

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

Version

EP Plan and Scheme with one off DfT funding

July 2024

INTRODUCTION

In October 2021 as a requirement of the new National Bus Strategy (NBS) agenda, Kent County Council (KCC) submitted its first (pre-funding settlement version) Bus Service Improvement plan to Government. The plan was formed in conjunction with the county's 39 bus operators in order to provide a strategic vision of how Kent's bus offer can be improved in line with the requirements of the National Bus Strategy. The plan sets out the existing bus offer in Kent through consideration of the current regulatory set up, the existing approach and known success stories. It also highlights the barriers and challenges that maybe restricting greater bus use.

To support the formation of the plan we undertook significant data-led analysis of the current network. We also looked at associated measures that have been used to identify areas demanding attention. The plan then uses feedback from bus operators, Kent residents and other key stakeholders to consider potential areas for improvement and future development. These are captured under a set of key principles and more detailed initiatives. While some of these may be delivered within existing budgets, others will require NBS funding to succeed.

Delivering on the National Bus Strategy

To deliver the aims and objectives of the NBS, the Government has set requirements on LTAs and bus operators. These must be adhered to in order to ensure the availability of existing national funding streams as well as a potential new funding allocation through the NBS process. These requirements are as follows:

- To produce and publish the initial version of a BSIP
- To introduce a new statutory path for the regulatory set up of bus services in the county by March 2022, including the use of franchising or Enhanced Partnerships.

Enhanced Partnership or franchising?

In June 2021, following a statutory decision by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, KCC identified that in line with Government guidance it would be forming an Enhanced Partnership (EP) for Kent from March 2022. The EP model will allow KCC to build on the positive relationships it already has with the county's bus operators, in order to seek to deliver the aspirations of the NBS.

The use of franchising was given due consideration but was not deemed appropriate at this time. Franchising is not automatically available to non-mayoral authorities (instead requiring approval from the Secretary of State) and there are considerable questions over the implications on resourcing and subsequent service levels which could be delivered in the county. KCC also already has strong relationships with its operators which can be the basis for more formal statutory EP Schemes in the future.

Kent has an active bus market with 39 operators currently registered with the Traffic Commissioner to operate services in the county. Close ties already exist between operators and KCC through such initiatives as the Kent Travel Saver, Kent's eight Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) and through management of contracted local bus

services. It is felt that these existing relationships will form a strong base for establishing an EP model. KCC received no objections from operators to this approach during engagement conducted for the production of the BSIP.

The formation of our three Enhanced Partnership Schemes have therefore been identified as the appropriate mechanism for KCC and its bus operators to meet the requirement of the NBS in introducing '*a new statutory path for the regulatory set up of bus services in the county by March 2022*'.

Objectives and Key Principles

Through a combination of our Bus Service Improvement Plan, our Enhanced Partnership Plan and the three associated schemes, KCC and Kent's Bus Operators intend to meet the requirements of and deliver on the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

At a local level, we have worked to ensure that our BSIP and our resulting EPs reflect the aspirations of bus users, potential bus users and stakeholders and have therefore used engagement activity in the form of public consultation and stakeholder workshops to help us understand what is most important to our residents and what they would like to see delivered through our BSIP and EP schemes.

This has enabled us to form a set of Key Principles which have informed the priorities in our BSIP, and which will also be used to establish the detail of the first and future generations of our EPs. These principles are:

Regulation

- 1** Form Enhanced Partnership Agreements covering all public buses in Kent, setting ambitious targets with respect to punctuality, journey times, vehicle quality and accessibility.

Customer

- 2** Put the customer at the heart of everything we do through developing a passenger charter agreed through EPs and by developing the Bus Services Feedback portal.

Network developments

- 3** Seek to secure all available funding and prioritise its use to 1) recover from the pandemic and stabilise the current network, and 2) further develop and enhance Kent's public transport through a range of initiatives.
- 4** Undertake a countywide and then localised network analysis to help inform the use of existing and new funding, with a view to providing service enhancements for rural communities where levels are currently lacking.
- 5** Continue to support the development of the community transport sector in Kent to supplement the core bus network.

Innovation and digital accessibility

- 6 Consider and embrace innovative transport solutions such as DRT and MaaS models as possible alternatives to the private car and make use of BRT where appropriate.

Fares and ticketing

- 7 Provide flexible and better value ticketing options and use technology to provide cashless and ticketless solutions on all operators' services.

Public transport information

- 8 Improve the quality and accessibility of public transport information, including the provision of a one-stop-shop for live bus times and fares information and making greater use of technology e.g. for voice announcements.

Accessibility

- 9 Strive to improve the levels of physical and digital accessibility both on buses and through infrastructure to ensure a fully accessible network for disabled passengers.

Environment and air quality

- 10 Promote the role of buses in solving air quality issues and work with operators and other stakeholders to improve emissions standards. This would include using funding to support the move from diesel to emission-free vehicles.

Infrastructure, network management and new developments

- 11 Put buses at the centre of decision making in respect of new road schemes, planning and developments, and support bus operators and services in KCC's role as the highway authority.

COMPETITION TEST

The Kent County Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP Plan and Scheme (for introduction from April 2022) on competition and believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.

PART 1 - EP PLAN

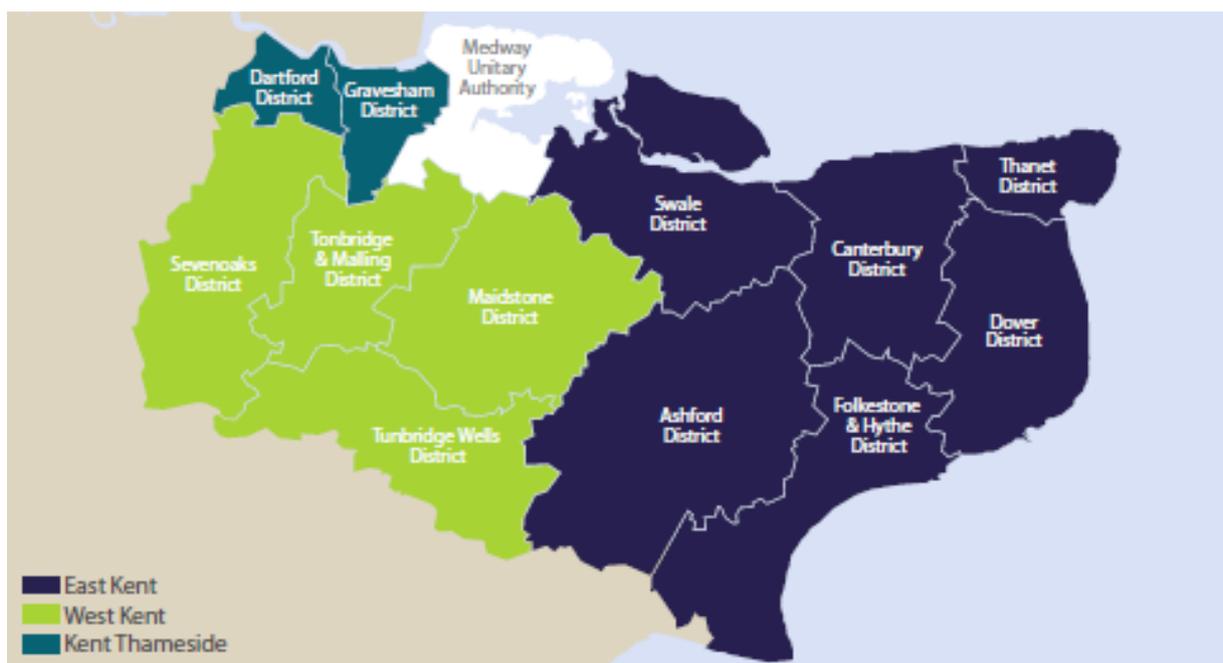
THE KENT ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL.

1. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Kent is the most heavily populated non-metropolitan authority in the UK. The county is made up of a mixture of larger urban centres such as Canterbury and Maidstone, smaller towns and villages and more rural areas. The county sees unique situations for certain locations with for instance the Gravesham and Dartford areas having close proximity to London and the Dover and Folkestone & Hythe areas being most heavily impacted by cross-channel traffic. It also sees variations across its area in relation to key indices such as employment levels, levels of deprivation and education, and it has 12 borough / district authorities operating in a two-tier administrative set up. There are also variations with respect to bus service provision and which bus operators run services. For example Stagecoach and Arriva are the major national group operators in the east and west of the county respectively.

