



Enhanced Partnership Board Meeting
Thursday 15th May 2025, 10:00 – 12:00
Agenda, Actions and Notable Points

Attendees:

CHAIR: Cllr Lulu Bowerman (HCC)	Natalie Wigman (HCC)	Andrew Wilson (HCC)
Caroline Mekky (HCC)	Cllr Kirsty North (HCC)	Martina Olley (HCC)
Holly Brogden (HCC)	Richard Tyldsley (Go South Coast)	Simon Goff (First Bus)
Marc Reddy (Stagecoach South)	Tim Houghton (Community First)	

Apologies:

Cllr Nick Adams-King (HCC)	Geoff Hobbs (HCC)	Frank Baxter (HCC)
David Garney (SCC)	Andrew Wickham (Go South Coast)	
Robert Williams (Reading buses – representing other operators)		

Agenda:

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Actions from the last EP Board meeting (20 February 2025)
3. Important EP related milestones achieved since February
4. 2025/26 Bus Grant Funding
 - 4.1. Update on Capital and Revenue investment programme for 2025
 - 4.2. Draft 25/26 Grant Funding Agreements shared with operators
5. HCC update
 - 5.1. Update on HCC savings programme for 2025/26 – revised future approach to provision of local bus service information and publicity
 - 5.2. Devolution Priority Programme
6. Round the table updates (operators and CTOs)
 - 6.1. £3 National Capped Single Fare (Effective January 2025) – Initial thoughts on first 4 months
7. EP Work Programme updates
 - 7.1. Bus Route Investment Plans progress update
 - 7.2. Bus Station and Hub Audits
 - 7.3. Bus priority measures & studies update
 - 7.4. Northern Test Valley ‘Connect Transport on Demand’ update
 - 7.5. Gosport Travelsafe Partnership
 - 7.6. Transport Focus ‘Your Bus Journey’ 2024 survey results & 2025 update
 - 7.7. Widening of representation at EP Forum planned for October 2025
8. Summary of key points discussed at Hampshire EP Forum meeting (8 May)
9. AOB

Date of next meeting: Oct/Nov 2025

Actions

	Action	Responsibility
1	PTG to send Cllr Bowerman a copy of a draft Bus Route Investment Plan (BRIP)	HCC
2	PTG to explore the use of district council communication channels—such as council tax bill inserts, district newsletters, and printed leaflets outlining	HCC

	local transport options—to help reach older or digitally excluded residents. This will be progressed through the Enhanced Partnership Forum	
3	PTG to circulate the Hampshire 2024 Transport Focus ‘Your Bus Journey’ survey results to EP Board members	HCC

