSIP, and further detail is included in The Scheme.

Availability of Travel planning and Passenger Information

7.23. An online survey (Summer 2021) sought to understand how both residents and visitors obtained their information on local bus services (Table 6).

Table 6: 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	15	12
Other source not listed	3	1

- 7.24. These results demonstrate 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.
- 7.25. 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.
- 7.26. Mobile apps use sits toward the lower end of the ranking, with a quarter of both cohorts referencing its use. Telephone enquiries came lowest of all the publicly available information sources.
- 7.27. 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.
- 7.28. PlusBus is available at Weymouth (including Portland) whilst Bournemouth/Poole covers Ferndown and Wimborne Minster. Through ticketing is 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.

Brand identity

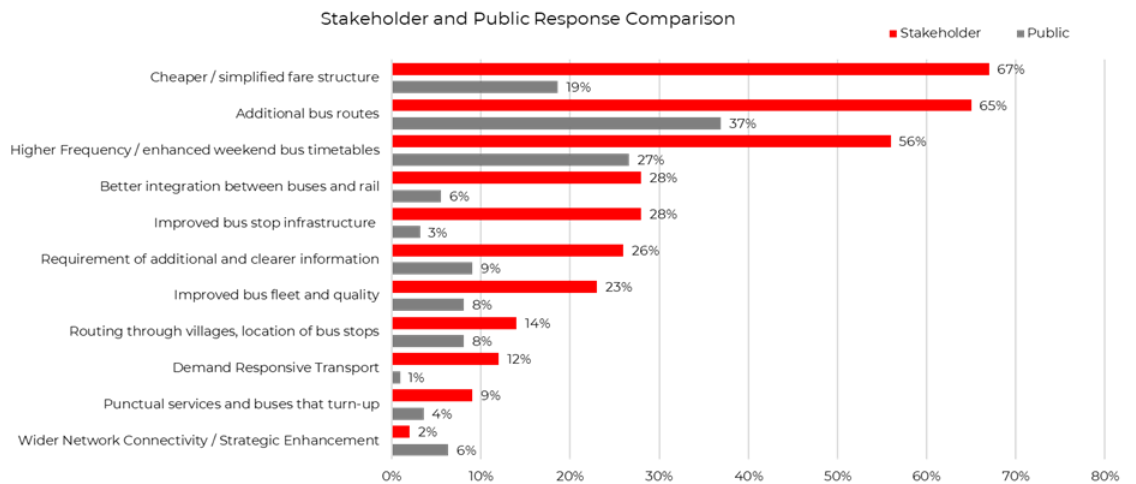
- 7.29. Once the core bus network has been revitalised and established, moves to examine the benefit of a more consistent network branding will be explored, building on and integrating with existing local identities.
- 7.30. A new 'Dorset Travel' portal, subject to funding, will be developed, placing public transport information across all modes in once location and link with an app for accessing real time information, bus ticket purchase, and live bookings and tickets for DRT. This will set the foundation to moving Dorset towards a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) model in line with current thinking and best practice across England.
- 7.31. A Dorset bus information and branding strategy, subject to funding, will also review existing at-stop travel information levels, plan a phased rollout of RTI at major stops/stations and interchanges and the production of a Dorset-wide network map

incorporating bus operators and rail routes as well as creating a consistent roadside experience for bus users.

The Passenger Experience and Priorities

- 7.32. To fully understand the key issues and priorities across Dorset, engagement activity has taken place with a large group of stakeholders and the public.
- 7.33. Three rounds of engagement workshops were held with four main groupings, defined as:
- All public transport (bus, coach, rail, community transport) providers
 - Council representatives (Dorset Council Councillors, Town/Parish/District Councils, Dorset Council officers, and Neighbouring LTAs)
 - Local bus user and campaign groups
 - Business and other special interest groups (covering a range of user needs from key attractors to passenger generators such as FE Colleges, Local Businesses, equality and diversity groups, the youth sector, and support agencies)
- 7.34. An online survey captured the wider views of the public. The survey was live from Friday 30th July 2021 to Friday 27th August 2021 and returned 1,845 responses (96% were resident in Dorset).
- 7.35. All engagement activities provided the Council with a rich dataset encompassing a diverse range of views and issues to help inform the key priorities for the BSIP.
- 7.36. From the public online survey, only 29% of respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their local bus services. 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%).
- 7.37. 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/late evening buses' (30%).
- 7.38. 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%).
- 7.39. The three top categories amongst the public 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.
- 7.40. Figure 4 shows these responses and their order of priority.

Figure 4: Public and Formal Stakeholder BSIP Priorities



7.41. 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. The stakeholder groups 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 be ranked in order of preference against other proposed attributes outlined.

7.42. The key points from the overall findings for each priority were:

- 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 council area. 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 Dorset-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 Dorset and beyond.

7.43. In summary, cheaper, and simplified fares, additional routes, higher frequency and enhanced weekend services, better modal integration, clearer bus information, improved bus stops and vehicles remained the top priorities following stage two.

Bus Journey Speeds and Congestion Impact

- 7.44. Regarding average bus vehicle speeds, the Dorset network operates at a generally higher average speed across all road types. However, average speeds have gradually decreased in line with regional and national trends showing increases in car use. Dorset tracks the trend for rising car use across England very closely.
- 7.45. Data suggests bus speeds tend to drop in the peak periods and there is a progressive slowing between 0400 and 1800, consistent across all days. Average end-to-end journey times across the Dorset local bus network are typically under an hour. However, journey times in the midweek inter-peak period as well as the inter-peak and PM peak periods on Sundays deviate from this by up to 16% due to traffic congestion and consequent delays which can have a sizeable impact on bus journey times at these times.
- 7.46. Using detailed data analysis, routes, and locations on each route where hot-spot delays occur can be identified. This allows the development of strategies described later in The Scheme regarding interventions that will reduce average journey times in line with BSIP targets and which are designed to maximise passenger benefit compared to the intervention outlay incurred.
- 7.47. However, whilst the overall performance of average journey time is within the tolerances of the -1/+5 minute 'on-time' window, local bus service schedules already have resilience built in to cater for known local delay hot-spots. Furthermore, even with this built in resilience, up to 14% of analysed scheduled bus trips operate more than 5-minutes late. Both factors indicate that bus priority interventions may resolve

lateness outside of the -1/+5 minute window and could allow average journey times to reduce further where some obsolete timetable resilience can be removed - allowing the network to further lower its average journey times progressively through the BSIP.