The above means that the county's geographical make up is not conducive to a single EP arrangement. As a result KCC intends to introduce an EP and related EP Plan covering its entire geographical area but, within it, introduce three EP Schemes. This will allow the overall aims, objectives, and targets of Kent's BSIP to be considered and reflected across the county as a whole, but with delivery tailored for different local circumstances, needs and operating territories.

Kent's EP Schemes are intended as follows:



Kent has borders with four other LTAs: East Sussex, London, Medway (Unitary Authority) and Surrey. KCC has held conversations with all four LTAs to discuss the overall approach to BSIPs, common issues between areas and to seek agreement for collaborative working with respect to cross boundary issues. We have and will continue this dialogue with these authorities throughout the EP process.

The differing characteristics and circumstances of each authority means that a joint BSIP was not deemed appropriate. However, there is a strong willingness to work together and move forward on key issues such as ticketing and cross boundary implications of passenger charters.

Particular consideration was given to a joint BSIP and EP Plan between Kent and Medway. However, this was not pursued for a variety of reasons including:

- In comparison to overall mileage there are only a small number of routes which operate between the two areas
- There is a differing geographical and social-economic make-up between the two areas
- There is a difference in administrative set-up between the two LTAs. Medway is a Unitary Authority holding responsibility over areas such as planning, parking and bus shelters. In Kent these powers are shared with our district partners under a two-tier system.

Medway Council will be an invited attendee at the Enhanced Partnership Board.

Kent's bus operators have indicated support for this approach.

2. PLAN PERIOD AND REVIEW

This first version of the Kent Enhanced Partnership Plan is intended to cover a five-year period from April 2022 until end of March 2027. The EP Board may propose variations to the Plan outside of the formal review dates, which if agreed will be subject to the statutory consultation process.

In keeping with Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Kent EP Plan remains aspirational but will be updated to reflect the availability of funding during this initial five-year period.

The process to review the EP Plan would commence at the start of the final year of the initial period (from April 2026) leading to adoption of a new plan and associated schemes from April 2027. Review of the Plan would be conducted using the established meeting and governance structure through EP Schemes Monitoring Groups making recommendations to the EP Board for approval.

Changes to operational and financial circumstances will be reflected in updated versions of the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan which will be subject to annual review and through the obligations and commitments made within our EP schemes which will be subject to a controlled but simple and responsive mechanism for variation.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

KCC has a number of strategic and operational plans in place across its Highways and Transportation division. At the forefront of these is Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4): Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031. Kent's LTP brings together the authority's transport policies by looking at local schemes and issues as well as those with a countywide or national significance. Within LTP4, KCC has identified bus improvements as a key strategic priority. As the county recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, travel patterns change and wider factors such as cross-channel traffic variances due to Brexit have an effect on the county's roads, KCC has embarked on a review of LTP4, with the intention to establish a new plan.

In any new LTP, KCC will set out policies and proposals that reflect the BSIP and our EP Plan that further its delivery. Sitting alongside LTP4 are a number of more detailed plans and strategies such as the Highways Asset Management Plan 21/22 – 25/26, Kent's Active Travel Strategy and the Freight Action Plan. It is intended that Kent's EP Plan will sit alongside the LTP and vice versa and will also likely align with a number of district LTPs.

4. CURRENT POSITION AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

In a large rural county like Kent, the bus network plays a major role in connecting remote, less populated areas with essential services and local centres. For this reason, KCC and Kent's bus operators have fought to protect service levels through a combination of funding and partnership working. However, it is acknowledged that in every area of provision there is more that can be done. Our Bus Service Improvement Plan sets out a range of ambitious initiatives to address identified challenges and shortcomings across all aspects of service provision.

As is the case in most parts of the UK, bus services in Kent operate in a de-regulated market outside the control of KCC. The Department for Transport, not KCC, is responsible for the licensing of operators and services. In this de-regulated environment, operators provide services at their own discretion and set vital features such as routes, timetables, frequencies, and fares. Around 90% of all bus journeys in the county are provided on this commercial basis. They do not attract subsidy from KCC but run only for the revenue generated by passenger usage.

Throughout the pandemic, KCC worked very closely with all its transport providers to ensure that services continue to operate and are provided in line with emerging guidance. Our relationships with bus operators in particular have strengthened as a result of this. From a financial perspective, KCC supported the network by maintaining payments to operators for contracted bus services, and freezing pre Covid reimbursement levels for concessionary schemes. This, coupled with other support

provided by the Government, ensured that buses continued to operate and to date, we avoided a significant reduction to service levels in Kent.

However, it is acknowledged that this challenge remains. Covid restrictions resulted in a fall of 66% of passengers on Kent's bus network in the 2020/21 year. KCC continues to work closely with operators, but we are mindful that the network faces a significant challenge moving forward should current support funding end and other factors such as costs and usage remain consistent.

Consideration also needs to be given to the pressure on KCC finances, particularly in discretionary areas and with challenging operating conditions caused by increased congestion and running times, and rises in costs such as fuel, wages, and insurance. For these reasons, it has been difficult for the council and Kent's bus operators to be ambitious in recent years.

More recently, the national driver shortage has created a resource barrier to providing bus services in parts of the County and is anticipated to exasperate cost increases in this area leading to further pressure on the sustainability of commercially provided services and the costs for the Council in securing subsidised replacements.

As well as any additional funding that might be forthcoming, the NBS and BSIP represent a positive framework for supporting network recovery. Initiatives in the form of enhancements to public transport information and ticketing will be used to encourage passengers to the network with a view firstly to recover patronage to pre Covid levels and ultimately to exceed them. Patronage targets will be set on an increasing scale through our Enhanced Partnership process.

Taking account of the above, KCC is prioritising initiatives that will maintain commercial and subsidised service levels consistent with or similar to the pre-pandemic network. Having secured this base level of provision, additional funding will be used to deliver a range of aspirations that will, be prioritised through future stakeholder engagement and taking account of a criteria being developed by the Council that will consider; recovery, sustainability and long-term legacy, policy context and value for money.

More generally, whilst KCC and Kent's bus operators have continued to maintain standards and levels of provision, it is acknowledged that there is scope for significant improvement. In respect of bus information, ticketing, fares, infrastructure, innovation and digital accessibility, KCC has identified specific areas for development. These are outlined in respective sections of the BSIP, along with initiatives for improvement in each area.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Engagement and Consultation

Although formal consultation is not required by the BSIP guidance, KCC has wanted to ensure that its plan reflected local need and aspiration. The Council has therefore sought to engage as fully as the timescale allowed, working to a principle of light touch consultation to establish resident's priorities and then to supplement this feedback with more detailed discussions with stakeholders in order to understand what the feedback

means in their area or for their clients. An all-operator forum has met and then been supplemented by ongoing discussions with appointed operator representatives.

An independent Market Research Company have been engaged to analyse and report on feedback and suggestions made through the Public Consultation and the Stakeholder Working Groups.

This process has been used to inform the pre-funding settlement draft of the BSIP. On understanding of the financial settlement.

The following formal engagement activities and meetings have been undertaken;

Activity	Consultees / Stakeholders Involved
Engagement with Neighbouring Local Authority	Medway Council, East Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council, Transport for London.
Operator engagement	All Kent Bus Operators, leading to the formation of a working group.
Operator Initiative Survey	All Kent Bus Operators
Operator Data Request Survey	All Kent Bus Operators
Kent BSIP : Stakeholder Workshop – Kent BSIP Principles	Kent District Councils, Medway Council, KCC Officers, Passenger Focus, Chamber of Commerce, Youth Council, Disability Groups, other user groups.
Member Briefings	KCC Elected Members
District Council Engagement – Kent BSIP. Local Input to Initiatives	12 Kent District Councils
Transport Focus Engagement and attendance of workshops	Transport Focus
Department for Work and Pensions – Input to BSIP Initiatives	Kent Offices of the Department for Work and Pensions
Public Consultation : to establish priorities for users and provision of service suggestions.	All Kent residents.

