EVALUATION OF BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) PHASE 1 INTERVENTIONS

Interim report

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CONTENTS

Glossary

Term	
ABOD	Analyse Bus Open Data
ATCO	Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location
BFCG	Bus Fare Cap Grant
BODS	Bus Open Data Service
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan
BSOG+	Bus Service Operators Grant Plus
CAGR	Compounded Annual Growth Rate
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
CPT	Confederation of Passenger Transport
CRSTS	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements
DfT	Department for Transport
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
DVSA	Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
EP	Enhanced Partnerships
EV	Electric Vehicle
GPS	Global Positioning System
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
LSME	Larger, Small or Medium Enterprise
LTA	Local Transport Authority
LTF	Local Transport Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCA	Mayoral Combined Authority
NBS	National Bus Strategy
NECA	North East Combined Authority
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OTC	Office of the Traffic Commissioner
RMF	Rural Mobility Fund

Term	
RTPI	Real time passenger information
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
TCF	Transforming Cities Fund
UTG	Urban Transport Group
VfM	Value for Money
ZEBRA	Zero Emissions Bus Regional Areas

Executive summary

Introduction

Following the government's publication of the National Bus Strategy[1] (NBS) *Bus Back Better* in March 2021, local transport authorities (LTAs) outside London were invited to submit their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) to the Department for Transport (DfT). These laid out plans on how to improve local bus services over the period between April 2022 and March 2025. Following a review of BSIPs, DfT allocated over £1.085 billion of funding to 34 LTAs (7 of which were Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs)[2]. The scale of allocations varied significantly across areas, from just over £2 million to just under £165 million.

BSIP Phase 1 funding includes capital and resource expenditure. It sits alongside several other funding allocations that share the overarching aim of improving bus and local transport networks, and other funding allocations that could impact bus services or usage. These include the £2 Bus Fare Cap Grant (BFCG), the introduction of the Levelling-up Fund, the announcement of BSIP Phase 2, the announcement of the Bus Service Operators Grant Plus (BSOG+), and the announcement of the Local Transport Fund (LTF) for post-2025. Each of these is likely to affect bus services and associated infrastructure, creating a dynamic environment in which BSIP Phase 1 investments are taking place.

Monitoring and evaluation

DfT has commissioned Frontier Economics and SYSTRA to carry out an independent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the Phase 1 interventions from early 2023 to March 2025. This M&E programme consists of a process, impact, and Value for Money (VfM) evaluation.

To maximise learning in a proportionate way, monitoring data is being collected from all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding. This data focuses on four monitoring metrics identified by DfT as important indicators of progress towards meeting the aims of the NBS. More detailed process, impact, and VfM evaluation activity is focused on a representative sample of 16 LTAs. The LTAs have been identified in collaboration with DfT by applying selection criteria designed to reflect different types of bus interventions and a mix of socioeconomic and area characteristics in which they are being delivered.

[1] DfT (2021). Bus back better. National Bus Strategy for England. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better

[2] This was correct as of the time of allocation of BSIP Phase 1 funding but there have since been changes in the LTAs and MCAs. For example, North of Tyne Combined Authority and North East Combined Authority have merged to form one MCA, North East Combined Authority.

This report

This interim report provides an early update on the M&E programme. Whilst some BSIP Phase 1 interventions are already operational, the majority are still in the pre-implantation or early delivery phase, particularly those involving infrastructure. A full impact and VfM assessment is not possible at this stage. This report, therefore, focuses on the following:

- A **summary of the progress** made to date by the BSIP-funded LTAs on the delivery of their proposed interventions.
- An update on the **four monitoring metrics** (bus customer satisfaction, journey time, patronage, and punctuality) across LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding.
- **Initial findings from the process evaluation,** including findings from primary research relating to the design and delivery of BSIP Phase 1 interventions.
- **Emerging insights on the early signs of initial impacts** in 5 of the 16 representative BSIP Phase 1 areas, referred to as spotlight areas. These spotlight areas are Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Nottingham, Somerset, and West Berkshire and were selected on the basis that they have already started to implement some of their BSIP Phase 1 interventions.

This interim report will be followed by a full process, impact, and VfM evaluation, which will evaluate the BSIP Phase 1 interventions in all 16 representative LTAs.

The interim report draws on a mix of data sources, including qualitative data from 31 semi-structured in-depth interviews with operators, LTAs, regulatory and community stakeholders, alongside survey data shared by Transport Focus[3] and the LTAs; monitoring data as reported by LTAs or collated from the Bus Open Data Service (BODS); and secondary data from published sources, including DfT Bus Statistics and the Office for National Statistics (ONS)[4].

Monitoring

As part of the BSIP Phase 1 funding allocations, DfT identified four metrics that would be used to monitor progress and inform an impact evaluation: bus customer satisfaction, journey time, patronage, and punctuality. Pre-intervention trends for these metrics are summarised below.[5]

[3] Transport Focus (2023). *Your Bus Journey* 2023 results. Accessed at: https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/your-bus-journey-2023-results/

[4] These include the DfT annual bus statistics along with ONS socio-economic data on population and local economy make-up to provide context for each spotlight area.

[5] Monitoring data has, where possible, been collected from LTAs prior to the delivery of their Phase 1 interventions in order to establish pre-intervention trends and to inform the evaluation baseline. However, some of this period includes the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery. Between March 2020 and April 2022 bus services and patronage across the country were affected to different degrees. Time periods before the pandemic are not appropriate to inform a baseline because of the pace of change in local contexts, socio-demographics and transport systems.

The exception is bus journey times, as these are only available at an individual corridor level rather than across the whole LTA, and in many cases, interventions that would likely affect journey times have yet to be delivered.

LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding had broadly similar levels of customer satisfaction prior to the implementation of their BSIP schemes.[6]

The majority (19 of 27) of LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding took part in the 2023 Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey* survey to measure customer satisfaction. The highest overall net satisfaction for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding was 90%, the lowest was 75%, and the average was 82%. However, there has been a general reduction in overall satisfaction levels compared to 2019.

Overall patronage levels were 2% higher in December 2023 compared to January 2023, but trends differ significantly across LTAs, with some showing strong growth, whereas others remained flat or declined slightly.

Bus patronage is still in the process of recovering following the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the BSIP-funded LTAs, bus patronage in 2023 was between 63% (Hertfordshire) and 116% (Central Bedfordshire) of pre-COVID (2019) levels, suggesting variation in the recovery of patronage to pre-pandemic levels. There was no evidence to suggest that the degree of post-pandemic recovery was related to the prior levels of bus use (as measured by the number of bus journeys per head of population).

Punctuality continued to decline across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding relative to January 2022.

In January 2023, ‘on time’ performance was 74% across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding, compared to 76% in 2022. By December 2023, this had fallen to 71%. As many LTAs are yet to implement capital schemes aimed at improving journey times and punctuality, this can be considered a baseline against which to compare the effects of planned interventions. For the year 2023, potential explanations for the decline in punctuality relative to 2022 (a year in which traffic and bus patronage were still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic) could include the recovery in traffic, industrial action, and bus driver shortages.

Process evaluation: Early learnings from BSIP intervention design and delivery

In-depth interviews were carried out in Spring 2024 with key stakeholders to understand their experiences on the delivery of BSIP interventions. Interviews were carried out with delivery leads at LTAs in the five spotlight areas, along with four stakeholders working in local communities in these areas who support the delivery of interventions. In addition, interviews were carried out with nine bus operators delivering BSIP interventions across the 16

[6] Some LTAs may have had schemes that already started by the time of the 2023 TF survey although the impact of these schemes may not yet be reflected in the 2023 Transport Focus Survey.

representative LTAs, including some delivering services outside the five spotlight areas and with two regulators.

Self-assessment data provided by LTAs to the DfT relating to aspects of their BSIP intervention delivery were also analysed. LTAs scored themselves using a 'RAG' ('Red, Amber, Green') rating and scoring their 'likelihood of delivery' (on a scale of 1 to 9, with '1' being 'achieved' and '9' being 'on hold or discontinued') over the past year. This has been analysed for all 16 representative LTAs.

Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) have helped foster positive relationships with operators, but some challenges remain.

LTAs are generally satisfied with the progress they have made on BSIP delivery and the way their EP is working. Data provided by LTAs in 2023, in which they were asked to self-assess their capability in different delivery areas, found that 'Partnership working' was seen as an area of strength for 96% of LTAs who rated themselves '4' or '5'. Generally, operators welcomed EPs but noted variations across their operating areas in terms of levels of collaboration.

LTAs reported mixed experiences with operators. Many were pleased with the level of partnership and collaborative working arising from the EP. Still, others noted some challenges around data provision and feedback from operators on planned and implemented interventions.

Operators welcomed the BSIP funding, but some noted challenges around some interventions being specific to only some localities (e.g., some fare schemes do not apply cross-boundary). Operators also expressed a desire for a stronger focus on interventions relating to punctuality and reliability, such as bus priority and signalling upgrades, rather than revenue-based interventions.

LTAs and operators feel they are making good progress with revenue interventions. However, the practicalities of delivery and political challenges are considered to be slowing down the delivery of capital schemes.

Challenges were noted with the delivery of bus capital interventions. These were due to delays in receiving funding (some LTAs only received the 2022/23 funding in November 2022) and the number of components and variables involved in the delivery. There was a slight increase in January 2024 in LTAs noting their 'RAG' Rating (an assessment of the delivery risk level associated with their overall programme) as 'Red' (i.e., the majority of schemes are unlikely to be delivered in time, to cost and in quality due to major roadblocks). This mirrors early feedback provided by the LTAs as part of the stakeholder engagement in May 2023, at which point the LTAs had concerns about the feasibility of delivering in the timescales. Similarly, political issues (in particular, changes in administration and/or political priorities) became a more significant time requirement to manage than some LTAs had anticipated.

Delays in bus intervention delivery have been reported by stakeholders as related to various issues, including planning, procurement, technical/software/system issues, political issues, and adverse weather. Despite this, some progress has been made with pilot phases of signalling upgrades, and some reported ‘quick wins’ such as painting yellow box junctions and removal of overgrown vegetation, which can help improve bus journey times by reducing congestion, improving the overall efficiency of the bus service, and potentially improving the passenger experience. Overall, LTAs remained cautiously optimistic about the ongoing delivery of their capital interventions, although most anticipated them taking longer than planned.

Delays with receiving funding, as well as the time needed for internal governance processes, are considered to have impacted LTAs’ ability to deliver.

A concern was noted by a small number of LTAs that the funding allocation process led by the DfT did not appear to fully appreciate the financial situation of LTAs, which is that they are unable to progress interventions until the funding has been received (not just notionally allocated). Stakeholders also expressed concern that the timescales set out by DfT for BSIP Phase 1 delivery do not fully appreciate the time needed for internal LTA governance processes. For example, the production of the 2024 BSIP Refresh[7] and additional reporting requirements.

LTAs praised the helpfulness and responsiveness of DfT Relationship Managers, although both operators and LTAs noted the onerous data reporting requirements.

Positive feedback was received from all LTAs on their DfT relationship managers, all commending their responsiveness and helpfulness. This marks an improvement on feedback received as part of fieldwork for this evaluation in 2023, during which some LTAs noted slow response times and lack of support continuity.

Most LTAs found the quarterly data returns, which require them to provide data on the progress and spending of their overall programme and schemes, onerous. They noted that there had been errors in the spreadsheets issued to them for completion and changes in requirements each time. Similarly, most found the financial change control process onerous and would like a slightly higher level of autonomy, mirroring the sentiment reported in earlier engagement with LTAs in May 2023. Operators reported that data provision requirements were challenging. However, most stakeholders reported these things have become easier over time.

All LTAs participated in knowledge-sharing activities to some extent, and all found this to be a positive experience.

[7] DfT (2024). National Bus Strategy: 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plans. Guidance to local authorities and bus operators. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a6becf96a5ec000d731aa9/bus-service-improvement-plans-guidance-to-local-authorities-and-bus-operators-2024.pdf: On 16 January 2024, the DfT issued new guidance to LTAs across England on BSIPs. This guidance advised LTAs that they would need to publish an updated version of their BSIP by 12 June 2024. The guidance also makes it clear publication of the updated BSIP by this date is a condition of any DfT BSIP funding being made available to the Council in the 2024-25 financial year

All LTAs had participated in some engagement with other LTAs, for example, as arranged by the DfT Bus Forum, the Bus Centre of Excellence, and BaseCamp. Several LTAs also noted they work closely with neighbouring LTAs, supporting delivery and/or sitting on EP boards.

The experience of regulators differed. One had a good level of early engagement with DfT, and the other had no early engagement with the DfT.

The regulators interviewed noted that the additional resource requirement arising from the NBS had to be absorbed within their existing workload, sometimes creating capacity challenges. They also noted that their engagement with BSIPs/EP and the DfT was limited now that the BSIPs/EP are operational.

Impact evaluation: Early signs of local changes

Many of the BSIP Phase 1 interventions are in their early stages of delivery or are yet to become operational. Therefore, the impact evaluation for this interim report focuses on five spotlight LTAs, where some interventions have already been delivered.

Evaluation of impacts at this stage is not feasible (i.e., estimating the effect of the interventions relative to what would have been likely without the intervention) because even where interventions are already operational, many impacts are not likely to be observable in the data. Therefore, insights on impacts at this stage are drawn primarily from LTA and community stakeholder perceptions of local changes. These perceptions will be revisited and corroborated with the data in the final evaluation, likely in 2025.

The majority of schemes implemented to date are revenue-funded.

Given the extended implementation period required for capital-funded schemes, such as bus priority interventions, most interventions completed at this stage are revenue-funded. Across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, 36% of the ‘planned route, timetabling, and brand’ interventions and 35% of the ‘fare and ticketing’ interventions have been either fully or partially delivered. In comparison, only 5% of the planned ‘bus priority infrastructure’ schemes have been delivered or are partially delivered.

Several LTAs said interventions would not have been possible without BSIP Phase 1 funding, and some services were otherwise at risk of being discontinued.

LTAs in four of the five spotlight areas explicitly stated that their BSIP interventions would not have been possible without BSIP Phase 1 funding. Furthermore, Nottingham has used BSIP Phase 1 funding to maintain existing services that were otherwise at risk of being discontinued. This suggests that not all interventions delivered to date could be expected to enhance existing services as they aim to maintain services that might otherwise have been reduced and to support their long-term sustainability.

LTA perceptions of patronage impacts from new services are generally positive, but feedback from community stakeholders is mixed.

Given the early stage of BSIP Phase 1 delivery, it is unlikely that any patronage changes will be observable in the LTA-wide patronage data. Impacts are likely to be discernible at the route/corridor level before any potential broader shift in LTA-wide patronage data. Feedback from LTAs and other community stakeholders on the early impacts of service enhancements has, therefore, been collated via in-depth interviews.

LTAs had a generally positive perception of early patronage impacts, with all five spotlight LTAs reporting they had seen patronage growth on newly enhanced services. However, feedback from community stakeholders across different LTAs was more mixed, with one community stakeholder reporting limited awareness of the changes.

The £2 bus fare cap is perceived to have impacted the take-up of the bus fare and ticketing schemes. However, this impact may be lower on more targeted local bus fare schemes.

LTAs felt that the national scheme had an adverse impact on awareness of local schemes and the average savings available. One LTA had a positive view, expressing that the £2 bus fare cap scheme applies to single tickets, and their fare scheme complemented this as it is currently only available on day and period tickets.

Early perceptions of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes suggest that they are being used by students as well as older concessionary fare users.

Both LTA representatives from Hertfordshire and West Berkshire noted that a large proportion of DRT users were concessionary fare users, including older people and college students, suggesting that these services provide social value. LTA representatives from Hertfordshire also felt that the DRT service was particularly valuable for connecting rural areas.

Next steps

This interim report has provided an update on the evaluation activity to date, though many BSIP interventions have yet to be delivered or are only partially delivered at this time. It will be followed by a final evaluation report, likely in 2025. This will present the final process and impact evaluation of the BSIP interventions across all 16 representative LTAs. It will also include a VfM assessment.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The government published its National Bus Strategy (NBS) *Bus Back Better* in March 2021.[8] This publication laid out plans for improving bus services across England, with the goal of making them more frequent and reliable, easier to understand and use, better coordinated, and cheaper. These improvements were also expected to deliver wider benefits, including improving safety standards, reducing carbon emissions, supporting market innovation, and increasing the sustainability of the bus market.

In Autumn 2021, local transport authorities (LTAs) in England (outside of London) submitted bus service improvement plans (BSIPs) to the Department of Transport (DfT). These set out how LTAs planned to deliver the objectives of the NBS along with their local objectives for improving bus services. LTAs had the option to submit BSIPs for their areas alone or join other LTAs and submit a joint BSIP (most likely in places with significant overlap and interaction in local economies and travel patterns).

In total, 76 BSIPs were submitted, four of which were jointly produced by more than one LTA. Underpinning these BSIPs was the introduction and implementation of Enhanced Partnerships (EPs). The EPs are agreements between LTAs and local bus operators that set out how they will work together to deliver the BSIP interventions so that they can facilitate benefits for local communities.

Each BSIP was assessed by DfT and led to BSIP Phase 1 funding allocations to 34 LTAs and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs). The evaluation to which this checkpoint report relates covers interventions funded through BSIP Phase 1s in LTAs only – MCAs are not included as they are reviewed within a separate evaluation process. As an exception, this monitoring and evaluation (M&E) also covers the North East Combined Authority (NECA), a region formally covered by Transport North East, in addition to the LTAs. This is because it was allocated BSIP revenue and capital funding as it transitioned to become an MCA in May 2024.

2.2 Wider changes in the policy environment

The BSIP Phase 1 funding sits alongside other funding allocations that share the overarching aim of improving buses and other local transport networks but with specific aims or interventions in mind. At the end of 2021/22, when the BSIP Phase 1 allocations were being determined, funding was in the process of being allocated to local areas as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS), which are for MCAs only; the Zero Emissions Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme; the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF), which is delivering capital investment to improve sustainable transport networks in 18 cities across

[8] DfT (2021). Bus Back Better. National Bus Strategy for England

England; and the Rural Mobility Fund (RMF), which provides funding to trial on-demand bus services in rural or suburban areas of England.

Since then, there have been further changes to the transport landscape, including the introduction and subsequent extension of the £2 bus fare cap grant and additional funding to support bus services, including the BSIP Phase 2 scheme (formerly known as BSIP plus), and the Bus Service Operators Grant Plus (BSOG+) scheme. BSIP Phase 2 funding is revenue funding only (BSIP Phase 1 is both capital and revenue) and is intended to support and protect bus services. All LTAs that did not receive BSIP funding and LTAs with relatively lower BSIP allocations received BSIP Phase 2 support.

As part of these changes, LTAs are now able to use BSIP funding to support existing routes subject to DfT approval, which was not previously the case. DfT has also announced an additional £4.7 billion of funding for local authorities in the North and Midlands outside of city regions, known as the Local Transport Fund (LTF), which can be used to improve bus and other local transport in other areas, alongside an additional £1 billion of new Phase 3 BSIP funding for the North and Midlands starting in 24/25, with funding redirected from High Speed 2.

More widely, BSIP Phase 1 funding sits within a dynamic context of other ongoing and new major investment programmes, many of which involve significant funding being distributed by other government departments to achieve the aims of the *Levelling Up White Paper*.[9] Examples of these funds, each of which has the propensity to support the delivery of bus and related local transport infrastructure, include £4.8 billion infrastructure investment via the Levelling Up Fund, £2.4 billion for 101 towns to unlock their economic potential via the Town Deals, £830 million to regenerate 72 towns and high streets via the Future High Streets Fund, and £2.6 billion to deliver local interventions that support pride in place and life chances via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

2.3 Monitoring and evaluation of LTA bus interventions

The bus interventions that will be delivered by LTAs offer a valuable opportunity to develop evidence based on what works, for whom, and under what circumstances in relation to improving bus services. The DfT has, therefore, commissioned an M&E for bus interventions funded by the BSIP Phase 1 scheme. This M&E activity includes process, impact, and VfM evaluations.

2.4 Purpose of this report

At this stage in the delivery process, LTAs are still in the design and delivery phase for the majority of their planned interventions. This means that only a few schemes have commenced

[9] HMG (2022). Levelling up the United Kingdom. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61fd3c71d3bf7f78df30b3c2/Levelling_Up_WP_HRES.pdf

operation. These are typically revenue-funded schemes such as new and extended services or fare schemes.

Even where schemes have commenced operation, impacts may not be observable in the data yet, particularly where these schemes are localised rather than spread across the LTA. Therefore, this report focuses on trend analysis in five spotlight LTAs that have already begun implementing some schemes. It does not attribute impacts to the BSIP interventions, as this will form part of the full evaluation in 2025.

This interim report has four aims:

- **To present an update on intervention delivery to date.** This includes a summary overview of the progress made by the BSIP-funded LTAs on the delivery of their proposed interventions.
- **To present an update on the four monitoring metrics** identified by DfT as primary indicators of progress (bus customer satisfaction, journey time, patronage, and punctuality) across LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding.
- **To present initial findings from the process evaluation.** This includes the findings from qualitative research relating to the design and delivery of BSIP interventions.
- **To present a summary of trends in five 'spotlight' LTAs.** This includes presenting quantitative and qualitative insights based on an assessment of LTA-specific monitoring data, as well as deep-dive interviews with the LTAs.

2.4.1 Structure of this report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 3** sets out the M&E approach, including the evaluation questions and the methodology adopted for the process and impact evaluations.
- **Section 4** provides an update on the delivery of the proposed interventions across the BSIP Phase 1-funded LTAs.
- **Section 5** sets out emerging trends in the four monitoring metrics.
- **Section 6** discusses early learnings from the design and delivery as part of the preliminary process evaluation.
- **Sections 7** sets out emerging themes from the five spotlight LTAs that have already delivered some of their proposed BSIP Phase 1 interventions (further detail on individual spotlight areas can be found in the Annexes).
- **Section 8** summarises the next steps.

3 M&E approach

The interventions being delivered by LTAs using BSIP Phase 1 funding offer a valuable opportunity to build evidence based on 'what works' for bus improvements.

An M&E framework has been developed for the final evaluation, which is planned to take place in 2025. A summary of the approach for this evaluation is set out below, followed by a description of the approach taken for this interim report.

3.1 Summary of LTA bus intervention M&E framework

The M&E activity for BSIP Phase 1 funding has two components: (i) monitoring activity, which covers the four key metrics for all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, and (ii) evaluation activity, which focuses on more in-depth analysis on a representative sample of LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding.

3.1.1 Types of BSIP interventions

Inventions within BSIP plans have been categorised into five typologies (plus an 'Other' category, which mainly captures staffing revenue funding). Table 1 lists the five typologies and examples of typical interventions within the funded BSIP proposals.

Table 1 Example interventions by typology

Investment Typology	Intervention Examples
Bus Priority Infrastructure Investment	Priority lane extensions and creations. Bus detection at traffic lights and priority systems. Bus lane infringement detection. Addressing network pinch points (e.g., improving junctions). Bus rapid transit.
Passenger Environment	Driver training. Bus stop improvements, including Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) screens and lighting. Multi-modal interchanges. Vehicle quality standards. On-bus information.
Fares and Ticketing	Blanket fare reductions. Fare simplification. Ticketing options (e.g., capping and Carnet).

Investment Typology	Intervention Examples
	Promotions/targeted fare reduction (e.g., Job Seekers). Multi-operator tickets.
Scheduled Route, Timetabling, and Brand	Network planning capability building. Targeted increases in frequencies and operating times. Trialling of new services. Marketing, promotion, and brand identity initiatives.
On-Demand Bus Services	Implementation and support of on-demand bus services.
Other (staffing)	Other schemes, such as additional staffing to support the delivery of BSIP schemes and build internal capability.

3.1.2 LTAs on which to focus the evaluation

To maximise learning in a proportionate way, monitoring data is being collected from all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding. More detailed process, impact, and VfM evaluation activity is focused on a representative sample of 16 LTAs.

During the M&E framework development, 16 LTAs were identified as the representative sample. This selection was designed to capture a mix of socioeconomic and area characteristics and ensure that different bus schemes can be included in the evaluation. All areas that were in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding were assessed along three dimensions: (1) scale of intervention (funding per capita), (2) rurality (2011 rural-urban classification), and (3) socio-economic environment (an index of multiple deprivation scores). For each metric, LTAs were scored as ‘high’, ‘medium’, or ‘low’. Taken in combination, this assigned a ‘profile’ for each LTA, and a list of potential LTAs that covered as many of these profiles as feasible was identified. The process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Identification process for a representative sample of LTAs

Source: Frontier Economics, SYSTRA.

This was further refined to ensure a representative coverage of the range of BSIP Phase 1 intervention types. Finally, data available for potential representative LTAs was reviewed to ensure it was sufficient to inform the evaluation. This included consideration of the availability and quality of data reported via the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and practicality in terms of whether the LTA was already the focus of other evaluations or major funding programmes. Summary information on each of the 16 representative LTAs is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Representative sample

LTA	Region	BSIP Phase 1 funding allocation (2022-2025)
Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire	North West	£34,166,701
Brighton and Hove	South East	£27,854,330
Central Bedfordshire	East of England	£3,724,719
Derbyshire	East Midlands	£47,003,438
Devon	South West	£14,057,270
Hertfordshire	East of England	£29,732,100
Kent	South East	£35,070,139
Luton	East of England	£19,145,100
North East Lincolnshire	Yorkshire and the Humber	£4,684,754
Nottingham City	East Midlands	£11,367,414
Somerset	South West	£11,855,859
Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	£31,663,500
NECA	North East	£163,521,172
Warrington	North West	£16,198,420
West Berkshire	South East	£2,596,732
York	Yorkshire and the Humber	£17,360,000

3.1.3 Monitoring

Monitoring data is being collected from all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding (i.e., all 27 LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, including the 16 representative LTAs). Monitoring activity is focused on the collection of four key metrics: bus customer satisfaction, bus journey time, patronage, and punctuality. A data collection approach was developed with the valuable input of the LTAs and shared with them as a guidance note.

LTAs have been invited to report patronage data on a quarterly basis at a monthly level of disaggregation. Bus customer satisfaction data is, in most cases, available from the *Your Bus Journey* survey carried out by Transport Focus, which is reported on a 4-weekly basis, the results of which are generously shared with the evaluation team. In this report, the final results from the Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey 2023* survey are presented. Some LTAs have opted to use other approaches to generate customer satisfaction data, such as commissioning their own surveys (at this point, the regularity with which the surveys are commissioned is still to be determined). The M&E team have also been collecting data on punctuality and journey times through the Analyse Bus Open Data (ABOD) service, alongside data provided by LTAs to supplement this reporting.

3.1.4 Evaluation

The evaluation features a triangulation of evidence across a combination of approaches, with the aim to enhance the rigour of the overall findings. These approaches cover:

- **Impact evaluation:** A mixed methods approach, combining quantitative analysis (drawing on quasi-experimental methods where feasible) with theory-based approaches.
- **Process evaluation:** Insights drawn from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including LTAs, operators, and regulators. In addition, an assessment of the key metrics underlying BSIP delivery, including the likelihood of delivery at the programme and scheme level and 'RAG' ratings at the programme level. Case studies will be used to provide richer insights on particular themes.
- **Value for Money (VfM) evaluation:** An assessment of the extent to which the BSIP Phase 1 interventions have delivered on their strategic objectives and delivered social benefits that exceed costs (or are on track to do so).

Stakeholder Forum

As part of the evaluation, a Stakeholder Panel was formed in November 2022. The panel comprises officers from 27 LTAs, including several in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, some not in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, and representatives from key stakeholder groups, including the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO), the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), Bus Users UK, Transport Focus, and the Urban Transport Group (UTG), with an average of 40 attendees each session. The Stakeholder Panel meets quarterly and has proved a valuable forum for LTA officers to share their experiences and learning, as well as an opportunity to discuss data sources and evaluation methods and shape ongoing evaluation work.

Process evaluation

The process evaluation will explore the barriers and enablers to implementing planned bus interventions. Insights will be drawn from in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including LTAs, operators, and regulators. In addition, BSIP Phase 1 investment performance data submitted by LTAs to DfT will be analysed, looking at key metrics, including the likelihood of delivery at the programme and scheme level and 'RAG' ratings at the programme level.

Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation focuses on understanding the role of Phase 1 bus interventions in changing patronage, journey times, punctuality, and overall customer satisfaction, as well as broader objectives of the NBS, such as wellbeing, enabling sustainable travel, efficiency of bus operations to reduce emissions, facilitating a sustainable market for bus operators, and effective integration of bus networks with other modes.

The impact evaluation will combine quantitative methods with qualitative, theory-based tools to maximise the learnings from the exercise while ensuring robustness and consistency across approaches. The methods employed for this evaluation will be selected following a detailed investigation into their feasibility, proportionality, and scope for learning.

The quantitative evaluation will encompass descriptive statistics, a comparison of outturns on key metrics with anticipated changes, before vs after analysis, and, where data allows, quasi-experimental difference-in-difference analysis. Case studies will be used to explore themes relevant to the key areas of interest, informed by primary fieldwork and local primary data analysis. This will be triangulated with findings from the theory-based evaluation in the form of a realist evaluation to validate the theory of change for the range of interventions and contribution analyses, which will deliver an evidence-based narrative on the contribution of bus interventions to the observed outcomes. These will be informed by a data trend analysis, administrative data analysis, and primary fieldwork.

In the timeframe of the M&E activity, only outputs and short-term outcomes are likely to be observed.

Value for Money evaluation

The VfM evaluation considers the extent to which the BSIP Phase 1 interventions have delivered on their strategic objectives and delivered social benefits that exceed costs (or are on track to do so). This analysis has not yet been possible at this early stage of the evaluation.

The VfM assessment will be carried out for the final evaluation report (March 2025) as it relies on the findings of the impact evaluation (see the M&E framework document for a list of deliverables and content). The VfM evaluation will explore (i) the extent to which the BSIP Phase 1 interventions met their strategic objectives; (ii) whether the social, economic and environmental benefits of the interventions exceeded (or are on track to exceed) their costs; and (iii) under what conditions, for whom, and where are the benefits relatively more significant.

In the timeframe of the M&E activity, only outputs and short-term outcomes are likely to be observed. Therefore, the analysis will need to simulate the anticipated VfM over the longer term by transparently drawing on assumptions.

3.2 Approach for this interim report

At the time of this interim report, the majority of schemes are still in the early stages of delivery and have not yet been implemented. This has shaped the approach taken in this report, which is described below.

3.2.1 Emerging trends in monitoring metrics

All LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding are expected to report data on four BSIP metrics. Each metric comprises several potential data sources; the responsibility for collection is shared between LTAs, operators, and the evaluation team. Following are the four BSIP metrics:

- **Bus customer satisfaction:** collected through the Transport Focus or LTA commissioned survey.
- **Journey time:** collected through ABOD or provided by LTA M&E activities, where applicable.
- **Patronage:** reported through LTAs and provided by operators.
- **Punctuality:** collected through ABOD and provided by LTA M&E activities, where applicable.

This interim report sets out LTA-wide trends on bus customer satisfaction, patronage, and punctuality. As most LTAs have not yet delivered capital schemes aimed at improving journey times, these have not been reported at this stage. At this stage, it is not appropriate or possible to report on journey time changes (see below).

Bus customer satisfaction

The bus customer satisfaction metrics focus on overall customer satisfaction with the VfM, bus stop, punctuality, journey time, and driver. The majority (19) of LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding participated in the 2023 Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey* survey. Seven of the top ten LTAs for overall satisfaction are in receipt of funding. The highest overall net satisfaction for funded LTAs was 90%, the lowest was 75%, and the average was 82%. These results are prior to the majority of interventions taking place, and LTAs will seek improvements across the satisfaction metrics over the period to March 2025.

Journey time

Bus journey times are only available at an individual corridor level rather than across the LTA due to the need for a start and end point to measure. This is a point of distinction between this metric and the other key metrics. At this stage, many of the capital schemes expected to benefit journey times have not yet been delivered, and in some cases, specific corridors are still being finalised. Aggregate trends in bus journey times have, therefore, not been reported as part of the monitoring section. Where specific corridors have been identified in the spotlight areas, these have been reported as part of the early insights on impact.

Patronage

At this interim report stage, patronage data collected from LTAs for the evaluation of a full calendar year (2023) is available for 20 LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding. Whilst seasonal variation is present in all results (Section 5.4), the performance across LTAs differs significantly, with some showing strong patronage growth and others declining. Overall, patronage levels were 2% higher in December 2023 compared to January 2023. As 2023 is the first full year without pandemic restrictions, it provides insight into how the patronage has recovered, and for the majority, it represents steady growth. Somerset experienced patronage levels 30% to 40% higher than January 2023 for much of the summer and autumn. In contrast, Warrington and West Berkshire only started to show improvement in the latter months of the year. The impact of industrial action in NECA is evident in November 2023, as patronage levels were almost 70% of January 2023 levels.

Punctuality

Punctuality has continued to decline across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding relative to January 2022 (Section 5.5). In January 2023, on-time performance was 74% across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, compared to 76% in 2022. By December 2023, this had fallen to 71%. As many LTAs are yet to implement capital schemes aimed at improving journey times and punctuality, improvements to this metric are not yet anticipated. The decline in performance shows how the network has settled post-pandemic and that baselining prior to this may not reflect the current network conditions.

3.2.2 Generating early evaluation insights at this interim stage

The final evaluation of BSIP Phase 1-funded schemes will focus on 16 representative LTAs. Of these LTAs, five spotlight LTAs have been selected for this interim evaluation on the basis that they (i) have already begun to implement some schemes, (ii) have good monitoring data availability to observe any potential trends, and (ii) offer a degree of geographical spread across the country.

The five spotlight LTAs are Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Nottingham, Somerset, and West Berkshire. Insights on the process and impact evaluation have been drawn from interviews with these LTAs alongside analysis of their monitoring data.

Process evaluation: generating early learnings from design and delivery

To inform the process evaluation, 20 in-depth interviews were carried out with a range of stakeholders during February and March 2024, building on the 11 LTA interviews carried out in May 2023. This includes the five spotlight LTAs, four stakeholders working in the local communities supporting the delivery of interventions, and nine bus operators delivering BSIP interventions across the 16 evaluation LTAs and two regulatory bodies.

In addition, key metrics from LTA data returns are also analysed from July 2023 to January 2024, which included programme-level ‘RAG’ rating, ‘Likelihood of Delivery’ rating for each scheme, and an LTA self-assessment of capacity and capability.

Impact evaluation: generating early signs of local changes

The majority of BSIP Phase 1-funded schemes are still in the implementation stage and have not been delivered. This limits the impacts that can be reported at this time. The five spotlight LTAs were chosen on the basis that some of their BSIP Phase 1 schemes were delivered before March 2024. Insights on early experiences and changes that may be occurring locally at this stage of delivery have been based primarily on interviews with these LTAs and four community stakeholders working in the local communities and supporting the delivery of the interventions.

Where possible, LTAs have also provided scheme-specific data, such as patronage of new services introduced using BSIP Phase 1 funding. However, it should be noted that as some of these schemes have only become operational in the last few months, the time lag between implementation and impacts could mean that impacts are not yet observable.

3.2.3 Limitations

The approach taken for this interim report reflects the early stage of many of the BSIP Phase 1-funded interventions. The following limitations should be taken into account when interpreting these findings.

Emerging trends in key monitoring metrics

Whilst patronage data has been collected for the majority of LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, the process and type of data differ between LTAs and operators. For instance, some have provided ticket sales, some have provided trips/journeys, and others have provided LTA-wide data on boardings. Not all operators report each month, though there are usually smaller operators. One LTA can only provide patronage data at quarterly aggregation and cannot be included in the cross-LTA analysis. The impact evaluation will consider trends in patronage rather than raw figures to see if there is a growing improvement in patronage. To monitor the trends across 2023, an index for January 2023 has been used.