Section 8 - Outcomes and Interventions to Improve Local Bus Services

- 8.1. Following detailed analysis of the current local bus network across Dorset, plus an in-depth engagement process, a set of key outcomes have been developed to revitalise the local bus market across Dorset and put the passenger first in terms of accessibility and confidence in the network. Table 7 summarises these required outcomes.
- 8.2. The objectives sit in parallel with wider plans to decarbonise the local bus fleet, bring parking and planning development in-line with local bus network design, and deliver the BSIP progressively with multiple partners representing a wider audience than just public transport providers.
- 8.3. In seeking to reverse decades of local bus passenger decline and see Dorset move up the rankings in terms of passenger journeys per head, delivery of the objectives outlined in Table 7 have focused on making the network more expansive, easy to use and comprehensible, more reliable, and direct, increased affordability, greener and cleaner; thus, delivery of these objectives will improve the overall quality and effectiveness of local bus services in The Scheme area.
- 8.4. The Scheme will provide the facilities and measures in detail to deliver each planned objective set out in The Plan (Table 7) and the accompanying BSIP. Using bespoke variations under the powers at Section 138E of the 2000 Act, The Scheme will become more refined in its approach to each objective over time as the partnership progress and known levels of funding become clearer through The Plan and The Scheme duration.

Table 7: Outcomes to Improve Local Bus Services based on BSIP, subject to confirmation of funding and feasibility

BSIP Del.	Required Interventions (Deliverables)
1A	Set increased frequencies across a core network of local bus services
1B	Set a daily core operating period and additional lower frequency services outside of these hours to provide more opportunities for travel across the day
1C	Provide a near turn-up-and-go headway on certain corridors
1D	Evaluate opportunities to reflect the DfT ambition for a hub and spoke network delivery including a focus on 'first and last mile' solutions, synchronised feeder and core network services to minimise journey times and creating interchange, and the incorporation of the community transport sector to provide feeder service capacity
1E	Explore ways to better serve rural communities through use of more innovative modes such as Digital DRT
2A	Identify locations for and create 'superstops' and mobility hubs where services can provide interchange
2B	Seek opportunities to better develop and deliver coordinated services and facilities between bus and rail services across Dorset
2C	Co-ordinate infrastructure improvements and RTI roll out along core corridors
3A	Co-ordinate all public transport information across all modes in one location
3B	Co-ordinate publicity and information, and develop Dorset wide travel brand
4A	Address delay hotspots through progressive increases in bus priority measures
4B	Develop Dorset Greenwaves through end-to-end corridor improvements
5A	Review the range of existing ticket products and target key markets through simple and value fares
5B	Trial flat fare town zones, and agree the mechanisms for an all-operator family / group ticket and support network wide fare capping
6A	Deliver a decarbonisation programme over 13 years
6B	Replacement of buses across the network as part of a progressive plan to move the fleet to zero emissions by 2035.
6C	Create a minimum standard (accessible, smart, safe, and clean) for buses across the Dorset local bus network.

Section 9 - Consultation Plans and Future Funding Arrangements

- 9.1. The Council's plans to consult users, passenger groups and interested stakeholders on how well The Plan and The Scheme are working by creating a Bus Users and Stakeholder group. Creating this group will facilitate continuous ongoing engagement and create a forum to report the views of passengers and third parties on the performance of the local bus network. The group will provide insight and ideas on how to improve bus services in the BSIP's geographical area, which in turn will help revise and reshape the BSIP's priorities over time and ensure that the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership continues to focus on addressing bus user's needs.
- 9.2. It is proposed that the Bus Users and Stakeholder group meets at least twice a year in line with BSIP refresh and progress reporting schedules and can also be convened at key decision points in relation to the BSIP and EP to provide input and advice on key plans and proposals.
- 9.3. It is proposed that the chair of the Bus Users and Stakeholder Group is invited to be a sitting member on the Forum which ensures the views of the group are expressed and have influence over recommendations made to the Board.
- 9.4. Further to regular consultation on the performance of The Plan and The Scheme, securing the right level of funding is also critical to ensure that:
 - Everyone, no matter where in Dorset, is connected to opportunity; and
 - Existing business can grow, and Dorset is able to continue attracting new businesses and inward investment.
- 9.5. The Enhanced Partnership Board will look to draw on multiple funding sources to deliver the desired outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, these may include but not be limited to:
 - Bus Service Improvement Plan funding allocation from Central Government
 - Rural Transport Fund (RTF)
 - Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) Fund
 - Town Funds (TF)
 - Future High Street Funds (FHSF)
 - Developer contributions (e.g., Section 106)
 - Reinvestment of operator revenue generated by schemes
 - Other external funding opportunities as they arise (e.g., with rail operators)

PART 2 – EP SCHEME

The Dorset council enhanced partnership scheme for buses is made in accordance with section 138g(1) of the transport act 2000 by:

DORSET COUNCIL

Section 1 – EP Scheme Content

- 1.1. This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an Enhanced Partnership Scheme. In accordance with statutory requirements in Section 138 of the 2000 Act, The Scheme document sets out:

Section 2 - Scope of The Scheme and commencement date

Section 3 - Obligations on the Local Authorities

Section 4 - Obligations on Bus Operators

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements

- 1.2. The Scheme can only be put in place if an associated EP Plan (The Plan) has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside The Plan.
- 1.3. The Scheme has been jointly developed by Dorset Council (acting also as the Local Highway Authority), relevant lower tier authorities and those bus operators that provide local bus services in The Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Transport Authority (LTA), lower tier authorities, and operators of local services to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of The Plan.

Section 2 - Scope of the EP Scheme and Commencement Date

Description of Geographical Coverage

- 2.1. The Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating in the entirety of the Dorset Council area.

Map of EP Plan and EP Scheme Areas

- 2.2. The map below identifies the geographical area covered by The Scheme. The area is the same as that covered by The Plan.

