



Place Overview and Scrutiny

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Growth and Development
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Growth and Development
DATE:	Monday 2 December 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Growth and Development
WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
KEY DECISION:	N/A

SUBJECT: Bus Service Improvement Plan

1. BACKGROUND

In October 2021 our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was approved securing circa £3.7million of funding for capital and revenue improvements to bus service provision across the Borough.

As part of the Government's commitment to it's National Bus Strategy, additional BSIP funding has been secured in a further 2 rounds of awards: –

BSIP+ - £470,171 allocation for both 2023/24 and 2024/25

Phase 3 BSIP - £880,000 for 2024/25.

Both of these allocations are revenue funding and therefore have to be spent on bus service improvements rather than capital projects. All schemes and initiatives have to be approved by the Department of Transport (DfT) and are monitored quarterly by them. Proposals have been drafted in partnership with the DfT and conversations are ongoing with bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership regarding the delivery of these service improvements.

2. BSIP FUNDING

Funding Reference	Funding Period	Amount
BSIP (Phase 1)	22 to 25	£3,722,320.00
BSIP+ (Phase 2)	23 to 24	£470,171.00
BSIP+ (Phase 2)	24 to 25	£470,171.00
BSIP (Phase 3)	24 to 25	£880,000.00
Total		£5,542,662.00

The funding profile has recently been amended through a PAR with DfT. St Paul's Street/Montague Street and Johnson Street Bus Gate have been discontinued with funding reallocated to A666 Larkhill/Barbara Castle Way.

3. BUS LANES AND CO-ORDINATED SIGNALS

To improve journey time reliability bus priority is being introduced on the traffic signals at the following locations;

- Accrington Road / Audley Range
- Bolton Road / Aqueduct Road
- A666 Larkhill / Barbara Castle Way
- King Street / Montague Street
- Lower Audley / Bennington Street
- Yew Tree Drive / Lammack Road
- Audley Range / Queens Park
- Shadsworth / Old Bank Lane
- Townsmoor Gyratory

Local Bus Priority loop detection is being used to detect buses approaching the signals. The bus is given priority by the controller either by extending the green or shortening the previous stage to give green quicker. Special detection loops are used for the buses that can tell the difference between normal vehicles and buses based on their detection profile.

All sites will also now be upgraded to operate under MOVA control (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation). MOVA is a traffic signal control system that uses detectors and signal controllers to optimise the traffic throughput at the junction. Upgrading the signals will provide bus priority by default as the signals will operate more efficiently for all road users, especially under MOVA control.

Pedestrian improvements are also being carried out at some locations as part of these works.

4. CONNECTIVITY AND TIMETABLING

BSIP funding was allocated in two forms, capital for infrastructure improvements and resource for improvements to bus services. The following improvements have been made to bus services -

- Reintroduced the Sunday service on the Service 4 Mill Hill route.
- Increased frequency and coverage of the Service 33 Darwen to Royal Blackburn Hospital by extending through to Blackburn, incorporating previously unserved Audley Range and Shadsworth Industrial Estate.
- To be introduced December 2024 three Blackburn local services, reinstating areas of Blackburn that previously lost services including;
 - M10 - Warrenside Close, Openshaw and Troy Street area.
 - M9 - Griffin estate
 - M11 – Albion Mill and Brackendale, onto Tockholes and Belmont, taking in the new developments on Bog Height Road.
- Incorporated in all these areas are a number of sheltered housing properties, with vulnerable residents that would otherwise struggle accessing public transport.

Cross boundary services have also been introduced in partnership with LCC;

- Service 2 to Chorley increased from 60 to 30 minutes frequency.
- Service 22 to Clitheroe increased evening journeys with three additional journeys.
- Service 152 to Burnley increased operational hours to 11:00pm on all weekdays, rather than just Friday and Saturday.

5. TICKETING AND PATRONAGE

Patronage - The BSIP Programme is a joint initiative with Lancashire County Council, therefore all patronage figures are for the Lancashire area as a whole, rather than just BwD.

- 21m bus journeys in Lancashire in first half of 2024/25
- 10% increase compared to first half of 2023/24
- BSIP effect – Contracted services saw 3.1% increase Q1 to Q2 2024/25

7pm £1 Fare

- Transdev were operating the £1 fare after 7pm following Covid 19 pandemic to increase bus patronage. LCC adopted this on their services under BSIP, which included cross boundary services into Blackburn.
- 2.6m £1 evening tickets sold January 2023 – October 2024

Multi Operator Ticketing

- Tap on Tap off ticketing system currently being trialled in Blackpool and the Fylde with a view to rolling out Lancashire wide system.
- Due to technical issues full Lancashire wide launch has been delayed. There is no current date for BwD or wider Lancashire area introduction of this initiative.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

CONTACT OFFICER:	Carmel Foster-Devine
DATE:	14 November 2024
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Executive Board Decision – Blackburn with Darwen Enhanced Bus Partnership 10 June 2022. Executive Board Decision – Blackburn with Darwen