Journey times and speeds can only be recorded between stops (i.e., along intervention corridors). At this early stage, many of the capital schemes that would impact these metrics have not been delivered yet, so analysis is not possible. Some data, such as patronage and punctuality, are collected monthly in this evaluation. National statistics from the DfT are generally reported annually – every financial year. For this reason, a direct comparison between the 2023 figures in this report and those from earlier DfT statistics tables is not possible.

The BODS is accessed through ABOD service to get punctuality in this evaluation. Whilst this means data is accessible across all LTAs, there are caveats with missing data in some areas, usually smaller operators. As punctuality data is collected each month, it is possible to present wider general changes at the LTA level with these caveats in mind.

Process evaluation: Early learnings from delivery design

Where possible, common themes and consensus options emerging from the LTA and operator interviews are reported. However, where a unique point is pertinent to local issues, these have also been considered. As such, in some cases, these themes may not fully reflect the actions and mitigations put in place by DfT during the funding process.

Quantitative data reported to DfT about the process evaluation has also been analysed; it should be noted that this data is self-reported and collected by a third party[10].

Impact evaluation: Early signs of local change

At this early stage, it is not yet possible to undertake a robust analysis of the impacts of the BSIP interventions. Many schemes that have been implanted are local in their scope, meaning impacts may not be observable when looking at LTA-wide aggregated monitoring data. Even where disaggregated data is available, the lag time between implementation and uptake could mean that impacts are not yet observed in the data. It should be noted that interventions do not inhabit a closed environment, and the BSIP Phase 1 interventions implemented to date have been delivered alongside several other interventions. This will also reflect wider trends, such as changing post-pandemic behavioural trends.

Finally, this report focuses on identifying early trends in spotlight areas. It does not attempt to attribute any changes to the bus interventions delivered to date.

[10] Self-reported and third-party data has limitations, as inaccuracies can arise from bias, subjective perceptions or misinterpretation of questions, and as such should be treated with caution.

4 Delivery of proposed interventions

4.1 LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding

BSIP Phase 1 funding has been awarded to 27 LTAs[11] and 7 MCAs[12] across 31 BSIP Phase 1 funding awards.[13] All MCAs received revenue funding, and NECA (formally North of Tyne and North East Combined Authorities) also received capital funding. In addition, the MCAs are also in receipt of CRSTS, which is for capital investment in local transport over a more extended period (to March 2027), including bus interventions. Therefore, the MCAs are being evaluated separately under the CRSTS M&E.

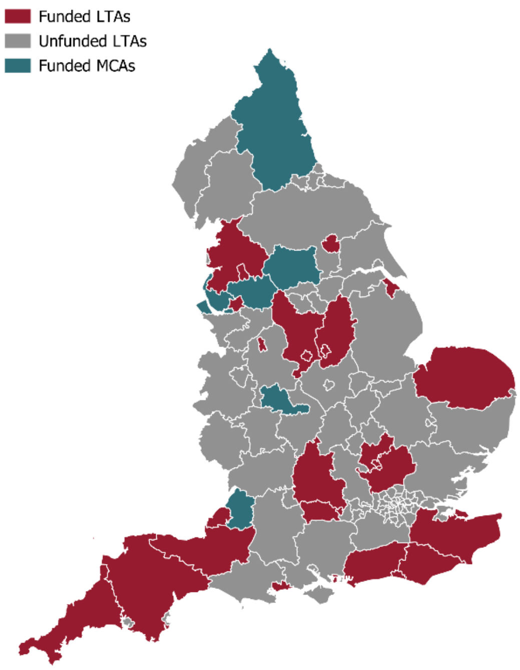
As an exception, this M&E also covers NECA (region formally covered by Transport North East), which has been allocated BSIP Phase 1 revenue and capital funding because, at the time of the funding allocation, it was transitioning to become an MCA. Figure 2 shows the spatial distribution of the LTAs and MCAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding in England. As shown, the total number of LTAs included in this evaluation is 27 (including combined Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen and NECA).

[11] Lancashire has submitted a joint BSIP with Blackburn with Darwen so for the purpose of this report they have been combined as Lancashire. North somerset is being considered as a separate LTA from the joint West of England & North Somerset BSIP submission.

[12] This was correct as of the time of allocation of BSIP Phase 1 funding but there have since been changes in the LTAs and MCAs. For example, North of Tyne Combined Authority and North East Combined Authority have merged to form one MCA, North East Combined Authority. Total Phase 1 MCAs is now six.

[13] DfT (2023). Bus Service Improvement Plans: local transport authority final allocations 2022 to 2025. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-service-improvement-plans-local-transport-authority-allocations/bus-service-improvement-plans-local-transport-authority-final-allocations

Figure 2: LTAs and MCAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding



Note: The legend refers to 'funded' in respect to BSIP Phase 1 funding only and 'unfunded' in respect to BSIP Phase 1 funding only. These terms do not refer to any other sources of funding.

4.2 Current status of implementation

Table 3 sets out the number of delivered and partially delivered schemes[14] within the 16 representative LTAs and Table 4 presents the schemes delivered in the remaining LTAs within the scope of this evaluation.

Given the more extended implementation period required for capital-funded schemes, such as bus priority interventions, most completed interventions are revenue-funded. Across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, 36% of 'planned route, timetabling, and brand' interventions and 35% of 'fare and ticketing' interventions have been either fully or partially delivered as of January 2024. In comparison, only 5% of planned 'bus priority infrastructure' schemes have been delivered or partially delivered.

[14] 'Partially delivered' refers to schemes that are phased and have an overall completion date beyond the date of this report, yet benefits are being realised. For example, a scheme for pinch point removal may have delivered some but not all sites, or bus service improvements may have been delivered for some but not all routes within the scheme, yet this counted as one scheme line item within LTA reporting.

Table 3 Delivered and partially delivered schemes by intervention typology across 16 representative sample LTAs (as of January 2024)

Intervention Typology	Number of Schemes in Typology	Number of Delivered/Partially Delivered	Percentage of Delivered/Partially Delivered
Bus priority infrastructure	171	29	17%
Fare and ticketing	58	31	53%
On-demand bus services	14	7	50%
Passenger environment	71	12	17%
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	60	25	42%
Other (Staffing)	16	13	81%

Source: LTA self-reported.

Table 4 Delivered and partially delivered schemes by intervention typology across the remaining 11 LTAs (as of January 2024)

Intervention Typology	Number of Schemes in Typology	Number of Delivered/Partially Delivered	Percentage of Delivered/Partially Delivered
Bus priority infrastructure	105	7	7%
Fare and ticketing	48	14	29%
On-demand bus services	13	3	23%
Passenger environment	61	6	10%
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	46	15	33%
Other (Staffing)	13	6	46%

Source: LTA self-reported.

The tables show that a quarter of the schemes have been delivered/partially delivered across the LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding (as of January 2024, the most recent reporting period for LTAs). The majority (around 60%) of the remaining delivery is expected to occur between April 2024 and March 2025. However, some authorities have already indicated the need to push delivery beyond March 2025, and at present, 70 schemes fall within this timeframe.

Where the delivery date is still uncertain, the 31st of March 2025 has been provided as the delivery date, as this is the end date of the BSIP Phase 1 funding period. This date has also been provided for schemes that may already be delivered but will cease following the end of the BSIP Phase 1 funding period, such as bus service support schemes. These are counted as delivered schemes in the tables above.

5 Emerging trends in the four monitoring metrics

All LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding are expected by DfT to continue to report data on the four primary BSIP evaluation metrics:

1. Bus customer satisfaction
2. Journey Time
3. Patronage
4. Punctuality

This section will summarise the trends in the four key metrics.

5.1 Data quality and methodology

Data collected to inform the impact evaluation are from a variety of sources and methodologies. Some of these will differ from official DfT statistics published annually through the bus statistics data tables[15]. This is because the evaluation requires more frequent and granular data than is published.

As part of their BSIP submission, LTAs set ambitions for what they want to achieve in terms of key performance indicators (KPIs) (including these four metrics). DfT annual statistics will continue to be the official measure by which an LTA will measure the success of their BSIP, so analysis in this report is complementary.

5.1.1 Analyse Bus Open Data (ABOD)

This service, provided by DfT, is a platform for accessing bus open data that avoids the need for additional data resources from authorities and operators. Disaggregate data on bus speeds, journey times, and punctuality is available. These inform two of the four key metrics in this evaluation. ABOD is a core data source to inform this evaluation, with a focus on monitoring trends rather than raw figures.

There are known quality limitations with the dataset, which is why LTAs and operators have been given the opportunity to contribute their data to this evaluation if desired. Potential limitations include:

- Missing data in some areas, particularly smaller operators. ABOD developers identify four main reasons why data may be missing from the feed:

[15] DfT (2024). Bus Statistics Data Tables. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus-statistics-data-tables

  - Static data (timetabled data) was not correct in BODS, and therefore, it was not possible for ABOD to match the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data to the static data.
  - AVL data was not received.
  - The line name in the static data and the AVL file did not match.
  - There was not enough AVL data around a stop.
- 'GPS drift' – this is where the GPS signal from a stationary bus may move and indicate that the bus has left early. Across 2022 and 2023, fewer than 10% of departures were reported as 'early'. Therefore, any potential errors account for a relatively small number of departures.

This data is collected purely for the purpose of this evaluation and is not being used to monitor the performance of operators and does not replace the reporting relationship with the Traffic Commissioner[16].

5.2 Bus customer satisfaction

Key messages

- **Overall satisfaction.** Across all LTAs that were included in the 2023 Transport Focus *Your Bus Journeys* survey, overall bus satisfaction was 80%. Among the LTAs that received BSIP funding, this ranged from 75% to 90%. However, there has been a general reduction in overall satisfaction levels compared to 2019.
- **Overall satisfaction amongst recipients of BSIP Phase 1 funding**. LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding generally have slightly higher customer satisfaction – even prior to the implementation of their BSIP schemes.
- **Individual criteria.** Of the individual metrics covered by the survey, satisfaction with the bus driver had the highest average score. In contrast, the journey cost had the lowest average score, despite many passengers benefitting from the £2 Bus Fare Cap Grant (BFCG).

Most bus passenger satisfaction data dates back to 2019 and is what most LTAs would have used as a baseline through their funding applications. Given the impact of the pandemic, it is anticipated that attitudes would have changed. Therefore, a review of the baselines may be

[16] DfT (2024). Statutory Document No. 14: local bus services in England (outside London) and Wales. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-commissioners-local-bus-services-in-england-outside-london-and-wales-november-2018/statutory-document-no-14-local-bus-services-in-england-outside-london-and-wales (Section 3.2).

necessary (the DfT is promoting this through the *2024 BSIP refresh* document[17]). Taking results from 2023, prior to most interventions being started or delivered fully, provides a suitable baseline of post-pandemic satisfaction levels with the bus network for this evaluation.

Many LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding have schemes targeted at improving customer experience and satisfaction, such as driver training and the development of a passenger charter. Many of the other interventions will have an indirect impact on customer satisfaction, such as increased frequency (reducing wait times), new buses and routes (reducing journey times), and bus priority measures (improving punctuality).

The majority (19 of 27) of LTAs in this evaluation participate in the Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey* survey, which began on the 31st of January 2023 (not all LTAs started on this date). On the 13th of March 2024, Transport Focus published the 2023 result. The overall satisfaction results for each LTA participating in this survey and in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding[18] are presented in this section and compared to results from those not part of this evaluation either because they do not receive BSIP funding or are MCAs and are being evaluated through CRSTS. The survey covers a wide range of questions; a summary of the following and how they compare to the national picture is provided.

Satisfaction with:

- Value for Money;
- Bus stop;
- Punctuality;
- Journey time; and
- Bus driver.

Annex G contains the LTA results for each question.

Overall satisfaction

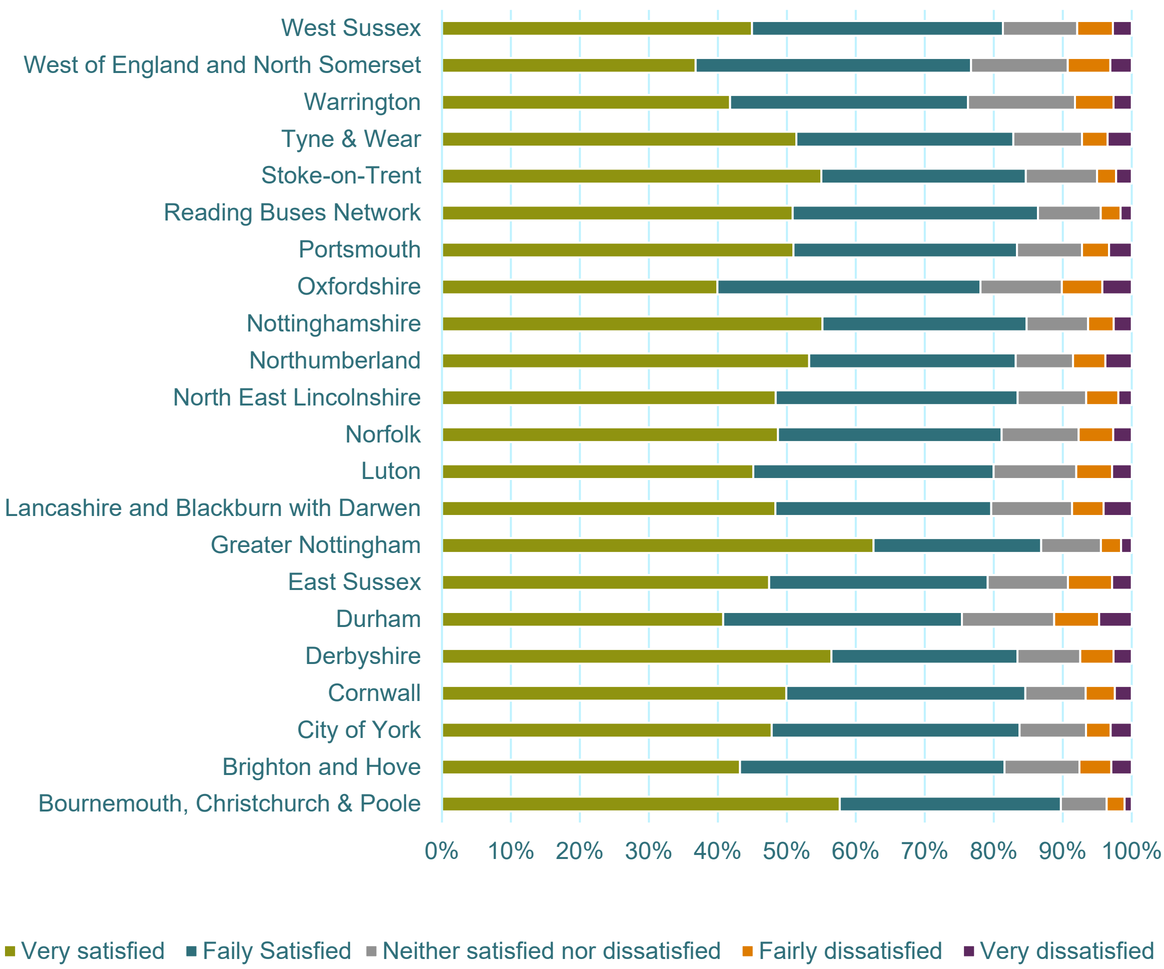
Overall satisfaction with the bus journey on the day of the survey is the headline measure of bus satisfaction both in the Transport Focus survey and this evaluation. Through the implementation of BSIP interventions, it is hoped that overall bus satisfaction will improve. The Transport Focus survey and other surveys undertaken by LTAs have occurred across or within 2023 and, therefore, prior to the majority of interventions being delivered (Section 4). This is

[17] DfT (2024). National Bus Strategy: 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plans Guidance to local authorities and bus operators. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a6becf96a5ec000d731aa9/bus-service-improvement-plans-guidance-to-local-authorities-and-bus-operators-2024.pdf

[18] Durham, Northumberland, and Tyne & Wear are the representative authorities for the North East and North of Tyne combined authorities.

why, for the majority, 2023 is a good mid-point measure with the expectation of room for improvement that should be reflected in the 2024 results.

Figure 3 *Your Bus Journey 2023* results, Transport Focus



Source: Transport Focus - *Your Bus Journey* 2023 results.

Of the LTAs that received BSIP Phase 1 funding and participated in *Your Bus Journey*, the highest net satisfaction rate was 90%, the lowest was 75%, and the average satisfaction was 82%. This compares to the national figures of highest net satisfaction, which are also highest at 90%, lowest at 73%, and the average satisfaction is 80%.

Table 5 shows the top 10 LTAs for overall satisfaction, seven of which are in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding. In cases where areas' overall scores are the same, the one with the higher 'very satisfied' rate is ranked first.

Table 5 Top 10 LTAs for overall satisfaction in 2023

Rank	Area	Satisfied (%)	BSIP Phase 1
1	East Riding of Yorkshire	90	No
2	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	90	Yes
3	Greater Nottingham	87	Yes
4	Stoke-on-Trent	85	Yes
5	Nottinghamshire	85	Yes
6	Suffolk	85	No
7	Cornwall	85	Yes
8	Thurrock	84	No
9	City of York	84	Yes
10	Derbyshire	83	Yes

Source: Transport Focus, Your Bus Journey.

Table 6 presents the overall customer satisfaction reported in the *Your Bus Journey* 2023 survey, compared to that reported in the 2019 Transport Focus survey for the LTAs in receipt of Phase 1 funding that participated in both years. The table suggests a general deterioration in the overall reported satisfaction compared to pre-COVID levels. However, the scale of this deterioration varies across the LTAs, ranging from a 16 percentage point reduction in Oxfordshire to a 4 percentage point reduction in York. Survey methodology differed between the two years, which has implications for the comparability of the findings. Most notably, the 2023 survey was conducted throughout the year in 4-week cycles, whereas the 2019 survey was conducted only in autumn. Therefore, this comparison is only indicative.

Table 6 Overall satisfaction in 2023 compared to 2019

Area	Overall satisfaction 2019 (%)	Overall satisfaction 2023 (%)	Difference (percentage point)
Oxfordshire	94	78	-16
Tyne & Wear	94	83	-11
West of England and North Somerset	87	77	-11
Portsmouth	94	83	-11
Derbyshire	94	83	-10
North East Lincolnshire	93	83	-10
Cornwall	94	85	-10
Nottinghamshire	94	85	-9
Northumberland	91	83	-8
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	94	90	-5
City of York	88	84	-4

Source: Transport Focus, Your Bus Journey 2023 and Transport Focus 2019.

Bus Driver

Satisfaction with the bus driver is the highest scoring of the headline results. For BSIP-funded LTAs, the highest net satisfaction was 91% (in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) and the lowest was 83% (in West of England and North Somerset); even the lowest-scoring LTA in bus driver satisfaction had a high satisfaction score. The average across the BSIP LTAs was 87% compared to 85% nationally, which ranged between 80% and 92%. BSIP-funded LTAs align with the national trend on this metric.

Bus Stop

This measure asks passengers to consider the quality of the bus stop, seating, shelter, timetable information, and safety. Of the BSIP-funded LTAs, the highest net satisfaction was 85% (within Greater Nottingham) and the lowest was 69% (in Durham, a constituent LTA of NECA). The BSIP average net satisfaction was 79%, slightly higher than the national average, which was 76% and ranged from 69% to 85%.

Journey Time

Satisfaction with journey time is higher than with bus punctuality. The highest net satisfaction for BSIP-funded LTAs was 86% (for Greater Nottingham), the lowest net satisfaction was 75% (in Oxfordshire), and the average was 83%. Nationally, the range was similar: the highest net satisfaction was 89%, the lowest was 75%, and the average was 81%. Across the survey areas, at least three-quarters of passengers are satisfied with their bus journey time.

Punctuality

Punctuality of the bus considers whether or not the bus arrived on time compared to the timetable. At 86%, Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole had the highest net satisfaction rating for punctuality of BSIP LTAs, whilst Durham had the lowest net satisfaction rating at 64%. The average across the BSIP LTAs was 76%, compared to 70% nationally; the national figure ranges from 62% to 86%.

Value for Money

Nationally, satisfaction with VfM is the lowest of the headline results, even though many passengers now benefit from the £2 BFCG. Of the BSIP Phase 1 LTAs, the highest net satisfaction rating was 80% for Stoke-on-Trent and the lowest was 55% for Brighton and Hove. The average was 68%. This is similar to the national average net satisfaction rating of 67%, ranging from 55% to 87%

5.3 Journey time

Data on journey times is collected from the ABOD service, where available. This data is only available at the individual corridor level, not as an LTA-wide figure. This is a point of distinction between this metric and the other key metrics.

In addition, the LTAs have been asked to indicate the corridors that will receive BSIP interventions as well as comparable non-intervention corridors to serve as potential 'counterfactuals', which can help isolate the potential impact of the interventions on the journey times in the relevant corridors. The data from ABOD will be collected for this set of corridors only.

The information on ABOD is reported daily, which can capture any short-term fluctuations that may affect the journey times across different corridors. In addition, the availability of historical data within the system allows a detailed comparison of journey times prior to, during, and post-interventions for a more holistic analysis.

As part of their scheme evaluation, LTAs have also been invited to submit any journey time data they may be collecting, which could support the rolling data collected from ABOD.

At this stage, the majority of capital interventions expected to impact journey time are still in feasibility, design, and consultation phases; therefore, an analysis across all LTAs will not be possible until the final evaluation report in 2025. Further guidance is due to be issued to LTAs to confirm appropriate intervention and counterfactual corridor definition for the purpose of this evaluation.

5.4 Patronage

Key messages

- **Seasonality.** General trends in patronage were similar across most LTAs, with an observed increase in patronage around March 2023, followed by a material decline in April. Bus patronage increased until June and declined in the summer months. September and October saw the most significant increase in patronage, followed by a reduction over the winter holiday period.
- **Post-pandemic recovery.** There was significant variation in bus patronage recovery rates following the COVID-19 pandemic across the LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding. For example, by comparing the data collected through this evaluation to DfT bus statistics (2019), in 2023, bus patronage in Hertfordshire remained below 2019 levels (37% lower), while 2023 patronage in Central Bedfordshire was 16% higher than 2019 levels. It has not been feasible to investigate the reasons for these variations at this stage, though this will be considered in the final evaluation.

Patronage figures have been requested from all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding starting in January 2023 and reported monthly. Of the 27 LTAs, 20 have provided monthly patronage.

The patronage analysis of the 20 LTAs for which complete datasets are available enables observations of seasonality, changes in the trends from the start of 2023, and a comparison with pre-covid levels, as reported to DfT and presented through the bus statistics table BUS01e[19].

Some operators/LTAs have provided more detailed data, which includes:

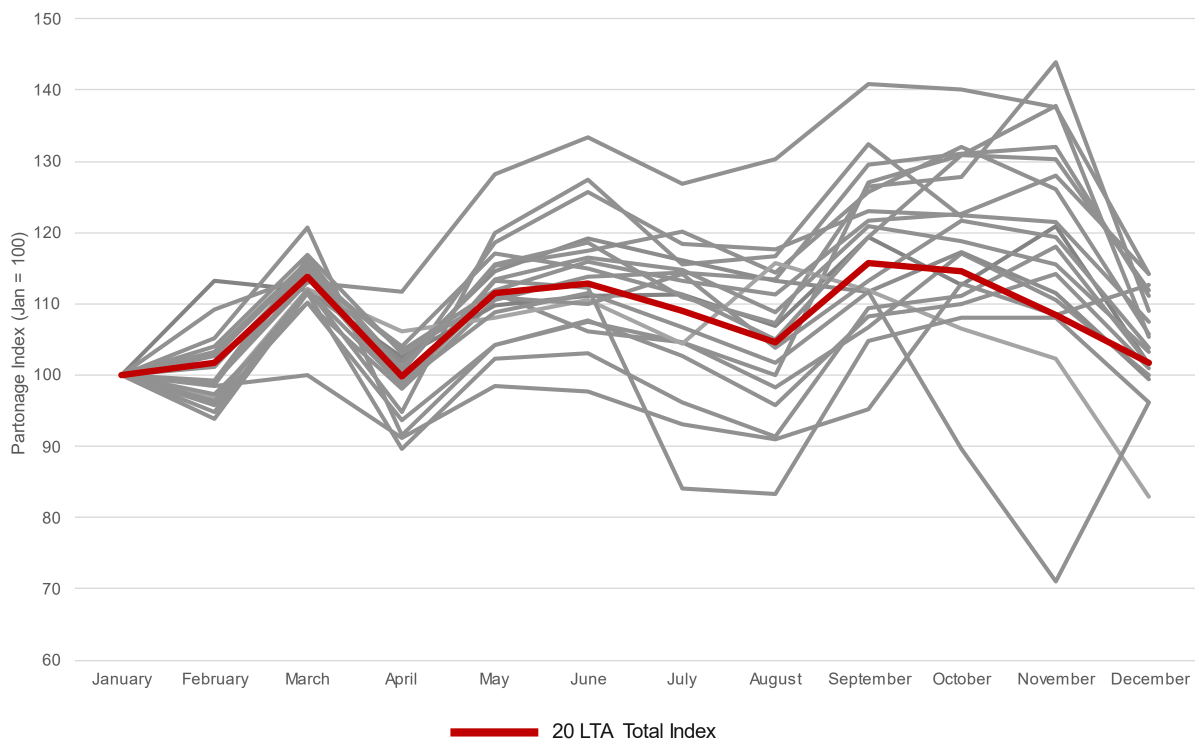
- Ticket type (full fare, concessionary etc.);
- Peak/Off-Peak;
- Route-level patronage; and
- Weekends/Weekdays.

[19] DfT (2023) Bus Statistics Data Tables. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65662505312f400013e5d534/bus01.ods (BSUS01e).

LTAs have also been asked to clarify how patronage reporting is defined; generally, this is either as ticket sales or trips.

Figure 4 shows that across 2023, total patronage for the 20 LTAs (the red line) has exhibited anticipated seasonality, but there have been significant differences across the LTAs. Overall patronage in March was 13% higher than in January 2023. In April, all LTAs saw a fall in patronage, 10 of which fell below January 2023 levels; the impact of Easter and school holidays likely contributed to the fall in patronage. Growth returned for the majority of LTAs through to June 2023 before numbers fell back during the summer months, which is expected given the holiday season. September and October saw the highest patronage growth across the year – it increased by 15% and 14% relative to January 2023. The onset of winter and associated school holidays in December likely contributed to a reduction in monthly patronage, but across the 20 LTAs, total patronage was overall 2% higher than in January 2023.

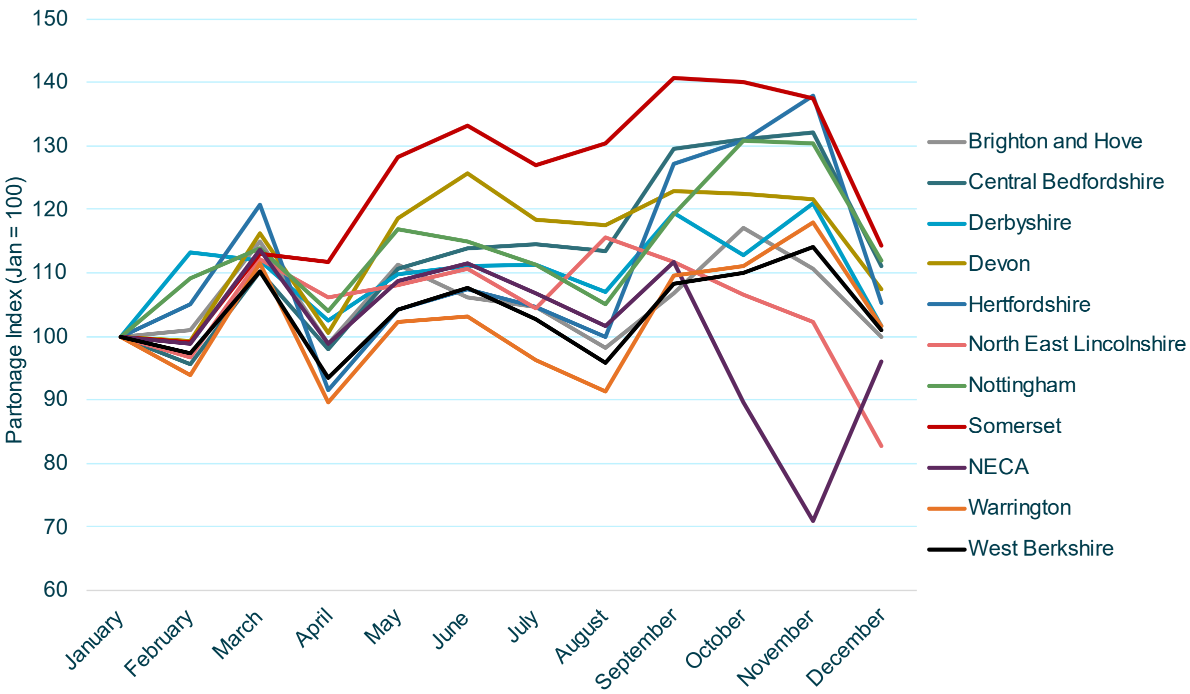
Figure 4: Patronage, indexed to January 2023, for 20 LTAs



Source: Monitoring data reported by LTAs.
Note: All patronage values are indexed to January 2023.
Based on information submitted by 20 LTAs.

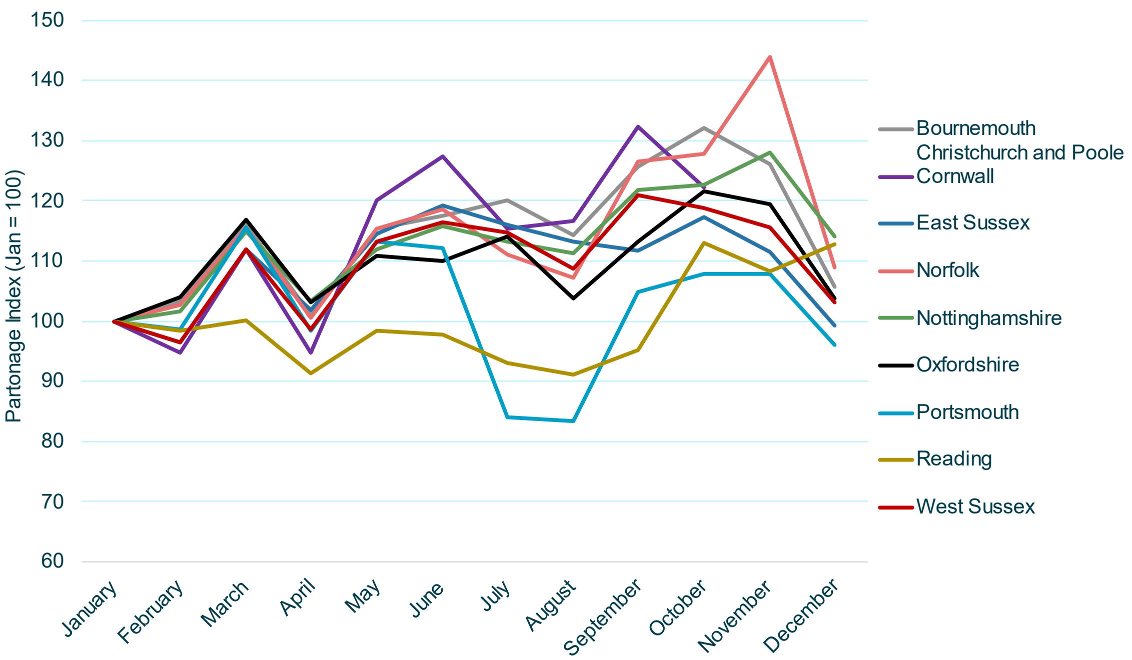
For those LTAs where a full year of data is available, Figure 5 shows the representative sample LTAs and Figure 6 shows the remaining LTAs.

Figure 5: Patronage, indexed to January 2023, for representative LTAs



Source: Monitoring data reported by LTAs.

Figure 6: Patronage, Indexed to January 2023, for remaining LTAs



Source: Monitoring data reported by LTAs.

Monthly patronage data was not available prior to the commissioning of this evaluation, and therefore, a monthly year-on-year comparison will not be possible until the end of 2024.

When interpreting the results, the following should be considered:

- Not all LTAs have been able to obtain data from all operators, usually smaller operators.
- Some LTAs experienced significant industrial action that affected bus services in 2023. Within the NECA, one operator experienced 49 days of industrial action from September to December[20].
- Reporting from operators differs between journeys and ticket sales. The DfT pre-COVID figures (2018 and 2019), in which comparisons have been made below, are based on journeys. Where LTAs report on ticket sales, there may be a slight shortfall relative to journeys.
- Cross-boundary trips may be counted in some instances where the journey began in a separate LTA.
- Figures for 2018 and 2019 are from DfT statistics table BUS01e[21] and are reported for the year ending in March, but the 2023 figure, against which they are compared, covers the calendar year as this is the annual data available at this stage.

Table 7 shows that when comparing the data reported in this evaluation for 2023 with the pre-COVID published patronage data (here taken as 2019), some LTAs' 2023 levels surpassed pre-COVID patronage levels, and others are within 10% of their 2019 figure. The recovery rates represent 2023 annual patronage figures as a percentage of the pre-COVID annual figures (2018 and 2019). The range in recovery rates is extensive, from the lowest being 63% of the 2019 figures in Hertfordshire to the most robust recovery in Central Bedfordshire, up 116% compared to 2019.

Table 7 Patronage recovery rates in 2023 compared to 2018 and 2019 annual journey reporting

LTA	2023 Recovery Rate	
	2018	2019
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole*	80%	89%
Brighton and Hove	95%	93%
Central Bedfordshire	113%	116%
Cornwall	104%	93%

[20] As reported on BBC News (2023). https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-66797241

[21] DfT Bus Statistics. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65662505312f400013e5d534/bus01.ods

Derbyshire	107%	108%
Devon	73%	74%
East Sussex	96%	96%
Hertfordshire	64%	63%
Norfolk	92%	91%
North East Lincolnshire	84%	86%
Nottingham	117%	115%
Nottinghamshire	81%	84%
Oxfordshire	87%	85%
Portsmouth	96%	102%
Reading	97%	94%
Somerset	83%	106%
North East Combined Authority (NECA)**	73%	72%
Warrington	80%	86%
West Berkshire	75%	71%
West Sussex	83%	83%

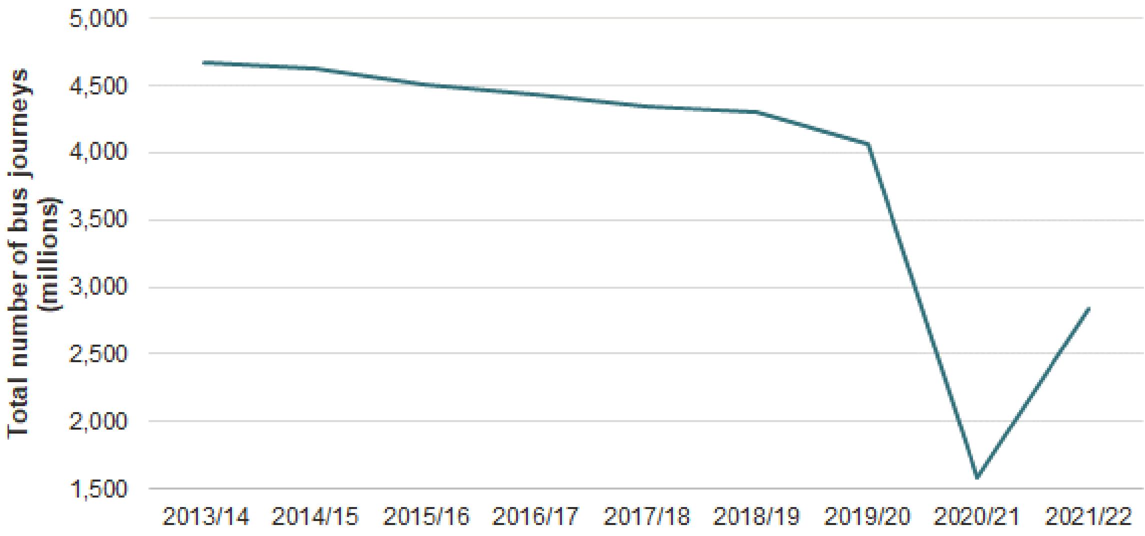
Source: Monitoring data reported by LTAs and Bus Statistics Table BUS01e.