Figure 1: Dorset Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme Area



Commencement Date

- 2.3. The Plan and The Scheme are made on 25th April 2022. The Plan and The Scheme will be in place for 10 years from adoption (25th April 2022 to 31 March 2032). A full mid-term review of the effectiveness of The Plan (including its extent, objectives, and partnership governance) and The Scheme (including measures and facilities provided, and requirements imposed) and compliance of both with competition legislation will take place during the 12 months prior to 31 March 2027.
- 2.4. Progress of The Scheme will be reviewed by the EP Board on a quarterly basis and publicly accessible reports will be prepared on a routine basis (see Section 5).

Exempted Services

- 2.5. The following services are exempt from the requirements of the EP Scheme:

- a service which has part, or all its route registered as a local service in the EP geographical area, but where that part of its route is 10% or less of the overall route distance covered by the service from its service start to service end point.
- A service which is registered as a local service under section 6 of the Transport Act 1985, but which would otherwise be an excursion or tour within the meaning in section 137(1) of that Act is exempt from the headway requirements in section 4 of this agreement.
- A service that is specifically operating a registered service to/from or in connection with a special event (e.g., a music festival) or due to an emergency event or force majeure where the service in question is operational for up to but no more than 14-days continuously.

Section 3 - Obligations on the Authorities

- 3.1. Subject to the award of sufficient funding, the Council will provide the Facilities set out below. These will need to be varied to implement the Facilities, following discussion and agreement with the Board or by way of the Statutory Mechanism when funding for their implantation is identified.

Facilities²

- 3.2. The Council will provide, and where appropriate continue to retain ownership of and manage Facilities that may be developed as outlined below, or subsequently listed in later versions of The Scheme.

Better Integration Between Modes: Introduce a Bus Stop Design Guide, Mobility Hubs, Superstops and a Bus Stop Hierarchy Approach

- 3.3. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, seek to continue to develop the programme of targeted improvements across The Scheme area initially set out in the BSIP. This will include moving forward to organise bus stop stock into four priority tiers and developing a bus stop design criterion for each tier before rolling out required upgrades and improvements on a corridor / route priority basis aligned to other objectives listed under 'measures'. This will include the development of 'superstops' for coordinated bus to bus interchange, 'Mobility Hubs' for increased multimodal interchange, and feasibility work to address issues at any existing interchanges and bus stations.

Better and Clearer Information: To Develop Bus Information that is Consistent, Accessible, Simple, Clear, Coordinated

- 3.4. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, seek to develop a programme to identify and roll-out RTI at key locations across the local bus network in parallel with the organisation of bus stops into priority tiers and the following programme of works coupled to corridor / route development.

Better Journey Time Reliability: Bus Priorities to Ensure on Time Performance and Faster and More Reliable Services

- 3.5. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, seek to develop a programme of targeted bus priority improvements by undertaking feasibility studies across Dorset and developing detailed scheme designs;
- 3.6. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, explore the concept of 'Greenwaves' and will look to work with Operators and neighbouring LTAs to identify complete corridors where a package of measures may be created and delivered based on funding allocated; and
- 3.7. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, seek to pursue delivery of enhanced digital infrastructure, including Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) systems and digitally enabled information.

² Provided under s.138D(1) of the Transport Act 2000

Measures³

- 3.8. Subject to the allocation of sufficient funding, the Council will seek to introduce the measures set out below. These will need to be varied to implement the measures, following discussion and agreement with the Board or by way of the Statutory Mechanism when funding for their implementation is identified.
- 3.9. The Council will provide, and where appropriate manage, maintain, and take ownership of, Measures that may be developed as outlined below, or subsequently listed in later versions of The Scheme.

Better Network Coverage and Scale: The Council will seek a range of measures to meet priorities for a more extensive local bus network

- 3.10. The Council will seek to work with Bus Operators to explore opportunities to expand the local bus network, subject to available and future funding. In the meantime, the Council will use reasonable endeavours to manage and maintain the existing local bus network at its current level in close cooperation with Bus Operators.
- 3.11. The Council will seek to embed stronger sustainable transport accessibility into development planning processes and will work towards better engagement with bus operators at the pre-application and pre-master-planning stage;
- 3.12. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, explore opportunities to set increased frequencies across a core network of local bus services, running across a set daily period and supplemented by additional, lower frequency services outside of these hours to provide more opportunities for travel across the day and reasonably agreed with bus operators – prioritising those which have the most opportunity to become commercially viable in the medium to longer term;
- 3.13. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, seek to identify opportunities to move the current local bus network to a hub and spoke model, maximising the use interchange locations through any work that may be undertaken in delivering the 'Facilities' noted above;
- 3.14. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, explore ways to better serve rural communities, tourism 'honey-pots', and socially isolated communities through use of more innovative modes such as Digital DRT. It is envisaged such services would be integrated and coordinated with changes to the core local bus network;
- 3.15. The Council will work with operators to ensure services are designed to be specifically appealing to work age travellers, young people, family groups, and leisure travellers; and
- 3.16. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, explore the opportunities presented by Digital DRT concepts and applications in rural areas to understand the feasibility of using a combination of delivery models to provide greater rural accessibility. This work will look at, but not be limited to: smaller MPV style vehicles, evening and night-time services, delivery by CT operators.

³ Provided under s.138D(2) of the Transport Act 2000

Better Integration Between Modes: The Council will support work to create greater coordination between public transport services and access to trip generators

- 3.17. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, pursue the feasibility to undertake works at key bus interchanges to better facilitate multi-modal interchange where appropriate and linked to approaches outlined earlier in 'Facilities';
- 3.18. The Council will work with operators to ensure critical trip generators are better embedded into the core and feeder network patterns. Locations include but are not limited to: hospitals; further education facilities; shopping centres; major employment centres; and train stations;
- 3.19. The Council will work with train operating companies and Network Rail to seek opportunities to better develop and deliver coordinated services and facilities between bus and rail services across The Scheme area, in particular the 'Heart of Wessex Line'. This will need to be sensibly considered and realising that the bus is not subservient to the train and will require the positive input from the rail industry. Many routes serve not only several rail stations but also other destinations enabling people to arrive at the at a location at a time for work locally, for example as well as those undertaking longer distance train journeys and these local destinations should not be disadvantaged; and
- 3.20. The Council will seek to better embed the local planning process and parking pricing and capacity strategies into its approach to public transport provision to ensure priority is given to more sustainable modes.