BSIP Consultation Results

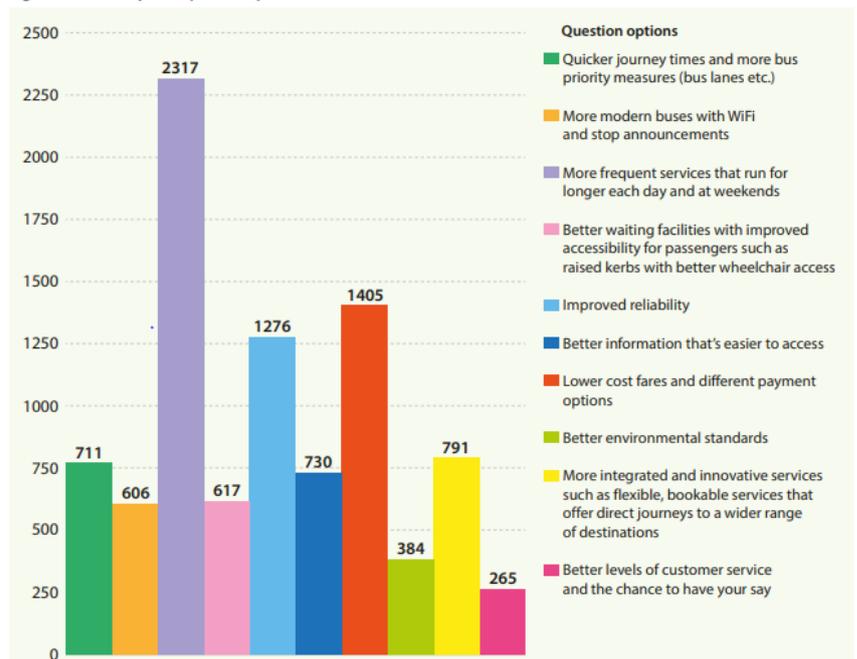
The following extract from Kent’s BSIP demonstrates the results from the public consultation undertaken for initial BSIP preparation.

They were asked to choose their top three from the following:

- More modern buses with Wi-Fi and stop announcements
- More frequent services that run for longer each day and at weekends
- Better information that's easier to access
- Better environmental standards
- More integrated and innovative services such as flexible, bookable services that offer direct journeys to a wider range of destinations
- Better levels of customer service and the chance to have your say.

Almost 3,500 responses have been received and these are summarised opposite.

Figure 6. Summary of response to public consultation



Data

In order to support the understanding of trends across the network KCC engaged with operators to obtain data relating to range of measurables including; patronage, revenue, mode share, running times and reliability.

With the requirement to deliver the NBS at a fast pace, KCC utilised a variety of datasets already available through our current activity. This was complemented by further research and data from operators, requested during development of the EPs. Moving forward, we are looking to improve our planning resources and tools to support delivery of our EPs.

Data collected from operators pre-Covid demonstrated that buses were operating at 77.7% on time across the network. Such performance highlights the challenge of building a reliable schedule, indicating high variability in traffic congestion in Kent. Statistics collected from operators in June 2021 presented an average of 85% service on time.

OTP results presented earlier clearly highlight the challenges faced by operators when trying to set a workable and reliable timetable. While some counties achieved well over 90% bus on time and the England outside London average reached 83.5% in 2019, Kent's estimated OTP figure was 77.7% on time in November 2019. The main causes of variability include variable volumes of traffic, roadworks, and the impact of the M25.

More detail obtained through ABOD shows the peak hours are even more affected, while performance in off-peak and weekends are better overall.

The analysis of existing schedules demonstrates that the planned commercial speed of services is around 24.7km/h on average in the morning peak for most service types, except for P&R and urban services which reach around 19km/h for the same period.

In some areas the bus network in Kent is significantly affected by traffic congestion. This is visible through our journey time analysis. An analysis of main congestion points extracted from the Kent traffic model clearly highlights locations around the M25 in Dartford, Canterbury, Dover, and Tunbridge Wells as being particularly affected. Not surprisingly, these locations almost all coincide with the key bus travel corridors identified in Kent.

Mode share

The KCC traffic and public transport model has estimated a theoretical pre-Covid public transport mode share (bus + rail) for Kent and Medway of around 9.2% between 7am and 7pm.

Dover, Folkstone & Hythe, Maidstone, and Ashford districts present the lowest public transport mode share (below 8%), although it should be noted that figures in Dover and Folkestone & Hythe may be impacted by cross-channel traffic.

Our journey time analysis concentrated on low network coverage for these districts and also highlighted pockets of deprived population which reinforce these results.

6. PLAN OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

The overall imperative for KCC and Kent's Bus Operators is to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, sustaining current service levels and offerings and then to aspire to drive genuine improvement across all areas of bus service provision in Kent.

To inform the formation of Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan, in conjunction with Kent's Bus Operators and other stakeholders we developed and agreed **11 Key Principles** to act as the focus for the plan.

Key Principles

Regulation

- 1** Form Enhanced Partnership Agreements covering all public buses in Kent, setting ambitious targets with respect to punctuality, journey times, vehicle quality and accessibility.

Customer

- 2** Put the customer at the heart of everything we do through developing a passenger charter agreed through EPs and by developing the Bus Services Feedback portal.

Network developments

- 3 Seek to secure all available funding and prioritise its use to 1) recover from the pandemic and stabilise the current network, and 2) further develop and enhance Kent's public transport through a range of initiatives.
- 4 Undertake a countywide and then localised network analysis to help inform the use of existing and new funding, with a view to providing service enhancements for rural communities where levels are currently lacking.
- 5 Continue to support the development of the community transport sector in Kent to supplement the core bus network.

Innovation and digital accessibility

- 6 Consider and embrace innovative transport solutions such as DRT and MaaS models as possible alternatives to the private car and make use of BRT where appropriate.

Fares and ticketing

- 7 Provide flexible and better value ticketing options and use technology to provide cashless and ticketless solutions on all operators' services.

Public transport information

- 8 Improve the quality and accessibility of public transport information, including the provision of a one-stop-shop for live bus times and fares information and making greater use of technology e.g., for voice announcements.

Accessibility

- 9 Strive to improve the levels of physical and digital accessibility both on buses and through infrastructure to ensure a fully accessible network for disabled passengers.

Environment and air quality

- 10 Promote the role of buses in solving air quality issues and work with operators and other stakeholders to improve emissions standards. This would include using funding to support the move from diesel to emission-free vehicles.

Infrastructure, network management and new developments

- 11 Put buses at the centre of decision making in respect of new road schemes, planning and developments, and support bus operators and services in KCC's role as the highway authority.

Initiatives

To support the achievement of these Key Principles and using feedback received through Public Consultation and our Stakeholder workshops, we then identified our range of **Initiatives**. In our initial EP scheme documents we have included facilities, measures and obligations which can be delivered with no funding from the NBS

process. The Bespoke variation method outlined within the EP Scheme will be utilised to add further initiatives included below should funding permit.

Reference	Network Development	Requires NBS Funding?
NDI 1	KCC will secure all available funding and prioritise its use to support services, alongside BSOG, that have become unsustainable at reduced passenger levels until such time as other NBS initiatives drive growth.	YES
NDI 2	KCC and Kent's bus operators will deliver a range of Year 1 service initiatives based on feedback gathered through engagement activity with operators, stakeholders and the general public. Initiatives will be prioritised based on evaluation criteria which takes into account factors such as network gap analysis (e.g. accessibility to town centres), sustainability, value for money and deliverability.	YES
NDI 3	KCC and Kent's bus operators will deliver a range of Year 2 and 3 service initiatives which address areas with poorer accessibility levels identified through our Network Gap Analysis. In these areas more detailed analysis will be undertaken which will consider changes to the commercial and subsidised bus network, taking account of over and underserved corridors, the use of DRT and other alternative solutions and the Total Transport Concept, including the relationship with other layers of transport provision such as home to school and patient transport services.	YES
NDI 4	KCC and Kent's bus operators will seek to increase the proportion of the population within the 15, 30 and 45-minute catchment of the closest defined town centre for their district by improving corridor performance, service levels, speed and integration, including during off-peak hours.	
NDI 5	KCC will review its criteria for the support of council-funded socially necessary bus services to ensure it continues to reflect the travel needs of the community and is in line with the changing requirements of the NBS.	
NDI 6	KCC and Kent's district councils will produce a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to ensure that improvements to bus services are fully considered and delivered with consideration of new planning developments.	
Reference	Alternative Delivery Models	Requires NBS Funding?
ADMI 1	KCC will continue to develop Fastrack Kent Thameside to delivery of full network, roll out the service to Dover and give consideration to the future relationship between Fastrack Kent Thameside and Crossrail.	
ADMI 2	KCC will establish a policy to ensure opportunities for BRT are explored, including the creation of a housing development triggerpoint for larger scale developments.	
ADMI 3	KCC will continue to support the community transport sector. We will continue to refine our toolkit to support the sector's growth, and continue to run grant schemes that fund the delivery of new community transport services.	YES
ADMI 4	KCC and Kent's bus operators will consider areas where a Superbus approach to network development could be implemented to deliver improvements in infrastructure, fares, reliability and journey times and achieve a 'premium' service standard.	YES
ADMI 5	KCC and Kent's bus operators will consider the role that DRT, feeder services and other alternative modes can play in solving rural connectivity issues.	YES

