



Enhanced Partnership Forum Meeting

Thursday 8th May, 1:00 – 3:00pm

Agenda, Actions and Notable Points

Attendees:

Andrew Wilson (HCC)	Geoff Hobbs (HCC)	Holly Brogden (HCC)
Caroline Mekky (HCC)	Richard Tyldsley (Go South Coast)	Adam Mugliston (First Bus)
David Garney (SCC)	David Airey (Bus User)	Stuart Jones (Bus User)
Andrew Broster (Gosport BC)	Mark Cohen (Basingstoke & Deane BC)	John Woodson (Bus user)
Emma Gover (Basingstoke & Deane BC)	Phil Gagg (Winchester Action on Climate Change)	
James O Neill (Stagecoach)	Cali Sparks (Eastleigh BC)	

Apologies:

Stuart Baker (Solent Partners)	Simon Rowland (White Bus)	Simon Fisher (Thames Valley Buses)
Dan Massey (Winchester CC)	Richard Gibson (Cross Country Trains)	Mark Miller (Hants Community Rail)
Rob Vince (Stagecoach)	Phil Dominey (SWR)	

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Actions from the last meeting (10 February 2025)
3. Operator bus fleet investment updates (Bus Operators)
4. HCC updates
 - HCC savings programme for 2025/26 - revised future approach to provision of local bus service information and publicity
 - Devolution Priority Programme
5. EP Board and Working Group updates including:
 - Time scales for service enhancement implementation for 2025
 - Promotional Fares initiatives
 - Bus Route Investment Plans
 - Bus Station & Hub Audits
 - BSIP bus priority measures & studies update
 - Northern Test Valley 'Connect Transport on Demand' update
 - Gosport Travelsafe Partnership
 - Your Bus Journey survey 2024 & 2025
 - EP Forum representation – plans for October 2025
6. Discussion/ feedback (All)
7. AOB and next meeting (2025)

Actions

	Action	Responsibility
1.	HCC to send meeting invitation to participants ahead of the next EP Forum meeting	HCC
2.	HCC to liaise with Network Rail and South Western Railway to seek to ensure that onward travel information maps at Winchester station are accurate about bus services to help encourage easier interchange between public transport modes.	HCC
3.	Work on the Stagecoach 69 Bus Route Investment Plan to be commenced shortly, in order to help inform ongoing discussions at the EP Forum regarding potential future revisions/ improvements to this service.	HCC

4.	HCC to circulate the Transport Focus 'Your Bus Journey' 2024 survey Hampshire final report to EP Forum members for information.	HCC
5.	HCC to share planned bus priority improvements and service enhancements in and around the Eastleigh area with EBC, who will then include this information in publications that go out to local residents via letter drops and social media	HCC
6.	EP Forum attendees to communicate specific long-term reliability issues to HCC, who can address this with bus operators during EP Working Group meetings	EP Forum
7.	HCC to invite EP Forum members to a workshop to get input into potential service enhancements that they would like operators to consider as a way of utilising part of future year BSIP revenue funding.	HCC
8.	HCC to invite new strategic-level representatives to attend the next EP Forum meeting planned for October/ November 2025.	HCC

Notable points

Notable Points	
i.	<p>The following operator bus fleet and passenger rail investment updates were given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go South Coast – Early observations of the single fare cap increase from £2 to £3 appears to have led to a 2-3% decline in passengers on some routes, but overall patronage is positive, with routes that saw BSIP+ funded service enhancements growing by 15-20%. Bluestar has received 14 new diesel double-deckers and 8 single-deckers, with 7 tri-axle double-deckers for college routes on the way ready for the new academic year. There are aspirations for electric buses, and progress is being made on Southampton's power supply issue, with a potential resolution in the next 2-3 years, down from 10+ years. A new DfT ZEBRA scheme is anticipated as part of a multi-year settlement which could see huge progress in this area. Meanwhile, the wider network will soon include 30 EVs in Salisbury and 31 on the Isle of Wight. Stagecoach – Stagecoach reports that the £2 single fare cap rising to £3 has led to reduced growth on long-distance routes, but fundamental commercial ridership and concessionary numbers remain strong. The best growth seen on the network has been after 8 PM and on Sundays, likely due to changing travel patterns i.e. less people shopping on the high street and more people working from home. 40 newer vehicles expected in the summer and electric vehicles will be added to the fleet in Aldershot and Portsmouth by year-end. Manchester cascades are starting to replace older vehicles, and more TFT screens and one-line displays are to be installed to fleet in line with the DfT mandating that all local buses and coaches in England must have visual and audible announcements by October 2026. Printed timetables are being reintroduced in Portsmouth and other key locations. Portsmouth network enhancements in April, funded by PCC and HCC, and Andover's new Sunday service on the 75 route are proving successful in their first few weeks. First Bus – First Bus has introduced 4 repowered (from diesel to battery electric) buses on the Solent network (E1 daytime, 9/9A, X4/X5 weekends) with plans to add more in the medium term as they prepare for the new Hilsa depot. Depot building work has not yet commenced, and the case for the depot rollout is being presented to the executive board. BSIP enhancements are expected from the end of August, with a few network tweaks pending confirmation.
ii.	<p>HCC savings programme for 2025/26 - revised future approach to provision of local bus service information and publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the impacts of HCC discontinuing the digital and printed local bus timetable publications it has produced and identify steps to mitigate any adverse impacts, HCC conducted a consultation, contacting 52 individuals and organisations. This decision was understood by those engaged with as a necessary response to continued financial