** Bournemouth and Poole only available pre-COVID.*

*** 49 days of industrial action impacted one major operator from September to December.*

This post-COVID recovery sits in the context of declining trends in bus patronage in the years prior to the pandemic. As shown in Figure 7, total bus patronage across England declined from 4.67 billion journeys in 2013/14 to 4.07 billion journeys in 2019/20. This ongoing decline in bus patronage was further accelerated by the pandemic, with national bus passenger numbers dropping to 1.58 billion in 2020/21.

Figure 7: Passenger journeys on local bus services, England (in millions)



Source: DfT Bus Statistics, Bus01a.

Journeys per head is another metric featured within LTA BSIP submissions and indicates the utilisation of the bus network across the LTA whilst normalising for population size. Table 8 shows how the 2023 reported figures compare to those pre-COVID. The 2023 figure used 2021 census population data for each LTA; the other years are based on ONS mid-year population estimates.

As with Table 7, patronage for the 2023 calculations is based on the calendar year collection for this evaluation. The 2018 and 2019 figures for the year ending in March are in the DfT bus statistics table BUS01f. Most areas have fewer journeys per head in 2023 compared to the pre-pandemic figures. Whilst the slightly different methodology has been noted, these differences are likely to be attributed to lower passenger numbers in 2023 (Table 8) and increasing population totals. This observation may also reflect the existing downward trajectory in bus journeys per capita across England prior to the pandemic, declining from 86.7 journeys per head in 2013/14 to 72.3 journeys in 2019/20.[22]

Table 8 Journeys per head in 2023 compared to 2018 and 2019.

LTA	Journeys per Head		
	2018	2019	2023
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	*	*	*
Brighton and Hove	170.1	171.8	167.7
Central Bedfordshire	12.7	12.2	13.6

22 Bus statistics. Bus01f

Cornwall	19.1	21.3	19.6
Derbyshire	30.7	30.2	32.5
Devon	31.0	30.0	21.8
East Sussex	29.7	29.4	28.7
Hertfordshire	23.5	23.9	14.9
Norfolk	30.5	30.8	27.5
North East Lincolnshire	43.1	42.1	36.6
Nottingham	146.4	147.4	176.2
Nottinghamshire	35.1	33.6	28.2
Oxfordshire	59.5	60.9	48.8
Portsmouth	54.0	51.1	54.0
Reading	132.3	137.6	121.3
Somerset	14.6	11.3	11.7
North East Combined Authority (NECA)	**	**	**
Warrington	28.9	26.7	22.8
West Berkshire	17.9	19.1	13.2
West Sussex	31.1	30.8	24.8

Source: Monitoring data reported by LTAs and Bus Statistics Table BUS01f.
** BCP is not reported pre-2021, and aggregation is not possible with this metric.*
*** Not reported as a NECA figure, and aggregation is not possible with this metric.*

5.5 Punctuality

Key messages

- **General trends in punctuality.** There was a general deterioration in the proportion of bus services arriving ‘on time’ across the LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding between the start of 2022 and the end of 2023.
- **Punctuality levels across LTAs.** In 2023, around three-quarters of departures were on time across all days and LTAs. The lowest ‘on time’ weekday average was 52%, whilst the highest ‘on time’ average was 86%.

Punctuality is a measure of whether a bus is on time, as defined by the Traffic Commissioner’s guidelines[23]. As with Journey Times, this data is collected through ABOD for all LTAs.

[23] For non-frequent services (fewer than six buses per hour), 60 seconds early to 5 minutes and 59 seconds late. For frequent services, at least 10 buses must depart within 60 minutes, and there should be no gap bigger than 15 minutes.

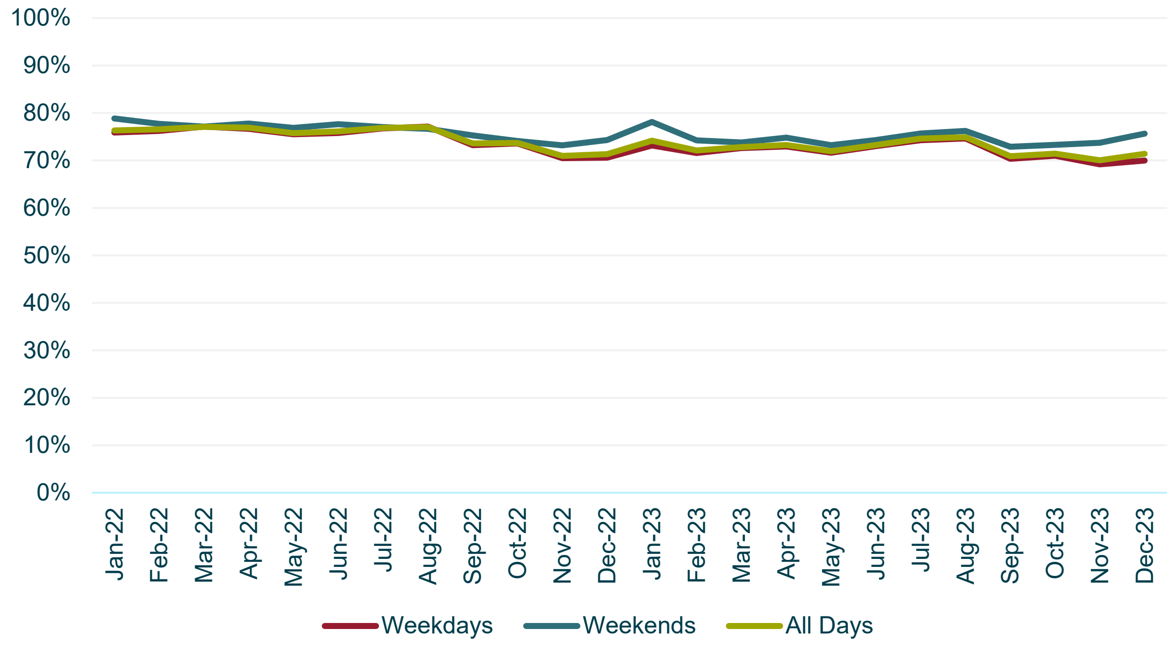
However, LTAs are also invited to submit their data on punctuality as provided by operators to sense check. ABOD collates AVL data via GPS from buses and compares the departures to the expected timetable.

Punctuality metrics are collected each month and cover the average for all the days of the month, weekdays, and weekends. The following percentages are collected for all departures across these three categories:

- On time: Departures that fall within the times defined by the Traffic Commissioner's guidelines.
- Early: Departures of more than 60 seconds early.
- Late: Departures 6 minutes late or greater.
- No data: The percentage of the anticipated departures (timetabled) is not recorded. Therefore, no data is available. This can be due to timetable data being incorrect and not matching AVL data, not receiving AVL/enough AVL data, or a mismatch in line names between timetable data and the AVL file. These instances are not included in the calculation of on-time performance.

Average on-time performance for all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding from January 2022 through to December 2023 is shown in Figure 8. It shows a deteriorating trend in on-time performance, particularly on weekdays. Improvements observed in the summer months are reflective of school holidays, which coincide with improved highway conditions and fewer journeys (Figure 5 and Figure 6) that can improve dwell time.

Figure 8: On-time performance, January 2022 to December 2023 (All LTAs)



Source: ABOD.

As with patronage, LTA BSIP submissions contain outcomes to improve punctuality relative to pre-COVID levels. Table 9 compares the ‘on time’ departures for 2018 and 2019 (reported in the DfT bus statistics table BUS09a[24] as non-frequent bus services running on time), and the annual averages extracted from ABOD for all LTAs in receipt of Phase 1 funding. Since the methodology used for BUS09a[25] (non-frequent services only) and the one used in this evaluation, taken from ABOD (all services), differ, they are not directly comparable. However, this has been included for completeness.

A collection of monthly performance is being undertaken in this evaluation to look for any significant changes pre- and post-intervention. The DfT bus statistics tables are annual and, therefore, do not give appropriate detail for this evaluation.

Table 9 ‘On time’ departures (All LTAs)

LTA	Journeys on time (%)			
	2018	2019	2022†	2023†
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	*	*	77	80
Brighton & Hove	85	82	78	74
Central Bedfordshire	81	77	72	66
Cornwall	85	86	71	69
Derby	-	93	78	75
Derbyshire	79	84	74	71
Devon	74	82	71	71
East Sussex	82	83	76	72
Hertfordshire	83	94	74	68
Kent	-	-	74	72
Lancashire	82	81	78	76
Luton	-	-	73	65
Norfolk	81	78	74	73
North East Lincolnshire	94	95	74	75
Nottingham	89	93	74	71
Northamptonshire	-	-	74	72
Oxfordshire	73	79	74	71

[24] DfT Bus Statistics BUS09. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65662505312f40000de5d539/bus09.ods

[25] DfT Bus Statistics Methodology. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buses-statistics-guidance/annual-bus-statistics-quality-report-2023#the-dft-bus-punctuality-statistics

Portsmouth	-	-	73	69
Reading	85	88	80	78
Somerset	86	80	73	68
Stoke-on-Trent	72	77	78	75
North East Combined Authority (NECA)**	88	88	79	76
Warrington	91	90	76	77
West Berkshire	83	85	82	79
West Sussex	84	84	78	74
York	84	-	73	73

Source: ABOD and DfT Bus Statistics Table BUS09a.

- No data.

** BCP is not reported pre-2021.*

*** Average of the constituent authorities.*

† Evaluation methodology (ABOD averages including frequent services) differs from DfT table reports; a direct comparison is not possible.

This data shows that punctuality has continued to decline from 2022. The majority of LTAs are still developing capital interventions designed to improve this metric.

Table 10 below shows the range in on-time performance for 2023 across the LTAs, including the minimum, maximum, and averages. It also indicates to what extent the representative LTAs in this evaluation match the wider performance of all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding.

Table 10 Range in On-time performance, 2023

	Representative LTAs	All BSIP Phase 1-Funded LTAs
All Days		
Average 'On Time'	74%	74%
Min 'On Time' Average	52%	52%
Max 'On Time' Average	86%	86%
Data Availability Average	71%	71%
Weekdays		
Average 'On Time'	73%	73%

Min 'On Time' Average	52%	52%
Max 'On Time' Average	86%	86%
Data Availability Average	70%	71%
Weekends		
Average 'On Time'	75%	76%
Min 'On Time' Average	64%	64%
Max 'On Time' Average	87%	87%
Data Availability Average	71%	72%

Source: ABOD.

Across all days and LTAs, the average proportion of departures 'on time' was 74%, weekdays was 73%, and weekends 75%. Around three-quarters of departures were on time in 2023. The lowest 'on time' weekday average was 52%, whilst the highest 'on time' average was 86%. The difference was less significant at the weekends, with a minimum of 64% and a maximum of 87%; road conditions are generally better at the weekends (depending on LTA).

Data availability refers to the amount of data included in ABOD reporting compared to what was expected from the timetable, and missing data is not included in the overall performance percentages. The main reasons for missing data in the feed are outlined in 5.1.1.

6 Process Evaluation: Early learnings from design and delivery

6.1 Approach

In-depth interviews and quantitative data analysis are the main sources of data used to inform the process evaluation. These methods of collecting qualitative data to address the evaluation questions seek to balance various factors, such as minimising burdens on stakeholders, respecting the confidentiality with which some stakeholders will want to offer their views, and ensuring a sufficient breadth of representation in the sample frame to present robust and meaningful insights.

To inform this interim report, 11 in-depth interviews were undertaken with LTAs in May 2023, and five in-depth interviews were carried out in February/March 2024, three of which were with LTAs previously interviewed. In most cases, LTA representatives were Programme Managers, Heads of Transport, Public Transport Officers, or Passenger Transport/Service Managers. In addition, in-depth interviews were carried out with nine bus operators in February/March 2024, across a range of geographies and representing a range of sizes, and with two regulatory stakeholders. This builds on the 11 LTA interviews carried out in May 2023; a summary of these is included in this section.

The in-depth interviews were based on several core process questions, which include the following process items:

- Funding allocation;
- Reprogramming;
- Partnership working (EP);
- Barriers;
- Enablers;
- Complementary and Wider Contextual Factors;
- Governance; and
- Public Engagement.

These areas are further explained in Annex H . To complement this, an analysis has been carried out on self-reported data provided by LTAs in July 2023 and January 2024. LTAs were asked to self-assess against various aspects relating to the delivery of their BSIP interventions. LTAs scored themselves using a ‘RAG’ rating and scoring their ‘likelihood of delivery’ (on a scale of 1 to 9, with ‘1’ representing ‘Achieved’ and ‘9’ representing ‘On Hold/Discontinued’) over the past year. This has been analysed for all 16 representative LTAs. In addition, consideration has been given to feedback received throughout the process of gathering impact evaluation data, through stakeholder forum events, and through sharing lessons learnt across the project team.

6.2 Quantitative Data

Key messages

- **The LTAs in receipt of BSIP funding self-reported relatively high capability levels regarding the design and delivery of their BSIP interventions:** LTAs provided a capability score for 26 different capability-related areas related to the BSIP interventions, with average scores ranging between 3.3 and 4 out of 5, suggesting relatively high capability for most areas.
- **Likelihood of delivery:** Almost all LTAs indicated that their planned interventions would be successfully delivered at the stated cost or quality or with some unforeseen risks, which may require some mitigation. A tiny proportion of LTAs indicated that the majority of schemes are unlikely to be delivered on time, at cost, and quality due to significant roadblocks.
- **Delivery Score**: More than 90% of the planned schemes across the LTAs were deemed feasible (or very likely) in January 2024, compared to 95% in October 2023, suggesting a slight decrease in confidence over time.

6.2.1 Capability Rating (July 2023)

In the three months to July 2023, LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding were asked to provide a capability score (on a scale of 1 to 5, where '1' refers to low capability and '5' refers to high capability) for 26 different capability areas related to the design and delivery of the BSIP interventions.

These have been collated into eight core topic areas, outlined below. The average capability score for each area was between 3.3 and 4 out of 5.

Table 11 Average self-reported capability scores across LTAs

Capability Grouping	Average Capability Score
Public Engagement (Customer Service, Accessibility, and Consultation) Customer Service, Accessibility and Inclusion, Consultation Techniques	3.3
Data and Analysis (Information, Data, and Modelling) Data, Modelling, and Travel Information Utilisation	3.5
Communications and Marketing Marketing and Branding, Communication, and Negotiation	3.5

Planning and Programming Improving Sustainability, Presenting Commercial Information, Developing Transport Investment Plans and Using Capital Funding, Business Case Development, Revenue Funding, Network review, Design and Planning, Bus Infrastructure Development and Delivery, Developing Creative Solutions	3.8
Governance Utilising Quality Standards, Working with Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Contract Management, Procurement, and Project Management	3.8
Operations Operating and Planning Concessionary Passes, Operating and Planning DRT, Operating and Planning Home to School Transport, and Utilising Fares and Ticketing Mechanisms	4
Partnership Working	4
Staffing (CPD)	4
	n=24

An analysis of the responses reveals that operational aspects showed the most significant variability. A deeper analysis of the sub-categories shows that a third of LTAs rated themselves ‘1’ or ‘2’ in capability for ‘Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) operations’ (some noted that this is not relevant for their area) and for ‘Utilising Fares and Ticketing Mechanisms’ (with a number stating they rely on consultants or their EP partners to support this).

‘Data and Analysis’ also had mixed responses, with just over 1 in 10 rating themselves ‘1’ or ‘2’ for the sub-categories ‘Data and Modelling’ or ‘Travel Information Utilisation’. Some have noted in their responses they are actively recruiting or have recently recruited for more data analysis support. ‘Partnership Working’ was seen as an area of strength for 96% of LTAs who rated themselves ‘4’ or ‘5’.

Likewise, over two-thirds of LTAs rated themselves ‘4’ or ‘5’ for different ‘Communications and Marketing’ sub-categories, though several noted challenges around resourcing. In addition, two-thirds considered themselves a ‘4’ or ‘5’ capability level for accessibility and inclusion, with a number commenting on the organisational importance of this but noting the need for ongoing training. The majority of LTAs gave good capability levels for most aspects of Governance. However, almost half rated themselves as ‘2’ or ‘3’ for ‘Working with Legal and Regulatory Frameworks’, with a mix of support from in-house and external legal teams.

In addition to providing self-reported ratings, LTAs were asked how their existing *capacity* (i.e., resourcing availability) to deliver is linked to their *capability* (i.e., skillset) for delivery. Around a third noted a firm reliance on consultants, and a fifth highlighted their training needs.

Approximately half of the LTAs responded neutrally to the overall question, noting they were managing resourcing requirements but often using consultants or stretching resources more thinly. Around a quarter of LTAs were optimistic about the match between capacity and capability; a quarter also stated they were recruiting or had recently recruited, specifically to support BSIP delivery.

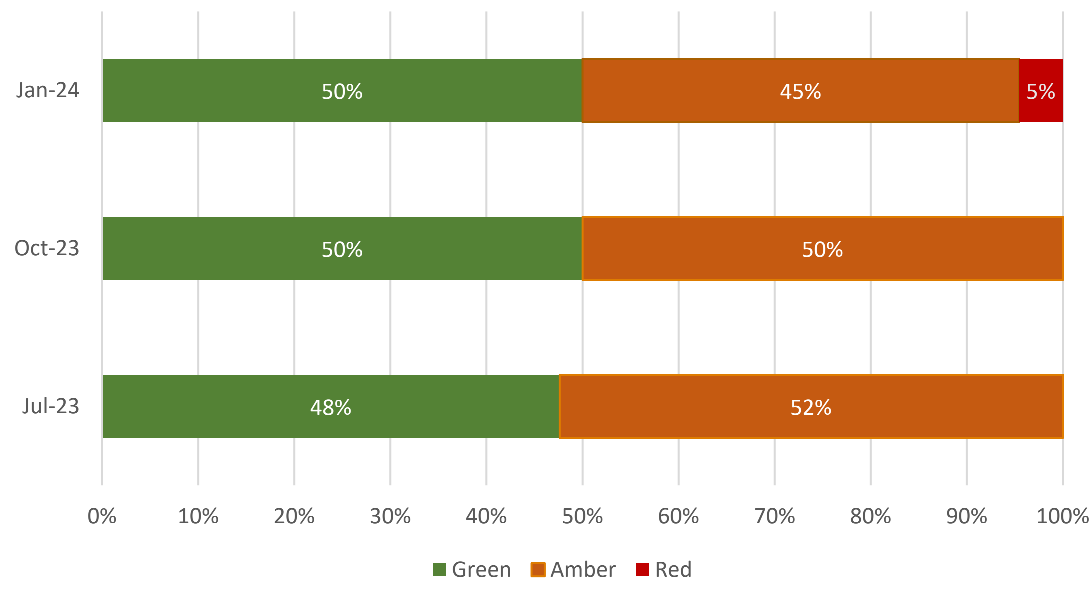
6.2.2 Programme Level 'RAG' (Red, Amber, or Green) Rating

In January 2024, all LTAs were asked to submit a programme level 'RAG' rating:

- **Red:** The majority of schemes are unlikely to be delivered on time, at cost, and quality due to major roadblocks.
- **Amber:** Successful delivery of the majority of schemes is likely, but risks affecting overall programme delivery have been raised. Mitigation and exposure to these risks need to be managed for the overall programme.
- **Green:** Successful delivery of the majority of schemes on time, at cost and quality is very likely or was achieved, depending on the majority of scheme completion dates.

Of the responses, just over half of LTAs rated their overall programme as 'Amber' at each reporting stage (July 2023, October 2023, and January 2024). The remaining half rated it as 'Green'. Until January 2024, no LTAs selected 'Red'; however, in the most recent data return, 5% of LTAs classified their progress as 'Red'. This is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Programme Level 'RAG' (Red, Amber, or Green) Rating



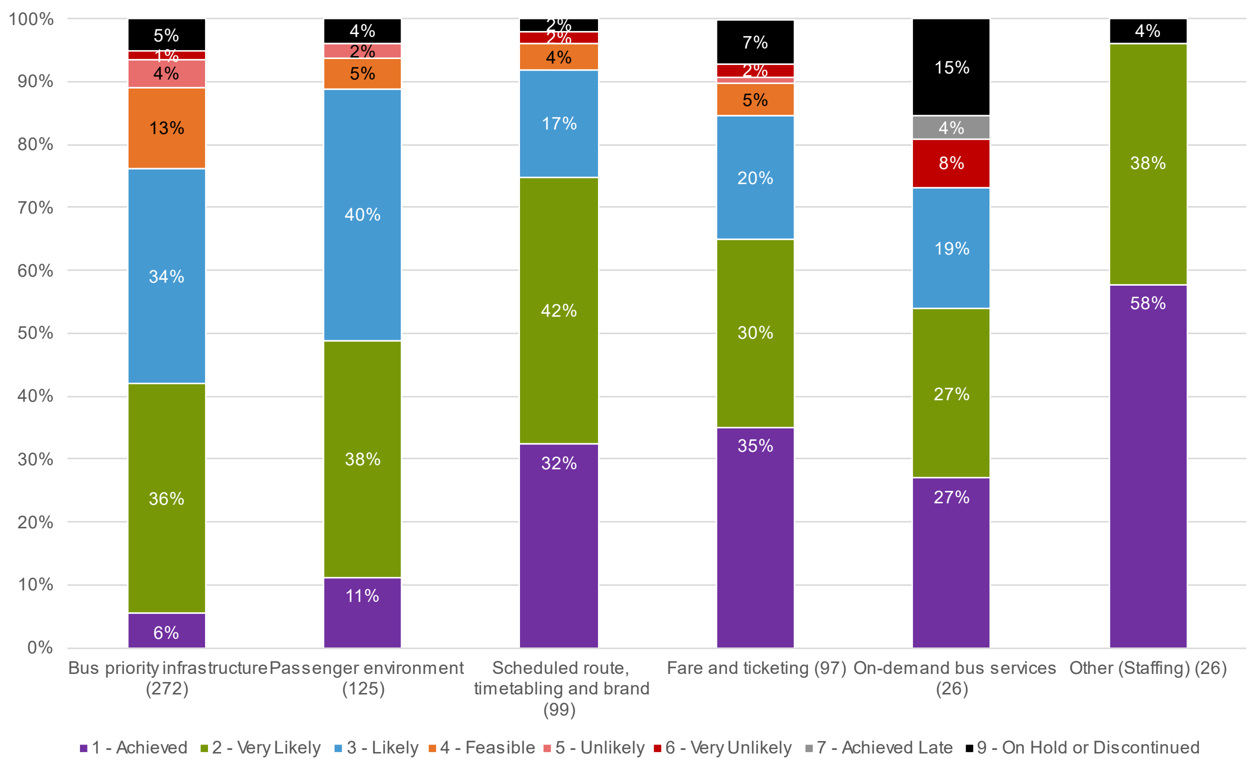
Source: LTA data; July 23 returns: 21, October 23 returns: 22, January 24 returns: 22.

6.2.3 Delivery Score

In January 2024, all LTA teams were asked to report a 'likelihood of delivery' score for each planned scheme. As detailed below, this has been categorised against each evaluation typology. Revenue interventions, particularly fares and ticketing, have the highest proportion of 'Achieved' schemes. In contrast, capital interventions, namely bus priority infrastructure, reported only 6% as 'Achieved'. 'On-demand bus services' (i.e., DRT) are reported to have the highest proportion of 'Achieved Late', 'Missed', or 'On Hold or Discontinued', suggesting these, alongside bus priority infrastructure, are the most challenging to implement. This finding is mirrored in the subsequent qualitative narrative.

As shown in Figure 10, as of January 2024, across the 28 self-reporting LTAs, 9% of schemes were classed as 'Very Unlikely', 'Achieved Late', 'Missed', or 'On Hold or Discontinued', compared to 5% in October 2023. On the other hand, 91% of schemes were 'Feasible', 'Very Likely', 'Likely', or 'Achieved', indicating a relatively high confidence level in delivery. However, compared to the 95% reported in 2023, a slight decrease in confidence over time is evident.

Figure 10 Self-reported likelihood of delivery score across 28 LTAs (January 2024)



Source: LTA data January 24 returns.

6.3 Qualitative Data

Since spring 2023, 16 LTA interviews have been conducted, as well as nine with bus operators, four with local community stakeholders and two with regulators. In addition, quarterly delivery metrics from LTAs have been monitored. The first phase of interviews was carried out in spring 2023 during the early delivery phase of BSIP interventions; a summary of this engagement is provided in Section 6.4. The more detailed findings from spring 2024, looking more in-depth at delivery, are provided in Section 6.5.

All interviews were carried out over Teams and lasted around an hour each. Following the interviews, they were written up and thematically analysed, drawing together common themes and consensus opinions. Where a unique point is pertinent to the topic or the circumstances of a specific intervention or LTA, these have also been reflected in the analysis.

In addition, anonymised quotations have been used in this section to illustrate the perceptions of LTA officers and other stakeholders. In some cases, these perceptions may not align with the actions and mitigations put in place by DfT during the funding process.

6.4 Process evaluation headline findings: Spring 2023

Eleven LTAs were interviewed during May 2023 to understand what has worked well with the design, delivery, and experience of the BSIP Phase 1 funding process to date and what improvements may be required for the complete BSIP process. A summary of the findings from this phase of the research is provided below:

- As of May 2023, all those interviewed had received Year 1 funding despite the majority of funding being delayed. Nearly all had made progress with interventions, with some revenue schemes underway and design stages for capital schemes. Of those interviewed, around half had other relevant funding streams, such as ZEBRA, TCF, or Levelling-Up.

- Regarding funding, half of the LTAs interviewed in May 2023 noted a challenge with spending the funding due to the delay associated with receiving the funding. This was also a concern in relation to the delay in receiving the funding for next year. It was emphasised in the interviews that due to the funding being received late, delivering all measures within the given timeframe may be challenging, with some having removed certain interventions from their BSIP altogether.

- External factors influencing the ability to deliver as of May 2023 included fuel shortages, driver shortages, the cost-of-living crisis, and the interaction with the £2 Fare Cap on planned fare schemes.

- At this stage, the majority of challenges reported in relation to progressing with the BSIP interventions were due to a lack of resources, as well as delayed responses and feedback from the DfT and their Relationship Managers.

- The majority of LTAs interviewed at this stage of the evaluation had used the bus capacity and capability funding for recruitment, resourcing, and staff costs, which were well received and welcomed for future schemes. However, due to the resourcing and skillset challenges faced by the LTAs, the majority of LTAs interviewed used this funding to commission external consultancy support to aid with writing the BSIP.

- The LTAs interviewed noted that local knowledge was key in determining interventions. Local knowledge was gathered through stakeholder engagement, regular discussions with bus operators, customer consultation surveys, previous customer engagement, and engagement from further local key groups, such as those from the healthcare and education sectors.

- Likewise, the majority of LTAs identified their aims and objectives through local knowledge, discussions with bus operators and highway colleagues, and previous research and programmes. LTAs noted that the aims and objectives reflected DfT's guidelines for the outcomes of the BSIP programme and the aims pointed out in the NBS. All LTAs interviewed noted that equality was always a consideration when formulating the BSIP and associated interventions.

- As part of setting up their EP, LTAs created new partnerships with local bus operators or expanded on existing partnerships with local bus operators through the EP process. All LTAs interviewed engaged with at least one other stakeholder partnership as part of the BSIP process.

- Nearly all LTAs had a positive experience with their Relationship Manager; however, many noted delays in receiving a response or a lack of response from the DfT to queries submitted.

- At this stage of the evaluation, only some of the LTAs interviewed had completed the quarterly performance monitoring data for the DfT. Of those that had (8 of the 11 interviewed), there were mixed responses, with some finding it difficult and others finding it straightforward. There were a number of comments about the consistency and timing of the data collection. Some LTAs noted they would like more flexibility and autonomy around change control.

6.5 Process evaluation findings: Spring 2024

In February/March 2024, five more LTAs were interviewed to build on these findings and develop 'Spotlight' areas to explore in-depth. In addition, nine bus operators were interviewed, with services covering a range of geographies across the evaluation areas. Two regulators and four community stakeholders also provided feedback.

6.5.1 Enhanced Partnerships and Working with Operators

Key messages

- **EP helped foster positive relationships with operators, but some challenges remain.** While most LTAs were optimistic about their EPs, some highlighted challenges and 'learning curves' regarding collecting data and feedback from operators and keeping them informed.
- **Most operators were also positive about their experiences with EPs.** However, some faced challenges when working with different local authorities due to different priorities and working methods.

All LTAs were positive about their EP and were generally pleased with their progress and working methods.

> 'Having the enhanced partnership there has been a positive for us and it helps us engage more with operators and it sets out the obligations on both the local authority and the operators. So it's much more clearly documented in terms of what we've agreed and what what's expected from each party …' – LTA Representative
>
> '… there's never been anything we couldn't work through.'

Some LTAs had mixed experiences with operators on a more day-to-day basis. Some had more established EP, describing them as 'business as usual', whereas others were establishing new ways of working, describing the process as having a 'learning curve'. Challenges which arose included:

- collecting data from operators;
- obtaining feedback from operators to support prioritisation and ongoing delivery; and
- keeping both smaller and larger operators engaged and informed.

Some LTAs also noted the challenges facing operators themselves, such as ensuring they are a commercially viable business, and factors such as ongoing driver shortages.

Operators expressed similar sentiments. Overall, operators were positive about the EP and generally pleased with the progress and ways of working.

Operators who previously had a voluntary partnership structure and already had good working relationships with their LTA expressed that setting up the EP did not significantly change their work; instead, they provided more structure to existing meetings. Conversely, other operators emphasised how the EP and jointly signing up for initiatives has strengthened relationships between operators and authorities.

> ‘I think it's fair to say, now that we've got the EP and are having to sign up to all these initiatives jointly, our relationships have strengthened. Some of the authorities … that we deal with, the relationship was non-existent.’ – SME Operator Representative

Operators faced challenges when working with different local authorities due to differences in priorities and ways of working. All operators emphasised the benefits of a collaborative approach, finding that LTAs who involved operators and had aligned objectives had more effective partnerships working and designed more effective schemes. Moreover, increased communication and collaboration between neighbouring authorities were important in coordinating and providing more joint interventions.

> ‘The approaches between all these authorities were really inconsistent.’ – SME Operator Representative
>
> ‘There is just more meetings now and paperwork and reports, and it's very time consuming. I would seriously question whether it's all necessary … The enhanced partnership was just something we're already doing.’ – SME Operator Representative

Operators mentioned some of the following challenges in partnership working, mirroring some of the sentiments shared by LTAs:

- Increase in data requirements, especially with added pressures related to other funding;
- Increase in bureaucracy, although there have been changes in the level of cooperation between the councils; and
- Underestimation of how much time is required to be involved in the BSIP. Larger operators felt there should have been a provision in the BSIP funding to support this.

> ‘When we are getting pull from 10 different local authorities for their time to go through BSIP initiatives. Generally speaking, it's going to be one or two people who will need to get involved in that. And one or two people in 10 meetings a week, as well as doing their day job is very challenging.’ – Big Operator Representative

6.5.2 Delivery of Interventions: Capital

Key messages

- **Complex processes and political challenges slow down delivery.** Many capital schemes require high 'entry costs' before they can be implemented, such as health and safety and procuring software systems to deal with complex technical requirements.
- **Operators suggested that support from politicians was sometimes a barrier to delivering capital interventions, particularly those that were deemed 'unpopular' or 'controversial'.**

LTAs and operators explained that capital schemes bring a particular challenge due to the number of components to manage before being able to 'get a spade in the ground', including consultation, health and safety, booking road space, timing, weather, and working with other stakeholders. Similarly, complex software systems and technical requirements also took time. However, LTAs were positive about how they overcame these challenges:

> 'I think we've done particularly well in a really short space of time because we're not even at the two-year mark since getting the funding …at the 18-month mark really.' – LTA Representative

For others, this remained a 'worry' and something they were feeling apprehensive about.

One LTA described how many of the capital interventions are well received by operators and that they have been working closely with operators to identify pinch points. Others noted some 'easy wins' with simple junction painting or removal of overgrown vegetation.

> 'These have been really well received by local bus operators. It's the literally one of the best things that we've ever, ever done for them. … It's just talking to the bus operators to see where problems are and doing something about it.' – LTA Representative

All operators highlighted that bus priority schemes would be 'transformational' for both passengers and operators, positively impacting travel for the longer term. However, there is frustration due to a heavier focus on short-term revenue-based initiatives, which operators feel are less sustainable.

> 'We want to see more punctuality improvements done – it seems to be easy to do revenue-based scheme rather than a traffic management or punctuality improvement based scheme … ' – SME Operator Representative

> ‘The capital money should be spent on infrastructure, which will give us long-term benefits to the wider network, making us more efficient and increasing use of public transport.’ – SME Operator Representative

Several operators highlighted support from politicians as a barrier to driving capital interventions such as bus priority lanes, which are typically ‘unpopular’ and ‘controversial’. This mirrors some of the feedback from LTAs. Another barrier discussed was increasing costs after running feasibility studies, meaning not all schemes planned can be delivered.

6.5.3 Delivery of Interventions: Revenue

Key messages

- **LTAs feel they are making good progress with revenue interventions.**
- **Some LTAs raised concerns about the interaction of their fare schemes with the national fare cap, leading to lower uptake.** While the fare initiatives were generally well-received by operators, the evidence on patronage effects has been mixed.
- **Overall, operators feel DRT interventions are progressing slowly with most operators and are aimed at more rural areas.**

Fare Schemes

Two LTAs mentioned the interaction between their local fare schemes and the national fare cap, with plans made for local fare schemes prior to the implementation and/or extension of the national fare cap. This was also a concern raised in feedback received in May 2023 as LTAs reallocated their awarded funding. Those who have implemented discount cards explained they have seen limited uptake but continue to support and promote the scheme. In some instances, fares can become lower than the £2 fare cap, and LTAs noted the uncertainty over the future of the £2 fare cap scheme.

> ‘… we're finding that actually the £2 is kind of overshadowing all the ticketing products that we've looked to deliver.’ – LTA Representative

Operators also felt the BFCG £2 scheme minimised the impact of a local £1 scheme (Taunton) and made marketing more difficult.

> ‘The £1 scheme at its inception would have seemed like a really big contrast with standard fares, but suddenly it was then against a backdrop of £2 fares, which I think made marketing harder and probably made the difference seem less pronounced’ – SME Operator Representative

From the operators’ perspective, one described the fare initiatives as innovative and believed they could not have implemented such schemes prior to the BSIP. The BSIP created incentives for operators to work together and cooperate on tickets that benefit customers. However, some operators reported delays to planned BSIP-funded interventions as the £2 fare cap was extended. Moreover, operators felt that some fare initiatives and the BFCG £2 scheme competed and diluted each other's message.

The fare initiatives were generally well-received by operators, but their views on the effects on passenger growth have been mixed. Some operators experienced a significant increase in patronage, while others saw minimal growth.

Demand Responsive Transport

Three of the five LTAs had or were soon to implement a DRT scheme. The LTAs described different approaches to the delivery of DRT services; some run them in addition to existing services to 'gap fill', and some replace existing services. One explained they chose to run the service in-house, which is more cost-effective and offers better service visibility. One is using electric vehicles (EVs), but others have opted for diesel. One operator said that DRT is not the best use of funding and has had minimal impact. Overall, operators feel DRT interventions are progressing slowly with most operators and are aimed at more rural regions.

Another LTA explained they are experiencing a delay in their DRT scheme due to internal governance processes and procuring a suitable vehicle supplier. Another noted they had some delays due to software suppliers, system issues, and registration with the Traffic Commissioner's Office. This LTA also explained that they are using an external advertising agency to support branding.

Additional / Enhanced Services

All five LTAs have reported implementing the planning and delivery of enhanced or additional services (often evening and weekend), which were prioritised through a review of existing services and trip attractors.