Reference	Fares and Ticketing	Requires NBS Funding?
FTI 1	KCC and Kent's bus operators will introduce a multi-operator ticket covering the Kent network and through this will seek to introduce a simpler, more attractive and flexible ticketing offer.	YES
FTI 2	KCC and Kent's bus operators will look to identify and deliver specific fares and ticketing schemes, with a particular focus on initiatives which support recovery from the pandemic and access to tourism, employment opportunities and the support of Kent businesses.	YES
FTI 3	KCC will support Kent's bus operators to develop their ETM and related back-office capabilities to enable the introduction of innovative and user-friendly ticketing offers including full network acceptance of contactless payments and fare capping.	YES
FTI 4	KCC will consider the fares, ticketing and backoffice requirements required to enable the introduction of ticketing solutions covering bus, rail and other modes to support the MaaS concept of service delivery.	
FTI 5	Through our EP Schemes, KCC and Kent's bus operators will seek to support the acceptance of multi-operator tickets on common sections of route.	
FTI 6	KCC will seek to continue to support home to school travel through initiatives such as the Kent Travel Saver, which make journeys more attractive and cost effective for the user.	YES

Reference	Infrastructure and Priority	Requires NBS Funding?
IPI 1	KCC will ensure that there is continuous focus on the quality of marked bus stops across Kent. KCC will look to provide high quality boarding and alighting points for passengers as far as possible and continue to drive forward improvements in accessibility and appearance across Kent's bus stop assets.	YES
IPI 2	Working with borough, district and parish councils, KCC will seek to deliver improvements in the provision and maintenance of bus shelters across the county, placing particular emphasis on using advances in technology to incorporate environmental benefits.	YES
IPI 3	Through working with borough and district councils, KCC will seek to ensure that as Kent's bus network develops it provides appropriate operator facilities such as bus stands and driver amenities.	YES
IPI 4	With a focus on integration, KCC will create a hierarchy for bus stops in Kent to identify key locations that have high levels of connectivity, either with other bus services or other transport modes. We will seek to deliver improvements beyond the 'standard' offer at these locations, with bike parking facilities, higher levels of passenger information, etc.	YES
IPI 5	KCC will use advances in technology to ensure Kent's bus stops are modern, safe and of a high standard of appearance, to enhance the user experience.	YES
IPI 6	KCC will look to evaluate the merits and feasibility of two bus priority schemes per year in each EP Scheme. These will take account of bus congestion modelling identifying pinch points that affect bus journey times, and consider local context and sensitivity, as well as potential network and passenger gain.	YES
IPI 7	KCC will support infrastructure and highway schemes to support the development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects in Kent.	YES

Reference	Environment and Air Quality	Requires NBS Funding?
EAQI 1	KCC and Kent's bus operators will explore all opportunities to secure funding to improve emission standards on buses operating across Kent, with a particular focus on moving parts of the network towards zero emissions.	YES
EAQI 2	KCC will form an air quality corridor hierarchy taking account of Kent Air Quality Management Areas, and use this as the basis on which to prioritise future funding for zero emission corridors.	YES
EAQI 3	KCC will use the EP process to establish minimum standards for emissions on buses operating in Kent, seeking to introduce a targeted approach to improve standards over the term of the EP Schemes.	
EAQI 4	KCC and Kent's bus operators will actively promote the environmental benefits of the bus through better promotion of the network and the comparable impact of bus use against other modes of transport.	

Reference	Innovation and Digital Accessibility	Requires NBS Funding?
IDA 1	KCC will support operators financially to help them secure enhanced ETMs, associated backoffice function and TransXChange and Real Time Information capability. This will support a range of initiatives in respect of Real Time Information, ticketing and reliability.	
IDA1 2	KCC will embrace the use of modern technologies and software to support a dataled approach to network planning.	YES
IDA1 3	KCC will deliver a MaaS pilot scheme in the North West Kent EP Scheme areas. We will look to expand the use of this platform to other parts of the county subject to the pilot providing a multi modal approach to service delivery.	YES
IDA1 4	KCC will seek to embed the use of new innovation and technology to improve bus passenger experience, e.g. next stop announcement technology, the development of a passenger occupancy tool, audio announcements at bus stops and capital grants for supporting the introduction of RTI displays at strategic bus stop locations.	YES
Reference	Public Transport Information	Requires NBS Funding?
PTII 1	KCC will develop the Kent Connected journey planner in order to provide enhanced journey and route planning functionality.	
PTII 2	KCC will provide a one-stop-shop for Kent public transport information including an interactive bus map with pop up timetables, access to e-ticketing, links to bus operator websites, pop up timetables, ticketing and fares information available via web and app platforms.	YES
PTII 3	KCC will develop the use of bus stop QR codes to provide instant access to operators' websites, fares, timetables, RTI, journey planner and other facilities such as links to other websites, tickets and events.	YES
PTII 4	KCC and Kent's bus operators will establish an agreed minimum standard of information to be displayed at all marked bus stops.	YES
PTII 5	KCC and Kent's bus operators will proactively promote the bus network and the role of buses in supporting strategic priorities and other activity such as tourism, environmental benefits, road safety etc. We will work with key partners to ensure public transport is publicised with events.	YES
PTII 6	KCC and Kent's bus operators will look to agree a common identity and approach to the design of publicity relating to all bus services around the county.	YES
Reference	Highways & Network Management	Requires NBS Funding?
HNMI 1	KCC will ensure that new/upgraded road schemes delivered by the authority fully consider the requirements of buses with respect to access and design. In line with the NBS, KCC will also ensure that new/upgraded road schemes fully consider bus improvements or bus priority. If this is not possible, schemes will clearly detail why this is the case. KCC will strongly encourage its partners to follow similar principles for schemes not delivered by the LTA.	
HNMI 2	As part of its network management duty, KCC will actively consider how the punctuality and reliability of buses can be improved through the management of the network in terms of traffic signalling, junction changes, traffic flow control etc. The Kent County model will be used to identify congestion hotspots as part of this process to target where change is required.	YES
HNMI 3	KCC will re-purpose and re-launch its Punctuality Improvement Partnerships (PIPS) to ensure that they have the biggest impact on reliability/punctuality on the ground. KCC will work with bus operators to agree an appropriate format for the groups and closely link outputs to Enhanced Partnership targets.	
HNMI 4	Working with district partners KCC will actively consider the management of parking issues which cause bus routes to be blocked including a) illegitimate parking on existing restrictions and b) potential new restrictions to ease service flow.	
HNMI 5	KCC will establish a roadworks review taskforce (held quarterly), including representatives from KCC Highways, bus operators, utility companies, Highways England and any other key stakeholders. The meetings will focus on the link between works on the highway and bus service operation and will enable discussion at a strategic level, with key outputs subsequently picked up by PIPs for delivery.	
HNMI 6	KCC will continue to support the position of a Soft Landscapes Technical Support Officer for bus routes, to ensure that vegetation issues effecting bus passage are expedited as far as possible. A review will be undertaken on how emergency requests are dealt with.	