Notable points

Notable Points	
i.	<p>HCC gave an update on the following changes and milestones achieved since November:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed MoU for 25/26 funding and 25/26 BSIP Delivery Plan submitted to DfT • £13 million of new 25/26 BSIP funding was signed off by Cllr Adams King at H2050 Decision Day in early March and due to receive funding in June • Agreement reached with operators on service enhancements utilising 2025/26 bus grant funding & some of these have commenced • Northern Test Valley Connect Transport on Demand DDRT service launched in March - Launched in March, the service is performing well with a good mix of users and journey types. Cllrs North and Bowerman attended the launch, with hopes to return after three months for community feedback. A recent Community First event with Stagecoach boosted sign-ups. The soft launch allowed time to address technology, driver training, and app readiness. Continued promotion is key—through local networks, social media, printed materials, and in-person events, which have proven effective in raising awareness. • £1 single promotional fares on Andover Town bus routes extended to mid-July • Additional BSIP programme management staff resource in post supporting smooth delivery of the BSIP and close matrix working with Frank’s team.
ii.	<p>HCC gave an update on the DfT 2025/26 Bus Grant funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Capital and Revenue investment programme for 2025 – All BSIP+ projects (e.g. infrastructure, RTPi, fare and education initiatives) are on track. The full BSIP+ budget is expected to be spent by August, meeting DfT requirements. £13M in 25/26 Bus Grant funding was signed off by Cllr Adams King in March. PTG is securing spend approvals for revenue programmes (e.g. bus stops, RTPi). Staff are being allocated to 25/26 capital and revenue work, with additional programme management resource now in post. The Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Delivery Plan for 2025/26 is progressing well, with budgets allocated and early work underway ahead of DfT funding receipt in June. • Draft 25/26 Grant Funding Agreements shared with operators - 16 service enhancements across 14 routes have been agreed, with 3 launched in April. Commercial support has been approved for 7 routes. Draft 2025/26 grant agreements for First Bus, Go South Coast, and Stagecoach have been issued for feedback, with payments scheduled quarterly from July. • 2025/26 service enhancements - PTG outlined the grant process: operators proposed services based on projected viability, supported by passenger data and costings. Funding is allocated proportionally based on Hampshire mileage, ensuring funding isn’t used to subsidise unsustainable services. Public Transport and Enhanced Partnership forums have shaped priorities, with a stronger focus on market towns reflected in the 2025/26 plans. PTG is coordinating with corporate comms on a communications plan, with media releases scheduled. Bluestar in-person events are planned in Winchester and efforts are underway to showcase new Hythe B*9 buses. Operators will also promote enhancements through their own media channels. Cllr Bowerman recommended targeted district-level outreach to ensure residents are well informed. Community First noted challenges in securing parish funding for non-viable routes. HCC confirmed support through seed funding and capital contributions for community-led transport solutions within the 2025/26 delivery plan. While some areas lack services due to low viability, tailored, limited-day services were suggested where full provision isn’t feasible. As Cllr Bowerman noted, even 2–3-day services could help reduce isolation, with the understanding that consistent use is key to sustainability.
iii.	<p>HCC gave an update on the following governance initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on HCC savings programme for 2025/26 – revised future approach to provision of local bus service information and publicity – Consultation with 52 individuals and organisations was

	<p>undertaken to assess the impact of discontinuing printed maps and timetables and to identify mitigation measures. While the decision was broadly accepted due to financial pressures, key concerns included difficulty accessing information across multiple operators, digital exclusion, poor connectivity in rural areas, and the loss of a single, unified public transport overview. HCC continues to work with operators through the Enhanced Partnership to address these issues. Meetings will be scheduled to develop a 12-month marketing plan and explore BSIP-funded support options. Cllr Bowerman proposed using district council platforms—such as council tax bill inserts—to share bus information, particularly for older or digitally excluded residents. This could be explored further via the EP Forum. Cllr North emphasised the role of district councillors in bus-related queries and the value of strengthening these links. Suggestions included district newsletters and printed leaflets outlining local transport options, which districts could distribute at their discretion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolution Priority Programme - Devolution is progressing, though few mayoral candidates have come forward so far. A recent DfT slide indicates that under the new combined authority structure, local transport planning, bus services (including subsidies), light rail, and concessionary fares are responsibilities that they expect to see come under the Mayoral Strategic Authority. Meanwhile, local highway maintenance and traffic management and local plans will be managed by the new Unitary Authorities. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) remains complex, with more clarity expected by 26 September. Public interest is expected to grow as the impact on local identity and governance becomes clearer. External stakeholders are engaged, particularly around future funding and mayoral priorities. Cross-border collaboration is ongoing between Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight. A suggestion was made to hold a regional transport conference—separate from LGR—to support networking and collaboration across operators and authorities. Bus operators expressed willingness to input to this and Stagecoach noted that local authority boundaries are less relevant from an operator’s perspective—emphasising the need to focus on what works best for passengers, regardless of administrative lines.
<p>iv.</p>	<p>Round the table updates were given from bus operators, CT operators and Other Local Authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecoach South – Surprised the £3 single fare has not significantly shifted passengers to alternative ticket options. The £1 single fare in Andover has led to a 35% increase in patronage. BSIP improvements, such as on route 66 (Winchester – Romsey) is showing promising results with a 25% rise in usage, alongside other encouraging trends across the network. Further network enhancements are scheduled to commence in June and September (with enhancements already started on some routes in April) with anticipation for the Bordon launch on 14th June at The Shed. Fleet developments include 22 EV’s ordered for Aldershot routes (20 – Aldershot to Guildford, 1 - Aldershot to Camberley), with two NVA chargers secured at the depot, though further expansion is constrained by limited supply access from distribution network operators. Challenges persist with roadworks—both planned and emergency—impacting services, especially on route 13 (Basingstoke – Whitehill). Efforts are ongoing with the Enhanced Partnership Working Group and highways colleagues to improve coordination and direct communication between bus operators and HCC highways teams, particularly around scheduling. • First Bus - First Bus services were impacted by industrial action, now resolved through an 18-month agreement at Hoeford. Passenger volumes dipped in Q4 but have shown strong recovery through April and May, supported by improved punctuality—now at 92%—following February timetable changes. The Tap On Tap Off (TOTO) system is gaining traction, used in nearly 20% of journeys and up to 50% in areas with longer implementation, helping to speed up boarding. A revised zonal fare structure was introduced in January. BSIP enhancements continue, with recruitment progressing well. The EV rollout is advancing, with many vehicles in service for over a year and four diesel repowers now operating on key routes. Planning for a new depot in Hilsea is underway, with some delays due to land disposal, but expected to accelerate by year-end. • Go South Coast – Go South Coast reports strong overall patronage, though the £3 fare cap has led to a modest 2–3% reduction on some routes. In contrast, BSIP-enhanced routes are outperforming with 15–20% growth. Fleet investment continues, with 29 new vehicles for Hampshire this year—