Better and Clearer Information: Ensuring an attractive network proposition to new and existing passengers is presented

- 3.21. The Council will explore opportunities to bring public transport information together, using best practice from Bus Operators within The Scheme area (and beyond where appropriate); and
- 3.22. The Council will seek to review at-stop information levels and deliver standard information linked to the priority tiers for each bus stop. As part of this work the Council will seek to develop and maintain a single network map for use online and at-stop / interchange and adopt common network branding for all information presented to the public.

Better Value and Integrated Fares: The Council will support operators in enabling simpler fares and targeted promotions to drive growth

- 3.23. The Council will work with operators to ensure all local buses are able to accept contactless payment for all fare types by no later than 1 April 2022;

- 3.24. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, explore opportunities with operators to support, with revenue funding, targeted discounts on fares to encourage growth in key passenger groups, including younger travellers and family groups;
- 3.25. The Council will seek to work with operators to introduce multi-operator and through ticketing, with this seen as strengthening the core network offer and making interchange between the core network and feeder network solutions (e.g., Digital DRT) more attractive;
- 3.26. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, explore opportunities with operators to support, with revenue funding, reduced ticket prices on Park and Ride services, fare caps on local town networks, and reduced ticket prices and fare caps on core inter-urban routes with a view to these fare measures becoming self-supporting after an agreed trial period; and
- 3.27. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, make reasonable endeavours to consistently implement enhancements to the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) across Dorset if and where these do not currently exist either now or in the future.

Better Vehicle Standards and Lower Emissions: The Council will work with operators to enable targets for reducing emissions to be met.

- 3.28. The Council shall, subject to funding being identified, work with operators to explore the opportunity to electrify various parts of the local bus network, including but not limited to: the Weymouth Park and Ride and Town services; Bournemouth to Wimborne corridor, to test this technology in different operating environments;
- 3.29. The Council will, subject to funding being identified, explore opportunities to deliver Digital DRT services with zero emission buses which may be smaller, MPV style vehicles using plug-in charging technology;
- 3.30. The Council shall commission a longer-term decarbonisation strategy with a structured and costed delivery plan;
- 3.31. The Council will explore opportunities with Operators to set minimum vehicle standards across the local bus network to encompass areas in addition to emission standards, such as but not limited to; on-board passenger facilities; vehicle sizes and configuration etc; and
- 3.32. The Council will seek to explore and develop opportunities to bid for zero emission vehicles in partnership with Bus Operators from time to time as opportunities to access funding are made available.

Section 4 - Obligations on Local Bus Operators⁴

- 4.1. Subject to the allocation of sufficient funding, the obligations set out below will apply to local bus operators. These will need to be varied to implement the obligations, following discussion and agreement with the Board or by way of the Statutory Mechanism when funding for their implementation is identified.

Better network coverage and scale

- 4.2. Bus Operators will explore and where possible implement opportunities where current local bus service frequencies can be further enhanced and establish if such enhancements will be commercially viable or if they will require initial or continued funding through the BSIP to achieve. Where such funding is required, this needs to be at an appropriate level to guarantee the commercial viability of the service within a time period to be agreed and linked to the funding requirement;
- 4.3. It is recognised that there needs to be sufficient flexibility to allow Bus Operators to run services at the right frequencies to make them commercially viable, especially where funding may not be available or where funding may only be available for a limited time. When contemplating making changes to frequency of services included within the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bus operators will have regard to the views of the Board when planning to make any local bus service changes and will seek to work with the Council on any potential mitigations where frequencies are reduced due to viability; and
- 4.4. Where appropriate Bus Operators and the Council together will be required to make reasonable endeavours to operate even headways across corridors where two or more services combine and to coordinate timetables between services across the network to enable increased interchange.

Better integration between modes

- 4.5. Where possible (having regard to commercial and practical considerations and an approach where this can be achieved without worsening the offer to existing bus passengers), Bus Operators and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) will coordinate timetables between local bus and rail services where interchange locations are served as part of the public transport network;
- 4.6. Bus Operators should seek to make reasonable endeavours to allow flexibility to accommodate late local bus and heavy rail connections where possible;
- 4.7. When disruption (planned or unplanned) occurs on the heavy rail network Bus Operators will seek to make reasonable endeavours to coordinate services between themselves and work alongside rail operators to make special provision for services and capacity where this would benefit stranded passengers, building on existing best practice and arrangements already in place across The Scheme area; and

⁴ Under s.138C of the Transport Act 2000

- 4.8. Bus operators will ensure where possible, timetables are coordinated with other core and feeder network road transport services at agreed interchange locations to facilitate interchange. Operators will make best endeavours to allow flexibility for late connections where possible in line the traffic commissioner regulations.

Better and clearer information

- 4.9. Bus Operators will work towards a system of agreed timetable change dates across the local bus network in Dorset and significantly increased coordination with other local transport authorities bearing in mind the need for an agile approach to school and tourism related services to ensure a stable network that creates bus passenger confidence in the long-term.
- 4.10. Where deviation away from this approach is required by a Bus Operators to manage unprecedented situations that require the Bus Operator to make additional Bus Operator specific timetable and/or service level changes the Bus Operator will: notify the Board of their intentions; have regard to the views of the Board; will seek to work with the Council on any potential mitigations where otherwise any specific timetable and/or service level changes will be made.

Better journey time reliability

- 4.11. Bus operators will work with the Council to identify locations where journey time reliability can be improved through existing and future software systems including Traffic Signal Priority and identify a corridor approach to enable journey time improvements on key routes– including provision of before and after scheme date where available.

Better value and integrated fares

- 4.12. Bus Operators in Dorset shall, subject to being practical and funding being identified, investigate the simplification of fares and undertake targeted promotions to drive growth where additionally agreed exit plans are put in place between the Council and the Bus Operator when/if funding comes to an end; and
- 4.13. Remaining Bus Operators in Dorset will work with partners to ensure all buses used on local bus services will be able to accept contactless payment for all ticketing products offered.