6.5.4 Funding

Key messages

- **Delays with funding 'in the bank' impacted LTAs' ability to deliver.** LTAs reported that due to delays in the funding being issued, their ability to deliver capital schemes was negatively impacted
- **Operators raised concerns that the scale of funding did not match the DfT's initial messaging to undertake ambitious interventions.**

LTAs' indicative allocations were announced in April 2022; following this, LTAs were required to submit a spending plan by June 2022. The DfT signed off on this, and funding confirmation letters were issued, the majority in August 2022, with some being delayed due to further clarifications. Funding was subsequently released once their EP was in place, as per the conditions of funding.

LTAs reported their ability to deliver capital schemes was compounded by funding not being issued until later in the year. In the example of one particular LTA, funding was not released until November 2022, following the April indicative funding allocation. The LTA emphasised they are unable to progress until 'the money is in the bank' and noted a 'discord' in the DfT's appreciation of the financial situation of LTAs, a sentiment shared by other LTAs.

> 'We're trying to mitigate those things, but I think sometimes, to us that's a big problem.' – LTA Representative

Some operators were critical of the bidding process and 'postcode lottery' for funding. They believe it should be allocated on the merit of the schemes and initiatives, regardless of local authority boundaries.

> 'Despite having clear plans, some areas did not receive funding and could not proceed with plans, whereas other areas receive a lot of funding but did not have the necessary skillset within the Council to utilise it.' – Big Operator Representative.

Operators were also frustrated by the 'initial drive' from the DfT to be 'ambitious' with their plans, although there was insufficient funding.

> 'You're told to be ambitious and then the budget was nowhere near that ambitious … so we were setting ourselves up for conversations for a much bigger project than eventually happened.' – SME Operator Representative

6.5.5 Capacity and Capability

Key messages

- **Capacity funding was welcomed, but in some instances, resourcing the additional volume of work created a delivery challenge.** Timescales were raised as a particular challenge.
- **Some LTAs suggested that DfT did not fully appreciate the level of internal governance required for their submissions.**

Several LTAs cited the 2024 BSIP *Refresh* as an example, both in terms of the lead-in time for approvals within their LTA and the volume of requirements. One LTA agreed that better communication on the reasons for the timings would be beneficial.

> '… the expectation on what needs to go into that document is over and above what the original BSIP document was in terms of aspirations … That's quite a big challenge considering you're trying to deliver everything with what we're trying to deliver now.' – LTA Representative

A sentiment shared by some LTAs was that DfT did not fully appreciate the level of internal governance required for their submissions. Within the preparation period of the BSIP *Refresh* document, an internal panel may only sit quarterly and require paperwork roughly two weeks in advance, effectively halving the time available to produce the document. One explained they would like to see 'a bit more awareness in the DfT around internal governance processes at local authority'.

6.5.6 Working with DfT

Key messages

- **LTAs praised the helpfulness and responsiveness of Relationship Managers.** All LTAs were positive about their Relationship Managers.

Several LTAs noted they had recently switched or were about to switch to a new internal DfT Relationship Manager. None reported any concerns about this, and they were keen to maintain a collaborative relationship.

> 'We've been pretty open with our relationship manager and she's been supportive and open, we've not had any major issues.' – LTA Representative

This shows a marked improvement from the 2023 feedback from LTAs, in which a number of LTAs raised concerns about the timeliness of responses from Relationship Managers.

6.5.7 Working with Other Stakeholders

Key messages

- **Some LTAs noted that managing political stakeholders was more involved than anticipated. This sentiment was not raised in previous engagements with LTAs.** Most LTAs noted the political angle to delivery in that they did not fully account for the time and resources required to engage with stakeholders at the local and MP level.

Two LTAs felt they ‘underestimated’ the political aspect and level of interest of delivery at both the local and MP levels (where objections locally have been escalated) and the amount of time and resources it has taken to support this. Conversely, another noted they had good political support, which created no challenges.

Most operators also noted the political angle to delivery and felt areas with good political support did not face as many challenges in implementing desired interventions. One operator expressed concerns over expected changes in local administration, which adds uncertainty to ongoing delivery and priorities for LTAs.

> ‘There might be a policy about Bus priority measure in one location that the officers are in agreement with as soon as it starts to rise, it potentially starts to take more of a political slant, at which point it can get batted down and that can be really frustrating’ – Operator Representative

Some LTAs were anticipating or had recently experienced changes in administration locally, which gave a level of uncertainty to ongoing delivery and priorities. One explained that other large infrastructure projects had become higher priority, causing a knock-on effect for BSIP delivery, in terms of resourcing to deliver and on-road traffic impact of construction.

6.5.8 Data Returns and Reporting

Key messages

- **Most LTAs felt that the data requirements were demanding but felt they were improving.** Data return requirements tended not to follow a standard approach and were not always the most ‘user friendly’, making the process more challenging.
- **Nearly all LTAs felt the change control process was onerous, with the form not always being ‘fit for purpose’ to individual circumstances.**
- **While some operators felt that there had not been significant issues with data requests, others found the data requirements and processes laborious.** The latter was mainly observed among smaller operators.

Most LTAs noted that the quarterly return spreadsheet requirements to DfT tended to change each time and were not always the most ‘user friendly’, which made the process more challenging – this largely mirrors the feedback from a previous engagement in 2023. However, LTAs now welcomed the timely support provided by Relationship Managers and Arup when issues arose. They generally did not have any major issues completing the requirements and submitting them on time. However, the sentiment was that more consistent requirements would be preferred, as well as ensuring spreadsheet templates do not contain errors.

Nearly all LTAs felt the change control process was onerous, with the form not always being ‘fit for purpose’ to individual circumstances. One described they would like to see the process more intuitive and smooth, noting that changes from the original submission are inevitable. A couple did feel the process had improved over time. One LTA noted they have limited control over their budget, with change control processes being required for any changes over a low threshold, and would welcome further autonomy over this. This sentiment was shared by other LTAs and in earlier feedback from May 2023.

> ‘… but to have a bit more flexibility around that would have been really useful.’ – LTA Representative

With regards to bus operators, a few found the process to be ‘straightforward’ and did not have any major issues completing the requirements and submitting them on time. One operator mentioned that data was accessible through the BODS and found this simple.

Conversely, other operators agreed with the majority of the LTAs that the amount of data required was overwhelming and expressed that some of the data requested seemed unnecessary. One operator noted that authorities had tried to standardise data requirements; however, some frustrations remain.

Smaller operators highlighted that with local authorities having similar deadlines and other ongoing schemes such as Concessionary Fares, there are peaks in data requests, and the time is difficult to manage. In addition, one operator mentioned issues with timescales for reporting data, as LTAs want monthly reporting, whereas they usually report in 28-day cycles, meaning data has to be rerun.

> ‘The amount of data required is exhausting.’ – LSME Operator Representative

6.5.9 Participating in Knowledge Sharing

Key messages

- **All LTAs found participating in knowledge sharing to be a positive experience.** They noted that it was reassuring and encouraging to hear LTAs experiencing similar issues.
- **Operators highlighted the benefits of working in partnership between neighbouring LTAs.**

All LTAs participated in knowledge sharing to some extent, and all found this to be a positive experience.

Nearly all LTAs participated in regular bus forum meetings. Some had engaged with the Bus Centre of Excellence, some with ATCO, and most also noted they worked closely with neighbouring LTAs, for example, sitting on their EP boards, setting up shared contracts for service efficiency, and providing general support and advice. A number of LTAs noted it was reassuring and encouraging to hear LTAs experiencing similar issues.

Several operators were also involved in regular bus advisory board meetings, EP boards, and multi-operator meetings. Operators also participated in a forum which included representation from the districts, the public, and the transport focus, who met twice a year to shape the agenda. Their view was that allowing representatives on the board meant that there were quick and efficient meetings to approve papers.

Operators also highlighted the benefits of neighbouring LTAs working closely together and sitting on each other’s EP boards, allowing for more collaboration. The LTAs’ transparency of the BSIP process, with openness regarding challenges and honest discussions, was also helpful for operators.

> ‘In those places where it worked well, I think we actually had the same goals, same purpose. There was transparency around the process. There was honesty, openness about the challenges. We were able to challenge each other, and it was just a good working relationship.’ – Big Operator Representative

> ‘Those neighbouring authorities are working together, which is really, really good and it's pleasing to see. Even though it was never part of the original scope of the EP. But it is absolutely the way to go.’ – SME operator representative

6.5.10 Regulators

Two key regulatory bodies were engaged as part of this evaluation, both of which act as statutory consultees as part of the BSIP/EP process.

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

The CMA has a dual role in relation to EP: first, it is a statutory consultee to any proposed new EP or variation; this applies to both EP plans and schemes (each LTA EP plan can have multiple schemes). The second role is that ‘if at any time the Competition and Markets Authority considers that [an EP] may not meet the competition test, it may conduct an investigation’.[26]

An in-depth interview was conducted with CMA’s advocacy team members, who carry out this function.

The CMA published an advice paper to LTAs in May 2023. Although the CMA is a statutory consultee, the CMA is not legally obliged to provide views to the consulting LTA. The Advocacy Team has reviewed all EP consultations that have been sent to them. The CMA commented that, in most cases, it has required little interaction with LTAs.

The advice paper was published following a review of over 50 draft EP plans and schemes in which the CMA provided aggregated and bespoke high-level feedback on competition issues. An example of this was that one LTA who chose to see ‘what is possible’ with the EP and include some more complex interventions has liaised closely to test and check aspects of the EP and continues to do so when variations arise.

The CMA noted it has always had close engagement with the DfT, and there were frequent communications between the CMA and the DfT in the early stages of developing the BSIP proposal, assisting with some aspects of interpretation around the competition test. It also engaged with the DfT in preparing the advice note and noted that the DfT were keen to avoid a situation in which the advice paper from the CMA may discourage or disincentivise LTAs. Further, the DfT supported the CMA in getting the advice shared and provided a speaking opportunity at a bus forum meeting.

Following the preparation of the advice paper, interactions with DfT have naturally become less frequent as EPs become more ‘business as usual’. The CMA was positive about its role

[26] CMA (2023). Bus Enhanced Partnerships: Advice for Local Transport Authorities. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6463995fd3231e000c32da7d/CMA_Bus_Enhanced_Partnerships_Update_Paper_post_legal_review_.pdf

in EPs and found the advice paper to be an effective way to communicate key points, and would consider a similar approach in future.

Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain

The Traffic Commissioners are appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport to regulate the lorry, bus, and coach industries. There are eight full-time Traffic Commissioners, and they act independently of Government – partly in a judicial capacity. Traffic Commissioners are supported by fee-paid deputy Traffic Commissioners, with administrative support provided by staff employed by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) but who are deployed to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC). In the context of BSIP, their role primarily relates to the registration of new and amended local bus services. Additionally, Traffic Commissioners can also take action against bus operators who fail to run in accordance with their timetables or fail to comply with the requirements of an EP scheme. As with the CMA, the OTC is a statutory consultee on BSIPs and EPs. An in-depth interview was conducted with members of the OTC who carry out this function on behalf of the Traffic Commissioners.

The OTC explained they were not given advance notice of the NBS. Most engagement with the DfT is with policy teams. The OTC explained they would like more readily available direct access to DfT lawyers to ensure clarity on legislative matters: ‘We are used to dealing with lawyers, day in, day out’. Further to this, it was also noted that there is no dedicated resource to the additional requirements put on the Traffic Commissioners and the OTC by the NBS.

In terms of working with LTAs, in some cases, an LTA can ask for the responsibility of registering local bus services to be delegated to them – the OTC must then facilitate this. In these instances, the OTC works quite closely with the LTA to manage this process. In the case of other bus service registrations, this is business as usual for the OTC.

LTAs have to be proactive in passing their documentation to the OTC as a consultee; however, the OTC is not certain it is aware of all EPs in existence at the present time. However, it was noted that there are a number of different communication channels for the OTC, which may mean they do not always get to the correct team, and this is something the OTC could improve.

Although the OTC explained it is able to take action against bus operators who do not meet reliability or punctuality requirements, it is not an investigative body, so any complaints are directed to the DVSA, which is noted to have limited resources to support this function.

> ‘… ultimately the Traffic Commissioner could take action but really we’d want the local authority to work with the operators, [be]cause they’re in partnership … trying to improve services.’

It was also flagged that there is sometimes a discord between standards. For example, the Senior Traffic Commissioner sets a standard of 95% of services operating punctually; however, an EP may state an interim target of 80%, and it is unclear which takes precedence. It was also flagged that the delegation of registrations impacts the quality of the data held by the OTC. When an LTA takes on the registration of services, those services are removed from the OTC record, reducing the number reported by the OTC, and artificially suggesting that the volume of bus services is reduced, leading to concern amongst politicians and communities.

It was also flagged that there is no single system in which bus services can be registered to ensure a single source for the data. It would benefit a number of interested parties to have sight of the registrations carried out by all delegated authorities in a single source. Further, the OTC felt that EPs could make the registration process more complex because the introduction of delegated bodies means that operators may have to register services with various authorities rather than just the Traffic Commissioners.

On overall reflection, the OTC suggested it would like more resources for, and prior awareness of, future initiatives that affect the local bus services and earlier, closer engagement with relevant teams at the DfT to support their role.

7 Impact evaluation: Early themes across the spotlight areas

Many of the BSIP Phase 1 interventions are in their very early stages of delivery or are yet to become operational. The impact evaluation for this interim report, therefore, focuses on five spotlight LTAs where some interventions have already been delivered. This section summarises key themes across the five spotlight areas. Further details on each area are available in subsequent chapters.

The majority of schemes implemented to date are revenue-funded.

Given the more extended implementation period required for capital-funded schemes, such as bus priority interventions, most completed interventions are revenue-funded. Across all LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding, as of January 2024, 36% of ‘planned route, timetabling, and brand’ interventions and 35% of ‘fare and ticketing’ interventions have been delivered or are currently ongoing. In comparison, only 5% of planned ‘bus priority infrastructure’ schemes have been delivered or are ongoing.

Several LTAs stated that the interventions would not have been possible without BSIP Phase 1 funding, and some previously considered cutting services.

LTAs in four of the five areas explicitly stated that their BSIP interventions would not have been possible without BSIP Phase 1 funding, particularly in relation to fare schemes. For example, Nottingham introduced its Under-22s ticket scheme, which offers student prices for passengers under the age of 22. However, the LTA reported it would have been challenging to justify funding over and above the national £2 bus fare cap in the absence of the BSIP Phase 1 funding. Similarly, Somerset LTA said they would not have been able to introduce their £1 bus fare cap in the Taunton Zone without BSIP Phase 1 funding due to the national £2 bus fare cap.

Furthermore, Nottingham has used BSIP Phase 1 funding to maintain existing services that would otherwise have been cancelled. It is important, therefore, to recognise that not all interventions delivered to date will enhance existing services; some will be about maintaining these services and supporting their long-term sustainability.

LTA perceptions of patronage impacts from new services are generally positive but feedback from community stakeholders is mixed.

Given the early stage of the overall BSIP Phase 1 programme, it is unlikely that any patronage changes will be observable in the LTA-wide patronage data. Therefore, feedback from LTAs and other community stakeholders on the early impacts of service enhancements has been collated via in-depth interviews.

LTAs had a generally positive perception of early patronage impacts, with all of the five spotlight LTAs reporting that they had seen patronage growth on newly enhanced services.

- West Berkshire reported that they had received positive feedback on their new DRT service, and they felt it was attracting new people who did not previously use public transport. They shared initial perceptions that patronage on their new X34 service and additional evening and Sunday services on existing routes were fairly good.
- Somerset LTA reported that they felt the scheme had led to increased patronage. This was echoed by the interview with a local bus operator who thought the Somerset fare initiatives have effectively encouraged more bus users. Similarly, a community stakeholder also felt that the £1 care cap has stimulated bus usage and significantly impacted the town.
- Nottingham introduced a new evening and weekend service on route 50. Whilst it is too early to judge the overall impact on patronage, data shared by the LTA from September to December 2023 tentatively suggests that patronage on this route increased by a more significant proportion than other routes over those four months.
- Hertfordshire LTA reported that they had observed patronage growth on new services, estimating a 7% uplift in patronage on new services during the stakeholder interview.
- Derbyshire LTA noted that 25 new or enhanced bus services have been implemented. Early figures on patronage shared by the LTA on these services show an average growth of 17% across these services, with two routes achieving growth of 44% and 52%.

Feedback from community stakeholders across different LTAs was more mixed. One community stakeholder in Nottingham shared that the introduction of evening services had been the most impactful intervention to date. It had a key role in supporting and stimulating jobs in the service industry and hospitals. In comparison, a community stakeholder in Derbyshire who worked at the local hospital noted that they had a mixed experience with local operators, with the hospital not being made aware of changes to bus services.

The £2 bus fare cap is perceived as impacting the take-up of bus fares and ticketing schemes.

Several spotlight LTAs reported that the national £2 bus fare cap grant was impacting the take-up of local fare and ticketing schemes targeting specific areas or age groups. LTAs felt that the national scheme had an adverse impact on the awareness of local schemes and the average savings available. One LTA raised that the £2 bus fare cap scheme applies to single tickets only, whereas their fare scheme complemented this as it currently applies to day and period tickets.

Early perceptions of DRT schemes suggest that they are being used by students as well as older concessionary fare users.

Both LTA representatives from Hertfordshire and West Berkshire noted that a large proportion of DRT users were accounted for by concessionary fare users, including older people and college students, suggesting the social value of these services. LTA representatives from Hertfordshire also felt that the DRT service was particularly valuable for connecting rural areas.

8 Next steps

This interim report presents an update on the monitoring metrics, initial findings from the process evaluation, and early signs of local changes in five spotlight areas where some interventions have already been delivered.

This interim report will be followed by a final report in 2025. This will provide an update to the interim report and present the final process and impact evaluation of the BSIP interventions across all 16 representative LTAs. It will also carry out a VfM assessment.

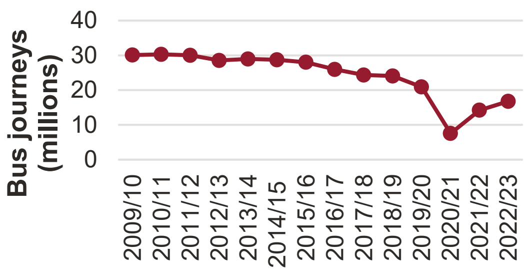
Annex A Spotlight: Derbyshire

Derbyshire is a non-metropolitan county in the East Midlands with a population of 796,800, according to 2021 figures.[27] Derbyshire consists of several smaller district and borough councils, some largely rural, while others are predominantly urban. Across the entire county, 27% of the inhabitants live in rural regions. Individuals under the age of 16 accounted for 18% of the total Derbyshire population in 2021 (compared to the regional and national averages of 19%).[28]

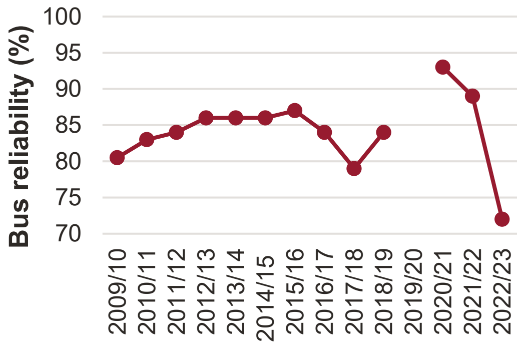
Derbyshire had a marginally higher share of people aged over 65 compared to the rest of the region in 2021 (22.2% compared to 19.6% in the East Midlands). Employment rates were in line with the rest of the region.[29] Of the people in Derbyshire who reported as economically inactive, 22% were retired, compared to an average of 14% in England. [30]

KEY METRICS

Total annual patronage for 2022/23: 16.8 million annual passenger journeys were on local bus services in Derbyshire, representing 0.5% of the total patronage in England (DfT bus statistics BUS01a and BUS01e).



Punctuality of bus services (2022/23): 72% of non-frequent bus services in 2022/23 in Derbyshire were recorded to be 'running on time', compared to the national average of 80% (DfT bus statistics BUS09a).[31]



Customer satisfaction (2019): 93.4% of bus passengers in Derbyshire were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the bus journey overall, relative to 89% across all LTAs when surveyed in 2019 (Transport Focus survey, 2019). According to the *Your Bus Journey* customer survey, 83% of bus passengers in Derbyshire were 'very' or 'fairly satisfied' with the bus journey overall. This was in response to the

[27] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

[28] ONS, Population estimates mid-2021.

[29] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

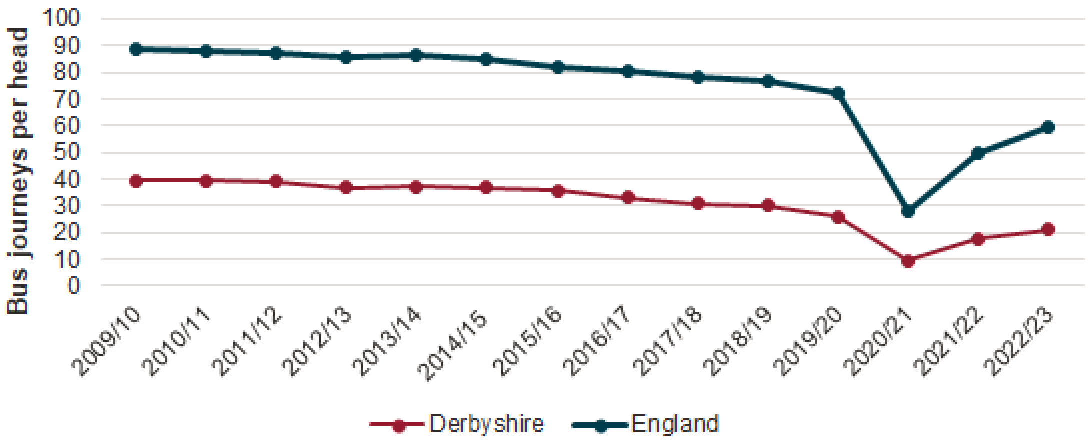
[30] Ibid.

[31] Data is from the annual bus statistics, BUS09a, which only covers non-frequent services. Monthly performance data on bus punctuality for all services is being collected for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding as part of the monitoring metrics. This is discussed in section 5.5.

question, 'Overall, taking everything into account from start to end of the bus journey, how satisfied were you with your bus journey'.

Derbyshire exhibited relatively lower average bus patronage per capita compared to the rest of the country, with 21.0 bus journeys per head of population in 2021/22, compared to 59.8 journeys per head across the rest of England. This is shown in Figure 11

Figure 11 Derbyshire – Bus journeys per head of population



Source: DfT bus statistics BUS01b and BUS01f.

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) interventions

Planned BSIP interventions

Derbyshire was awarded a total BSIP Phase 1 funding of £47m to March 2025. Table 12 below is an overview of the range of interventions the local transport authority (LTA) plans to implement (some already delivered) through the use of BSIP Phase 1 funding until March 2025. It should be noted that BSIP plans have evolved over time, and the table below is a reflection of the LTA's plans as of April 2024.

Table 12 Derbyshire intervention summary by typology

Type of intervention	
Bus priority infrastructure	Automated bus priority capability in all traffic signal junctions in Derbyshire, with a focus on pinch points.
	Corridor-based approach to address locations of network hotspots and pinch points that cause delay and affect reliability, as identified by operators.

	Establishing a plan for improved management of roadworks to minimise disruption on bus services. This will include working with statutory undertakers to implement potentially disruptive roadworks with optimal timings to minimise delays, as well as implementing priority timings for late-running buses.
Passenger environment	Continued development of holistic Transport Hubs that improve access across Derbyshire.
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Collaborate with the districts in boroughs in Derbyshire to develop Park and Ride sites, including seasonal 'pocket' Park and Rides.
	Individual timetables in printed format for all services, including a frequency guide highlighting the first and last bus, complete timetable information and route map.
	An extended network to give improved access to jobs and more services to support the visitor and tourist economy in Derbyshire.
	Delivering highly targeted marketing campaigns focused wholly on bus travel, integrating with other initiatives and promoting the 'Travel Derbyshire' brand. These will include providing details of local bus services and other options, as well as an attractive ticket offer.
	Developing a new website and app allowing people to access all timetable information, plan journeys, and monitor their buses in real time.
Fares and ticketing	Working with operators to support an extension to the 'Mango' account-based ticketing product to improve easy access to best value simpler fares. Also, Derbyshire's first contactless Tap-on Tap-off travel payments will be introduced with automatic best-value capping.
	Delivering a new 'Bus Only Multi-Operator' version of the popular 'Wayfarer' ticket to introduce a suite of new better value tickets for select customer groups.
On-demand bus services	Purchase of Booking & Management Software and vehicles for DRT Service. Additional revenue support for DRT will offer enhanced services to residents away from the main corridors and some direct connections without travelling via the city centre.

BSIP interventions delivered to date

Table 13 summarises the set of interventions Derbyshire has already implemented as part of their BSIP Phase 1 plans. These span a wide range of typologies and include the introduction of a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service. Some interventions may have an ongoing roll-out. Therefore, the intervention date indicates the first phase of delivery.

Table 13 Derbyshire interventions delivered to date

Typology	Intervention*	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	Bus traffic signals/pinch point schemes	January 2024	£500k to £1m

Typology	Intervention*	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Real Time Information Boards	January 2023	£500k to £1m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	New bus services serving local attractions	April 2023	£5m to £10m
On-demand bus services	DRT	February 2024	£1m to £5m
Fares and ticketing	Lower Fares for Key Groups (£1.50 Flat Rate for 11-19-year-olds)	October 2023	£1m to £5m

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation, in-depth interview, and LTA reporting.

**In their reporting, Derbyshire split some schemes into individual scheme line items. They have been grouped for reporting here.*

Table 14 shows the number of schemes, by typology, still to be delivered in Derbyshire as of April 2024. The majority of the remaining schemes are capital schemes associated with bus priority (29) and passenger environment (25), mostly transport hub infrastructure schemes. Of the allocated funding for these remaining schemes, 57% is associated with bus priority schemes. The fares and ticketing schemes account for over £5m in allocated funding, including the companion pass, b_line, and wayfarer ticketing schemes. This is a greater funding share than for the remaining 25-passenger environment schemes. Table 14 represents the schemes planned for delivery as of April 2024 and could be subject to change.

Table 14 Derbyshire interventions outstanding by typology (April 2024)

Typology	Schemes remaining*	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	29	> £5m
Fares and ticketing	1	> £5m
On-demand bus services	0	-
Passenger environment	25	£1m to £5m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	4	£1m to £5m
Other (staffing)	0	-

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation, in-depth interview, and LTA reporting.

**Derbyshire split some schemes into sub-schemes. The total values represent the sub-scheme total.*

Further details on the interventions delivered/partially delivered are described below.

Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand

Derbyshire has delivered an extended network with 24 enhanced services introduced between March and October 2023 to provide improved access to jobs, services, and visitor attractions to support the local tourist economy. It has carried out a network review of bus services in partnership with key stakeholders and subsequently revised the timetabling (a combination of earlier, later, or more frequent services) to meet the needs of key attractor destinations, including:

- Chesterfield Hospital, to better suit shift working and connectivity to the rail station;
- Connectivity from rural areas to main town centres; and
- Industrial Estates to reflect shift patterns.

The Council is also planning to rerun its 'Peak Sightseer' service, a hop-on-hop-off open-top bus service which covers a tourist route connecting villages and Chatsworth House. Users with a Peak Sightseer ticket can access discounts for Chatsworth House and other attractions on the route. This service ran in 2023, and the LTA is planning to use BSIP Phase 1 funding to run this again from May 2024 and extend the route further into the Hope Valley.

In addition to these enhanced services, Derbyshire has installed 302 real-time information (RTI) boards, which have been partially funded by BSIP Phase 1 funding.

Fares and ticketing

Derbyshire introduced a £1.50 flat rate fare via the b_line young person discount travel card in October 2023. This was for passengers between the ages of 11 and 19 (expanding the age range from the previous 16-19). The introduction of the scheme was accompanied by a two-phased marketing campaign, which targeted young people first and then parents of eligible users via social media and radio, along with posters on telephone boxes.

On-demand bus services

Derbyshire implemented a DRT service in Chesterfield, Bolsover, and North East Derbyshire in February 2024, which replaced an outgoing supported bus route. Bookings can be made both via a purpose-built app or phone.

Bus priority infrastructure

Derbyshire's BSIP Phase 1 plans include a series of bus priority infrastructure schemes focusing on pinch points. Some of these schemes have been delivered, including:

- bus gates at Chesterfield Road/Brimington Road and Belmont Street;
- new traffic signals, new signs, and line markings on Chesterfield Holywell roundabout; and
- new signals and junction improvements in Ashbourne.

Emerging insights

Process evaluation: Early learnings from design and delivery

Key messages

- **Derbyshire noted challenges working with operators but was positive about its Enhanced Partnership (EP).**
- **The LTA also noted initial 'setup' challenges as well as unforeseen time and resources, including attracting specialist consultants and equipment suppliers.**
- **The LTA also felt that some of the data return requirements were arduous and duplicated existing information already provided.**

The LTA noted a number of aspects on which progress has been made, alongside some challenges in relation to the delivery and management of their BSIP schemes at this stage.

The LTA noted that capital scheme bus interventions pose a particular challenge due to the number of components to manage before being able to 'get a spade in the ground', including consultation, health and safety, booking in road space, timings, and working with other stakeholders. However, the LTA was positive about how they have overcome these challenges:

> 'I think we've done particularly well in a really short space of time because we're not even at the two-year mark, since getting the funding.' – LTA Representative

As alluded to, they noted that funding was not issued until November 2022, following the April 2022 indicative funding allocation. The LTA emphasised they were unable to progress until 'the money is in the bank' and noted a 'discord' in the DfT's appreciation of the financial situation of LTAs.

> 'We're trying to mitigate those things, but I think sometimes, to us that's a big problem.' – LTA Representative

In terms of revenue schemes, the £1.50 flat rate for under 19s has been launched. However, the LTA fed back that 'under 22s demand has been slightly distorted by the £2 fare scheme'.

The LTA also 'underestimated' stakeholder engagement and the amount of time and resources it has taken to support this. There is also the additional upcoming challenge of local elections, and they anticipate the political side to 'ramp up' with more stakeholders to manage.

Despite positive relationships with operators, the LTA observed that their relationship has evolved over recent years and is mindful that they are 'businesses' and some aspects of BSIP Phase 1 delivery have sometimes been challenging. The LTA has both larger and smaller operators with which to work.

> ‘We've got bus operators at all levels really, and so trying to keep everybody informed is quite challenging all the time, but I think we’ve done pretty well with it.’ – LTA Representative

The LTA also recognised the challenges faced by operators having a knock-on effect (i.e., driver shortages) but were positive about their EP:

> ‘I think our EP Board is working well, really well, we've got a really good chair, we have 6 operators that come and sit around the table with us and that's been working really well.’ – LTA Representative

Similarly, a stakeholder at the local hospital noted a mixed experience with local operators, with the hospital not always being aware of information and the operator not always being proactive.

The LTA noted they have welcomed fortnightly meetings with their DfT relationship manager, had a good relationship, and are optimistic about a recent swap to a different relationship manager.

In terms of data returns submitted to Arup on a quarterly basis, the LTA felt that some were more ‘arduous’ than others and experienced some issues with spreadsheets, but were managing the requirements and submitting on time. Similarly, the LTA noted they have limited ability to make changes to their BSIP Phase 1 budget, with change control processes being required for any changes over a low threshold.

> ‘… but to have a bit more flexibility around that would have been really useful.’ – LTA Representative

The LTA also described a close involvement in bus forum meetings and with the Bus Centre of Excellence, as well as working closely with neighbouring authorities on a regular basis, and has been able to gain some efficiencies from setting up joint contracts for the delivery of BSIP interventions. A stakeholder at a local hospital noted they now work more closely with the LTA (and have attended the Sustainable Travel Forum regularly), with the LTA running promotional events and providing 64 free bus tickets for staff, as well as timetables and leaflets. However, the hospital was often unaware of changes to bus services and relied on usual ‘round robin’ emails from operators and the authority.

Preliminary observations to inform the impact evaluation: early signs of local change

Key messages

- **On average, the LTA has reported patronage growth on new or enhanced bus services delivered under the BSIP Phase 1, although there is significant variation across routes.**
- **Across each of the bus customer satisfaction criteria in the *Your Bus Journey* survey, the proportion of overall 'satisfied' customers in Derbyshire was higher than the average across the participating LTAs.**

Bus patronage

Lower Fares for Key Groups

Whilst data on the number of b_line card applications or number of trips made using b_line cards has not been shared with the evaluation team for this interim report, when interviewed, LTA representatives reported that they had seen a 200% increase in the number of b_line card applications since the introduction of the £1.50 fare for under 19s. The LTA believes that this is a mix of new and existing passengers and that, overall, the cards have led to an increase in patronage. However, patronage data is not currently available to analyse this.

Other BSIP Phase 1 interventions

Data on the number of passengers on the new DRT service is not yet available, nor is historical patronage data on the route it has replaced. The LTA reported that whilst the scheme has had a slow start, they are now (March 2024) seeing the number of registered users on the app increase to around 500.

Derbyshire reported patronage growth of over 13% across routes that have received service enhancements under the Bus Services Serving Key Attractors scheme (based on patronage six months post-enhancement compared to six months prior). Of the 24 new or enhanced bus services implemented, early figures on patronage shared by the LTA on these services show an average growth of 17%, with two routes achieving growth of 44% and 52%.

However, a stakeholder at a local hospital had observed limited improvements to the bus service. In some cases, they had been aware of improvements in one direction, but not the other. They also explained that a local service run by a smaller operator was shortly withdrawn due to the service no longer being commercially viable.

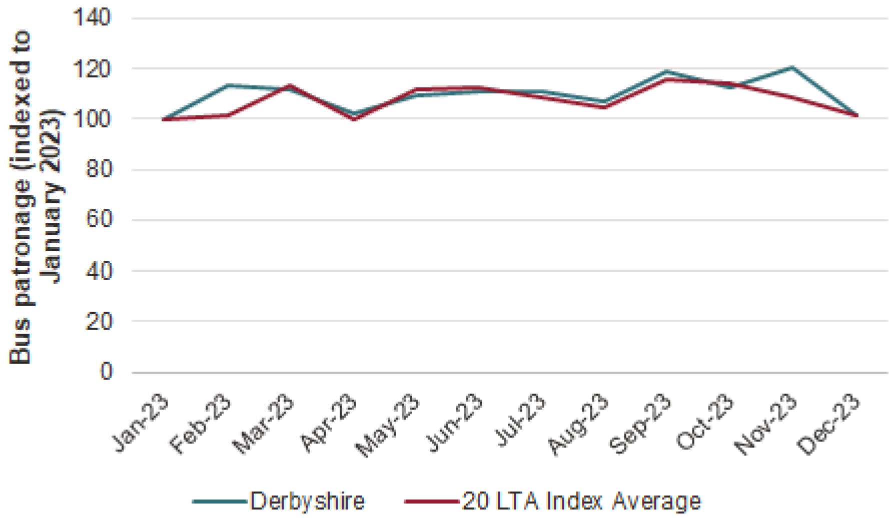
> '… but the thing is if you've not got the services there and they're not frequent enough then and people can't rely on them, then they're not going to use them. And to me, it just seems to be a downward spiral and we need that upward spiral.'

The stakeholder explained that 25% of employees do not have access to a car. Therefore, to access this ‘out of town’ site, they rely on public transport as an alternative. On Sundays, when services are less frequent, they often taxis. Reliability overall was seen as a key issue, particularly for patient appointments, where patients are unwilling to take the risk of missing appointments.

LTA-wide patronage trends

Initial trends suggest that bus patronage in Derbyshire exhibited similar growth over 2023 (Figure 12), as observed across the 20 LTAs that have provided monthly patronage data as part of this Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) programme (red line), many of which have not yet implemented their BSIP Phase 1 interventions.

Figure 12 Derbyshire bus patronage January to December 2023



Source: Data from Derbyshire LTA.

Note: All patronage data indexed to January 2023.