	<p>pressures. Key concerns included how easily bus users would be able to find timetable information online with multiple operators, digital exclusion for those without access to digital devices, data connectivity issues in rural areas, and the loss of a single public transport overview network map.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus operators continue to provide printed timetables and route maps at key hubs, online transport information via apps and websites, customer service phone lines for real-time information and printed materials whilst HCC continues to fund Traveline (phone line and online platform) for customer journey planning and provides a consolidated single location for all Hampshire bus routes (in lieu of the removal of printed area guides), and real time information (RTI) screens at bus stations, bus interchanges and busier bus stops. Further meetings are to be scheduled with bus operators to discuss their marketing programmes for the next 12 months and explore support options BSIP funding. • PG highlighted the need for accurate and up to date on-street publications from bus and rail operators, citing concerns about misinformation, particularly in Winchester. They discussed the necessity of a low-cost method to remove outdated publicity. HCC to talk to SWR to discuss what steps can be taken to improve the accuracy of the onward travel information poster at Winchester. SJ highlighted Policy PT2 in LTP4 that stresses HCC's commitment to create better co-ordinated timetables which support a more seamless travel experience between different modes and services. • It was discussed that that improving connectivity is crucial for increasing passenger numbers and some of the multi-year BSIP funding from 2026/27 onwards may need to be invested in timetable improvements on bus routes that will take longer to become commercially self-sustaining.
<p>iii.</p>	<p>Devolution Priority Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government run public consultation on the proposed devolution for Hampshire and the Solent area ran from 17 February to 13 April 2025, seeking input from residents and workers across the region on the potential establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority. Responses are currently under review. Elections for a Mayor are expected to be held in May 2026. For more details, you can find the Devolution FAQs here. DA recommended that HCC start to consider how cross-boundary routes may be impacted once the Mayoral Combined Authority is established, due to potential problems seen in London and surrounding areas, such as coordination issues and regulatory conflicts.
<p>iv.</p>	<p>A brief update was given on the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time scales for service enhancement implementation for 2025 – Utilising ~£2.8m of 2025/26 bus grant revenue funding, 14 services across the Hampshire network will be enhanced, including increased and extended daytime and evening frequencies, as well as new Sunday services. The EP Forum appreciated the addition of Stagecoach 69's extra morning service into Winchester and making Sunday service from Winchester to Bishops Waltham hourly, following discussion of this important inter-urban route at previous EP Forum meetings and the meeting with the bus operator about this route last year. Members were also pleased with improvements to services in Bordon & Fleet – not areas that have particularly comprehensive bus networks but stressed that Forum knowledge of unserved areas by bus in Hampshire could be valuable for deciding on future service enhancements or investments using multi-year settlement funding. • Promotional Fares initiatives - The Stagecoach £1 flat fare in Andover has been extended until mid-July benefiting residents using Stagecoach routes 1, 2, 3, and 4. Additionally, HCC is extending its contribution to Bluestar to cover the cost of offering a £1 evening single fare after 6pm for the remainder of the Bluestar network, up to 31st March 2026. The £1 evening fare is funded by Southampton City Council within their administrative area for the same timeframe. • Bus Route Investment Plans – PTG have made good progress with the BRIPs, completing an additional 6 since February. Currently, 14 BRIPs are awaiting data from bus operators, and once received, we will have 27 fully completed. We are actively working with operators to

obtain this data and have plans to prevent further delays. Additionally, 4 BRIPs are in the drafting stage, leaving 16 routes to be completed. As discussed at our last Forum meeting, the £13 million bus grant for 2025/26, expected in June, has expanded our work programme. This may affect the pace of BRIPs as staff resources could be redirected to more urgent projects. However, we remain optimistic about meeting our end-of-year deadline.