Reference	Highways & Network Management	Requires NBS Funding?
HNMI 7	KCC will continue to consider the most appropriate means of enforcing bus gates and bus lanes through liaison with district councils. The potential for KCC to manage a central common back office will be explored as part of this process.	YES
HNMI 8	To support the initiatives in this section, KCC is seeking to use NBS funding to secure dedicated staff resource and software to support highways issues. Posts are likely to include a Major Projects Highway Engineer focused on bus priority schemes and other more major bus projects, a Highway Engineer focused on smaller, more localised interventions to support bus reliability and access, and a Parking/ Roadworks Co-ordination Officer picking up enforcement issues through liaison with district councils and roadworks issues emerging from roadworks review meetings (see HNMI5).	YES
HNMI 9	KCC will work with district councils to undertake a countywide review of parking policy and its relationship with bus usage.	YES

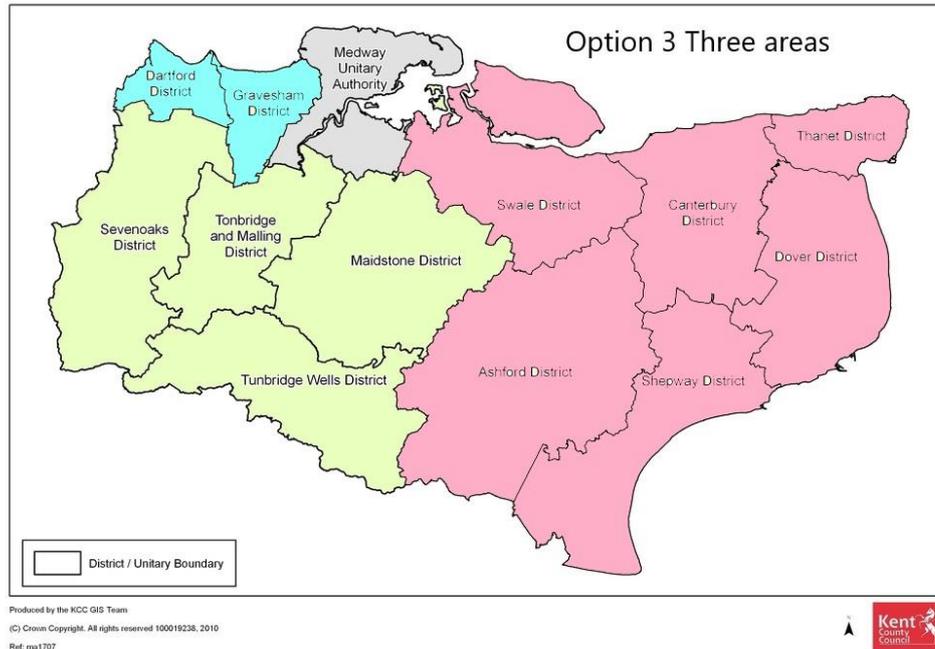
7. DELIVERY

As well as any additional funding that might be forthcoming, the EP plan represents a positive framework for supporting network recovery. Although it is not fundamentally changing the deregulated and commercial nature of the bus network, KCC is intent on forming Enhanced Partnership schemes that promote close working relationships with operators and stakeholders and permit more direct influence on standards and outcomes.

These are formal partnerships targeted at improving bus services. Although they are published by the local transport authority, they are close partnerships between bus operators and the local authorities. Other parties will play a part, including district councils, passenger groups and businesses, and there will be consultation, including obtaining public views, on what needs to be improved and what the priorities should be.

We have formed one **Enhanced Partnership Plan** for Kent (this plan), covering all of the county which took effect from April 2022. This sets out a strategic view on how the partners will improve bus services in Kent and takes most of its content from Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan. It will be updated every 5 years.

Sitting beneath our Kent Plan are three **Enhanced Partnership Schemes** as shown in the map below:



The three areas are:

1. **East Kent** covering Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Swale, and Thanet
2. **West Kent** covering Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells Districts.
3. **Kent Thameside** consisting of the Dartford and Gravesham Districts

These schemes provide a more tailored approach for each of these smaller areas setting out more detail of the plans for improvements to be made and taking on board local views. They set out intentions for the following few years and will be updated from time to time as the degree of success of the early schemes become clear and the demand for bus services changes.

Current Quality Bus Partnerships

In many areas of Kent, voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) between the county and district and borough councils and the local bus operators have been in place for a number of years. The Enhanced Partnership schemes will build on and, in most cases, carry forward the positive work achieved by these arrangements. The governance proposals are designed to ensure that groups are in place to reflect the legal requirements of the EP (e.g., overall EP Board, EP Scheme Monitoring Groups etc) but that these are complemented by more localised groups reflecting QBPs.

Improved bus services

The agreements with the bus operators will be aimed at bouncing back from the pandemic period, during which far fewer people used buses in Kent. The EP will be

used to go for growth by increasing the bus share of the transport market and to position the bus as a green form of transport.

A summary of our proposed measures is below. Our ability to introduce a number of these will depend on the availability of funding. The highlights are:

- Increased bus services including during the evenings and to out of town employment sites.
- Lower fares, including more flexible seasons and better tickets where you need to use more than one operator.
- More use of smartcards and mobile phone tickets to make purchases even easier, with rail tickets and even car hire available on the same app.
- Better integration with other transport modes.
- Innovative ways of retaining rural transport links, such as demand responsive services.
- An expanded Fastrack, frequent and high-quality services and consideration of a 'Superbus' network.
- Modern and comfortable buses and a move to zero-carbon vehicles.
- Traffic management measures to speed up buses on the key radial routes.
- Improvements to bus stops and the information shown at them.
- Comprehensive bus and train information on a one-stop site.
- Introduction of a bus passenger charter, with redress when things go wrong.

Cross-boundary services

The extent of cross-boundary working with Kent's neighbouring authorities has been considered, particularly in terms of a potential joint EP Plan. The key neighbour is Medway, which is surrounded on three sides by Kent. As Medway has different priorities and urban geography to Kent, it is not proposed to undertake a joint plan. However, both authorities are working closely to minimise any cross-boundary issues that might arise and are looking at developing joint initiatives where suitable.

We will also liaise closely with East Sussex and Surrey councils and with Transport for London to ensure that cross boundary routes can continue to operate effectively.

Governance

The Enhanced Partnership Plan and schemes will be supported by a governance structure. This will cover:

- An executive board supplying strategic overview and carrying out the key decision-making process, including formal reviews of the contents of the schemes.
- Monitoring groups in each of the three scheme areas and reviewing progress of the local initiatives.
- Network and bus punctuality improvement partnerships, concentrating on road network improvements and management.

- Passenger charter groups in each scheme area monitoring progress of the charters and feeding back customer views.
- Local focus groups in each district and borough, feeding the district views into the process and addressing issues previously covered by Quality Bus Partnerships.

Passenger charter

The EP will include a passenger charter developed initially by the targeted charter groups in each EP scheme area. These will set out the service that passengers can expect, the commitments made by both local authorities and bus operators and how any passenger issues will be addressed. Performance of services against the charter criteria will be monitored and complaints analysed to inform further actions in the EP Schemes.

8. ENGAGEMENT AND FUTURE REVIEW

This first version of the Kent Enhanced Partnership Plan is intended to cover a 5-year period from April 2022 until end of March 2027. The EP Board may propose variations to the Plan outside of the formal review dates, which if agreed will be subject to the statutory consultation process. Statutory consultees will be invited to sit on Kent's Enhanced Partnership scheme monitoring groups and as such have the opportunity to input into the success of the plan and inform any requirements for review or amendment.

In keeping with Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Kent EP Plan remains aspirational but will be updated to reflect the availability of funding during this initial five-year period. The process to review the EP Plan would commence at the start of the final year of the initial period (from April 2026) leading to adoption of a new plan and associated schemes from April 2027. Review of the Plan would be conducted using the established meeting and governance structure through EP Schemes Monitoring Groups making recommendations to the EP Board for approval. Targets will be reviewed through EP Schemes.

Changes to operational and financial circumstances will be reflected in updated versions of the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan which will be subject to six monthly review and through the obligations and commitments made within our EP schemes which will be subject to a controlled but simple and responsive mechanism for variation.

PART 2 – EP SCHEME

THE KENT THAMESIDE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Section 1 – EP Scheme Content

1.1 - This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an EP Scheme. In accordance with statutory requirements in section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, the EP Scheme document sets out:

Section 2 - Scope of the EP Scheme and commencement date

Section 3 - Obligations on the Local Authorities

Section 4 - Obligations on Bus Operators

Section 5 - Governance Arrangements

1.2 -The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated EP Plan has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the associated EP Plan.

1.3 - The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by Kent County Council (KCC), and those bus operators that provide local bus services in this EP Scheme area. It sets out commitments on both Local Authorities and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of working towards the objectives of the associated EP Plan. The Lower Tier Authorities of Dartford Borough Council and Gravesham Borough Council were engaged in the development of Kent's BSIP, the principles of which form the basis of the EP Plan. As per DfT requirements Kent has produced a 2024 BSIP which updates on the position since 2021. The EP Scheme and Plan will be updated to reflect the revised BSIP in due course.