	<p>22 already in service, including a significant number on the Waterside. Ten new vehicles have been delivered for the B*1 route, with five more on order to support a planned frequency increase by year-end. An additional seven large vehicles are expected in August/September for school and college services. Driver recruitment is underway to support service enhancements in Hampshire and Southampton from September. The £1 evening fare has driven 10–15% year-on-year growth after 6pm, reflecting a rise in evening leisure travel. Adult fare usage is increasing, while youth fare uptake remains steady. Full fleet electrification may face power supply limits, but near-term EV deployment looks feasible in next 2-3 years. Full depot capacity needs 4 NVA. There’s a strong desire to expand EV deployment in coordination with the port. The main constraint is not vehicle availability but depot capacity. Targeting EV rollout by 2027/28.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community First - Community First reports positive progress, with upcoming contract awards for September expected to support growth in Connect, Dial-a-Ride, and group hire services. Group outings have increased, and the Northern Test Valley ‘Connect on Demand’ service is performing well, with a similar model soon to launch under a new contract with Portsmouth City Council. The team is focused on flexibility and accessibility, with strong customer service engagement, particularly for users who struggle with the app. Recruitment and training remain strong, with ongoing discussions around MiDAS training opportunities. However, challenges remain, including the planned withdrawal of local bus services 44 and 74 in August due to funding cuts. While a potential solution is being explored for the 74, the 44 poses a greater challenge. Community First is engaging with parish councils and exploring alternative funding and service models, including reduced operating days, to maintain some level of provision.
<p>v.</p>	<p>An update was given on progress made by the EP Working Group (WG) on the following projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Route Investment Plans (BRIPs) progress update - Since February, six additional BRIPs have been completed, with 14 awaiting operator data—bringing the total to 27 once received. Plans are in place to secure passenger and punctuality data in coordination with the EP Working Group. Four BRIPs are in draft, with 16 yet to start. The £13m 2025/26 bus grant has expanded the work programme, which may slightly delay progress due to shifting priorities. Nonetheless, the team remains confident in meeting the year-end deadline. Completion will support investment prioritisation and implementation planning. • Bus Station and Hub Audits – In collaboration with bus operators, HCC will audit Hampshire’s 7 bus stations and 15 bus hubs. Depot managers will be closely consulted to ensure comprehensive coverage. The aim is to produce a costed improvement plan to enhance waiting environments, similar in format to the adopted Station Interchange Improvement Plan for rail. Audits are scheduled over the coming months, with an update expected at the November EP Board. • Bus priority measures & studies update – Work is underway to design a bus gate with a rising bollard on Fitzwygram Way near Leigh Park, Havant. Bus priority measures are being introduced at several traffic signals in Eastleigh and Fair Oak (B*2 route), as well as in Marchwood and Langley (B*8/9 routes), funded through the Southampton TCF project and expected to be operational by mid-May. Similar technology will be implemented at four junctions along the Stagecoach 1 route between Farnborough and Aldershot later this spring. A wider rollout of bus priority at 23 additional traffic signal sites across Winchester, Chandler’s Ford, Basingstoke, and Fareham is planned to begin in the summer and continue over ~nine months. In Basingstoke, design work for a contraflow bus lane on New Street is complete, with public engagement scheduled from early June to August. The Fareham bus station redevelopment is progressing, with architects appointed and work ongoing. For 2025/26, new bus priority studies include a proposed bus gate on the A3 southern approach to Ladybridge Roundabout (Waterlooville) and a task order in preparation for a new bus gate at Hamble Lane/Lowford Hill (Bursledon), benefiting X4/X5 services. The team is also currently sifting and prioritising deliverable packages from the Station Interchange Improvement Plan (SIIP). At Chestnut Avenue near Barton Peveril College in Eastleigh, the next steps for new bus laybys include completing optioneering and drafting a feasibility study, with resident engagement planned via letter drop and construction expected in 2026. • Northern Test Valley ‘Connect Transport on Demand’ update – A new on-demand travel service was launched in March in the northern Test Valley area, operated by Community First. The service