Bus punctuality

Bus traffic signals/pinch point schemes

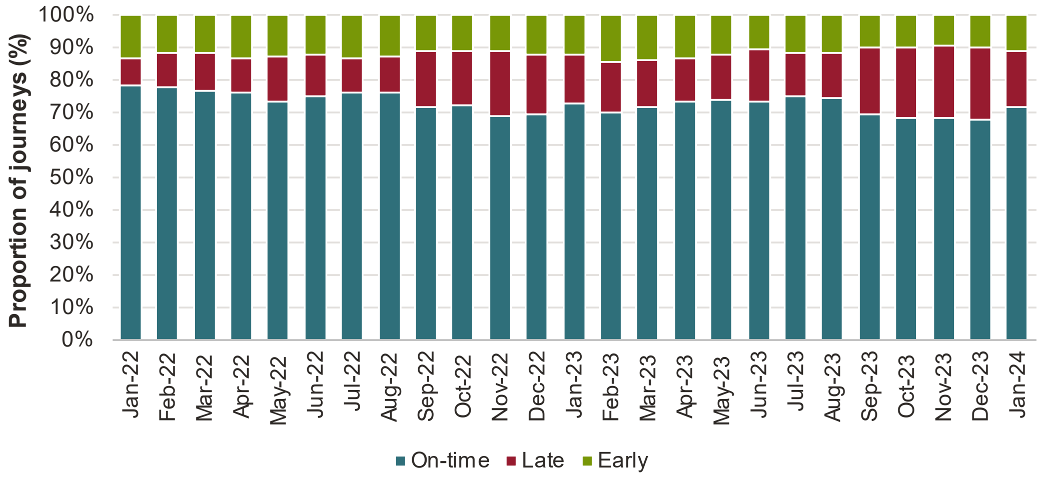
Data on bus punctuality for stops adjacent to the new traffic signalling upgrades is not yet available. However, LTA representatives noted that the new bus gate had been well received by operators.

LTA-wide bus punctuality trends

Similar to the trends observed across other LTAs, bus punctuality in Derbyshire (Figure 13) has been steadily decreasing over time. The proportion of bus services ‘on time’ fell from 78%

in January 2022 to 72% in January 2024, with a corresponding increase in late journeys from 8% to 17% over the same period. The data availability for Analyse Bus Open Data (ABOD) is typical of other LTAs, with information available on between 55% and 70% of journeys from May 2022 onwards. Prior to May 2022, the data availability was much lower at 20% to 40%.

Figure 13 Punctuality of bus services as reported by ABOD



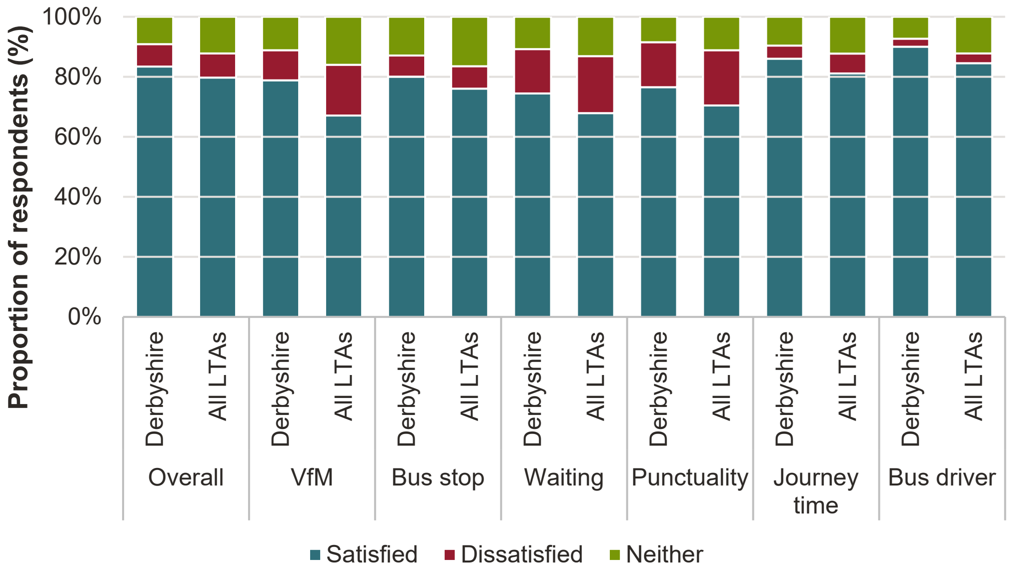
Source: Data from ABOD.

Bus customer satisfaction

As mentioned above, Transport Focus undertakes regular bus passenger surveys to measure customer satisfaction levels with the overall bus journey, as well as across individual metrics, including journey times, punctuality, and Value for Money (VfM).

Transport Focus has published the results from its *Your Bus Journey* surveys for 2023, which present customer satisfaction levels across the participating LTAs. Across each of the satisfaction criteria, the proportion of overall 'satisfied' customers in Derbyshire was higher than the average across the participating LTAs (Figure 14). Indeed, 83% of respondents in Derbyshire stated that they were satisfied with the overall bus journey, compared to 80% across the participating LTAs.

Figure 14 Transport Focus – *Your Bus Journey* survey results 2023 – Derbyshire compared to all participating LTAs



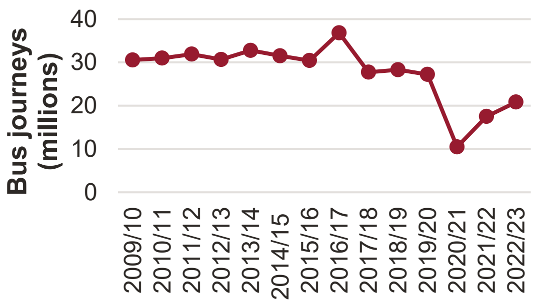
Source: Data from Transport Focus Your Bus Journey 2023.

Annex B Spotlight: Hertfordshire

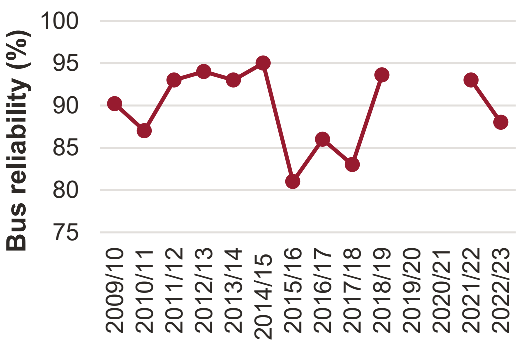
Hertfordshire is a county in the East of England with a population of just over 1.2 million according to 2021 figures.[32] Most of its population lives in urban areas, with 12% of the population living in rural areas.

Based on the latest ONS population survey (2022), 29% of people in Hertfordshire reported as economically inactive were students, compared to a regional average of 25%.[33] In 2021, individuals under the age of 16 accounted for 20% of the total Hertfordshire population (compared to regional and national averages of 19%). Additionally, individuals over the age of 65 accounted for 17% of the local population (compared to a 20% regional average and 19% in the rest of England).[34] The proportion of working-age individuals in Hertfordshire was in line with the regional average (63%). Employment rates at 80% were slightly higher than the national average, which was 75%.[35]

Total annual patronage for 2022/23: 20.8 million annual passenger journeys were on local bus services in Hertfordshire, representing 0.6% of the total patronage in England (DfT bus statistics BUS01a and BUS01e).



Punctuality of bus services (2022/23): 88% of non-frequent bus services in 2022/23 in Hertfordshire were recorded as 'running on time', compared to the national average of 80% (DfT bus statistics BUS09a).[36]



Customer satisfaction (2019): 90.8% of bus passengers in Hertfordshire were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the bus journey overall, relative to 89% across all LTAs, when surveyed in 2019 (Transport Focus survey 2019). This was in response to the question, 'Overall, taking everything into

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[32] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

[33] Ibid.

[34] ONS, Population estimates mid-2021.

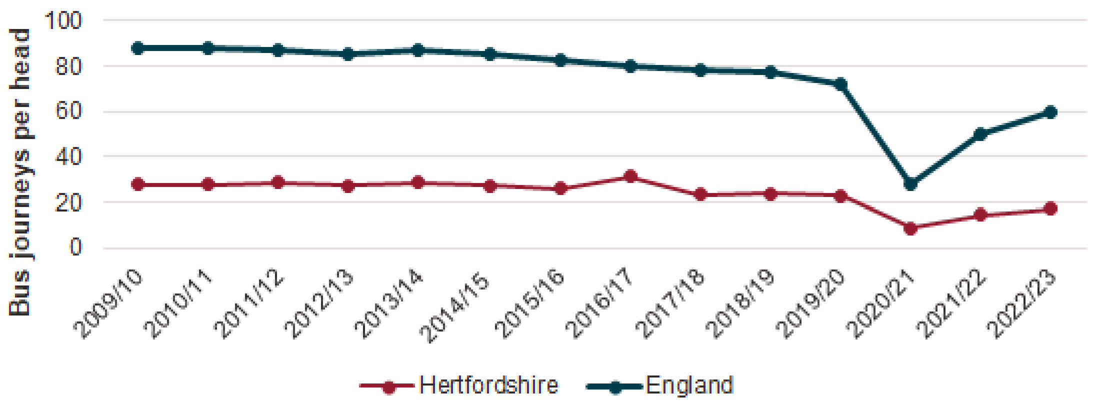
[35] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

[36] Data is from the annual bus statistics BUS09a, which only covers non-frequent services. Monthly performance data on bus punctuality for all services is being collected for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding as part of the monitoring metrics. This is discussed in section 5.5.

account from start to end of the bus journey, how satisfied were you with your bus journey'. No information is available for this LTA on the 2023 *Your Bus Journey* survey.

Hertfordshire exhibited relatively lower bus patronage per capita (Figure 15) compared to the rest of the country, with 17.3 bus journeys per head of population in 2022/23, compared to 59.8 journeys per head across the rest of England.

Figure 15 Hertfordshire – Bus journeys per head of population



Source: DfT bus statistics BUS01b and BUS01f.

BSIP interventions

Planned BSIP interventions

Hertfordshire was awarded a total BSIP Phase 1 funding of £29.7m to March 2025. Table 15 below is an overview of the range of interventions the LTA plans to implement (some already delivered) through the use of this funding. It should be noted that BSIP Phase 1 plans have changed over time, and this is a reflection of the LTA's plans as of April 2024.

Table 15 Hertfordshire intervention summary by typology

Type of intervention	Intervention
Bus priority infrastructure	Introduction of traffic signals that will have bus priority, new bus lanes, and redevelopment of bus interchange to reduce bus journey times and improve reliability.
	Introducing a camera enforcement system rather than relying on physical barriers.
Passenger environment	Installation of Real-Time Information displays and information kiosks with interactive electronic information points.
	Design and installation of mobility hubs and new bus shelters.

Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Improving existing bus routes, introducing new routes, and increasing bus frequencies on main corridors.
	Developing a new data analytics platform for performance monitoring and future service development.
Fares and ticketing	Bus fare discount schemes with new Adult SaverCard for 26-59-year-olds and a Senior SaverCard for 60+-year-olds
	Introduction of smart cards to increase the number of payment options.
	Introduction of new fare discounts and increasing existing discounts.
	Conversion of existing Intalink paper tickets onto mobile and smart card platforms along with the development of back-office systems to support these channels.
	Bring all ticket management data into the back office rather than it being held on the card or mobile device to provide the basis for the introduction of fare capping and the 'best fare' promise, as well as loyalty rewards and promotional offers.
	Introduction of Tap-on Tap-off to allow pay-as-you-go travel.
On-demand bus services	Introduction of new late-night services.
	Implementing HertsLynx DRT in new areas, improving access from rural areas.

BSIP Phase 1 interventions delivered to date

Table 16 summarises the range of BSIP Phase 1-funded interventions that Hertfordshire has implemented to date (April 2024). Hertfordshire has delivered various interventions across different typologies, including additional bus services, new DRT services, passenger environment investments, and extending fare schemes. Some interventions may have an ongoing roll-out; therefore, the intervention date indicates the first phase of delivery.

Table 16 Hertfordshire interventions delivered to date

Typology	Intervention*	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Passenger environment	Community shelters.	February 2024	£100k to £500k
On-demand bus services	Expansion of Hertslynx DRT services.	December 2023	£1m to £5m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Additional bus services and enhancements to existing services between core towns.	November 2023 to January 2024	£1m to £5m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Real-Time Information.	Phase 1 completed March 2023 Phase 2 on-going	£1m to £5m

Typology	Intervention*	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Fares and ticketing	Extended the SaverCard fare scheme to adults and senior citizens.	August 2023	£100k to £500k
Fares and ticketing	Ticketing reform (multi-operator smart ticketing).	August 2023	£100k to £500k

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation in-depth interview and LTA reporting.
**Some interventions are groups of multiple schemes.*

Table 17 shows the number of schemes, by typology, still to be delivered in Hertfordshire as of March 2024. The remaining schemes represent 27% of the total number of schemes due to be delivered as part of BSIP Phase 1 funding. Bus priority infrastructure, including bus lanes and bus gates, makes up most of the remaining funding to be allocated and delivered. These are capital investments subject to the longer delivery timescales already mentioned.

Table 17 Hertfordshire interventions outstanding by typology (March 2024)

Typology	Schemes remaining	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	3	> £5m
Fares and ticketing	2	£100k to £500k
On-demand bus services	0	-
Passenger environment	2	£ £1m to £5m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	1	£100k to £500k
Other (staffing)	0	-

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation from an in-depth interview and LTA reporting.

Further details on the interventions delivered/partially delivered are described below.

Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand

Between November 2023 and January 2024, the council introduced additional bus services for weekend and evening travel across several routes and new routes that connect core towns. These are summarised below:

Increased frequency:

- Up to four buses an hour between Hemel Hempstead and St Albans on routes 302 and 721.

- Up to six buses an hour between Hemel Hempstead and Watford on routes 20 and 322.
- An increase from two to four buses an hour between Hertford to Welwyn Garden City on routes 323, 324, and 724, offering connections at Welwyn Garden City with frequent services to St Albans.
- Up to three buses an hour between Stevenage and St Albans and four between Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City on routes 301, 908 and 725.
- Up to four buses an hour between Watford and St Albans on routes 321, 724 and 725.

New direct link services:

- Route 721 includes a new limited-stop direct link between Luton and Hemel Hempstead every 30 minutes, offering new links between Harpenden and Hemel Hempstead.
- A new direct link from King Harry Lane in St Albans to Hemel Hempstead and St Albans to Stevenage. The service operates along the entire length of St Albans Road in Hemel Hempstead.
- Route 725 provides a new limited-stop direct link every hour between Stevenage, St Albans, Hemel Hempstead, and Rickmansworth. Quicker link between Welwyn Garden City and St Albans via Parkway in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield Galleria.

New services:

- A new 907 bus service that operates every 30 minutes to connect the main town and hospitals in those areas.
- A new 908 bus service offering buses every hour between Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.

In addition to service enhancements, Hertfordshire has installed RTI display screens at several sites to improve information availability at bus stops.

Fares and ticketing

Hertfordshire has two main initiatives in this typology: the SaverCard fare scheme and the launch of a new Intalink app to allow customers to buy online tickets.

Hertfordshire originally had SaverCards for 11-19-year-olds and 20-25-year-olds, which offered a 50% discount on adult ticket fares for single and return tickets, as well as other ticket types. The scheme has been extended to include an Adult SaverCard for 26-59-year-olds (which offers a 15% discount on standard adult fares for Intalink Explorer, BUSnet, and Colney

7 tickets), and a Senior SaverCard for 60+-year-olds (which offers a 50% discount on standard adult fares, to bridge the gap in concessionary fare eligibility).

The Intalink app allows customers to purchase multi-operator tickets, which are then stored on their mobile phones. Tickets can be purchased through the app at any time in advance of travel and activated when required. The Intalink app also enabled the introduction of new ticket products, namely four-week period tickets and bundles of 10 one-day tickets, which can be used at any time up to one year from purchase.

On-demand bus services

Hertfordshire has previously received funding from the Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) to establish and run the Hertslynx DRT service in the North and East of the county. They have used part of the BSIP Phase 1 funding to extend this service to West Hertfordshire, which comprises a large town and several smaller rural areas. The extension of the service to West Hertfordshire includes 206 pick-up points in towns including Hemel Hempstead, Tring, Berkhamsted, and the villages surrounding Hertfordshire. Previously, these rural areas had no bus services going into the main towns.

Additionally, the existing North and East Hertslynx services have been extended into additional areas (including Hertford and Ware), and the fleet size has increased from five to seven vehicles and 103 additional pick-up points. Also, they have added late-night services on Fridays and Saturdays.

In the absence of the BSIP Phase 1 funding, stakeholders suggest this service would not have been extended.

Passenger environment

The Community Shelters project is part of the wider BSIP. By working with local communities, schools, colleges, and businesses, the project aims to improve shelters and the spaces in the area, making them more aesthetically pleasing and engaging. The project will also raise awareness of the bus network by highlighting shelters within their environment.

Works have been undertaken at shelters in Ware and Stevenage, with future sites in the early stages.

Emerging insights

Process evaluation: Early learnings from design and delivery

Key messages

- **Hertfordshire noted that relationships with operators were positive and that its EP board was working. Additionally, bus operators were incentivised to work together and cooperate on tickets as a result of the BSIP interventions.**
- **The LTA did not note any particular challenges with data provision and requirements of the DfT.**
- **Timescales were raised as a particular challenge in terms of the lead-in time for approvals within the LTA and the volume of requirements.**

The LTA noted a number of particular aspects in which progress has been made, alongside some challenges in relation to the delivery and management of their BSIP Phase 1 schemes at this stage.

The LTA described that their EP has been in operation since 2020. They were the first in the country, and felt this made their BSIP design a little easier due to the existing partnership in place. One operator described their EP as 'one of the instrumental ground-breaking first ones of its type'.

The LTA noted that bus infrastructure interventions, especially the traffic control systems, are taking longer to implement due to the complexity of different systems, which need to be integrated by different stakeholders. They have taken the approach of a pilot scheme, which will be monitored by operators and rolled out further if successful.

The LTA opted to run their DRT scheme in-house, unlike other DRT schemes elsewhere in the county. This enabled greater control and insight; they believe it is more cost-effective. The LTA did note concerns about the funding sustainability:

> 'It's going to have detrimental issues with rural areas if we can't carry that on.' – LTA Representative

The LTA noted that interaction with the £2 Bus Fare Cap Grant (BFCG) impacted the delivery of their Adult SaverCard, offering a 50% discount. It was launched in November 2023 when the £2 BFCG was expected to end imminently. However, the LTA decided to continue with it due to the uncertainty of the fare cap and as it can still provide a small saving for cheaper journeys.

> ' … we're finding that actually the £2 is kind of overshadowing all the ticketing products that we've looked to deliver.' ' – LTA Representative

A local operator explained that operators are now incentivised to work together and cooperate on tickets, which would not have happened prior to the BSIP. The ticketing systems are now 'right' for the customer and give them a better range of ticketing options.

Relationships with operators are positive:

> ' … there's never been anything we couldn't work through.' ' – LTA Representative

In addition, their EP board and annual bus user group events are working well. Some challenges working with different districts were also noted. A local operator noted that the LTA was willing to discuss options where there were disagreements about priorities.

The LTA did not note any particular challenges with the data provision and requirements of the DfT, and they have a long-running positive relationship with their relationship manager. However, it was felt that the change control process could be more intuitive and smoother, highlighting that changes since the original submission were inevitable.

The LTA noted that bus forum events are useful, and it is reassuring to hear that other LTAs are encountering similar issues.

Timescales were raised as a particular challenge, with the example of the BSIP 2024 *Refresh*[37] cited, both in terms of the lead-in time for approvals within the LTA and the volume of requirements. The LTA noted that more clarity on the reasons for the timings would be beneficial.

> ' … the expectation on what needs to go into that document is over and above what the original BSIP document was in terms of aspirations … That's quite a big challenge considering you're trying to deliver everything with what we're trying to deliver now.' ' – LTA Representative

Regarding the end of funding, one local operator felt the impact of the end of funding was difficult to predict but remained optimistic that the passenger growth observed would remain.

[37] On 16 January 2024, the DfT issued new guidance to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) across England on BSIPs. This guidance advised LTAs that they would need to publish an updated version of their BSIP by 12 June 2024. The guidance also makes it clear publication of the updated BSIP by this date is a condition of any DfT BSIP funding being made available to the Council in the 2024-25 financial year

Preliminary observations to inform the impact evaluation: early signs of local change

Key messages

- **Routes with BSIP interventions saw a more significant increase in patronage compared to those without.**
- **Early trends in LTA-level patronage suggest that patronage in Hertfordshire showed a similar trend to patronage across other LTAs for most of the year. However, there appears to be a material relative increase in Hertfordshire patronage from September to November 2023.**

Patronage

Additional bus services and enhancements to existing services

As part of the BSIP Phase 1 interventions, Hertfordshire increased the frequency of a large number of existing services. It is too early to assess the impact on patronage at this stage of the operation of the enhanced services. Figure 16 below presents the indexed patronage over 2023 on routes with increased service frequency[38] compared to the LTA-wide average. Patronage was generally higher on routes with increased frequency compared to the rest of the Hertfordshire routes.

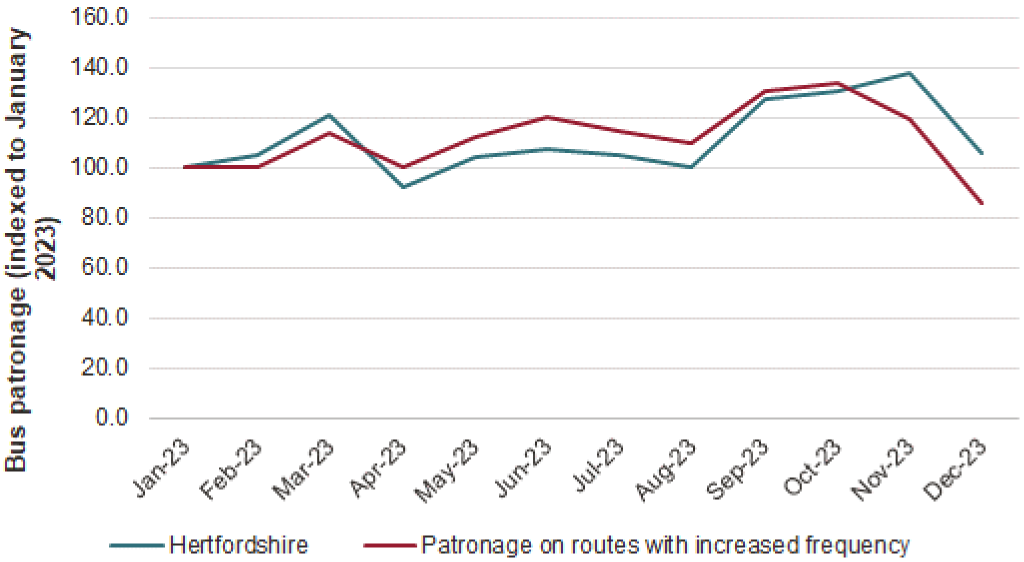
However, the decline in patronage in November and December 2023 appears to be higher on these routes, as compared to the average decline across the LTA; this would merit further analysis over time. The LTA also reported that they had observed patronage growth on new services.

> ‘ … having a look at the observed early impacts, overall there is somewhere between 7% uplift of average growth [in patronage] across the new services.’

Hertfordshire also introduced a new service on routes 907 and 908, but there is limited data available for this route across 2023.

38 For which there is data available over January to December 2023, namely routes 302, 20, 321, and 724.

Figure 16 Hertfordshire bus patronage on routes with increased frequency from January to December 2023



Source: Data from Hertfordshire LTA.

Note: All patronage data is indexed to January 2023.

Extension of the SaverCards scheme to adults and seniors

The LTA reported that take-up of the new SaverCards was low. It felt this was due to the national £2 BFCG which was introduced around the same time (January 2023) and meant that the SaverCard did not universally reduce travel costs.

> ‘The uptake hasn’t been as great as it [Adult and Senior SaverCards] would like to be and that’s down to the fact of the £2 cap. I think a lot of people are preferring to use that.’

Demand Responsive Transport

The LTA perceived the scheme as ‘very successful’ so far: ‘within the thousands already in terms of passengers’. The LTA also felt that the DRT services have been particularly valuable in providing connectivity in rural areas that previously were not well served by buses.

> ‘BSIP funding for this has been quite key to utilising the network more with bus services and DRT because we were finding areas where rural areas weren’t being served by buses but actually the DRT has kind of brought that into it.’

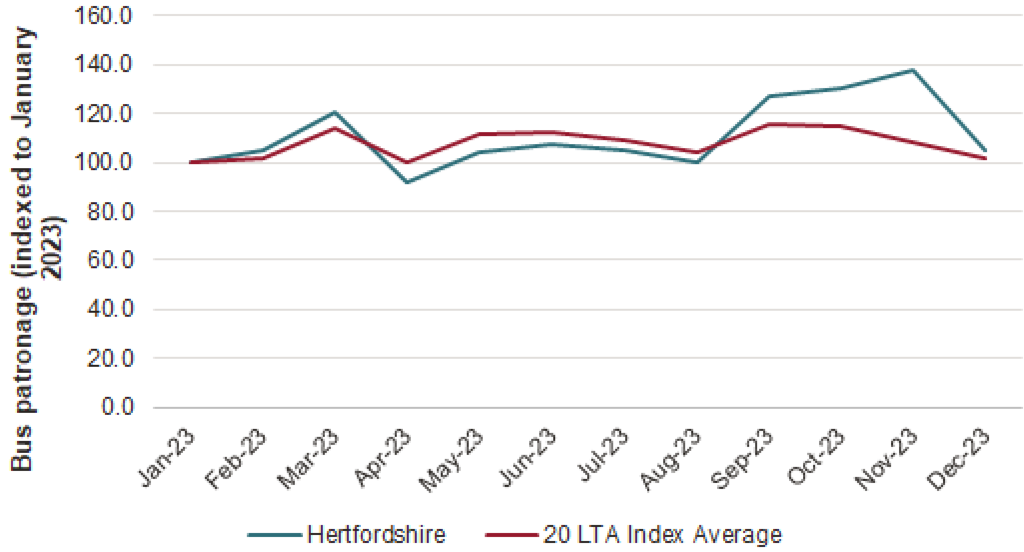
The LTA also reported that the service was being used by students. This will be explored in further detail as part of the final evaluation.

> 'We have more college students and younger students using it than actually some of the concessionary users. Age demographic is showing that actually the younger ones are using it more during college times.'

LTA-wide trends

Early trends in LTA-level patronage (Figure 17) suggests that while patronage in Hertfordshire showed a similar trend to patronage across the 20 LTAs for most of the year (many of which have not yet implemented their BSIP Phase 1 interventions), there appears to be a material relative increase in Hertfordshire patronage from September to November 2023.

Figure 17 Hertfordshire bus patronage January to December 2023



Source: Data from Hertfordshire LTA.

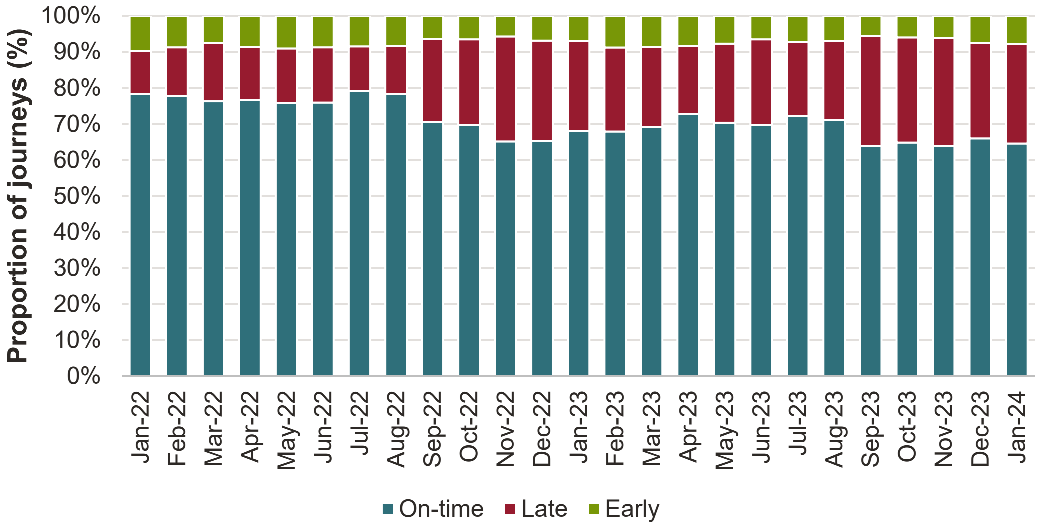
Note: All patronage data is indexed to January 2023.

Bus punctuality

Similar to the trends observed across other LTAs, bus punctuality in Hertfordshire has been steadily decreasing over time, with the proportion of bus services 'on time' falling from 78% in January 2022 to 65% in January 2024 (Figure 18), with a corresponding increase in the proportion of late journeys from 12% to 28% over the same period. The data availability for ABOD is typical of other LTAs, with information available on between 50% and 80% of the journeys. However, the availability of data has shown a marginal increase over time, with the more recent months having a more significant proportion of available data.

Most of the more extensive interventions delivered in Hertfordshire (additional bus services, DRT services, and ticketing reform) are unlikely to impact bus punctuality directly, so the figures below represent network averages.

Figure 18 Punctuality of bus services as reported by ABOD



Source: Data from ABOD.

Bus customer satisfaction

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) currently has an ongoing online passenger satisfaction survey. The survey captures bus passenger satisfaction for a bus journey using a '1' (very bad) to '5' (very good) rating system. The survey is currently promoted on the Intalink website[39] and in timetable cases at the roadside. Whilst the data has been reported for this evaluation, it is currently not public and cannot be included in this report.

HCC has previously run promotional campaigns to capture data for the BSIP reporting milestones. As part of BSIP delivery a customer engagement officer was recruited in autumn 2023 and is working on the development of the data capture with plans to widen the promotional material (onboard buses through the Intalink Enhanced Bus Partnership) and develop technology on the Intalink app which will engage with customers when they have purchased a multi-operator ticketing product. The Customer Engagement Officer will also be seeking to engage with Bus User Groups in Hertfordshire, working through the Bus Partnership with District and Borough Councils.

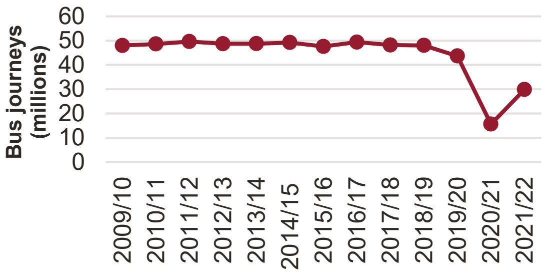
[39] www.intalink.org.uk

Annex C Spotlight: Nottingham

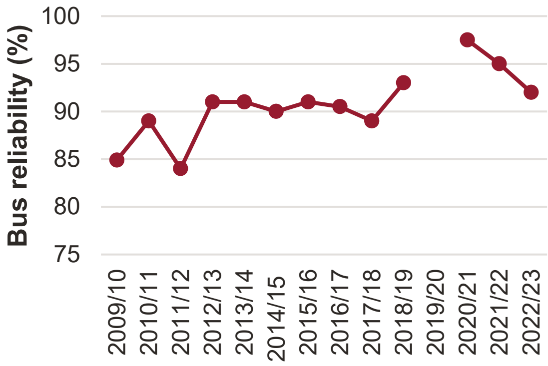
Nottingham is a city and unitary authority in Nottinghamshire in the East Midlands of England, with a population of 319,600, according to 2021 figures. [40] It is entirely urban and has no areas classified as rural. Its population is relatively younger than the rest of England. In 2021, individuals over the age of 65 accounted for only 12% of the local population, compared to an 18% regional average and 19% in the rest of England.[41] It had a higher-than-average student population in 2021, with full-time university students accounting for one in seven of the local population. [42]

The figures below present the baseline statistics for three of the four key metrics (excluding journey times), where available, across the LTA.

Total annual patronage for 2022/23: 37.6 million annual passenger journeys were on local bus services in Nottingham, representing 1.1% of the total patronage in England (DfT bus statistics BUS01a and BUS01e).



Punctuality of bus services (2022/23): 92% of non-frequent bus services in 2022/23 in Nottingham were recorded as 'running on time', compared to the national average of 80% (DfT bus statistics BUS09a) [43].



40 NOMIS Local Authority profile.

41 ONS, Population estimates mid-2021.

42 Nottingham Insight.

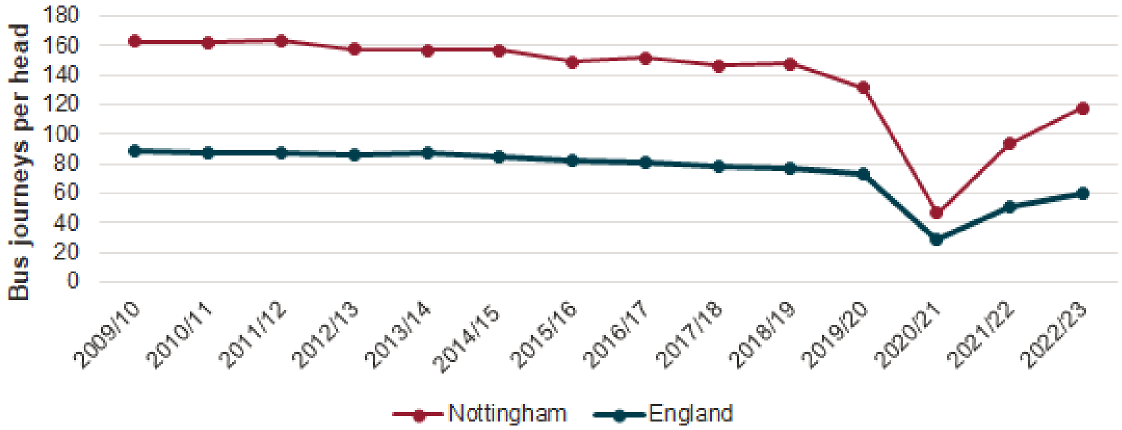
43 Data is from the annual bus statistics, BUS09a, which only covers non-frequent services. Monthly performance data on bus punctuality for all services is being collected for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding as part of the monitoring metrics. This is discussed in section 5.5.

Customer satisfaction (2019): 94.9% of bus passengers in Nottingham were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the bus journey overall, relative to 89% across all LTAs, when surveyed in 2019 (Transport Focus survey 2019).

According to the *Your Bus Journey* customer survey, 87% of bus passengers in Nottingham were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with the bus journey overall. This was in response to the question, 'Overall, taking everything into account from start to end of the bus journey, how satisfied were you with your bus journey'.

Nottingham exhibited materially higher bus patronage per capita (Figure 19) compared to the rest of the country, with 117.6 bus journeys per head of population in 2021/22, compared to 59.8 journeys per head across the rest of England.

Figure 19 Nottingham – Bus journeys per head of population



Source: DfT bus statistics BUS01b and BUS01f.

BSIP interventions

Planned BSIP interventions

Nottingham was awarded a total BSIP Phase 1 funding of £11.4 million to March 2025. Table 18 below is an overview of the range of interventions the LTA plans to implement (some already delivered) through the use of this funding. It should be noted that BSIP plans have changed over time, and this is a reflection of the LTA's plans as of April 2024.

Table 18 Nottingham intervention summary by typology

Typology	Intervention

Bus priority infrastructure	Installation of traffic light priority for buses and queue jump bus priority on the arms of the junctions served by buses, junction upgrades.
	Introduction of a filter light for right-turning traffic in key interchanges to support bus movements through the junction outbound.
	Introduction of new 7:00-19:00 bus lanes to improve service reliability and journey times.
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Maintain service levels on the Linkbus network, and improve northern connectivity for areas unserved by the tram. Improve evening and weekend services.
Fares and ticketing	Funding concessions for city mobility cardholders.
	Providing commercial support to jobseekers and support lower youth fares.