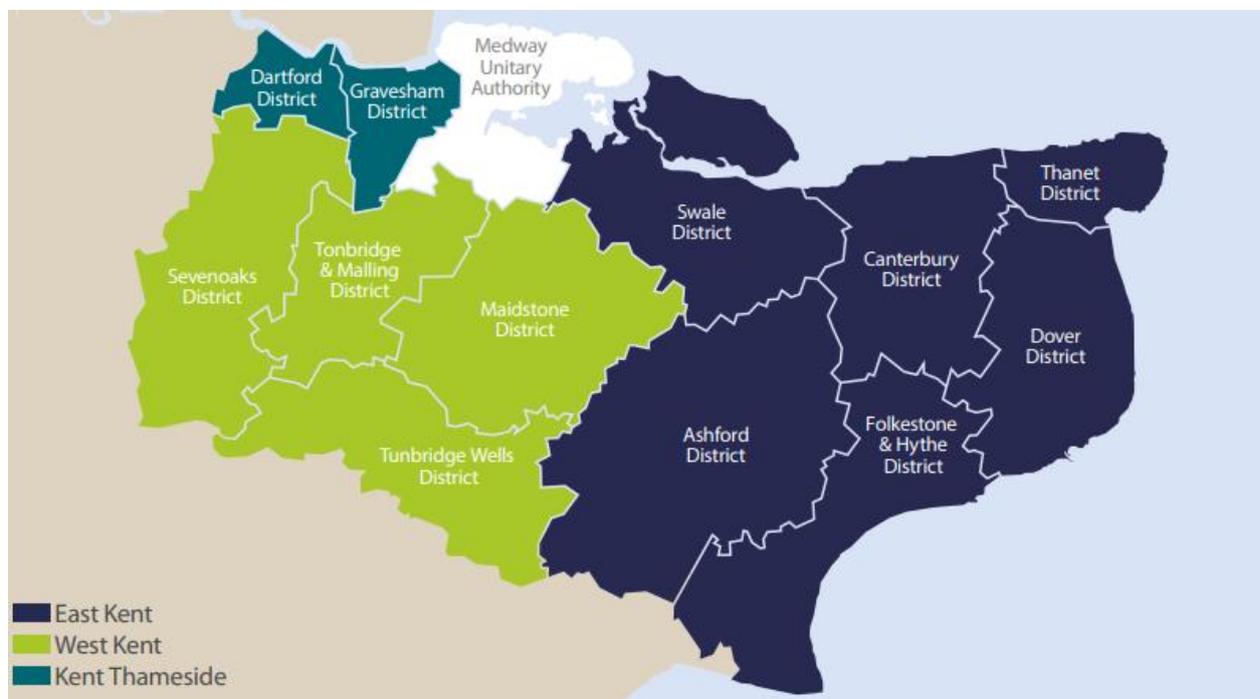
Section 2 - Scope of the EP Scheme and Commencement Date

Description of Geographical Coverage

2.1 - This EP Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating in the following areas:

Dartford and Gravesham

2.2 - Map of EP Plan and EP Scheme Areas



2.3 - Kent's EP Plan covers the whole of the area shown in the map (asides from Medway Unitary Authority which has formed its own EP).

2.4 – This Kent Thameside EP Scheme covers the Boroughs / Districts shown in light blue Two further schemes cover the East Kent and West Kent areas.

Commencement Date

2.5 - The EP Plan and EP Scheme were initially made on 1st April 2022. The Plan will have no end date but will be reviewed every five years from the commencement date. The EP Board may propose variations to the Plan outside of the formal review dates, which if agreed will be subject to the statutory consultation process.

2.6 - The EP Scheme will have no specific end date but will be formally reviewed by the EP Board on an annual basis. Variations may be made to the EP Scheme outside of this formal review date as set out in section 5. This Scheme variation takes effect from 8th July 2024.

Exempted Services

- 2.7 - The following services are exempt from the requirements of the EP Scheme:
- Long distance or commuter services terminating in London.

- A service which is registered as a local service under section 6 of the Transport Act 1985 but which would otherwise be an excursion or tour within the meaning in section 137(1) of that Act is exempt.
- A service provided by operators using S19 or S22 permits.
- Services operated by Transport for London (TfL)
- A service aimed primarily at the tourist or special event market utilising specialised vehicles – KCC will hold ultimate jurisdiction over which further services fall under this clause.

Section 3 - Obligations on the Authorities

3.1 - The following matrix sets out the specific interventions that authorities are required to deliver by subject area as part of the EP Scheme.

3.2 - All of the below obligations can be amended using the EP Scheme bespoke arrangements for varying or revoking the EP scheme as set out in Section 5.

3.3 - New obligations that relate to the principles and initiatives contained within the EP Plan are also subject to the bespoke arrangements for varying the EP scheme as set out in Section 5.

3.4 – KCC will seek to enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with its Borough / District Councils in order to gain support against the measures and facilities identified under “supporting authorities” in the matrix below.

Key: Kent County Council (KCC), Dartford Borough Council (DBC), Gravesham Borough Council (GBC)

In the 2024/25 financial year KCC allocates the following budgets to the bus network in Kent:

Area of Spend	24/25
Supported Bus and Kent Karrier	£5.910m
ENCTS Concessions <i>*Budget dictated by demand and reimbursement</i>	£15.47m (inc. £2.5m anticipated impact of DfT calculator)
Kent Travel Saver <i>*Payment to operators</i>	£15.02m
Bus stop infrastructure and timetable maintenance contract	£100k
Fastrack Infrastructure	£250k
Bus service policy and community transport support	£329k

With the exception of ENCTS and KTS concessionary schemes, which operate according to passenger numbers travelling, KCC will maintain these levels of funding through to at least March 2025.

In addition, £9.525 million of indicative Zebra funding is being utilised for the upgrade of the Dover and Kent Thameside Fastrack services to electric buses. KCC has also secured a grant of £2.265m from National Highways to further support the MaaS scheme.

The above figure includes the delivery of a range of areas including bus policy, bus service planning, concessionary fares schemes, bus stop infrastructure, community transport, bus information, existing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), data provision and innovation projects (e.g., MaaS).

The current substantive staff resource working on local bus issues is 25.4 Full Time Employees (FTEs)

This figure includes additional staff working on bus issues since 2021 due to availability of BSIP funding. In addition to this, three consultants are utilised by KCC to support on the BSIP.

Targets - These have been updated from the BSIP dated October 2021 and are tabled in Annex B.

LTA1 NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
LTA1.1 Complete Local Transport Fund (LTF) Review to rebase network-based passenger numbers post Covid.	KCC		M	Complete

LTA1.2 KCC utilised 2023/24 BSIP funding to procure a bus network analysis and planning tool for usage by officers. This is now in place. KCC will continue to use the tool to consider future possible route developments and to respond to further DfT requirements such as bus connectivity assessments. BSIP Initiative – Progress Update July 2024 KCC has utilised BSIP funding for 2023/24 to secure the network planning tool. A contract is in place with Podaris for this work. The tool is being utilised to support work on the Bus Connectivity Assessment. Next Milestone – None, Initiative complete.	KCC		M	Ongoing
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<p>LTA1.3 KCC used 2023/24 BSIP funding to secure 49 school bus services which would otherwise have faced withdrawal by operators. KCC will continue to support these services using 2024/25 BSIP funding.</p> <p>Details of services are shown in Annex C.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update July 2024 As agreed with the DfT, due to pressures continuing to affect the bus industry in Kent, KCC has utilised the network element of its 2023/24 BSIP funding to sustain services which were otherwise at risk of withdrawal from commercial operators. All funding has been utilised and will keep services sustained until March 2025. Next Milestone – None, initiative complete.</p>	KCC		M	Until March 2025
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<p>LTA 1.4 KCC will ensure that appropriate bus service provision is actively considered as part of new planning applications, including housing schemes</p>	KCC	DBC/GBC	M	Ongoing
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<p>LTA1.5 KCC will maintain bus funding levels as identified in section 3 until at least March 2025 – i.e. coverage period of BSIP. In respect of concessionary travel schemes (KTS and ENCTS) these commitments will be based on usage and therefore reimbursement to bus operators will vary.</p>	KCC		M	Until March 2025.
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LTA2 SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER CARE

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
<p>LTA2.1 In conjunction with operators and passenger charter groups, develop and implement a single Kent passenger charter to cover all services within the EP and to ensure high operating and customer service standards.</p>	KCC		M	By March 2025

<p>LTA2.2 The partnership will put passenger safety at the forefront of thinking with respect to operational / service management and infrastructure, including bus stop environments and the planned bus priority schemes.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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LTA3 FARES AND TICKETING