	<p>offers affordable, flexible, and convenient transport for rural residents, with minibuses providing pick-up and drop-off between designated bus stops in the SP10, SP11, and SO20 postcode areas. Ticket prices range from £2 to £5.50 per journey. Recent promotional efforts and initiatives have successfully increased both the number of registered users and daily passenger numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gosport Travelsafe Partnership - Using part of HCC's 2025/26 bus grant revenue, a two-year Travelsafe pilot is being developed to improve safety and address violence against women and girls in Gosport. The scheme includes recruiting six patrol staff, installing upgraded CCTV monitored by a central control room, improved lighting and introducing modular, easily repairable bus shelters along the Eclipse corridor. Local member engagement will be a key focus. • Transport Focus 'Your Bus Journey' 2024 survey results & 2025 update – Transport Focus published the 2024 national survey results in March, covering 48,000 journeys across England, Scotland, and Wales, providing a benchmark for passenger views on their bus journey experience . Hampshire ranked 19th out of 39 English LTAs for overall satisfaction. Local operator satisfaction was in the top 60%, with commuting and shopping as the most common journey purposes. Satisfaction met or exceeded the national average across most areas, particularly for driver performance and journey time. Overall satisfaction was 86%, with higher satisfaction for off-peak and older passengers. The 2025 survey is underway and hopeful satisfaction levels will reflect the impact of BSIP investments. The full Hampshire report will be circulated to EP Board members. • Widening of representation at EP Forum planned for October 2025 – PTG is broadening EP Forum representation by inviting a wider range of organisations to ensure key demographics are included and to gather broader feedback. Attendance records have been reviewed, and those inactive for over 12 months will be contacted. New strategic-level representatives were agreed at the May EP WG meeting, with invitations to follow ahead of the next Forum (Oct/Nov, date TBC). HCC will continue discussions with Community First to explore how their networks might support this work.
vi.	<p>HCC gave an update on other topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of key points discussed at Hampshire EP Forum meeting (8 May) – The forum emphasised the importance of accurate and up to date on-street information from bus and rail operators, particularly in Winchester, and called for a low-cost solution to remove outdated publicity materials. Improving connectivity was highlighted as key to increasing passenger numbers, with recognition that some routes may require multi-year investment to become commercially viable. Attendees expressed a desire for greater influence in timetable planning, leveraging their local knowledge of underserved areas—a workshop will be scheduled once the multi-year settlement is confirmed. Bus operators were praised for their openness and flexibility, with appreciation for recent inter-urban service enhancements in Bordon, Fleet, and Bishops Waltham.
vii.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
viii.	<p>The next meeting will take on place on Tuesday 11th November, 14:00 – 16:00 (via. MS Teams)</p>