Better vehicle standards and lower emissions

- 4.14. Bus operators in Dorset will work with the Council to establish a minimum vehicle standard for use across the local bus network. Facets of this standard will relate to, but not be limited to: emission standards, CCTV, on-board passenger facilities (e.g., WiFi, USB ports); heating and cooling systems, audio visual passenger systems, and ticketing systems.

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements

5.1. The Enhanced Partnership will be governed by a two-tier governance structure.

The EP Board

5.2. The Board will oversee the delivery of The Plan and The Scheme. The Board has mandate to take decisions using an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation mechanism on recommendations put to them by the Forum, and other issues identified as being relevant to partnership delivery. Decisions taken by The Board shall have the effect of varying the Scheme.

5.3. Operator representatives will have membership of the Board. This will be based on market share defined as:

- Large = equal to or greater than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset
- Medium = equal to or greater than 2.5%, but less than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset
- Small = less than 2.5% of total registered mileage in Dorset

5.4. The market share for local bus operators running services in Dorset is provided in Annex D. Operator market share will be reassessed on an annual basis or when service changes are registered. The next review should be completed by 1st April 2023.

5.5. Terms of reference in place at the date of this Scheme are provided in Annex E, these shall be amended and updated in accordance with their terms as required.

The EP Forum

5.6. The Board is supported in its decision making by the Enhanced Partnership Forum.

5.7. The core members will comprise:

- All bus operators running qualifying Bus Services (as defined in the Transport Act 2000) excluding excepted services detailed in section 2 of the Scheme.
- All Community Transport operators
- Dorset Council (Officers from the Dorset Travel, Highways, and Planning)
- All neighbouring LTAs (BCP, Devon, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire)
- All train operating companies serving Dorset
- Express Coach Operators
- Chair of the Bus User and Stakeholder Group

5.8. Other groups/stakeholders can be invited to join the Forum and this could include business groups and other public service providers.

5.9. Terms of reference in place at the date of this Scheme are provided in Annex F, these shall be amended and updated as required.

5.10. The Forum shall create working groups in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

Bus User and Stakeholder Group

5.11. A supporting Bus User and Stakeholder (BUS) Group will represent the views of a wider group of representatives including passengers. This group should be as wide-ranging as it needs to be to be effective but should include:

- Passenger / Transport Action groups
- Business groups
- Disability and access groups
- Voluntary / community groups
- Education sector
- Tourism sector
- Health sector
- Other interest groups as appropriate

5.12. The BUS group should seek and report the views of passengers and third parties on the performance of bus services locally and to facilitate the exchange of views, data and ideas on how to improve bus services in the BSIP's geographical area.

5.13. The BUS Group will be chaired by the Council Cabinet Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours. The BUS group Chair will be invited to sit on The Forum to ensure that the views of passengers, the wider public and stakeholders can be regularly fed into the Forum to consider and propose recommendations on how issues can be addressed through the EP scheme.

5.14. The BUS Group will meet twice a year convened at key BSIP review and refresh points to provide input and advice.

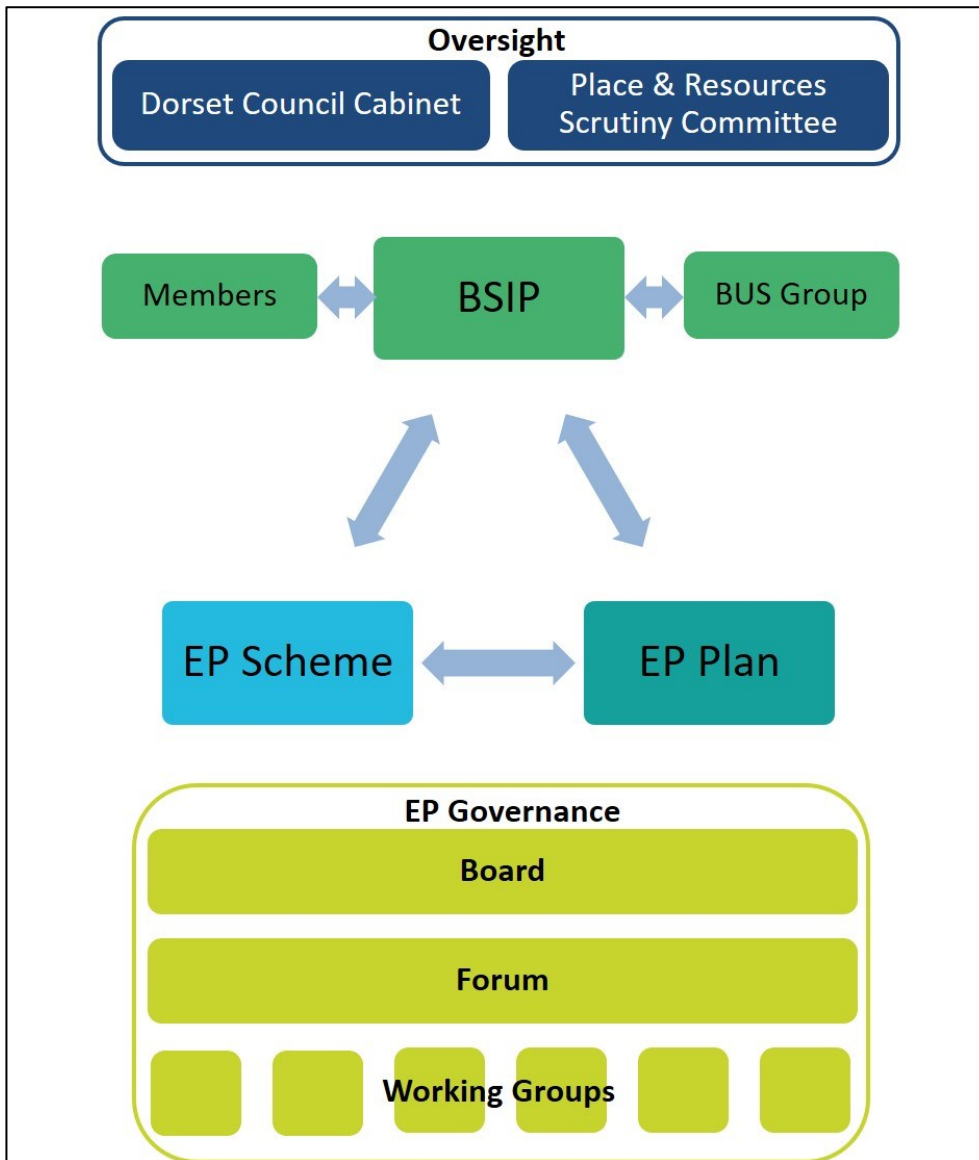
Overview and Scrutiny

5.15. There will be oversight of the Enhanced Partnership from the Dorset Council Cabinet, and the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Structure