<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Local Transport Authority</p>	<p>Supporting Authorities</p>	<p>Facility (F) or Measure (M)</p>	<p>Delivery Date</p>
<p>LTA3.1</p> <p>2023/24 BSIP funding was utilised to deliver a range of positive fares promotions including a price freeze to the Kent Travel Saver for 23/24. Detail of these schemes is included in Annex C.</p> <p>KCC will utilise 24/25 BSIP funding to deliver a pricing discount on the Kent Travel Saver Scheme for 24/25, to deliver a promotional campaign for bus and should funding allow further fares initiatives. Details on these initiatives will be added to Annex C once known.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 BSIP funding for 2023/24 has been fully utilised to run the promotions detailed above which are now all complete. 2024/25 BSIP funding will be utilised to deliver a further price freeze in 2024/25. Next Milestone: None for 2023/24 – programme complete. 2024/25: Offer of KTS pass in summer 2024 at reduced cost supported by BSIP.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>March 2025</p>

<p>LTA3.2 KCC will assist SME bus operators to meet the required standards of ticketing equipment in their ETMs and back-office systems to enable the introduction of innovative multi-operator ticketing schemes, including a fully contactless fleet and fare capping.</p> <p>Annex C will show the minimum requirement for the standards of equipment that will be used, once all ETM grants have been awarded. This is to ensure alignment with the DfT’s Project Coral.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 KCC has offered grants to all SME operators who would be entitled under the scheme. Operators are</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>By March 2025</p>
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currently procuring updated machines to align with the grant offer. Once all grants have been paid, the revised standard will be added to the Annex C. Next Milestone – Deadline for operator invoices – 30 th August 2024.				
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<p>LTA3.3 2023/24 BSIP funding was utilised to deliver a trial multi-operator ticketing scheme in Swale in 2023.</p> <p>Working closely with DfT with respect to Project Coral, KCC will use 24/25 BSIP funding to explore and broker further schemes to ensure passenger choice and ease of use of bus services across the county.</p> <p>Annex C sets out detail on the 2023/24 funded Swale scheme. Detail on 2024/25 schemes will be added once known.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 The Swale multi operator ticketing trial was completed in summer 2023. Operators involved covered the marketing costs of the scheme and worked collaboratively to offer the product. BSIP funding was utilised to offer a promotion on ticket prices. Next Milestone – None for 2023/24 - programme complete. 2024/25 – Summer 2024 – Meeting with DfT to ensure 2024/25 schemes align with Project Coral.</p>	KCC		M	March 2025
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<p>LTA3.4</p> <p>KCC will establish a MaaS scheme in Kent Thameside to include bus and rail ticketing and wider multi-modal products. This will coincide with the upgraded Fastrack service.</p> <p>Once this scheme has been procured, details will be added to Annex C.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 In February 2024, a Key Decision was taken at KCC to progress with the MaaS project. Subsequently, a procurement exercise was conducted during late Spring 2024 with a view to initial project mobilisation by September 2024. Next Milestone – Analysis of bids received following procurement process – Late June / Early July 2024.</p>	KCC		M	By September 2024
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LTA4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRIORITY

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
<p>LTA4.1 KCC will introduce new bus stops and upgrade existing bus stops (including poles, flags, timetable cases, raised/ dropped kerbing, clearways) to support the network and passenger / operator requests as funding permits.</p>	KCC		F	Ongoing.
<p>LTA4.2 When conducting civils work at bus stops, take the opportunity to bring them up to latest standards with respect to accessibility where practically possible.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	F	Ongoing.
<p>LTA4.3 KCC will work with Borough / District Councils to establish whether revised shelter contracts could be introduced across EP areas to improve standards and consistency of offering.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing
<p>LTA4.4 KCC will offer the annual Rural Shelter Grant to support the delivery of improved shelters in more rural areas as funding permits.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
<p>LTA4.5 Through District/Borough Focus Groups, KCC will work to identify and deliver bus standing and driver facilities to support network growth and service reliability.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	F	Ongoing.
<p>LTA4.6 In 23/24 KCC produced a bus stop hierarchy to categorise Kent's bus stops to enable prioritisation and investment. This will be utilised to deliver RTI screens at key stops utilising 23/24 and 24/25 BSIP funding.</p> <p>Existing RTI screens are outlined in Annex C and further sites produced by the hierarchy work will be added once finalised.</p>	KCC		M	March 2025

<p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 KCC has completed the formation of a bus stop hierarchy. A procurement exercise was run in late 2023 to establish a contractor for the delivery of new RTI screens. Mobilisation of the contract is ongoing. Next Milestone – Agreement of final list of locations – End of July 2024.</p>				
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<p>LTA4.7 KCC will press (where appropriate based on modelling) for the inclusion of bus priority measures as part of new developments or funded highway schemes</p>	<p>KCC</p>	<p>DBC GBC</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
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<p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024</p> <p>Rennie Drive – Full design work was completed in autumn 2023. A Key Decision for the progression of the scheme was taken in December 2023. Works began on site in March 2024. Next Milestone – Works completion July 2024.</p> <p>Pencester Road – Full design completed in Autumn 2023. A Key Decision to proceed to consultation and for the Cabinet Member to take a final decision on the scheme subject to a consultation was taken in December 2023. Consultation completed in early 2024. Final decision to proceed with scheme taken in May 2024. Next Milestone – Start of construction – August 2024</p> <p>Superbus Scheme – Full design work for phase 1 of scheme completed in autumn 2023. Consultation on TROs held in early 2024. Decision to proceed with scheme taken in April 2024. Scheme construction and reciprocal operators benefits began in June 2024. Next Milestone – Final Design and Consultation for phase 2 of scheme – August 2024.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>By March 2025</p>
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<p>LTA4.9 Utilising 24/25 BSIP funding, KCC will trial new technological solutions at bus stops e.g. solar lighting, to react to BSIP priorities.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>F</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
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<p>LTA4.10 KCC will deliver already programmed infrastructure relating to the Kent Thameside Fastrack BRT scheme - i.e. Bath Street</p>	<p>KCC</p>	<p>DBC GBC</p>	<p>F</p>	<p>March 2025</p>
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LTA5 HIGHWAYS AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
<p>LTA5.1 Through KCC's new technical approvals process and the Kent Design Guide ensure that new and upgraded highway schemes fully consider buses with respect to access and design.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
<p>LTA5.2 For any new / upgraded highway schemes under KCC's control consider potential bus service improvements which would enhance reliability, service levels and accessibility and incorporate as funding permits. Ensure that these principles are encouraged (or enforced where applicable) for other non KCC schemes / developments.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
<p>LTA5.3 KCC will continue to deliver highways interventions to aid bus punctuality after suggestions from PIPs and local transport focus groups. This commitment will continue into 24/25 using BSIP Tranche 2 funding. Further details of highways interventions will be added to Annex C.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 Following the relaunch of Kent's PIPs, a survey was held to establish ideas from operators in April 2023. The list of suggestions has been extensively reviewed to establish what schemes are physically possible. Schemes continue to progress. A status of each scheme is indicated in annex C. Next Milestone – Summer 2024 PIP meetings to liaise with operators on scheme status.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	F	Ongoing
<p>LTA5.4 KCC will review, relaunch and lead new Punctuality Improvement Partnerships (PIPs)</p>	KCC		M	Complete

<p>LTA5.5 Through PIPs and local focus groups, KCC will identify parking issues affecting buses and work with districts/boroughs to introduce new restrictions and/ or enforce existing restrictions as funding & resource permits.</p>	<p>KCC</p>	<p>DBC GBC</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
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<p>LTA5.6 KCC will establish a roadworks taskforce – seeking to refine notification / communication processes. To support this work, KCC will secure and provide access for operators and other stakeholders to a roadworks planning tool.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>By September 2024</p>
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<p>LTA5.7 KCC will continue to support buses with respect to soft landscaping issues.</p>	<p>KCC</p>		<p>M</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
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<p>LTA5.8 KCC will use the new TMA Part 6 powers to enforce bus gate and bus lane ANPR enforcement. BSIP Funding will deliver capital equipment costs at sites requiring enforcement, delivering solutions as funding permits. Through these powers, KCC will deliver the back-office system and the resources to undertake this activity.</p> <p>Current and planned sites are outlined in Annex C.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 A procurement exercise took place across 2023 for the establishment of a partner to run the back-office system to support ANPR enforcement. Whilst this occurred detailed analysis was conducted on sites suggested for ANPR deployment by operators at PIPs. The back-office contract is now in place and a number of sites are ready to progress once some final details of this are finalised. Next Milestone – Agreement with DVLA on data release. July 2024. Begin roll out of sites September 2024.</p>	<p>KCC</p>	<p>DBC GBC</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>By March 2025</p>
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LTA6 ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
<p>LTA6.1 KCC will continue to develop the Fastrack services in Kent Thameside</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
<p>LTA6.2 KCC will convert bus priority schemes offering sufficient passenger benefits to Superbus standards including fare offers and comprehensive marketing. There are no planned schemes in Kent Thameside at this stage.</p> <p>Any schemes will be detailed in Annex C once finalised.</p>	KCC		M	First scheme to commence by June 2024
<p>LTA6.3 KCC will establish a policy to ensure further opportunities for BRT and Superbus schemes are explored, including the creation of a housing development trigger point for larger scale developments.</p>	KCC		M	September 2024
<p>LTA6.4 KCC will ensure that park & ride, coach services, community transport services and DRT schemes are integrated with the conventional bus network, including in marketing and ticketing schemes.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
<p>LTA6.5 KCC ran its Community Transport Grant (CTG) in the 23/24 financial year, partially using 2023/24 BSIP funding to provide one off capital grants to local community groups to introduce new or develop existing community transport schemes within their area. Future CTGs will be subject to the availability of funding.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 KCC run its Community Transport Grant in late 2023 / early 2024. This has resulted in the award of £510k worth of grants made up of BSIP funding and KCC funding. All grants have been paid and</p>	KCC		M	Complete

local organisations are now rolling out their schemes. Next Milestone – None, initiative complete.				
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LTA7 ENVIRONMENT AND AIR QUALITY