BSIP interventions delivered to date

Table 19 summarises the set of interventions that Nottingham has already implemented as part of its BSIP Phase 1 plans. As the LTA is in the early stages of delivery, the majority of interventions are revenue-funded, such as fares and ticketing; scheduled route, timetabling, and brand interventions; and service enhancements. However, Nottingham has started to deliver its Pinch Point Package and installed a yellow box junction in September 2023. Some interventions may have an ongoing rollout; therefore, the intervention date indicates the first delivery phase.

Table 19 Nottingham interventions delivered to date

Typology	Intervention	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Route 50 Enhancements: Introduction of evening, weekend, and Sunday service. EV buses deployed March 2023.	September 2023	£1m to £5m*
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Existing bus service support	1E, 3, 49, 50, 53/54, and 70/71 (Sept 23-Sept 25) 3,10,11,15,39,40, 49,50,53, 56/57/59,70/71,	£1m to £5m*

Typology	Intervention	Intervention date	Scale of funding
		and 88 (Oct 22 – Aug 23)	
Fares and ticketing	Under-22 ticketing scheme	September 2023	£50k to £100k
Fares and ticketing	Care leavers ticketing scheme	February 2023	< £50k
Bus priority infrastructure	Pinch Point Package - yellow box junctions	September 2023	< £50k

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation and in-depth interview.
** Route 50 is part of a wider package of service support.*

Table 20 shows the number of schemes, by typology, still to be delivered in Nottingham as of April 2024. Schemes associated with bus priority are the only remaining typology to be delivered; this represents the majority of allocated spending for Nottingham (68%).

Table 20 Nottingham interventions outstanding by typology (April 2024)

Typology	Schemes remaining*	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	12	> £5m
Fares and ticketing	0	-
On-demand bus services	0	-
Passenger environment	0	-
Scheduled route, timetabling and brand	0	-
Other (staffing)	0	-

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation, in-depth interview, and LTA reporting.
** Some schemes have been grouped under one scheme ID, but the totals include sub-schemes.*

Further details on the interventions delivered/partially delivered are described below.

Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand

Nottingham has delivered two schemes in this typology: the introduction of additional services on route 50 and the provision of support for several existing bus services. In September 2023, Nottingham introduced new evening and weekend services on route 50, which serves a former industrial area east of Nottingham, a key regeneration area. LTA representatives said these additional services would not have been introduced without BSIP Phase 1 funding.

Nottingham has also funded an ongoing package to support a number of existing bus services, including a Park and Ride service to an enterprise zone (route 49) and a semi-rural service primarily used by school children (route 1E). This network support was used to maintain frequencies, make service diversions to mitigate the loss of other services, or avoid cancellation of services altogether. Stakeholders have stated that without the BSIP Phase 1 funding, the 1E route would have been dropped, meaning that school children living in semi-rural areas would need to find alternative means of transport. Similarly, the frequency of route 49, which serves the Boots Enterprise Zone and Park and Ride service, would have been drastically reduced. BSIP Phase 1 funding also enabled route 3 to be diverted to areas from which another operator's service was withdrawn.

Fare and ticketing

Nottingham has implemented two main fare schemes, the Under-22s ticket scheme and the Care Leavers scheme. The Under-22 ticketing scheme was introduced in September 2023 and offers student prices for passengers under the age of 22 on top of the existing Under-19 offer. Initially, the scheme only applied to period tickets (such as monthly or season tickets), but as of April 2024, this has been extended to pay-as-you-go fares. The LTA suggested that, in the absence of BSIP Phase 1 funding, this scheme would not have been undertaken, especially as Nottingham is part of the national £2 fare cap, which caps the fare for single bus tickets at £2 for participating operators and eligible services. Without the BSIP Phase 1 funding, the LTA would have found it challenging to justify funding additional savings over and above the national fare cap.

The Care Leavers scheme offers free travel to care leavers so that they can access education, employment, and leisure. The scheme was introduced in February 2023. It currently offers eligible people Robin Hood Flexible Days tickets. These are multi-operator cards and are available for 20 or 50 days (i.e., 20 or 50 individual all-day travel passes). Nottingham has submitted a change request to DfT to use BSIP Phase 1 funding to offer season cards rather than flexible day cards; this is planned for May 2024. This change would reduce admin as the discount can be applied to the whole duration of the season pass rather than requiring passengers to apply for individual passes. It also extends the number of routes and modes of transportation covered to all train and bus operators and tram operators rather than the few who are currently able to use the flexible day cards.

Bus priority infrastructure

The majority of Nottingham's capital programme projects are in the pre-construction stage, with some having gone out to public consultation. However, the LTA has completed the installation of yellow box junctions in some high-traffic areas as part of its wider Pinch Point Package. As part of this package, Nottingham has also designed interventions to improve traffic flow in areas where the reliability and accessibility of key bus routes are impeded by traffic congestion, on-street parking, and reduced bus stop alignment.

Other infrastructure

Nottingham has deployed four electric buses on route 50 services as of the 11th of March 2024.

Emerging insights

Process Evaluation: Early learnings from design and delivery

Key messages

- **Nottingham has reported a good level of political support for bus priority.**
- **The LTA has also been working closely with operators to identify pinch points to be addressed by the interventions. The EP also continues to do well.**
- **The LTA felt that the quarterly data returns required by DfT were arduous and having numerous iterations has not been helpful.**

The LTA noted areas of progress and challenges in relation to the delivery and management of their BSIP schemes at this stage.

The LTA noted steady progress with their intervention delivery.

> ‘Most the revenue work packages are just progressing along at a decent pace. All of our capital programme projects are really in that pre-construction stage now.’

Alongside this, they highlighted a good level of political support for bus priority. The LTA also described how many of the interventions were well received by operators and that they have been working closely with operators to identify pinch points.

> ‘These have been really well received by local bus operators. It's the literally one of the best things that we've ever, ever done for them … It's just talking to the bus operators to see where problems are and doing something about it.’

A local operator mirrored this sentiment of collaborative working on capital interventions. They explained they have ‘pushed’ for interventions to improve reliability and journey times and shared a hot spot report identifying any problem locations to help the LTA with prioritisation.

Similarly, the EP continues to work well.

> ‘The EP itself really is business as usual for us locally.’
>
> ‘We've always worked in collaboration with our local operators, all our success in Nottingham over the years has been through partnership working.’

The LTA confirmed that almost all interventions would not have gone ahead without BSIP Phase 1 funding. The operator explained that the funding enabled them to improve network stability and minimise risks; without the support of BSIP funding, they were much more risk averse.

The LTA noted that their DfT-appointed relationship manager was helpful and easy to work with.

> ‘[Our] relationship manager, has been really good, really responsive. I think it helps sometimes to have someone who's external to the DfT, because they can see things from both sides.’

However, the LTA felt that the quarterly data returns required by DfT were ‘not user friendly’ and accepted that, although it is a complex task to manage, having numerous iterations has not been helpful. Similarly, in relation to change control, ‘some of that has felt a bit laboured and a bit inefficient’. A local operator had similar views about data, explaining the volume of data required is ‘overwhelming’ and the formats are difficult and time-consuming. They also noted a mismatch between reporting cycles, with their monthly reporting timelines not being aligned to the DfT/LTA reporting timelines and, therefore, requiring additional processing.

Preliminary observations to inform the impact evaluation: early signs of local change

Key messages

- **New bus services introduced on route 50 have seen a slightly higher increase in patronage in the four months following their introduction, as compared to other routes in Nottingham.**
- **Based on operator-level information, the period after September 2023 (when the yellow box junction was installed) exhibited a slight improvement in journey times on northbound and southbound services, compared to the previous period.**
- **Based on punctuality data collected by the LTA, there was a slight increase in the proportion of bus services reported to be ‘early’ in October 2023, as compared to the previous months.**
- **Across each of the bus customer satisfaction criteria in the *Your Bus Journey* survey, the proportion of overall ‘satisfied’ customers in Nottingham was higher than the average across the participating LTAs.**

Bus patronage

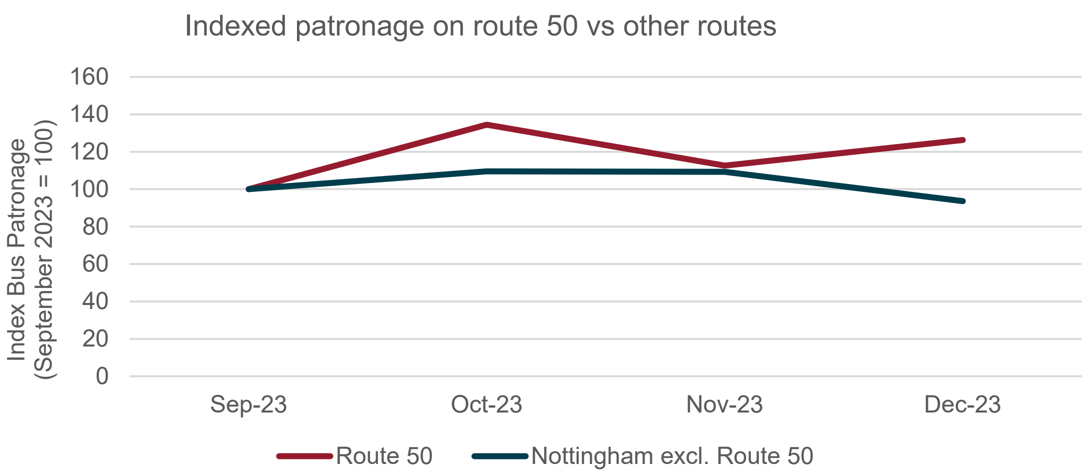
Introduction of new services on the route 50

Patronage specifically for route 50, which has new evening and weekend services, is only available from the intervention start date (September to October 2023), so it is not possible to compare patronage pre- and post-introduction of additional services.

It is also too early to assess whether patronage on route 50 is increasing over time compared to other routes in Nottingham. However, patronage data from September to December 2023 tentatively suggests that patronage on route 50 increased on average by a greater proportion over this four-month period compared to other routes in Nottingham. Furthermore, patronage on route 50 did not experience the seasonal decline typically observed. This seasonal dip was observed for patronage on other non-intervention routes (Figure 20). The LTA also felt that the evening and weekend services were being used based on initial patronage numbers.

> 'We've had some initial usage figures back from the operator and the enhancements are being used.'

Figure 20 Indexed patronage on route 50 and all other routes in Nottingham



Source: Data from Nottingham LTA.

Existing bus service support

Several of these interventions were to maintain existing services or service frequencies; the LTA suggested that without Phase 1 funding, these services would have been withdrawn. Therefore, it is challenging to estimate what patronage would have been in the absence of this funding.

The LTA has shared potential counterfactuals for each route that has received Phase 1 funded BSIP support (i.e., what would have happened to the route without this funding) and the potential implications for trips currently made using these routes. These are summarised in Table 21, along with reported patronage on these routes.

Table 21 Support for existing bus services

Route	Total patronage, September 2023-February 2023	Counterfactual as described by the LTA[44]
1E	22,595	Cancellation of service in a semi-rural area; it is likely that some proportion of trips may not have taken place or would have taken place by car.
3	132,786	This area would not have any bus services.
49	355,555	Reduction in the frequency of Park and Ride could lead to a proportion of these journeys being carried out by car.
53/54	128,569	This is one of the only orbital routes in the city, and it is reasonable to believe that not all of this patronage could be served by alternative services.
70/71	403,454	This area would not have any bus services.

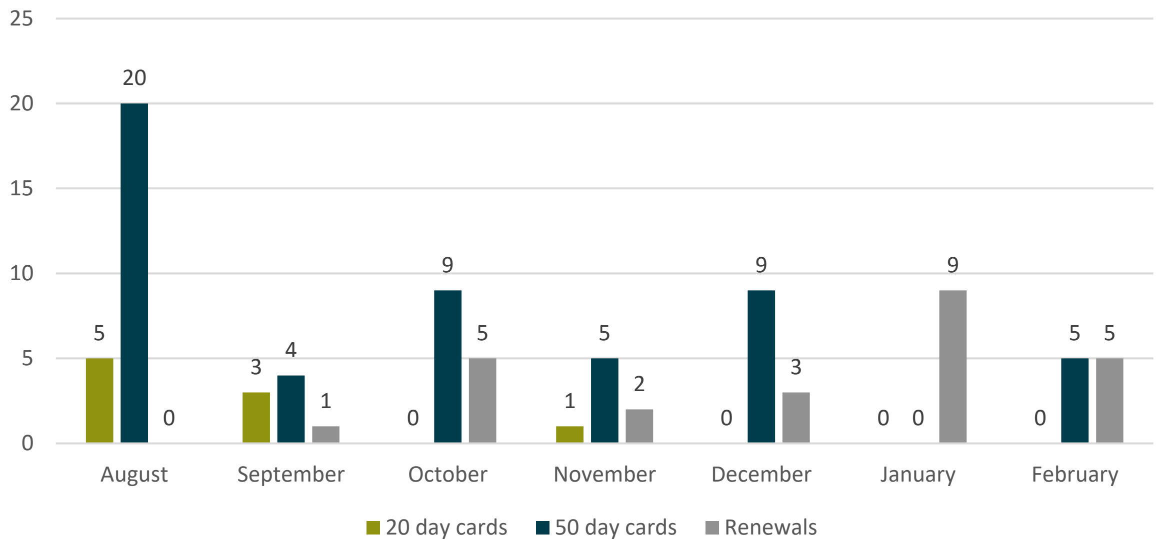
Source: Data from Nottingham LTA.

Care leavers ticketing scheme

Since August 2023, Nottingham has issued nine 20-day cards and 52 of its 50-day cards, along with 25 card renewals. The scheme provides care leavers with a Robin Hood Network Card, which allows free travel with any bus, tram, and train operator within the Nottingham metropolitan area. Excluding card renewals, this is equivalent to 2780 days of all-inclusive travel. Data on utilisation of these travel cards is not available, nor is the number of journeys per day. However, the fact that users have been requesting card renewals (shown in Figure 21) suggests that some eligible people are utilising these tickets.

44 These are counterfactuals as described by the Nottingham LTA during the LTA interview or via material shared by the LTA. In practice, if the bus service was discontinued, some of these journeys would still go ahead using an alternative mode, for example, via car, whereas others may not happen at all.

Figure 21 Number of tickets issued under the Care Leavers ticketing scheme



Source: Data from Nottingham LTA.

Anecdotal evidence from a charitable organisation supporting the Care Leavers scheme emphasised the importance of such schemes, not just locally but nationally. They felt that accessible transport for care leavers facilitates independence, which can, in turn, help them avoid situations which may negatively affect their mental or physical health. In addition, it supports access to employment (leading to improved job retention), training and healthcare.

This sentiment was echoed by the LTA who felt that this was an area that should be considered by the government as a standard concession.

> 'I think this is something that governments should be looking at as a standard concession … I think anything we can do to open opportunities for care leavers by helping them get on their feet with free travel. It's a really good thing to do and obviously saves lots of other expenses and costs further down the line.'

Under-22s ticketing scheme

The LTA reported that they had sold 60,000 tickets across bus and tram since the launch of the scheme in September 2023. However, it felt that the scheme had been impacted by the £2 BFCG. Day tickets and tram tickets have been particularly popular as these are not covered by the £2 BFCG (the cost of a single tram ticket is £3.20, and these tickets are not included within the £2 bus fare cap). The LTA noted that not only did the £2 fare cap reduce the potential savings for passengers, but it also offers more flexibility as the Under-22s ticketing scheme only applies to period tickets. They plan to extend this scheme to pay-as-you-go trips on the existing Robin Hood multi-operator card over the next few weeks.

> ‘I think the under 22s [intervention] has been slightly distorted by the £2 fare scheme. … Day tickets are most popular on buses so that isn’t impacted by the £2 fare. It’s been popular on the tram.’
>
> ‘We are also launching our pay-as-you-go on the Robin Hood Multi-operator card. At the moment the Under 22s is only available on season tickets so they are forced to buy a month or three months travel. Pay-as-you-go will offer them a bit more flexibility and it’ll be less of a commitment to purchasing a month or longer.’

Bus journey times

Figure 22 shows an aerial view of the junction at Nottingham station, where a yellow box has been installed.

Figure 22 Installation of a yellow box junction at Nottingham station

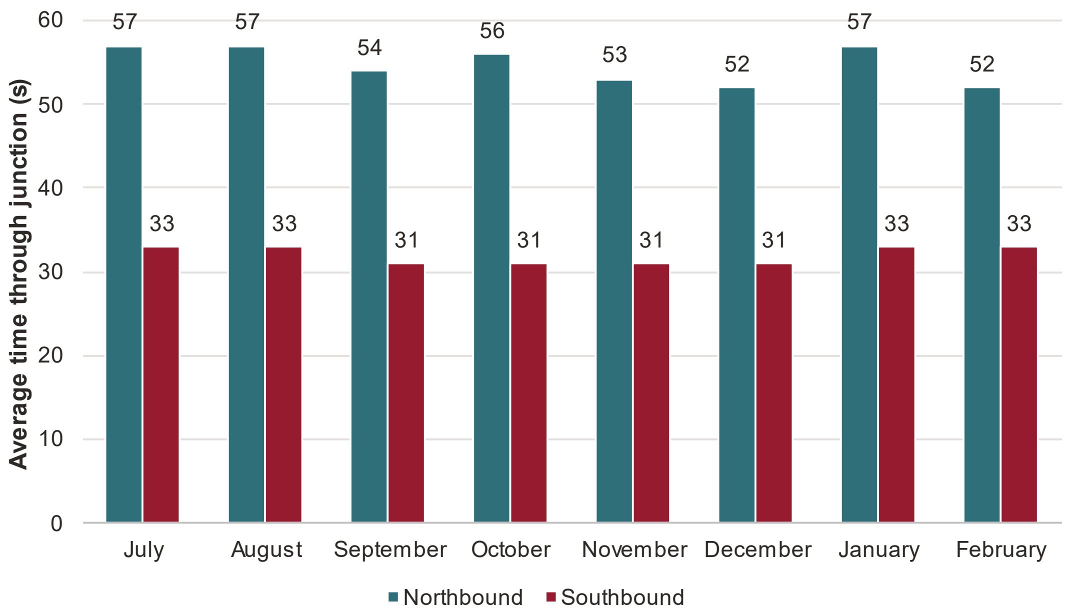
Source: Google Maps 2024.

Note: The yellow star indicates the junction where the yellow box has been installed.

As noted above, Nottingham City Transport does not currently report to ABOD; therefore, it is not possible to get performance statistics for all routes through the junction.

For those specific operators that do report to ABOD, Figure 23 shows the average journey time in the northbound and southbound directions from the stops on either side of the junction.

Figure 23 Journey times for northbound and southbound services from the junction at Nottingham station, July 2023-Feb 2024



Source: Data from ABOD.

Note: There are four southbound services and one northbound service for which ABOD data is unavailable.

Comparing the period after September 2023 (when the yellow box junction was installed) to the period prior, the northbound and southbound services have a slight improvement in journey times (typically between two and three seconds). This represents an approximately 4% to 5% decrease in journey times. However, it is important to note that this simple comparison does not account for the difference in network load across the year. In particular, the period around September and October is relatively busy, given the re-opening of schools. A more detailed analysis for the final evaluation will require a longer data collection period.

The LTA noted that they have received positive feedback from operators on the new junctions.

> 'These have been going really well, well received by local bus operators. It's literally one of the best things we've ever, ever done for them.'

The LTA further explained that the implementation of the yellow boxes on this corridor will be complemented by priority measures as part of the Nottingham Station-Trent Bridge scheme, including junction improvements, a new inbound bus lane, and a widened outbound bus lane on Meadows Way.

Bus punctuality

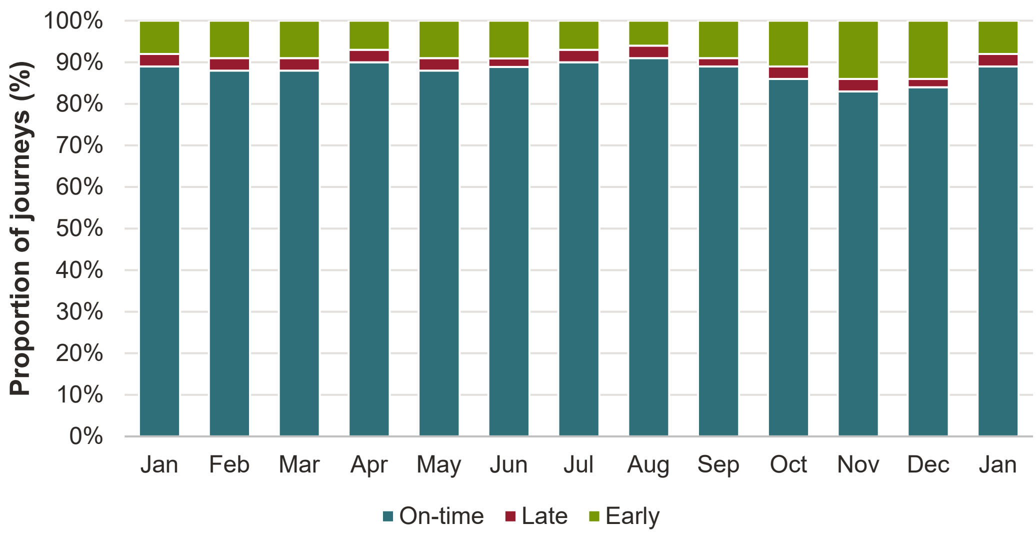
Nottingham has also provided information on bus punctuality, covering the period from January 2023 to December 2023. The data suggests that prior to September 2023, approximately 88% to 90% of bus journeys were reported to be ‘on time’. However, in the months following October 2023, there was a decrease in the proportion of bus journeys reported to be ‘on time’ (between 83% and 86%), and a corresponding increase in the proportion of bus journeys reported to be ‘early’.

Again, while this trend coincides with the installation of yellow box junctions in key corridors across Nottingham in September 2023, it is too early to make any casual links between the interventions and observed changes in bus punctuality.

It is also important to note that while information on bus punctuality is available on ABOD, the quality of this information for Nottingham is significantly limited. As shown in Figure 25, across 2023, only data on approximately 20% of the journeys was available on ABOD

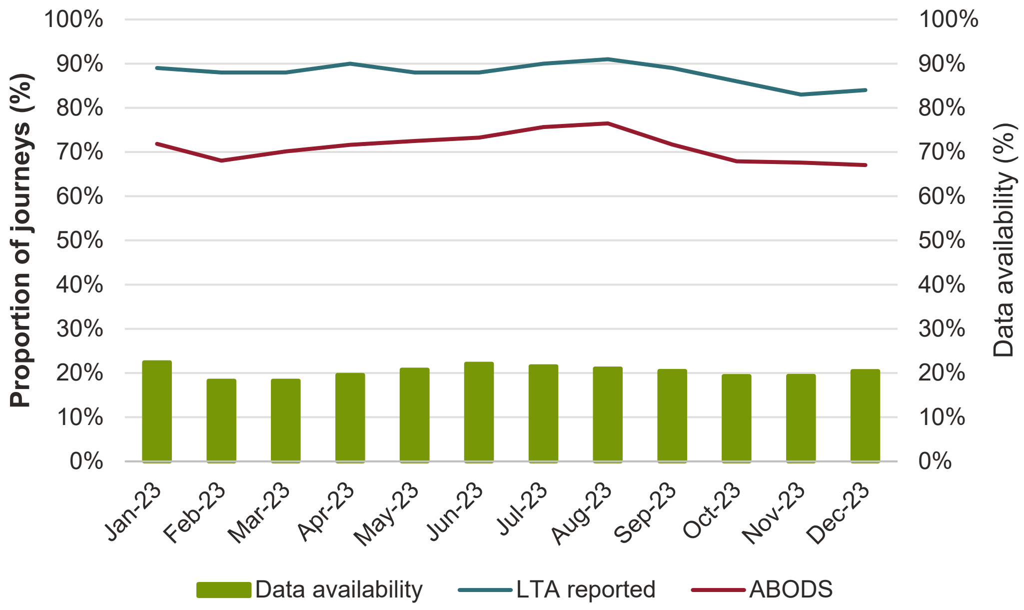
Additionally, even though the trends in punctuality as reported by the LTA and by ABOD are fairly similar, ABOD suggested a much lower proportion of services were on time (Figure 25). The LTA suggested that a possible explanation for this discrepancy is the nature of routes currently available through ABOD in Nottingham. The data does not include Nottingham City Transport, which operates around 85% of the local bus service. Yet the data captured in ABOD is more heavily weighted to longer-distance routes from other operators, which are more susceptible to punctuality issues.

Figure 24 Punctuality of bus services as reported by the LTA



Source: Data from the Nottingham LTA.

Figure 25 Proportion of journeys 'on time' as reported by Nottingham LTA compared to ABOD and BODS data availability for Nottingham



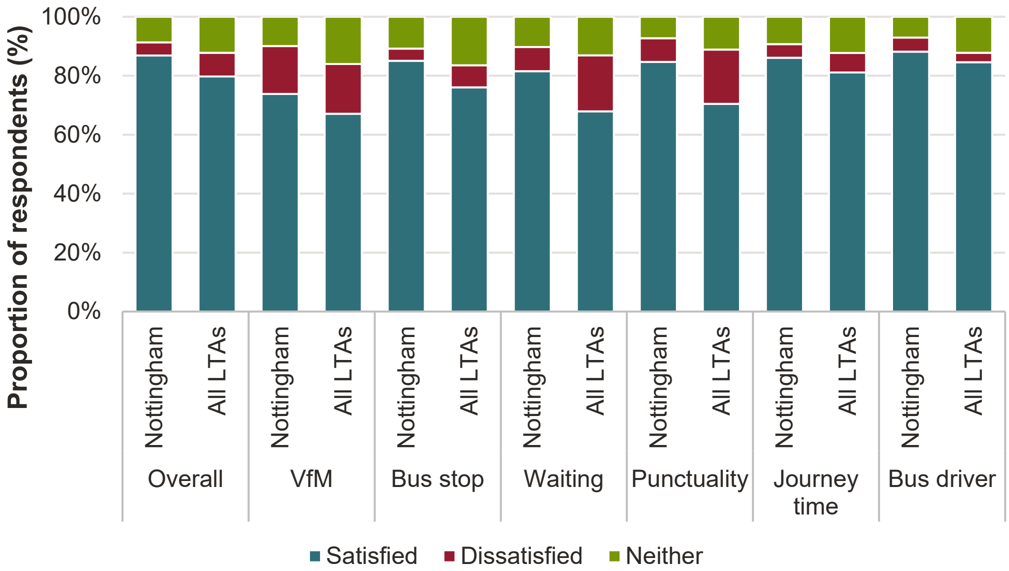
Source: Data from the Nottingham LTA and ABOD.

Bus customer satisfaction

As mentioned above, Transport Focus undertakes regular bus passenger surveys to measure customer satisfaction levels for the overall bus journey and across individual metrics, including journey times, punctuality, and VfM.

Transport Focus has published the results from its *Your Bus Journey* surveys across 2023, which present customer satisfaction levels for the participating LTAs. Across each of the criteria, the proportion of 'satisfied' customers in Nottingham was higher than the average across the participating LTAs (Figure 26). Indeed, 87% of respondents in Nottingham stated that they were satisfied with the overall bus journey, compared to 80% across the participating LTAs.

Figure 26 Transport Focus – *Your Bus Journey* survey results 2023 – Nottingham vs all participating LTAs



Source: Data from Transport Focus Your Bus Journey 2023.

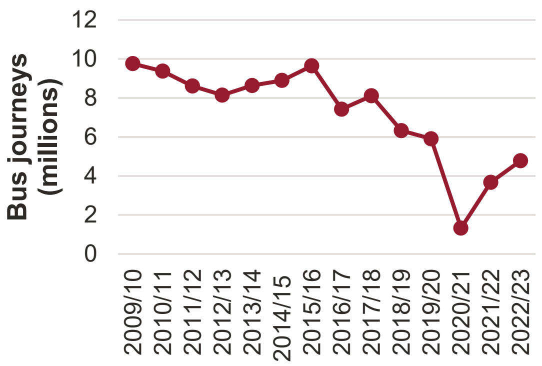
Annex D Spotlight: Somerset

Somerset is a ceremonial county in South West England, with a population of 573,100, according to 2021 figures.[45] It is a predominantly rural county, with more than half (52%) of the population living in rural areas.

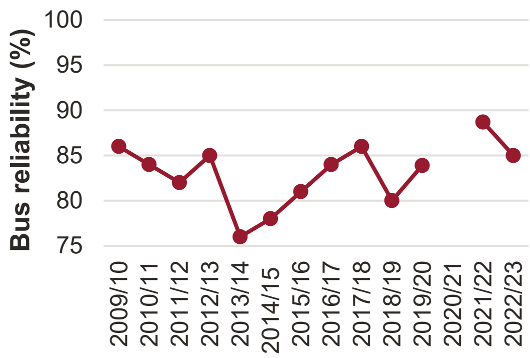
In 2021, it had a relatively higher share of people aged above 65 (25% compared to a national average of 19%). This was in line with the general trend of Somerset's population, which is ageing faster than the national average, with an increasingly higher proportion of the population being accounted for by those aged 65 and up.[46] Employment rates were in line with the rest of the region at 76%, compared to the 78% regional average.

The figures below present the baseline statistics for three of the four key metrics (excluding journey times), where available, across the LTA.

Total annual patronage for 2022/23: 4.8 million annual passenger journeys were on local bus services in Somerset, representing 0.1% of the total patronage in England (DfT bus statistics BUS01a and BUS01e).



Punctuality of bus services (2022/23): 85% of non-frequent bus services in 2022/23 in Somerset were recorded to be 'running on time', compared to the national average of 80% (DfT bus statistics BUS09a).[47]



Customer satisfaction (2019): No information is available for this LTA on the Transport Focus Survey 2019, nor on the 2023 *Your Bus Journey* survey.

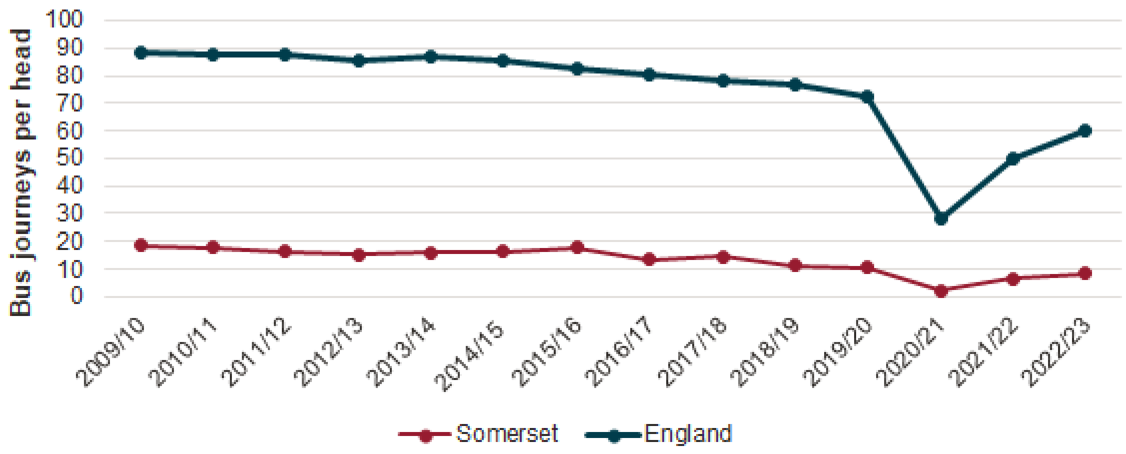
45 NOMIS Local Authority profile.

46 Somerset Council: Our ageing population.

47 Data is from the annual DfT bus statistics BUS09a, which only covers non-frequent services. Monthly performance data on bus punctuality for all services is being collected for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding as part of the monitoring metrics. This is discussed in section 5.5.

Somerset exhibited relatively lower bus patronage per capita compared to the rest of the country (Figure 27), with 8.3 bus journeys per head of population in 2022/23, compared to 59.8 journeys per head across the rest of England.

Figure 27 Somerset – Bus journeys per head of population



Source: DfT bus statistics BUS01b and BUS01f.

BSIP interventions

Planned BSIP interventions

Somerset was awarded a total BSIP Phase 1 funding of £11.9m to March 2025. Table 22 below is an overview of the range of interventions the LTA plans to implement (some already delivered) through the use of the BSIP Phase 1 funding. It should be noted that BSIP plans have changed over time, and this is a reflection of the LTA's plans as of April 2024.

Table 22 Somerset intervention summary by typology

Typology	Interventions
Bus priority infrastructure	Installation of bus priority lanes and improvement of existing corridors.
Passenger environment	Development of a Mobility Hub to support multimode transfer in town centres.
	Development of a rural town Mobility Hub to facilitate interchange between Somerset's bus network and a new Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service.
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Service extensions and improvements to the current network levels, as well as funds to allow for a response to issues raised by stakeholders and bus passengers.
	Marketing and advertisement of improvements and extensions to the network using media, social media, web content, and traditional hard and soft forms of marketing.

Fares and ticketing	Implementation of a £1 fare on all single trips on town bus services and intra-urban bus services in Taunton.
On-demand bus services	Providing a trial of DDRT within Somerset linked to the Taunton Bus Town approach.

BSIP interventions delivered to date

Table 23 summarises the interventions that Somerset has already implemented as part of its BSIP. In particular, Somerset has delivered two fares and ticketing interventions and one bus priority infrastructure scheme. Some interventions may have an ongoing rollout; in those cases, the intervention date indicates the first delivery phase.

Somerset differs from other authorities in that it has decided to focus the majority of the funding on one key town, Taunton, to showcase the benefits of targeted investment as opposed to a more comprehensive package of interventions. This allows a comparison of the key metrics in Taunton to those in areas that have not received similar interventions, such as Yeovil Town.

Table 23 Somerset interventions delivered to date

Typology	Intervention	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Fares and ticketing	Taunton Town £1 bus fare cap	December 2022	£1m to £5m
Fares and ticketing	Taunton £1 Park and Ride fare (£1 PnR)	September 2022	£100k to £500k
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Additional services on existing evening routes	January 2023	£1m to £5m

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation and in-depth interview.

Table 24 shows the number of schemes, by typology, still to be delivered in Somerset as of April 2024. The majority of the remaining allocated funding (63%) is to deliver bus priority across three ‘Greenwave’ corridors. A mobility hub in Taunton (passenger environment) is the next largest remaining funding allocation (25%).

Table 24 Somerset interventions outstanding by typology (April 2024)

Typology	Schemes remaining	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	3	£1m to £5m

Typology	Schemes remaining	Scale of funding
Fares and ticketing	-	-
On-demand bus services	-	-
Passenger environment	2	£1m to £5m
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	-	-
Other (staffing)	-	-

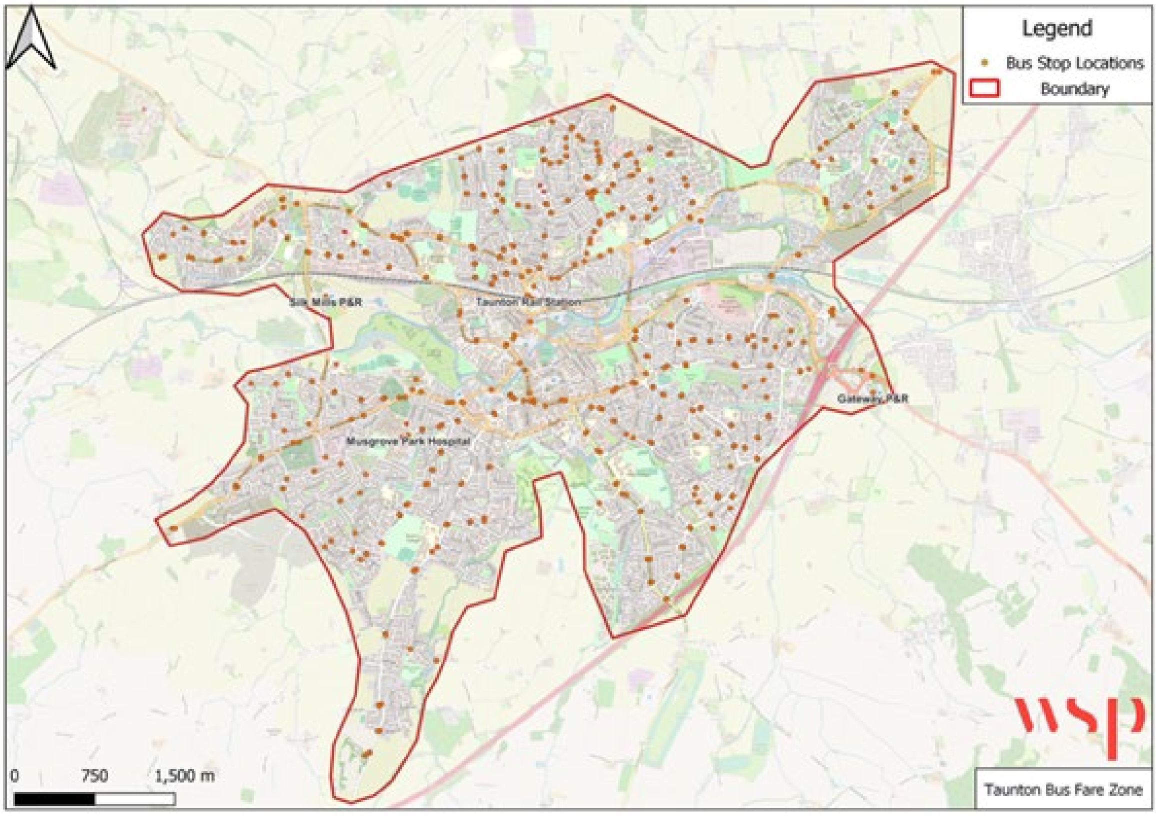
Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation, in-depth interview, and LTA reporting

Further details on each of the interventions delivered/partial delivery are described below.