5.16. The structure of this governance is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Enhanced Partnership Governance Structure



Review of EP Scheme

- 5.17. Once The Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by The Board every six months following publication of data on progress towards targets, as required by the BSIP – this will ensure any necessary action is taken to deliver the targets set out in the BSIP. The Council will initiate each review.
- 5.18. The Board can also decide to review specific elements of the scheme on an ad-hoc basis. Board members should contact the Council using the following email address busbackbetter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk explaining what the issue is and its urgency. The Council will then decide whether to table at the next scheduled meeting or make arrangements for all or the necessary Board members to gather more quickly.

Bespoke Arrangements for Varying or Revoking the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

- 5.19. Under powers at s.138E of the Transport Act 2000, Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations where this section is quoted will be subject to the bespoke voting mechanism set out in the Terms of Reference for the Board and Forum.
- 5.20. Variations to the Obligations of Authorities (Part 3 of this Scheme) or Obligations of Bus Operators (Part 4 of this Scheme) may be made in accordance with the Board Terms of Reference as an exercise of the power under s.138E of the Transport Act 2000 and without reference to the statutory variation process.
- 5.21. Any tendered service on which the tendering authority takes the revenue risk will not be subject to the Operator Objection mechanism, consistent with The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018 or approval by the Board.

Revocation of an EP Scheme

- 5.22. If Dorset Council or another member of the EP Forum believes it is necessary to revoke The Scheme, the EP Board will be reconvened. If the decision is taken to revoke The Scheme Dorset Council will follow the legislative procedures for revocation.
- 5.23. If at any point in the future, any area covered by The Scheme is included in a bus franchising scheme, the relevant requirements set out in The Scheme document will cease to apply to areas covered by the franchising scheme, in line with the arrangements set out in the franchising scheme.⁵

Data sharing

- 5.24. Members of the Board and the Forum must respect the confidentiality of any data or other information that is shown to them in confidence as part of their membership of the Board and Forum. This also extends to the Bus User and Stakeholder (BUS) Group and any permanent or temporary working groups linked to the Forum.
- 5.25. Information shared shall only be used by the Members for the purpose for which it was disclosed and shall not share this information with any individual or party outside of the Board or Forum except with the express permission of the information owner or where required by law.
- 5.26. This provision shall not apply to:
- information which is readily available in the public domain;
 - any other department, office or agency of the government provided that the Council informs the recipient of the duty of confidence owed in respect of the information.

Freedom of Information

⁵ Section 123H(6)-(8) of the Transport Act 2000

5.27. The Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The Council shall disclose information in accordance with these laws, and shall endeavour to notify the information owner prior to disclosure where possible.

Data Protection Legislation

5.28. All Members of the Board, Forum (including working groups) and the BUS Group shall comply with the provisions of data protection legislation including, but not limited to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

Annex A Schedule of Facilities

Annex B Schedule of Measures

Annex C Scheme Targets

The targets shown in table C1 and C2 are an Annex to The Scheme. Future targets will be confirmed once the BSIP funding outcome is known from DfT and appropriate targets will then be finalised for each funded area.

Table C1 – Scheme Targets

KPI	Target Description	Metric	2019/20 (Baseline)	By 2027	By 2032
T1	Reduction in journey times on the core bus network	Average peak journey times to urban centres on core bus corridors.	Route Dependent		
T2	Bus Punctuality & Reliability	% of buses operating on time (-1 minute to +5 minute window).	66%		
T3	Number of people travelling by bus in the Dorset area	Recorded passenger journeys per annum	7.6 million		
T4	Bus mode share	Mode share of peak time journeys to urban centres taken from annual cordon surveys undertaken for Weymouth and Ferndown.	20% (Town Cordons)		
T5	Local bus fleet – better standards and lower emissions	Percentage of vehicles in the bus fleet which are Euro VI or zero emission buses.	0% ZEB's 9% Euro VI		
T6	Core network mileage operated	Distance operated on core bus network (Commercial & Supported) Services.	6.9 million kms		
T7	Accessibility of local bus network through DDRT	Proportion of the Dorset local population within a 400-metre walking distance of a core bus and DDRT service.	70%		
T8	Rail services connected by bus	Better Integration Between Modes. Timetabled connections arriving or departing within 15 minutes.	60		

Table C2 - Customer Satisfaction Targets

KPI	Metric	2019/20 Baseline	By 2027	By 2032
C1	With bus services	51%		
C2	With buses arriving on time	60%		
C3	With bus frequency	50%		
C4	With the number of bus stops	64%		
C5	With the amount of information	55%		
C6	With clarity of information	57%		
C7	With accuracy of information	59%		
C8	With ease of use / finding information	52%		
C9	With reliability of RTI	54%		
C10	With fares	50%		
C11	With perception of Personal Safety	68%		

Annex D Categorisation and List of Large, Medium and Small Operators

Based on 2021 market share.

Large (Equal to or greater than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset)

First Bus (First Wessex and Buses of Somerset)

Go South Coast (More, Damory, Salisbury Reds)

Medium (Equal to or greater than 2.5%, but less than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset)

South West Coaches

Small (Less than 2.5% of total registered mileage in Dorset)

Yellowbuses

Stagecoach South West

Fromebus

Annex E Enhanced Partnership Board Initial Terms of Reference

1. Committee Name

1.1. Dorset Enhanced Partnership Board (The Board)

2. Type

2.1. Decision making Board overseeing the delivery of Dorset Enhanced Partnership Plan (The Plan) and Scheme (The Scheme).

3. Purpose

3.1. Established by the Enhanced Partnership with the mandate to take decisions using an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation mechanism on recommendations put to them by the Forum, and other issues identified as being relevant to partnership delivery.