- **Bus Station & Hub Audits** – In collaboration with bus operators, HCC will be auditing Hampshire's 7 bus stations and 15 bus hubs. The goal is to compile a document setting out costed infrastructure improvements at these locations that will enhance the waiting environment and customer experience for bus users, similar to the [Station Interchange Improvement Plan](#) (SIIP) created last year for the 48 railway stations in Hampshire. Audits will be completed in the coming months, with inputs from bus operator local depot operation managers.
- **BSIP bus priority measures & studies update** – Numerous bus priority measures are being delivered or planned to be completed in 2025. HCC is designing a bus gate with a rising bollard for Fitzwygram Way near Leigh Park. Bus priority at several traffic signals on B*2 and B*8/9 routes, funded by the Southampton TCF project, will be operational by mid-May, with similar technology for four junctions on the Gold 1 route (Rushmoor) later in the spring. Bus priority at 23 other traffic signals (Winchester, Chandlers Ford, Basingstoke & Fareham) will be delivered from the summer over a ~9-month period. Various bus priority studies are in development; design work for a New Street contraflow bus lane in Basingstoke is complete, with engagement scheduled from early June to August. An architect is developing designs for a future rebuild of Fareham bus station, and the project is ongoing. Future plans for 25/26 include a bus gate on the A3 southern approach to Ladybridge roundabout (Waterlooville) and a task order for a new bus gate at Hamble Lane/Lowford Hill (Bursledon) to benefit X4/X5 services. The team is prioritising deliverable packages from the SIIP and progressing with Chestnut Avenue/Barton Peveril College bus layby plans, with different options looked at and a feasibility design being commissioned. Resident engagement via letter drop will be required, with construction expected in 2026 outside of term time.
- **Northern Test Valley 'Connect Transport on Demand' update** – The Northern Test Valley DDRT ['Connect on Demand'](#) service, launched in March and operated by Community First, is a pre-bookable, limited-stopping local minibus service for areas without other bus connections. It links around 350 bus stops and operates in the SP10, SP11, and SO20 postcode areas, with ticket prices ranging from £2.00 to £5.00 per single journey. Recent fare promotion discounts have increased registered users and daily passengers, with bookings growing from approximately 5 a day in the first week to around 20-30 per day by week five. The service is performing well, and usage is expected to continue growing. HCC and B&DBC agreed that the cost of running DDRT is high and although concessionary passes are not accepted on this service, single price tickets are significantly cheaper than the cost of traveling by taxi or Uber.
- **Gosport Travelsafe Partnership** – Utilising part of HCC's 2025/26 bus grant revenue budget, HCC is in the early stages of developing a TravelSafe partnership for the Gosport area which will be a two-year pilot scheme aimed to improve personal safety and security, including measures to help reduce violence against women and girls. Six uniformed patrol staff will be recruited, and improved CCTV and lighting will be installed. Different elements of the project are being delivered to different timeframes. Patrols are expected to commence from the autumn, subject to the procurement of patrol staff. Timescales for the installation of enhanced lighting and CCTV along key corridors are being firmed up. Additionally, new bus shelters will be installed along the Eclipse busway, from early 2026.
- **Your Bus Journey survey 2024 & 2025** – In March Transport Focus published the [2024 results](#) covering 48,000 journeys across England, Scotland, and Wales, providing a benchmark for passenger views on their bus journey experience. Hampshire placed 19th out of 39 LTAs in England (excluding Scotland and Wales) for overall satisfaction, with Hampshire bus company satisfaction levels in the top 60%. Satisfaction levels across the board met or

	<p>exceeded the all-England average. Further details can be found in the Hampshire 2024 end report, which will be circulated to EP Forum members. The 2025 survey fieldwork started W/C 17 February and will run until year end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP Forum representation – plans for October 2025 - PTG aims to broaden the demographic representation of the EP Forum while keeping it compact and focused. Selected groups, including people with disabilities, women, and young people, will be invited to review plans and provide strategic input. Invitations will also be extended to surrounding LTAs and district councils. New strategic-level representatives will be decided ahead of the Oct/Nov EP Forum meeting. EBC confirmed the partial reinstatement of the Disability Access Forum, with Eastleigh town council as the key liaison. This group could help HCC reach a broader audience or provide additional input if needed.
<p>v.</p>	<p>Attendees of the EP Forum provided the following updates and discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PG raised a question about the forum's role in decision-making, desiring more influence. HCC reminded members that their input has led to improvements like the Stagecoach 69 route and the geographical spread of 2025/26 enhanced services. Forum proposals for bus service enhancements on commercial routes will be considered once HCC has been advised by the DfT of the expected multi-year BSIP funding from 2026/26 it can expect to receive, and any proposals suggested by the Forum will need to be assessed by bus operators to determine if they would be able to be commercially viable. • JW raised concerns about punctuality based on an experience of using a B* bus route. B* responded that some delays are beyond their control, such as gas leaks and last-minute road closures, and they communicate necessary route updates or diversions through their website and app. Forum attendees to communicate specific route issues to HCC, who will pass them onto bus operators at EP Working Group meetings. • When DfT bus passenger figures for each local transport authority area are published later this year (around November), this will hopefully indicate if the BSIP funded service enhancements have helped increase passenger numbers compared to the data from November 2024. • HCC will share relevant bus priority improvements and service enhancements in and around the Eastleigh area with EBC, who will then distribute this information to residents via letter drops and social media.
<p>vi.</p>	<p>The next meeting would be held in October/November in advance of the next EP Board (date tbc)</p>