Fares and ticketing

Somerset introduced a £1 bus fare cap for journeys in the 'Taunton Town Zone' in December 2022 (i.e., routes that are entirely encompassed in the Taunton Town Zone), as shown in Figure 28. This Taunton Town £1 bus fare cap was implemented just before the introduction of the national £2 bus fare scheme, which applies to all other eligible routes in Somerset.

Figure 28 £1 bus fare cap implemented on journeys in the Taunton Town Zone



Source: Somerset Council: https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/bus-it-you-know-it-makes-sense/

The aim of the scheme is to boost bus patronage while simultaneously helping passengers with the cost-of-living crisis. Somerset intends to maintain a fare cap within the Taunton Town Zone until the end of March 2025. Due to increased patronage from the success of the scheme, the associated reimbursement costs have increased more than anticipated, so the fare has been reviewed and will increase to £1.50 from June 2024. Without the BSIP Phase 1 funding, this fare cap would not have been implemented, particularly given the introduction of the national £2 fare cap.

Somerset also implemented a similar £1 fare cap on Park and Ride services in Taunton in September 2022. These services were operating from two Park and Ride sites that provided 1,610 parking spaces. Prior to this fare cap, the Park and Ride services in this area were offered for free in an attempt to maintain patronage levels on these services despite significant ongoing roadworks. However, given that such an approach was unsustainable in the long run, the BSIP Phase 1 funding was instead used to cap the fare at £1 to sustain patronage in a financially manageable way. In the absence of BSIP Phase 1 funding, the cap would not have been implemented; instead, the fares for these services would have returned to the previous levels.

Scheduled route, timetabling and brand

Starting in January 2023, Somerset increased the operating hours of five evening services, operating Monday to Saturday until 11 pm. Table 25 below sets out the routes on which these additional evening services were introduced.

Table 25 Additional evening services introduced in Taunton

Route	Key Route Identifiers	BSIP Intervention
1E – Taunton to Priorswood/Musgrove Park/Silk Mills Park and Ride	Serves Park and Ride.	Additional evening services, £1 Park and Ride fare cap, and £1 Taunton Fare.
21 – Bridgwater to Taunton	Serves Musgrove Park Hospital.	Additional evening services and £1 Taunton Fare.
22 – Wellington to Taunton	Serves Musgrove Park Hospital.	Additional evening services and £1 Taunton Fare.
28 – Minehead to Taunton	Serves Butlins.	Additional evening services and £1 Taunton Fare.
30 – Taunton to Chard	Serves Park and Ride.	Limited additional evening services, £1 Park and Ride fare cap, and £1 Taunton Fare.

Source: Data from the Somerset LTA.

The 1E route was introduced on the most popular bus service in Taunton Town to offer further evening into town. The service was also linked to a Park and Ride site to allow people to stay in town in the evenings if needed.

The 21, 22, and 28 routes were originally the strongest commercial routes, and have also represented the strongest patronage growth, according to the LTA interviews.

Only two additional services were introduced on route 30, primarily to link a Park and Ride site.

Emerging insights

Process Evaluation: early learnings from design and delivery

Key messages

- **Somerset welcomed the capacity grant that was provided by the DfT to support LTAs in developing their proposals.**
- **The LTA mentioned that the process to establish the BSIP and EP represented a steep learning curve with the major challenges around data provision and reporting to the LTA.**
- **An operator stated there was some public disapproval around the interventions being implemented only in the Taunton region of Somerset.**
- **A stakeholder noted some challenges around the publicity and marketing of the service changes. In particular, they stated that many local people tend to like a printed timetable.**
- **The LTA stated they would like to see more awareness in DfT about local internal governance processes, as these take time and affect overall project timescales.**

The LTA noted a number of aspects on which progress has been made, alongside some challenges in relation to the delivery and management of their BSIP schemes at this stage.

Overall, the LTA felt the delivery was going well and welcomed the capacity grant early on, which was provided by the DfT to support LTAs in developing their proposals. The LTA, operator, and local bus user group representative explained that Somerset had opted to focus their funding on one area, Taunton, to demonstrate the benefits of focusing funding and intervention in one area.

With regards to the process of establishing the BSIP, Bus Advisory Board, and EP, the LTA felt it was a ‘very big learning curve for us’ at the beginning, and the current challenge is around data provision from the operators. Mitigation measures have been identified through the use of dashboards to facilitate easier, regular reporting to the LTA. Similarly, they felt not all operators fully appreciated the ‘finite’ nature of the funding, and have not considered the longer-term view of potential for patronage growth.

However, a local operator welcomed the extended time (to 2025) to market and promote it, but further noted more generally that a longer-term, phased plan for bus improvements would be desirable to them. The EP has been particularly helpful.

> ‘Having the enhanced partnership there has been a positive for us and it helps us engage more with operators and it sets out the obligations on both the local authority and the operators. So it's much more clearly documented in terms of what we've agreed and what what's expected from each party.’

The operator explained they played an active role in the EP. They support the LTA by providing materials, in-depth information about vehicle specifications and driver training, mapping, and baselining data.

The Taunton Town Zone £1 fare cap was highlighted to have not been possible without the BSIP funding.

> ‘… the operators are looking for us to make up that revenue shortfall and say they're not prepared to take the hit and the risk of putting a lower fare in.’

Likewise, the same sentiment was shared for the new evening services.

> ‘It's certainly enabled us to do all of those interventions. I don't think any of them would have been happening without the BSIP funding.’

A local operator noted that there was some element of public disapproval that the £1 fare was only available within the Taunton Town Zone.

In terms of identifying routes for additional services, this was done through a review of existing services and identifying which would benefit.

> ‘… and they were all commercial services in and around the town - so we felt that that was the best to build on … bus services that we felt could see some increase and that the operator felt would work as well in terms of generating more patrons.’

The LTA also explained they are experiencing delays in getting their Mobility Hub up and running; this is due to planning issues as it is in a heritage area. Similarly, they experienced delays with vehicles for the DRT scheme and have received approval from the DfT to extend that funding accordingly. The delays were caused by internal governance processes and issues in procuring a suitable vehicle supplier. The LTA noted they had to submit a change request as the feasibility study found that electric vehicles (EVs) would not be suitable.

Another key stakeholder is the Somerset Bus Partnership, which was formed in 2021. A representative from the Somerset Bus Partnership board noted some challenges around the publicity and marketing of the service changes, explaining that many local people tend to like a printed timetable. These are not routinely printed and distributed by operators and are not funded through BSIP, so the Somerset Bus Partnership has had to fund this without financial support from the LTA or operators.

An unexpected outcome has been the high level of political interest observed and generated around raising the profile of bus services and operations.

Somerset and the Somerset Bus Partnership have an increasingly good working relationship.

> ‘We've got some really good communication channels now and some good input, from our last passenger group. That's been a real positive for us.’

A representative from the Somerset Bus Partnership board commended DfT for the provision of funding and noted they were pleased with their working relationship with the Council and their responsiveness.

The LTA explained that the Somerset Bus Partnership is a member of the Bus User and Stakeholder Group along with schools, colleges, disability groups, and the NHS. The Chair of the Bus User and Stakeholder Group is a member of the Bus Advisory Board and feeds back comments on behalf of the bus passenger representatives. A local operator noted that the advisory board is helpful in ensuring ‘joined-up thinking’ regarding bus timetable changes.

The LTAs’ experience with their DfT Relationship Manager has been positive. However, as with other LTAs, they are being moved to a new, internal relationship manager, but they were pleased with engagement so far, and there were no areas in which they felt further support was needed.

The reporting requirements to DfT were ‘fairly easy’, but a few technical issues with the spreadsheets over time were noted.

In terms of funding, the LTA stated they would like to see ‘a bit more awareness in the DfT around internal governance processes at local authority’, explaining that they often ‘lose time’ due to these processes, and have had to add an internal committee to enable them to meet deadlines, (e.g., for the BSIP *Refresh*).

The Community stakeholder, representing a local Bus User Group, and the local operator also noted concerns about the funding period. They pointed out that the interventions would not be sustainable and explained that the LTA is experiencing financial difficulties and, as such, would be unable to fund internally.

Preliminary observations to inform the impact evaluation: early signs of local change

Key messages

- **Patronage growth has been relatively strong in Somerset over 2023 relative to other LTAs, with significantly higher growth observed between April and December 2023.**
- **Bus patronage is reported by the LTA to have grown within Taunton (where Somerset's BSIP Phase 1 interventions have been focused) and on its interurban services into Taunton to a greater degree than elsewhere in the County.**

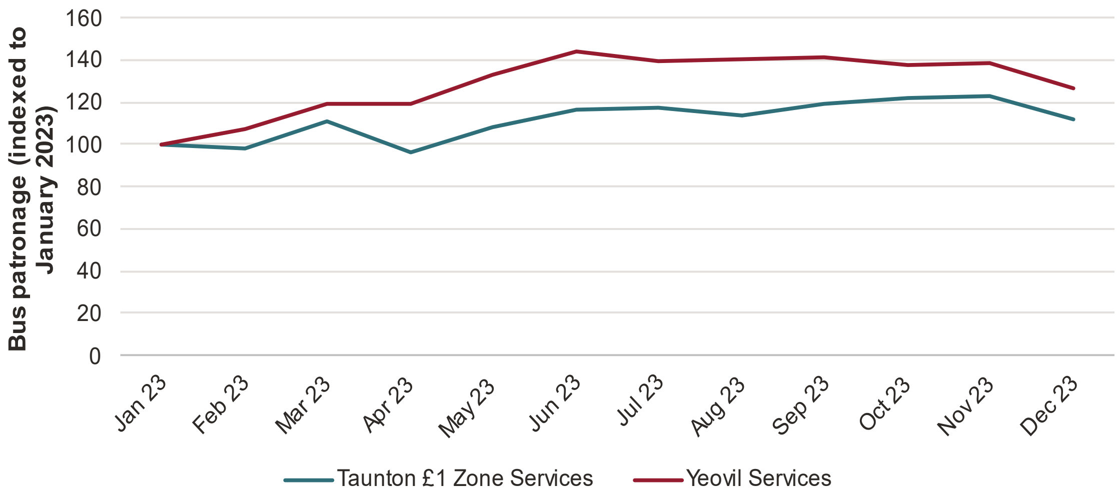
Bus patronage

The Taunton Town Zone Fare cap

The implementation of the £1 bus fare cap in December 2022, prior to the launch of the £2 fare cap in Taunton, was expected by the LTA to positively impact bus patronage.

As data is only available at a route level from January 2023 onwards, it is not possible to compare patronage prior to the introduction of the cap. However, as Somerset has only implemented the £1 fare in the Taunton area, it is possible to compare patronage in and outside of the Taunton £1 fare zone. Somerset LTA has suggested that Yeovil may be an appropriate comparator based on its local characteristics. Figure 29 compares indexed patronage on routes operating wholly within the £1 fare zone (7 services) to routes in Yeovil town (3 services as identified by the Somerset Council), where the £1 fare cap is not in place but the national £2 fare cap is.

Figure 29 Bus patronage on routes eligible by the Taunton £1 fare cap: January to December 2023



Source: Data from the Somerset LTA.

Note: All patronage data indexed to January 2023.

As shown in Figure 29, average bus patronage increased over the year 2023 both on routes in Yeovil and in Taunton Town, where the £1 fare cap is in operation (the latter is reported by the local authority to have reached a level higher than pre-COVID, unlike county-wide patronage). However, these changes in patronage levels are not directly comparable as these figures do not include inter-urban services into Taunton, which are used by some passengers to access the town. At this stage, it is too early to assess the extent to which the £1 bus fare cap has impacted patronage over and above the national £2 fare cap or how the other types of journeys have been affected.

Additionally, it is important to note that the growth in patronage in Yeovil is driven mainly by one specific route (11) that saw a significantly larger increase in patronage over the year compared to all other routes in Somerset. This may be attributed to the withdrawal of another town service that ran close to the 11 route, so passengers have transferred to route 11. Further statistical analysis, including testing of Yeovil as a suitable comparator, will be carried out as part of the final evaluation.

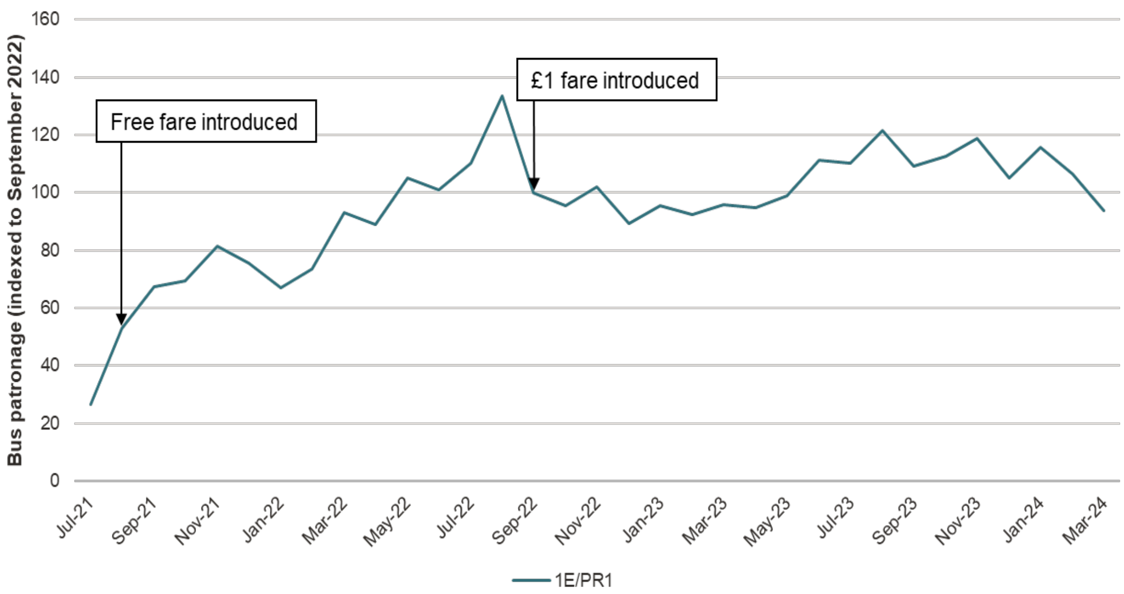
LTA representatives reported that they felt the scheme has led to increased patronage. This was echoed by the interview with a local bus operator who felt that the Somerset fare initiatives have been effective in encouraging more bus users. Similarly, a community stakeholder also felt that the £1 care cap has stimulated bus usage and had a significant impact on the town.

The Park and Ride fare cap

Prior to September 2022, the Park and Ride bus route was free due to major roadworks in the town centre. In September 2022, fares were reintroduced at £1, with this lower fare level funded using BSIP Phase 1 funding.

Bus passenger journey data on Park and Ride services has been provided by the LTA for the period between July 2021 and March 2024. This data shows the changes in patronage across the free fare period (August 2021 to September 2022) and the £1 fare period. Figure 30 shows that patronage grew throughout the free fare period and that patronage has held up with the introduction of the £1 fare. The LTA reported they feel the scheme 'has been really successful' as they were anticipating a reduction in Park and Ride users following the end of the free fare period, but feel they have retained and increased passenger numbers.

Figure 30 Bus patronage on Park and Ride routes affected by the £1 fare cap: July 2021 to March 2024



Source: Data from the Somerset LTA.

Note: All patronage data indexed to September 2022.

Additional services

Somerset has also provided disaggregated patronage data at the route level, clearly indicating which route will likely be affected by a BSIP Phase 1BSIP-funded intervention. This allows a simple, high-level comparison of the trends in patronage across these two groups of routes to identify any variations. It is noted that whilst this comparison is provided, the nature of services (e.g., Park and Ride) differs.

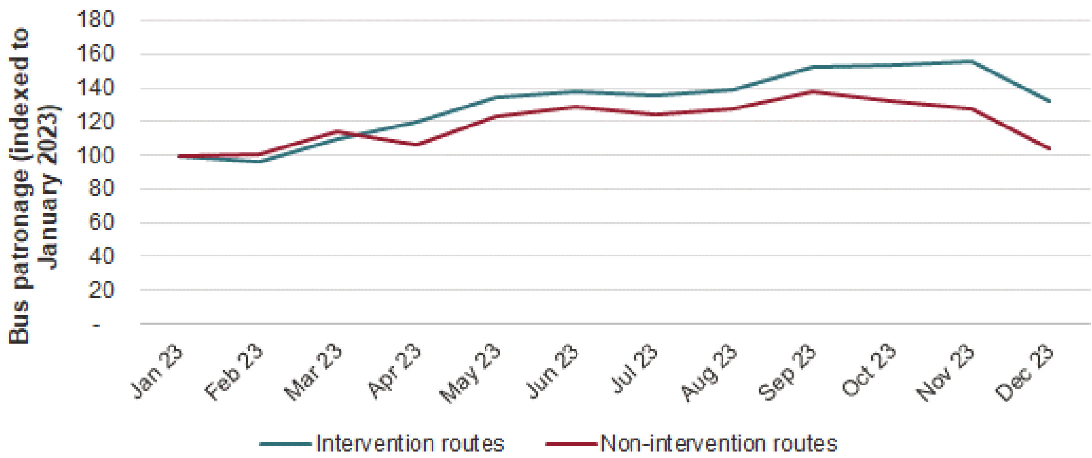
Figure 31 suggests that routes subject to BSIP Phase 1 interventions saw a more significant relative increase in patronage over 2023 compared to routes that were not in receipt of any BSIP-funded interventions. Indeed, between January and November 2023,[48] the patronage on routes with BSIP funding exhibited a monthly compound average growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5%, compared to a CAGR of 2.5% on the remaining routes.

The LTA representatives also suggested that they have observed a steady increase in patronage on the newly introduced evening services. Despite a smaller initial response, likely due to being introduced in the winter months, the number of passengers increased in the spring and summer months.

The LTA reported that the most substantial patronage growth was observed on routes 21, 22, and 28, originally the strongest commercial routes. This is supported by the route-level patronage data, which suggests that routes 21 and 22 exhibited a monthly CAGR of 9% between January and November 2023, compared to between 2% and 4% for the other routes that had additional evening services introduced.

A community stakeholder suggested that the introduction of evening services has been the most impactful intervention to date; in particular, the economic impact of supporting and stimulating jobs in the service industry and hospitals.

Figure 31 Somerset bus patronage on BSIP intervention routes: January to December 2023



Source: Data from the Somerset LTA.

Note: All patronage data is indexed to January 2023.

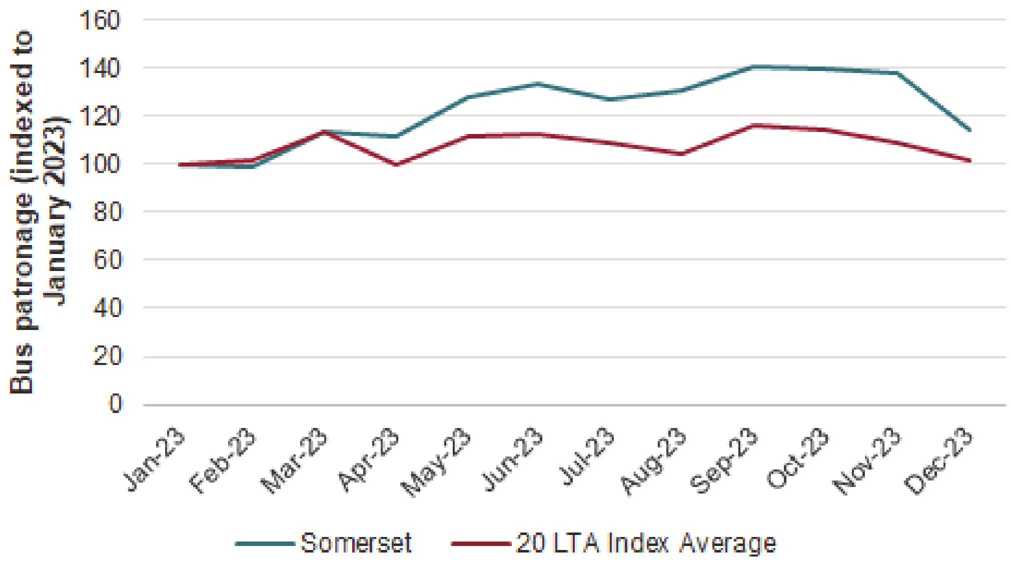
48 Excluding December 2023 due to holiday-period patronage levels being non-representative.

Overall trends in patronage

Somerset has provided data on bus patronage over the entirety of 2023. Since the interventions delivered so far have focused on fare reductions and increasing service frequency, they might be expected to directly influence bus patronage. However, given the early stages of intervention, any observed increases cannot be credibly attributed to these interventions at this stage.

As shown in Figure 32 patronage growth has been relatively strong in Somerset over 2023 relative to the 20 LTAs for whom a full year of data is available. In particular, the other LTAs reported a decline in patronage in April 2023, which was not observed in Somerset. Between April and December 2023, patronage growth in Somerset has been significantly higher than in the other LTAs.

Figure 32 Somerset bus patronage: January to December 2023



Source: Data from the Somerset LTA.

Note: All patronage data is indexed to January 2023.

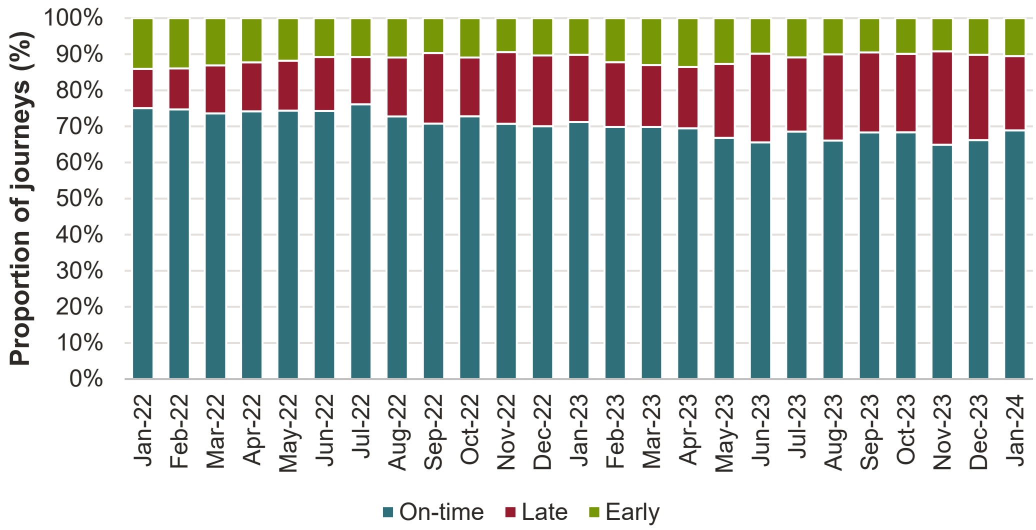
Bus punctuality

Similar to the trends observed across other LTAs, bus punctuality in Somerset has been steadily decreasing over time. The proportion of bus services 'on time' fell from 75% in January 2022 to 69% in January 2024, with a corresponding increase in the proportion of late journeys from 11% to 21% over the same period (Figure 33). The data availability for ABOD is relatively high, with information available on between 75% and 85% of journeys.

It is important to note that none of the BSIP interventions delivered by Somerset at the time of this interim report are expected to affect bus punctuality as they relate primarily to fare and ticketing schemes and service enhancements. Hence, the statistics below reflect the average network performance. The LTA has reported driver shortages experienced by the main operator over this period had an impact on the reliability of buses, which has now been addressed.

A community stakeholder noted an increasing issue with reliability, with a high level of cancellations, as a result of an ageing bus fleet, which has only started to become apparent after the BSIP funding began and citing the closure of two out of three maintenance depots and the absence of zero-emission buses. However, it should be noted that Somerset has recently been successful with a bid for Zero Emissions Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) 2 funding.

Figure 33 Punctuality of bus services as reported by ABOD



Source: Data from ABOD.

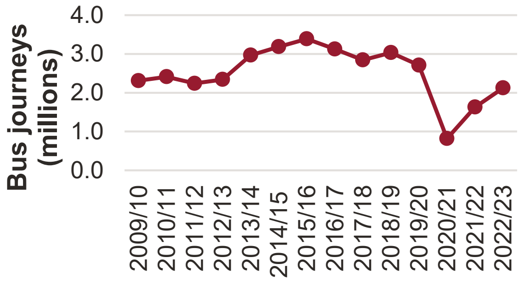
Annex E Spotlight: West Berkshire

West Berkshire is a local government district in Berkshire in South East England, with a population of 161,900, according to 2021 figures.[49] 37% of the population lives in areas classified as rural.

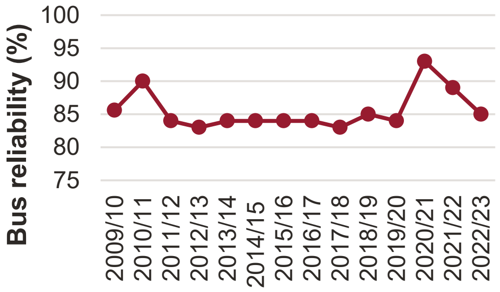
The population in West Berkshire increased by 4.9% between 2011 and 2021, lower than the overall increase of 6.6% across England. Of South East England's 64 local authority areas, West Berkshire was the 9th least densely populated as of 2021. In addition, from 2011, the increase in the number of people aged 65 and over was significantly higher in West Berkshire (34%) compared to England as a whole (21%).[50]

The age distribution in West Berkshire was similar to national trends. Individuals under the age of 16 accounted for 19% of the total West Berkshire population in 2021 (compared to regional and national averages of 19%).[51] Similarly, individuals above the age of 65 accounted for 20% of the population (compared to regional and national averages of 20% and 19%, respectively). The employment rate in West Berkshire in 2021 (83%) was significantly higher than the regional (78%) and national (75%) averages.[52]

Total annual patronage for 2022/23: 2.1 million annual passenger journeys were on local bus services in West Berkshire, representing 0.1% of the total patronage in England (DfT bus statistics BUS01a and BUS01e).



Punctuality of bus services (2022/23): 85% of non-frequent bus services in 2022/23 in West Berkshire were recorded as 'running on time', compared to the national average of 80% (DfT bus statistics BUS09a).[53]



[49] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

[50] ONS Census 2021: West Berkshire.

[51] ONS, Population estimates mid-2021.

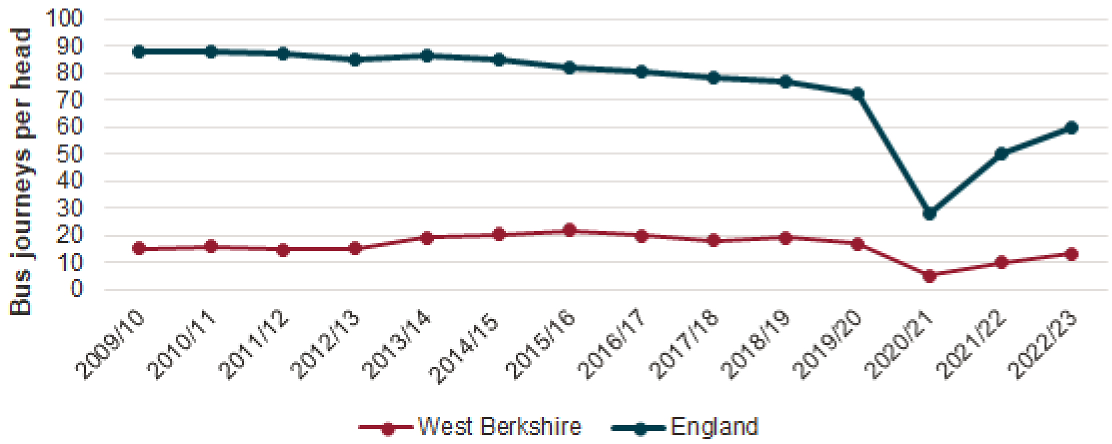
[52] NOMIS Local Authority profile.

[53] Data is from the annual bus statistics BUS09a, which only covers non-frequent services. Monthly performance data on bus punctuality for all services is being collected for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding as part of the monitoring metrics. This is discussed in section 5.5.

Customer satisfaction (2019): No information available for this LTA on the Transport Focus Survey 2019, nor on the 2023 *Your Bus Journey* survey.

West Berkshire exhibited relatively lower bus patronage per capita compared to the rest of the country (Figure 34), with 13.1 bus journeys per head of population in 2022/23, compared to 59.8 journeys per head across the rest of England.

Figure 34 West Berkshire – Bus journeys per head of population



Source: DfT bus statistics BUS01b and BUS01f.

BSIP interventions

Planned BSIP interventions

West Berkshire was awarded a total BSIP Phase 1 funding of £2.6 million to March 2025. Table 26 below is an overview of the range of interventions the LTA plans to implement (some already delivered) through the use of the BSIP Phase 1 funding. It should be noted that BSIP plans have changed over time, and this is a reflection of the LTA's plans as of April 2024.

Table 26 West Berkshire intervention summary by typology

Typology	Intervention
Bus priority infrastructure	Road redesign, including carriageway redesign options to provide bus priority.
	Traffic signal priority at a strategically important location.
	A number of small-scale measures to remove or reduce congestion hotspots which affect bus services.

On-demand bus services	Extension of an existing DRT scheme to serve more rural areas with increased frequency and faster journey times.
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	Introduction of a new service to link (potential) employees to the job opportunities at Harwell.
Fares and ticketing	Introduction of fare capping using Tap-on, Tap-off technology.
	Implementing a consistent approach for youth tickets, and extending young people's fares.

BSIP interventions delivered to date

Table 27 summarises the set of interventions that West Berkshire has already implemented as part of their BSIP Phase 1 plans. The majority of the schemes have focused on enhancements to existing services, including signage and line marking in congestion hotspots and trimming hedge rows and trees on routes to improve journey times. West Berkshire has also introduced additional services on existing routes and introduced a new DRT. Some interventions may have an ongoing rollout, and therefore, the intervention date indicates the first delivery.

Table 27 West Berkshire interventions delivered to date

Typology	Intervention	Intervention date	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	Bus congestion hotspots.	Phase 1 Autumn 2023	£100k to £500k
On-demand bus services	Downlands transport (a DRT service) – Branded West Berkshire Community Connect.	January 2024	£100k to £500k
Scheduled route, timetable, and brand	Introduction of evening service to existing route (1E) and extended Sunday service route (Lime 2/2A).	September 2023	£50k to £100k
Scheduled route, timetable and brand	New X34 service from Newbury to Harwell, along the A34.	July 2023	£50k to £100k

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation and in-depth interview.

Table 28 shows the number of schemes, by typology, still to be delivered in West Berkshire as of April 2024. The remaining schemes are spread across the typologies (although staffing is already in place), and the allocation of the remaining funding is also even across each scheme. The allocation for the remaining bus priority infrastructure schemes, as with other LTAs, represents the most substantial remaining spending (30%).

Table 28 West Berkshire interventions outstanding by typology (April 2024)

Typology	Schemes remaining	Scale of funding
Bus priority infrastructure	2	£500k to £1m
Fares and ticketing	1	£100k to £500k
On-demand bus services	1	£100k to £500k
Passenger environment	0	-
Scheduled route, timetabling, and brand	2	£100k to £500k
Other (staffing)	0	-

Source: BSIP process and impact evaluation in-depth interview and the West Berkshire LTA reporting.

Further details on each of the interventions delivered/ongoing are described below.

Bus priority infrastructure

In conjunction with the landowners, West Berkshire arranged for the carrying out of works in Atherton Road and Hungerford, including trimming hedge rows and overgrown trees along the route, which were slowing down buses and negatively impacting journey times. Although planned through BSIP, this did not require BSIP funding.

Additionally, as part of a larger ongoing package of interventions, West Berkshire implemented line markings and signage in noted bus congestion hotspots, including Newbury and Hungerford, to prevent other vehicles from stopping and parking in front of bus stops, with the aim of improving punctuality. However, these interventions have been undertaken in the context of wider instances of flooding and ongoing roadworks.

On-demand bus services

West Berkshire Council introduced West Berkshire Community Connect On-demand Transport on the 15th of January 2024, which connects the Northwest Downlands area of West Berkshire with Newbury, replacing part of a fixed service. The existing peak morning service and one afternoon service were retained on a fixed timetable. The remaining timetabled services were replaced by the DRT service. This route primarily serves a large number of students in the area.

During the in-depth interview, the LTA representatives suggested that the newly introduced DRT service has been performing better than expected, with generally positive feedback from passengers despite some early issues with the software. A large proportion of DRT service users is accounted for by concessionary fare users, including older people and college students.

In the absence of BSIP funding, West Berkshire would not have had access to the technology required to develop the DRT service. Additionally, since these services are not eligible for the £2 fare cap, in the absence of the BSIP Phase 1 funding, the LTA would not have been able to self-fund this intervention.

Scheduled route, timetable, and brand

West Berkshire, in partnership with Oxford County Council, introduced a new X34 bus route in July 2023, which links Newbury to Harwell Science and Innovation Campus along the A34. There were previously no northbound services out of Newbury beyond the boundaries of West Berkshire, so this new route aims to boost South-to-North connectivity. The new service provides bus links between previously unlinked towns, such as Newbury and Didcot.

Since the A34 is a long route, it is particularly vulnerable to traffic conditions. To address this, the LTA has been enacting timetable changes to improve the reliability of the service. In the absence of BSIP funding, this new route would not have been introduced.

Additionally, West Berkshire introduced two evening services to extend existing services: a Friday and Saturday late evening service between Newbury and Thatcham (route 1E) and a Sunday service to the Mortimer area through the extension of Lime 2/2A service. There have been no late evening services between Newbury and Thatcham since 2016, so the 1E route fills a service gap.

The loss of evening services on these routes, as well as the loss of other routes, was the result of major cutbacks in West Berkshire funding towards public bus services in 2016. The BSIP Phase 1 funding represents the first time since 2016 that such interventions have been implemented to reinstate or introduce bus services. The LTA stated that in the absence of BSIP funding, these service extensions would not have been introduced.

Emerging insights

Process Evaluation: Early learnings from design and delivery

Key messages

- **Delivery of revenue schemes was largely on track, but capital schemes were more of a concern due to the time it can take to get schemes operational. This was also driven by the fact that the BSIP delivery team did not have experience leading large capital projects.**
- **There were delays in the deliveries of planned interventions due to unforeseen factors, including the need for residential consultations and technical difficulties.**
- **The EP was felt to be working well.**
- **The quarterly data return requirements to the DfT were initially felt to be challenging but have become easier over time. The LTA felt that there was significantly more paperwork than anticipated.**

The LTA noted a number of aspects on which progress has been made, alongside some challenges in relation to the delivery and management of their BSIP schemes at this stage.