3.2. The Board will be the decision-making body of the Enhanced Partnership.

4. Scope

4.1. The Board is required to make key decisions to deliver the Plan and outcomes and interventions listed in section 8 of the Plan.

4.2. It is not within the scope of the Board to discuss bus operational issues.

5. Authority

5.1. Decisions

5.1.1. All matters put forward by the Forum will be considered by the Board.

5.1.2. The Chair will decide how matters will be presented to the Board, either as matters for discussion or matters for a vote.

5.1.3. The Board should aim to come to a consensus view if possible and acknowledge any areas of difference of opinion regarding the delivery of the Plan and Scheme as per the scope set out in paragraph 4.1.

5.1.4. Decisions taken by a vote of the Board shall have the effect of varying the Scheme.

5.1.5. Decisions taken by the Board must be voted for unanimously.

5.1.6. Where matters are presented to the Board for discussion, the Board shall come to a consensus view and feedback this view to the Forum.

5.1.7. The Council will have the power of veto regarding decisions in the following areas:

- 5.1.7.1. Where in the Council's view, the proposal would put it in breach of any of its statutory duties.
- 5.1.7.2. Where the financial level of variation to proposed funding exceeds £50,000.
- 5.1.7.3. To prevent an individual operator to influence the Enhanced Partnership to its own commercial benefit or to harm competitors.
- 5.1.7.4. Where it is believed or suspected as having anti-competitive implications or being significantly against the public interest.

5.2. Approval

- 5.2.1. The Board must consider, and may approve, amend, or reject recommendations from the Forum. Where rejected, the Board must provide reasons for rejection to the Forum.
- 5.2.2. Final approval will be a matter for the Chair, using Dorset Council's delegated powers governance processes.

5.3. Recommendations

- 5.3.1. The Board may make recommendations to full Council or other relevant decision making group where a change is required outside of the scope of the Board.

6. Membership

6.1. The Board will be formed of a Chair and a maximum of eight members consisting of:

- 6.1.1. Three Council officers (Heads of Service for Dorset Travel, Highways and Planning)
- 6.1.2. Four operator representatives - 2 large, 1 medium, 1 small defined as:
 - 6.1.2.1. Large = equal to or greater than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset
 - 6.1.2.2. Medium = equal to or greater than 2.5%, but less than 10% of total registered mileage in Dorset
 - 6.1.2.3. Small = less than 2.5% of total registered mileage in Dorset
- 6.1.3. One Community Transport operator

6.2. The position of Chair will held by the Dorset Council Cabinet Member for Highways, Travel and Environment.

6.3. Operators shall be nominated and voted in by the Forum in accordance with the Forum's terms of reference.

6.4. Board membership will end if a member leaves their employer. A vacant operator position will be filled by a vote at the next Forum meeting in accordance with the Forum's terms of reference.

7. Observers

- 7.1. Any other Bus Operator, or Council representative can be invited by the Chair to attend Board meetings as an observer. Observers may be invited to make comments or ask questions at the Chair's discretion or invited to defer these until the next Forum meeting.

8. Quorum and Voting

- 8.1. A Board meeting shall be quorate when three operator representatives, and one Council representative from each of the services listed in 6.1.1 are present.
- 8.2. Decisions of the Board will be made by way of a vote through a show of hands.
- 8.3. Operator Board members who are not in attendance can vote by proxy. The proxy must be another Board member who must be informed of voting preferences in advance of the Board meeting. The Chair should be notified of the intention to vote by proxy and which Board member will be voting on behalf of the absentee.

9. Meeting arrangements

- 9.1. Board meetings will take place quarterly at regular intervals between each Forum meeting, with provision for additional meetings as required to take decisions which in the opinion of the Chair cannot be deferred to a scheduled meeting, provided that a quorum can be achieved, with not less than one week's notice being given.
- 9.2. Hybrid meetings will be held at County Hall, Dorchester, with Board members having the option to attend in person or join virtually via MS Teams.
- 9.3. Board meetings will be arranged, and minutes taken by the Council. Meeting length will vary according to agenda content but ordinarily expected to be one to two hours.
- 9.4. The Agenda shall be set by the Chair.
- 9.5. Agendas and meeting papers will be circulated to all Board members no less than one week in advance of each meeting date, and draft minutes circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting. Copies will also be distributed to all Forum members so any issues or concerns can be discussed with the relevant Operator representative, to be raised at the Board meeting. Draft minutes will be approved at the next Board meeting.

10. Reporting

- 10.1. There will be oversight of the Enhanced Partnership from the Dorset Council Cabinet, and Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

11. Resources and Budget

- 11.1. The Board is responsible for utilising and managing any funding made available through the Bus Service Improvement Plan to deliver the outcomes and interventions listed in section 8 of the Plan.

12. Treatment of Disputes

12.1. Disputes on 'substantive' decisions relating to objectives of the committee or which could result in a variation to the Scheme will be resolved through mediation. The Board members shall agree the appointment of a suitably qualified and independent mediator who shall set out timescales and processes for the mediation to which all the members shall comply to come to a mutually acceptable outcome.

13. Review

13.1. The terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis, or where there are changes made to the Plan. The next review should be completed by 1st April 2023.

13.2. Changes to these terms of references and the terms of reference for the Enhanced Partnership Forum can be made following the decision process in section 5.1 or by the Council.

Annex F Enhanced Partnership Forum Initial Terms of Reference

1. Committee Name

- 1.1. The Dorset Enhanced Partnership Forum (The Forum).

2. Type

- 2.1. The Forum will act as an advisory and engagement group feeding recommendations up to the Dorset Enhanced Partnership Board (The Board).

3. Purpose

- 3.1. To provide a coordinated Forum for bringing forward ideas, building consensus and making recommendations to The Board in accordance with the Forum's scope (set out below) including:
 - 3.1.1. future content and variation and revocation of the EP Plan (The Plan) and EP Scheme (The Scheme); and
 - 3.1.2. in response to the National Bus Strategy – Bus Back Better and the published Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for the Dorset Council area.

4. Scope

- 4.1. The Forum may develop and submit recommendations to the Board on the following themes:
 - 4.1.1. Better network coverage and scale
 - 4.1.2. Better integration between modes
 - 4.1.3. Better and clearer information
 - 4.1.4. Better journey time reliability
 - 4.1.5. Better value and integrated fares
 - 4.1.6. Better vehicle standards and lower emissions
- 4.2. All recommendations must set out how they relate to the Forum's scope and will deliver the outcomes and interventions listed in section 8 of the Plan through variation and revocation of the Plan and the Scheme.
- 4.3. It is not within the scope of the Forum to discuss operational bus issues.

5. Authority

- 5.1. Decisions

- 5.1.1. The Forum may decide to create working groups or special interest groups. These groups shall have a particular task or focus. The Forum shall determine the scope and process for these groups.

5.2. Approval

- 5.2.1. The Forum may approve the referral of recommendations coming from working groups or special interest groups up to the Board.

5.3. Recommendations

- 5.3.1. The Forum may make recommendations to the Board in accordance with these terms of reference.
- 5.3.2. The Board must consider the recommendations of the Forum and provide feedback on whether recommendations are adopted, amended, or rejected. Where rejected, the Board must give reasons for rejection.

6. **Membership**

- 6.1. Membership shall consist of all members, the Chair and Co-Chair.
- 6.2. Membership is for those groups who are interested in improving bus services and responsible for their delivery within the area defined in section 2 of the Scheme. The core membership will comprise of the following:
 - 6.2.1. All bus operators running qualifying Bus Services (as defined in the Transport Act 2000) excluding excepted services detailed in section 2 of the Scheme.
 - 6.2.2. All Community Transport Operators
 - 6.2.3. Dorset Council (Officers from the Dorset Travel, Highways, and Planning)
 - 6.2.4. All neighbouring LTAs (BCP, Devon, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire)
 - 6.2.5. All Dorset train operating companies (South Western Railway and Great Western Railway)
 - 6.2.6. Express Coach Operators
 - 6.2.7. Chair of the Dorset Bus User and Stakeholder Group
- 6.3. Additional members can be nominated by any existing Forum member and will be subject to approval by the chair and co-chair. This could include, but is not limited to:
 - 6.3.1. Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body
 - 6.3.2. Dorset LEP
 - 6.3.3. BIDS
 - 6.3.4. NHS / CCG
 - 6.3.5. Police and other emergency services

- 6.4. Members are expected to be actively engaged and to regularly attend meetings.
- 6.5. Members will initially be invited to join the Forum by Dorset Council. Once in existence, the Forum itself will be responsible for appointing or inviting members to attend in accordance with 6.3.
- 6.6. The membership of the Forum will be reviewed annually to ensure members are still actively engaged and all identified interests remain represented. Members not regularly attending, excluding operators and Council representatives, will be requested to leave and will be replaced on the Forum by another group to represent that particular area of interest.
- 6.7. The Forum Chair and Co-Chair will be appointed on an annual basis. Candidates can self-nominate, requiring support from at least one other Forum member. Both positions will be appointed on a one year term by majority vote at the Forum AGM. There shall be no limit on reappointment.
- 6.8. Themed working groups will focus on detailed workstreams which will be aligned to the outcomes and interventions listed in section 8 of the Plan.
- 6.9. Observers or experts may be invited to join the Forum by the Chair to advise on specific issues on a time limited basis or until a specific workstream comes to an end. They shall not have voting rights.

7. Meeting arrangements

- 7.1. Meetings of the Forum will take place quarterly, at least four calendar weeks before each Board meeting.
- 7.2. The themed working groups or special interest groups are expected to meet regularly (monthly / bi-monthly) to progress specific areas of work.
- 7.3. The final Forum meeting of each financial year will be the designated Forum AGM.
- 7.4. Hybrid meetings will be held at County Hall, Dorchester, with Forum members having the option to attend in person or join virtually via MS Teams.
- 7.5. Forum meetings will be arranged, and minutes taken by the Council. Meeting length will vary according to agenda content but ordinarily expected to be one to two hours.
- 7.6. Agendas and meeting papers (including a copy of minutes and outcomes of decisions taken at the previous Board) will be circulated by the Council no less than one week in advance of each meeting, and draft minutes circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting. Draft minutes will be approved at the next Forum meeting.

8. Voting

- 8.1. Each Forum member in attendance shall have one vote.
- 8.2. Operators who are unable to attend may nominate a proxy to vote on their behalf, other members may only vote if they are in attendance.

8.3. Recommendations shall be put to the Board when a minimum of 75% of voting members, including all bus operator representatives present, vote in favour of the recommendation being submitted.

8.4. A minimum of four Bus Operators and Council officers from Highways, Dorset Travel and Planning, and at least one neighbouring LTA must be present to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

9. Reporting

9.1. The Forum will report its recommendations to the Board quarterly in advance of each Board Meeting.

9.2. There will be oversight of the Enhanced Partnership from the Dorset Council Cabinet, and Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

10. Electing Forum Members to the Board

10.1. Each operator will be invited to self-nominate an individual from the company or nominate a willing individual for Board membership, to represent themselves and all other operators in their category. A ballot will be organised by the Council at the Forum AGM to select operators preferred board representatives.

10.2. Each Forum member in attendance shall have one vote. Board members will be voted by a simple majority vote.

11. Deliverables

11.1. The Forum is required to submit any recommendations to the Board following each Forum meeting.

11.2. Agendas, minutes, and all recommendations will all be recorded and held by the Council.

12. Escalation

12.1. If the Forum can't reach consensus and make clear recommendations to the Board, the Chair and Co-Chair are required to issue a report to the Board setting out the issue and highlighting areas of common ground and disagreement.

12.2. All recommendations are escalated to the Board.

13. Treatment of Disputes

13.1. In the event of a dispute, the Chair should endeavour to find a resolution that will benefit the majority of members.

13.2. If the Chair is unable to resolve the dispute it will be resolved through Third Party mediation to come to a mutually acceptable outcome.

14. Review

- 14.1. The terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis or upon amendment of the Plan. The next review should be completed by 1st April 2023.
- 14.2. These terms of reference may be varied by the Board or the Council in accordance with the Board's terms of reference.

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