Overall, the LTA considers its teams to be relatively on track with revenue delivery. Still, capital schemes are more of a concern due to the time available and the length of time it can take to get schemes operational. In addition, a local change of administration meant a change in priorities and, therefore, a change in delivery, with the LTA explaining that other large projects became a priority. This had a knock-on effect on delivering BSIP interventions, which could not happen in parallel due to resourcing and the traffic implications of construction.

> ‘The capital is the one that we're slightly more apprehensive about. Capital schemes in my experience tend to extend, you never quite get it done in the time period that you initially expect.’

Another factor explained by the LTA is that the team responsible for BSIP delivery does not typically lead large capital projects; this would usually be the responsibility of Highways colleagues. On reflection, this has caused some challenges, with Transport and Highways colleagues needing to work closely to develop plans and take forward initiatives

Looking at interventions and the process of delivery, one scheme (removal of overgrown trees/foliage) emerged to be on privately owned land. As such, the intervention was delivered at no cost to the LTA (with the works carried out by the landowner) but was well received by operators.

The LTA considers delivering interventions to alleviate congestion hotspots a continual process; issues arising include residential consultation and adverse weather. The LTA notes that sometimes, they have difficulties getting operator feedback to help identify hotspots.

Delivery of the first DRT was delayed due to delays with the Traffic Commissioner confirming its registration and some difficulties with the software supplier and systems. However, they have had good engagement with some early marketing activities, including engaging an advertising agency to support the branding: West Berkshire Community Connect.

Regarding additional evening and weekend services, despite a relatively low level of investment, the LTA is hopeful of a longer-term impact.

> '… we wanted something that we could be funding for a couple of years with BSIP monies just to get that interest, that patronage and build the service up with the view that hopefully the operators will consider that this is something that they can continue long term.'

They also explained there was the 'political will' for these services, which helped ease delivery, and that the EP board was also engaged early on. They are now looking ahead to delivering 'quick wins' with bus shelter and stop improvements.

Data is another challenge for the LTA; their statistics are often impacted by other factors, for example, roadworks (locally and across the border in Reading), burst water mains, and flooding, meaning they find it hard to identify the extent to which interventions are having an impact.

The EP is felt to be working well and was up and running as 'early as possible'. As a smaller authority, the EP has more personal relationships with operators and no major challenges have arisen. The LTA are pleased to see operators coming to meetings and engaging. Likewise, public engagement has been largely positive. The LTA commended their relationship with their relationship manager and felt they were helpful and responsive.

> 'We've been pretty open with our relationship manager and she's been supportive and open, we've not had any major issues.'

The quarterly data return requirements to the DfT were felt to be challenging at first but have got easier over time, and they were also able to run things past the relationship manager. However, it was noted that there was significantly more paperwork than expected, which required some internal resource changes to accommodate. The LTA was pleased to report that it felt the change control processes became 'slicker'.

In terms of knowledge sharing, the LTA participates in a number of local EP boards, attends Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) meetings and supports other nearby LTAs.

Impact evaluation: early signs of local change

Key messages

- **Initial figures suggest that patronage in West Berkshire followed a very similar trend to that in the other LTAs, with the exception of a relatively larger decline between January and February 2023.**
- **The LTA perceived that there has been continued passenger growth on the new DRT service over the first three months.**
- **The average proportion of services reported to be late was 12% from January to August 2023, compared to 20% between September and December 2023. The LTA suggested some of this performance may have been due to water mains bursts and flooding that affected the road network.**

Bus patronage

Downlands Transport (DRT services) – West Berkshire Community Connect

The LTA has provided patronage data for the first three months of 2024, which shows continued passenger growth. The LTA has also shared its perceptions via the structured interviews. The West Berkshire Community Connect DRT service replaced a previously fixed service, except for two services: one morning and one evening peak, which remained fixed. The LTA explained that it has chosen not to carry out a widespread publicity campaign to promote the service until it could understand the impact on original users of changing the previously fixed timetable to a predominantly DRT service. Despite this, the LTA reported that it felt like there were new users using the service and that it had received positive feedback.

> 'We have had a lot of new people who have never travelled on our public transport service before who are now using the service.'

Other new services

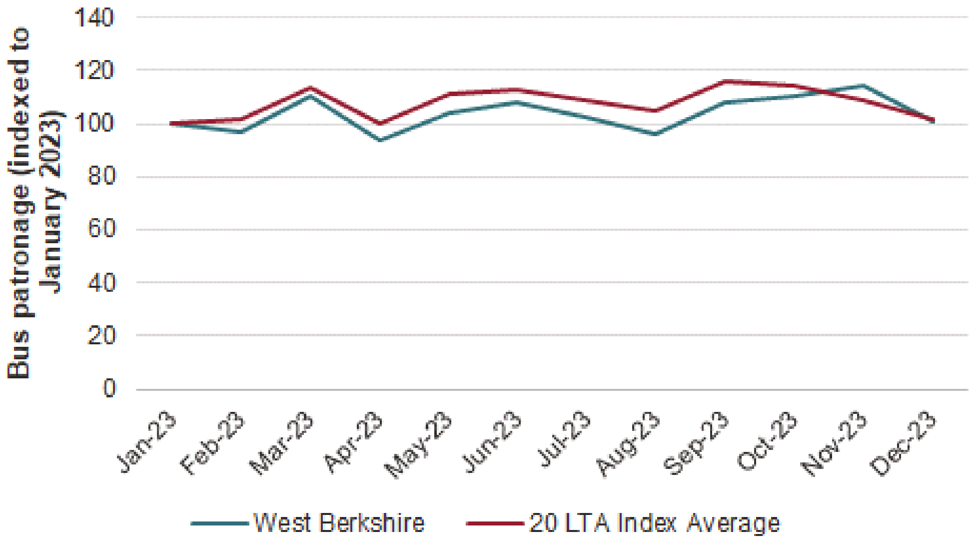
Individual route patronage data for West Berkshire is not available at this time due to commercial confidentiality. However, the LTA representatives have shared initial perceptions:

- **X34 service from Newbury to Harwell**: This is believed to be positively received and has received 'good patronage'.
- **Additional evening (1E) and Sunday services (Lime 2/2A) on existing routes:** Patronage on these services was perceived to be 'fairly good

LTA-wide trends

Initial figures suggest that patronage in West Berkshire followed a similar trend to that in the other 20 LTAs (Figure 35). Aside from a larger relative decline from January to February 2023, patronage trends in West Berkshire looked similar to the other LTAs. However, West Berkshire did exhibit a larger increase in its November 2023 patronage compared to the other LTAs.

Figure 35 Bus patronage in West Berkshire, compared to the other 20 LTAs' average: January to December 2023



Source: Data from the West Berkshire LTA.

Note: All patronage data is indexed to January 2023.

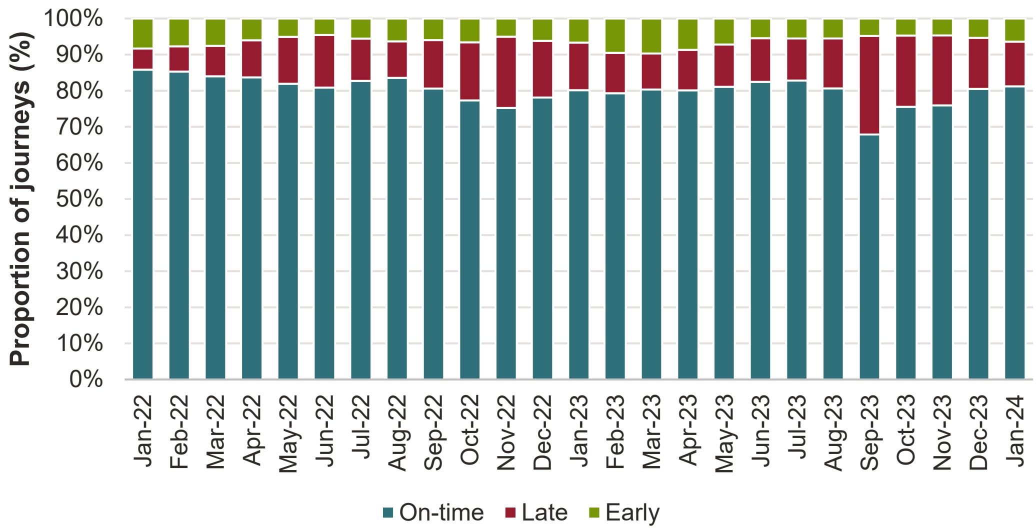
Bus punctuality

Data on punctuality from ABOD only presents the average punctuality across the LTA, whereas the impact of route-specific interventions is likely to be more prominent on a particular route when an intervention takes place. Therefore, changes are unlikely to be observable within the aggregated data.

It is also important to note that, as set out by the LTA, bus punctuality in West Berkshire was particularly low between October to December 2023, primarily due to water mains bursts and flooding. This is an example of wider factors that can materially impact patronage.

This is reflected in the bus punctuality data from ABOD, which suggests that the average proportion of journeys reported to be late was 12% between January and August 2023, compared to 20% between September and December 2023. Figure 36 below presents the proportion of bus services observed to be on time, early, or late, as reported by ABOD, and it shows a marked increase in the proportion of 'late' services between September and December 2023. The availability of punctuality data is fairly average for West Berkshire, with the ABOD database covering between 50% and 70% of services in the LTA across 2022 and 2023.

Figure 36 Punctuality of bus services as reported by ABOD



Source: Data from ABOD.

Annex F Key monitoring metrics

All LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding are expected to report data on four BSIP metrics. Each metric comprises several potential data sources, and the responsibility for collection is shared between LTAs, operators and the evaluation team. The four metrics for buses are:

- Bus customer satisfaction;
- Journey time;
- Patronage; and
- Punctuality.

Bus customer satisfaction

Bus customer satisfaction data collection is dependent on the survey approaches adopted by individual LTAs. The majority of LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding (20) have chosen to take part in the Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey* survey.[54] This report focuses on the 2023 findings as published in March 2024. Responses to the following questions have been collated:

1. How satisfied were you with each of the following during your bus journey?
    - Satisfaction with the bus stop where you caught the bus.
    - Satisfaction with the punctuality of the bus at the stop where you caught the bus (arriving on time).
    - Satisfaction with the bus driver.
    - Satisfaction with the length of time your journey on the bus took.
2. How satisfied were you with your bus journey overall?
3. How satisfied were you with the Value for Money of your journey?

LTAs not participating in the Transport Focus survey have been asked to work with suppliers and ask questions comparable to this survey. At this point in the delivery of the BSIP programme, some LTAs have commissioned and collected results for surveys whilst others are still working through procurement and determining specifications.

[54] Transport Focus (2022) Your Bus Journey. Available at: https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/your-bus-journey/

Journey Time

Data on journey times is being collected from the ABOD service, where available. This data is only available at the individual corridor level, as opposed to across the LTA as a whole. This is a major point of distinction between this metric and the other key metrics.

The information on ABOD is reported daily, which can capture any short-term fluctuations that may affect journey times across different corridors. In addition, the availability of historical data within the system allows a detailed comparison of journey times prior to, during, and post-interventions for a more holistic analysis.

LTAs have also been invited to submit any journey time data they may be collecting as part of their scheme evaluation, which could support the rolling data collected from ABOD.

At this stage, many of the capital schemes that would impact these metrics have not been delivered yet, so analysis across the LTAs is not possible. A focus area, Nottingham, has provided the location of a capital scheme, and an example ABOD extraction has been included in that section.

Patronage

Patronage data is collected from operators via the LTAs on a monthly basis and reported to the M&E team quarterly. LTAs have been asked to provide aggregated patronage data for their authority area, at minimum.

Some operators/LTAs are able to provide more detailed data, which will be used in case studies and intervention typology analysis. This additional data includes:

- Ticket type (full fare, concessionary, etc.);
- Peak/Off-Peak;
- Route-level patronage; and
- Weekends/Weekdays.

LTAs have also been asked to clarify how patronage reporting is defined: generally, ticket sales or trips. This differs across LTAs, which is why the trend is more important than the raw figures for this evaluation (see limitations below).

Punctuality

Punctuality is a measure of whether a bus is on time as defined by the *Traffic Commissioner's guidelines*[55]. As with Journey Times, this data is collected through ABOD for all LTAs. However, LTAs are also invited to submit their data on punctuality as provided by operators to sense check. ABOD collates Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data (GPS) from buses and compares the departures to those expected in the timetable.

Punctuality metrics are collected each month and cover the average for all the days of the month, weekdays, and weekends. The following percentages are collected for all departures across these three-day types:

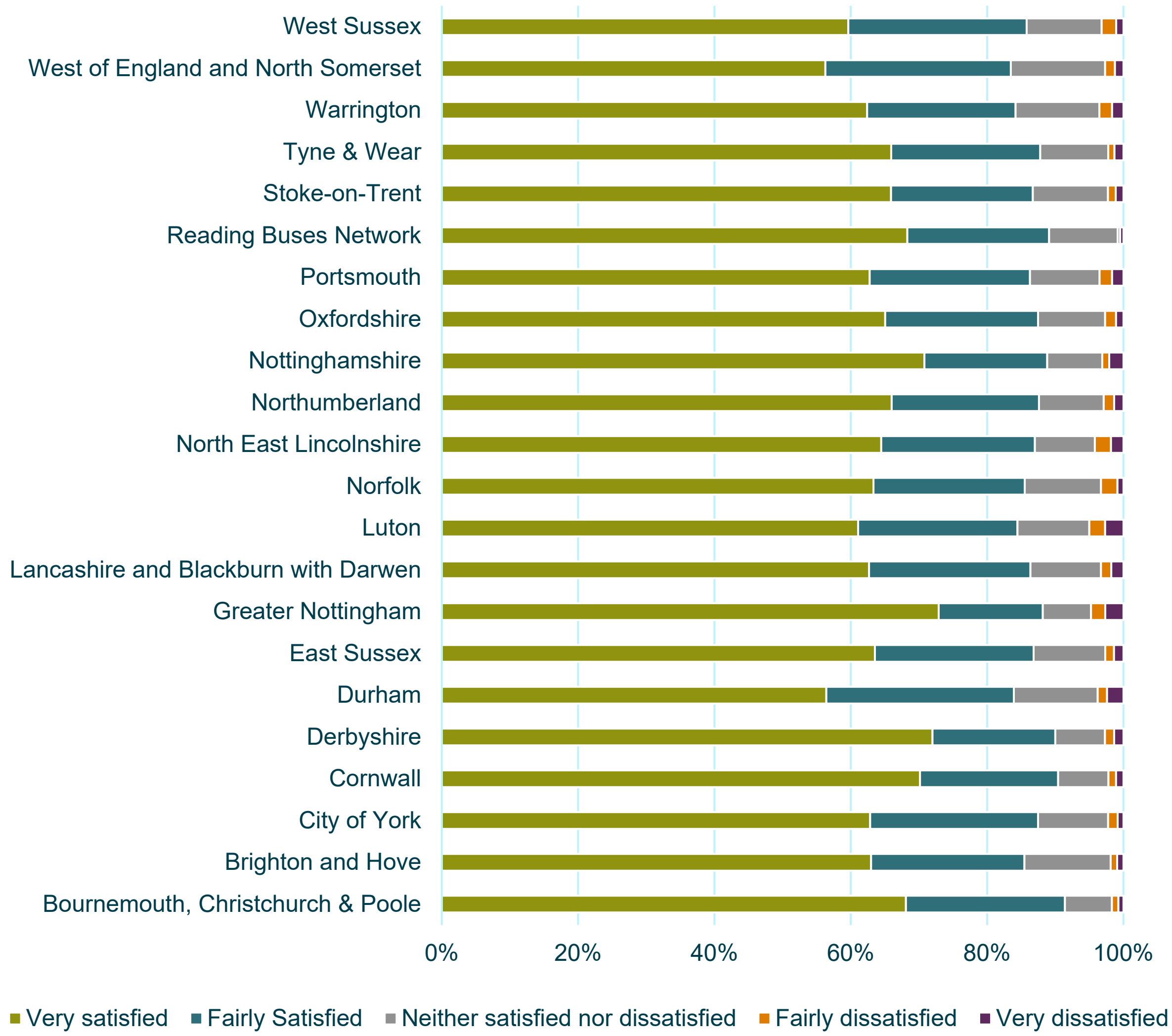
- On time: Departures that fall within the times defined by the *Traffic Commissioner's guidelines*.
- Early: Departures of more than 60 seconds early. This accounts for concerns by operators that the GPS methods employed to calculate departure can sometimes 'drift' and, therefore, indicate that a bus has left early when it has not. As relative on-time improvements are being investigated in reporting, they are treated as potentially consistent but small errors.
- Late: Departures 6 minutes late or greater.
- No data: The percentage of the anticipated departures (timetabled) is not recorded; therefore, no data is available. This can be due to timetable data being incorrect and not matching AVL data, not receiving AVL/enough AVL data, or a mismatch in line names between timetable data and the AVL file. These instances are not included in the calculation of on-time performance.

[55] For non-frequent services (fewer than six buses per hour), 60 seconds early to 5 minutes and 59 seconds late. For frequent services at least 10 buses must depart within 60minutes and no gap bigger than 15 minutes.

Annex G Transport Focus *Your Bus Journey* Headline Results

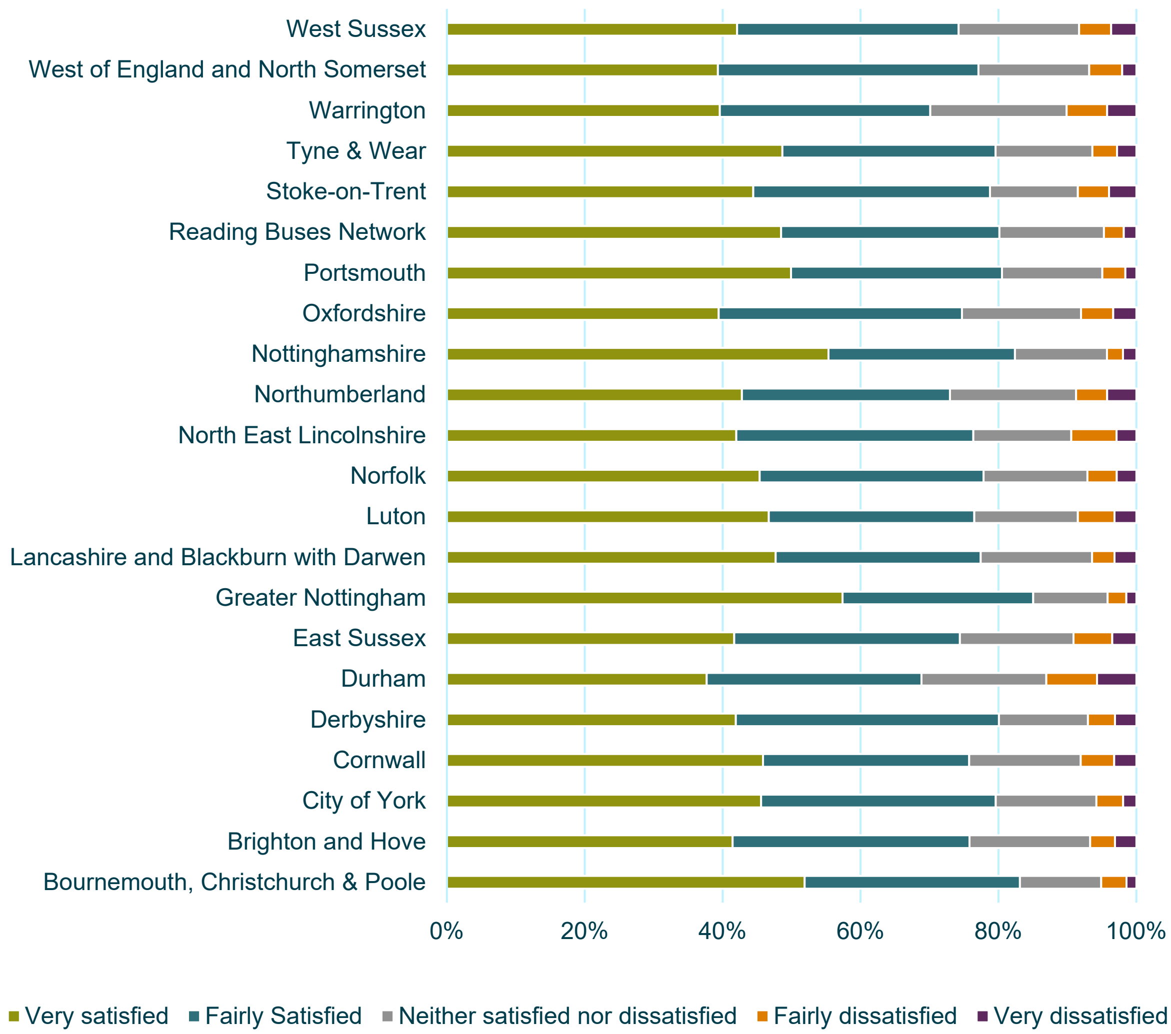
Headline results from the 2023 *Your Bus Journey* survey conducted by Transport Focus for LTAs in receipt of BSIP Phase 1 funding and were willing to participate.

Figure 37 Satisfaction with the bus driver



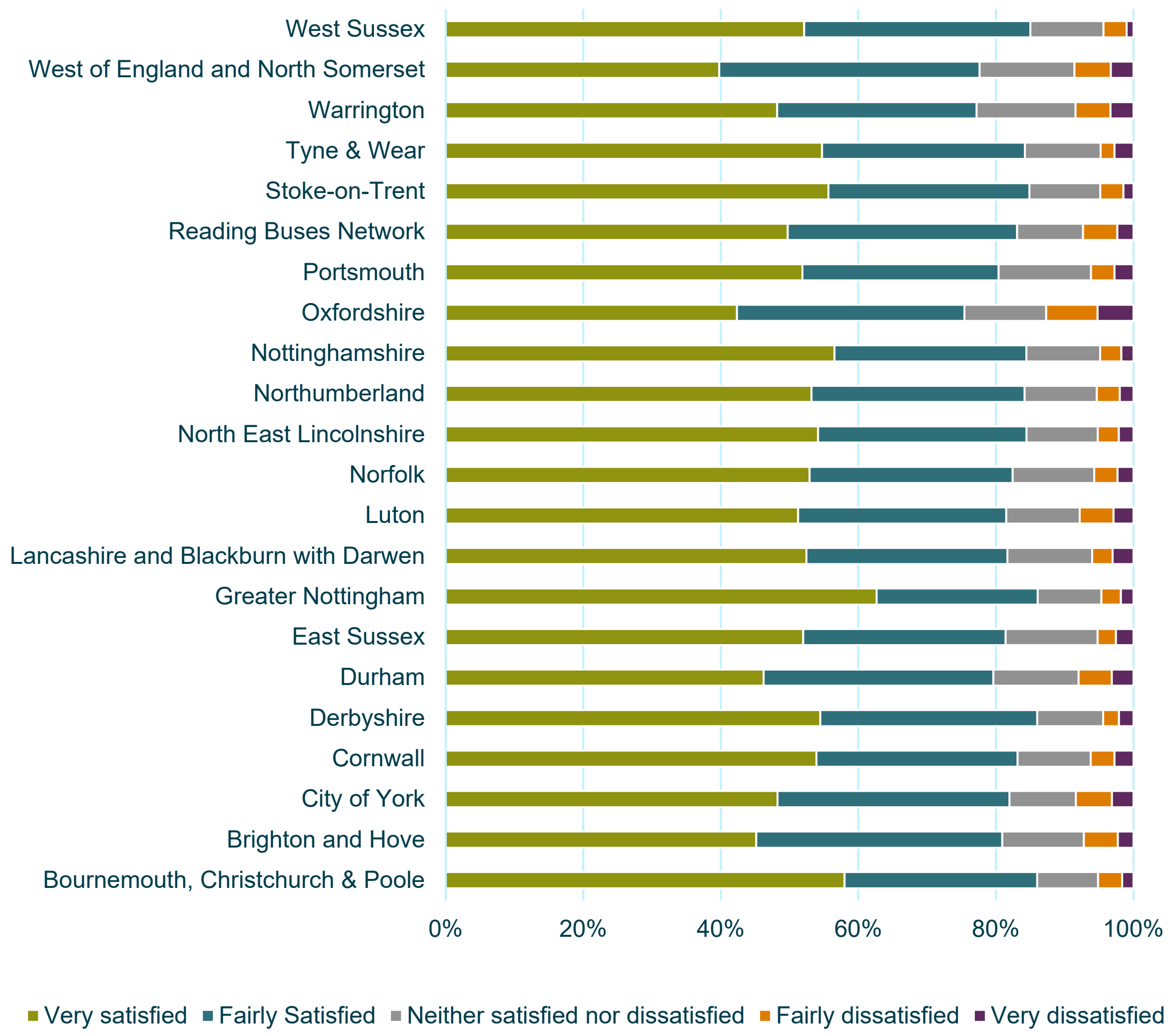
Source: Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey 2023 results.

Figure 38 Satisfaction with the bus stop



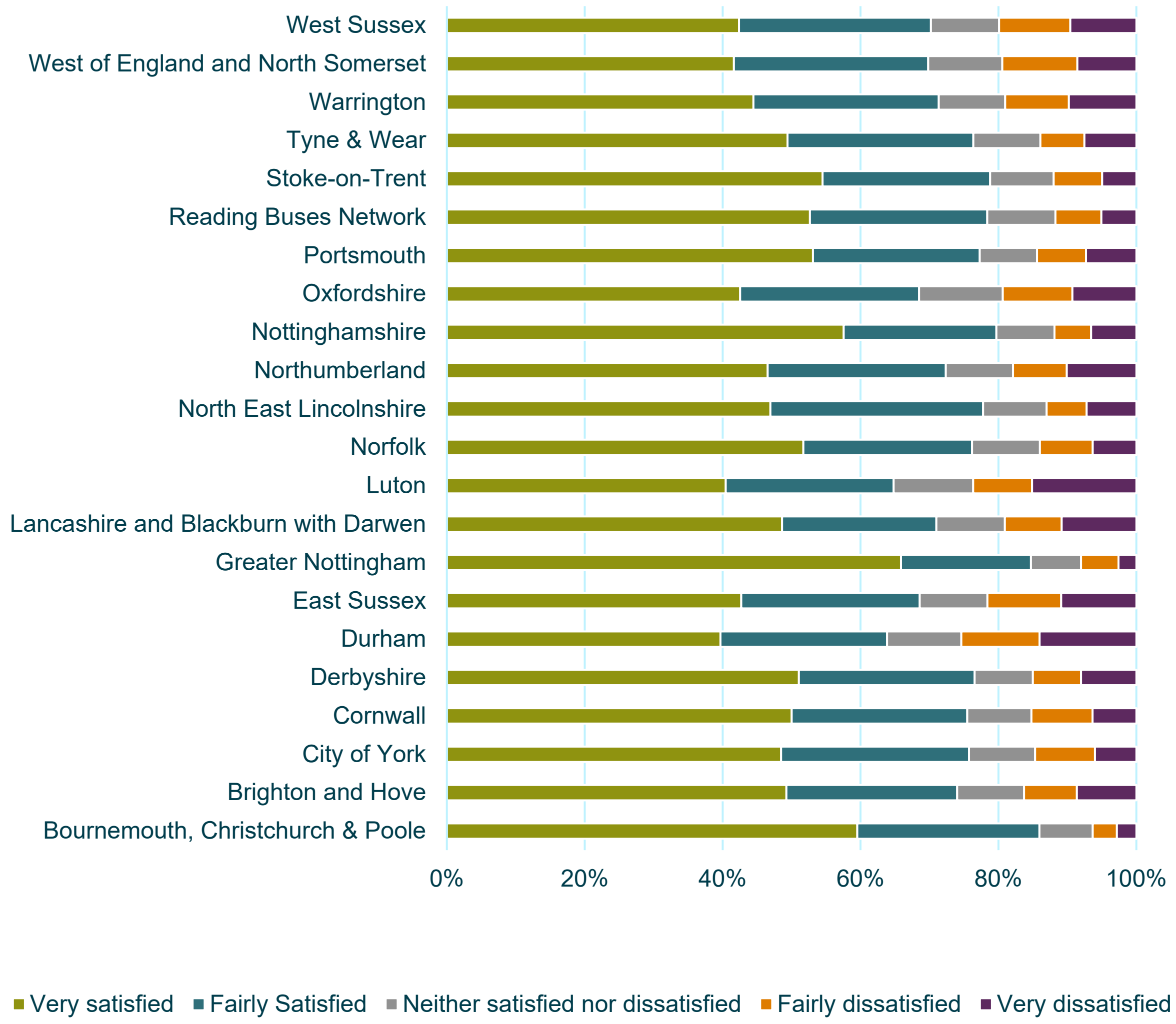
Source: Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey 2023 results.

Figure 39 Satisfaction with the length of the journey



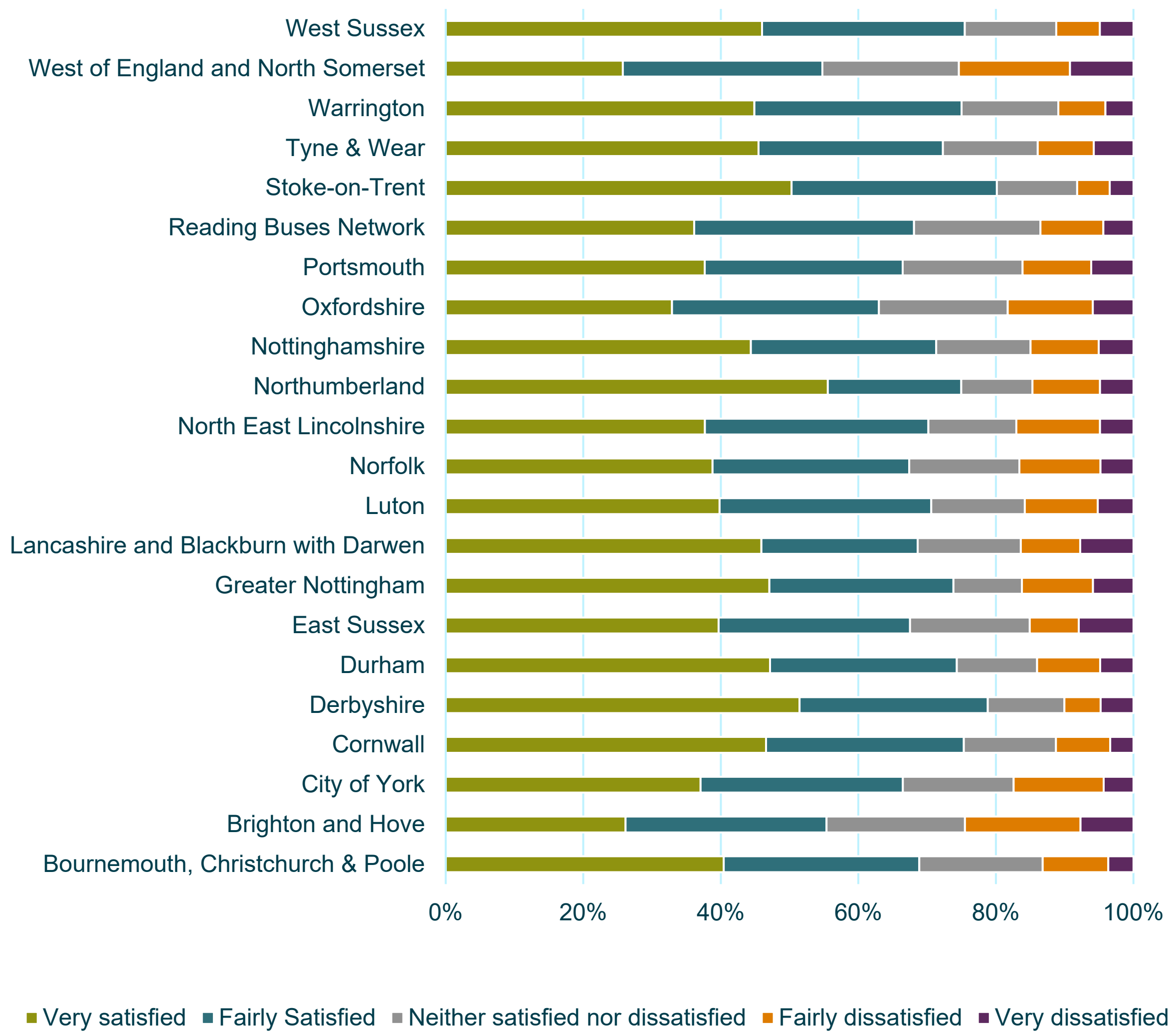
Source: Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey 2023 results.

Figure 40 Satisfaction with punctuality at the stop (arriving time)



Source: Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey 2023 results.

Figure 41 Satisfaction with the Value for Money of the journey



Source: Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey 2023 results.

Annex H Process Evaluation Question Framework

Table 29 presents the core process questions which were focused on heavily in the in-depth interviews.

Table 29 Process Evaluation Question Framework

Process Items	Design and Funding	Procurement and Mobilisation	Implementation
Funding Allocation	What worked well/less well in the funding allocation process? Was the design stage capable of responding to funding changes? What differed between capital and revenue funding? If applicable, how was capacity funding utilised?	Was the funding allocation able to respond to changes at the procurement and mobilisation stage?	Was funding allocation (capital and revenue) sufficient to implement the proposal in full? What funding barriers, if any, prevented full delivery?
Reprogramming	Was there a need to amend the programme to match the funding allocation? Was clear guidance provided? How was the reprogramming approached? What lessons can be learnt from this?	Was further reprogramming required after the procurement stage? Was clear guidance provided?	
Partnership Working (EP)	Were effective partnerships formed to inform the programming and design stages? What worked well and less well? Were there specific issues in dealing with neighbouring or cross-boundary schemes?	Was partnership working capable of informing the procurement and mobilisation stages? What barriers or opportunities existed? Were barriers to delivery discussed with Traffic Commissioners and the Competition & Markets Authority? Was a satisfactory resolution found to any regulatory and competition issues that arose?	Did partnership working endure once the proposal was implemented? Were there ways to effectively review and amend the proposal in partnership? How did LTAs and operators approach partnership working during implementation? Which approaches worked well?

Enablers	How did the BSIP document and other tools assist in enabling the design and funding stage?	Did the BSIP document provide useful context for the procurement stage?	Was the implementation stage assisted by the content of, and existence of, the BSIP document? To what extent was providing the quarterly and 6-month process appropriate? What benefits or difficulties arose?
Barriers	Were there any barriers to the agreement of funding and the design stages?	What procurement and mobilisation barriers were encountered?	What barriers to implementation arose, and how did they affect the delivery of outcomes?
Complementary and Wider Contextual Factors	What complementary investments and policies supported the delivery of proposals? Were there any issues in securing these complementary investments or policy drivers? How was equality considered throughout this?		Which contextual factors, if any, impacted the delivery of the bus transformation programme, including, for example, COVID-19 recovery or wider economic factors? If so, how? How did implementation differ in areas where other bus-funding schemes were also being implemented? What other changes and schemes are implemented during the implementation phase?
Governance	Was an effective governance structure set up that was able to support the design phase of the EP Scheme? Did the EP processes align with existing governance approaches or require new or amended structures?	Were there sufficient governance arrangements in place to secure effective and timely procurement and mobilisation? Were barriers to delivery discussed with Traffic Commissioners and the Competition & Markets Authority? Was a satisfactory resolution found to any regulatory and competition issues that arose?	Was there sufficient governance in place to support the work of the EP in optimising the implementation stage?
Public Engagement	What opportunities and barriers arose as a result of public engagement at the design stage?	Was there any local press/social media coverage of the proposals during procurement and mobilisation that affected proposals?	What opportunities and barriers arose as a result of public attitudes once the proposal was implemented?

	Was there any local press/social media coverage of the proposals following implementation and how accurate was this?