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
LTA7.1 KCC will utilise DfT Zebra funding to deliver zero emission buses and charging infrastructure on the Kent Fastrack projects.	KCC	DBC GBC	M	By March 2025

LTA7.2 KCC will pursue any future funding opportunities to improve Kent's vehicle emission standards.	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
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LTA7.3 Where funding permits, KCC will deliver publicity campaigns to promote the role of the bus in meeting environmental challenges.	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
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LTA7.4 KCC will form an AQMA hierarchy in order to help to prioritise any future funding submissions linked to zero emission buses.	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Complete
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LTA7.5 As future funding permits, KCC will set minimum emission standards for operation within EP scheme areas and negotiate with operators an appropriate programme for improving these standards.	KCC		M	Ongoing.
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LTA8 PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Responsibility	Local Transport Authority	Supporting Authorities	Facility (F) or Measure (M)	Delivery Date
<p>LTA8.1 KCC will develop a brand to support the journey planner, create an interactive bus map and market multi-operator tickets.</p>	KCC		M	Ongoing

<p>LTA8.2 KCC will develop and deliver a Passenger Information Portal for all bus services including journey planning functionality, an interactive map and RTI. The delivery of this will roll into 24/25 after agreement from the DfT through the PAR process.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 A procurement exercise was run in late 2023 to establish a supplier to deliver the portal. A contract was awarded in February 2024 to Ember. KCC is currently working with Ember to mobilise the map. Next Milestone – Rollout of map – September 2024.</p>	KCC		F	By September 2024
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<p>LTA8.3 KCC will agree with operators a set of standards for at-stop bus timetables and printed publicity. KCC will add QR codes to every physical bus stop in the County to link seamlessly to the bus information portal [See LTA8.2]. The delivery of this will roll into 24/25 after agreement from the DfT through the PAR process.</p> <p>BSIP Initiative – Progress Update June 2024 A procurement exercise was run in early 2024 for the establishment of a supplier to deliver these codes. A contract was awarded in March 2024 to Externiture. KCC is working with Externiture to agree a programme for rolling out the plates. It should be noted that the deployment of the plates is subject to the completion of the passenger information portal (LTA 8.2). Next Milestone – Agreement of programme with contractor (subject to LTA 8.2) – 30th August 2024.</p>	KCC		M	Ongoing. QR Codes by March 2025
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<p>LTA8.4 KCC will undertake specific promotional activity with the operators to encourage higher usage of the bus post recovery and to support strategic priorities.</p> <p>KCC will work with operators to promote the ENCTS concessionary fare scheme to newly eligible persons and also to encourage greater use of passes on issue. KCC will undertake promotional activity for new fares initiatives brought in through BSIP, including a school travel campaign.</p> <p>Details of significant promotions will be added to Annex C.</p>	KCC	DBC GBC	M	Ongoing.
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Section 4 - Obligations on Local Bus Operators

4.1 - The below sets out the specific interventions that operators are required to deliver by subject area as part of this EP Scheme.

4.2 - All of the below obligations can be amended using the EP Scheme bespoke arrangements for varying the EP scheme as set out in Section 5.

4.3 - New obligations that relate to the principles and initiatives contained within the EP Plan are also subject to the bespoke arrangements for varying the EP scheme as set out in Section 5.

4.4 – Bus operators operating within the geographical area covered by this EP scheme will provide representation at every EPSMG meeting.

OP1 NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	<p>OP1.1 To actively work with KCC to identify and implement opportunities to build on the revised base bus network, particularly to underserved communities and at times of day when service levels are poor.</p> <p>To adopt any required branding or acknowledgement of funding where services are supported through the BSIP funding.</p>	Ongoing
Operators	OP1.2	Ongoing

	To work with KCC to develop a unified bus network, making best endeavours to co-ordinate timetables and introduce simple ticketing to enable interchanging between services.	
Operators	OP1.3 To work with KCC, neighbouring local authorities, the rail industry and other service providers to seek opportunities to better develop and deliver coordinated services and facilities between bus, rail, and other modes across the Scheme area where practically possible.	Ongoing
Operators	OP1.4 To agree to work with KCC and neighbouring local authorities to work towards a set of common registration / timetable change dates per year (for the benefit of co-ordinated information etc), recognising the need for exemptions.	By March 2025
Operators	OP1.5 To work openly and transparently with KCC with respect to any planned service changes, ensuring that notification and discussion takes place ahead of the statutory registration window. Any significant reduction of services below the revised base network will require full discussion and information sharing with KCC before registration.	Ongoing
Operators	OP1.6 KCC used 2023/24 BSIP funding to secure 49 school bus services which would otherwise have faced withdrawal by operators. KCC will continue to support these services using 2024/25 BSIP funding. Applicable operators will work with KCC on the operation of these services.	Until March 2025

OP2 SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER CARE

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP2.1 In conjunction with KCC and passenger charter groups, develop and implement a single Kent passenger charter to cover all services within the EP and to ensure high operating and customer service standards through such measures as high-quality staff training.	By March 2025
Operators	OP2.2 Through high levels of operational management (e.g. vehicle contingency, network planning, scheduling, roadworks planning etc) work to deliver the highest possible levels of reliability and operational standards. These will be included in the Passenger Charter and EP targets.	Ongoing
Operators	OP2.3 To put passenger safety at the forefront of thinking with respect to operational / service management.	Ongoing

	<p>To work with KCC to ensure that any hail and ride sections of route are deployed safely, including picking up and setting down points (including DRT stopping points). This will include suitable driver training.</p> <p>To raise any safety concerns regarding stopping arrangements in the county, including marked bus stops and hail and ride stopping practices with KCC.</p>	
Operators	<p>OP2.4 To ensure a standard DBS check is included as part of the recruitment process for new drivers, as part of a safer recruitment policy.</p>	Ongoing
Operators	<p>OP2.5 To ensure that all buses on local bus services in Kent are operated to a good level of cleanliness, both internally and externally.</p>	Ongoing

OP3 FARES AND TICKETING

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	<p>OP3.1 To work with KCC to deliver the specific fares and ticketing schemes that are outlined in Annex C. This will focus on initiatives which support recovery from the pandemic and access to tourism, employment opportunities and the support of Kent businesses. To work with KCC to promote school services to compliment the KTS price freeze from September 2023.</p> <p>To actively promote the schemes included in Annex C and include on operator websites and in bus service publicity.</p>	Ongoing.
Operators	<p>OP3.2 To ensure that ETMs on local bus services in Kent at least meet the minimum standards set out in Annex C and that the bus ticketing products in the Annex, and other agreed promotions, are programmed into the systems.</p>	Ongoing.
Operators	<p>OP3.3 To ensure that return tickets are accepted by all operators on common sections of route, subject to a separate ticketing agreement brokered by KCC, and to adopt the multi-operator ticketing arrangements outlined in Annex C.</p>	Return tickets by September 2023
Operators	<p>OP3.4 To support the Council with initiatives to promote the availability and greater use of ENCTS passes.</p>	Ongoing

OP4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRIORITY

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP4.1 Provide feedback to KCC on bus stop condition to allow for quick and efficient action to be taken.	Ongoing
Operators	OP4.2 To ensure that buses are using infrastructure appropriately (e.g., position of bus at raised kerb) to support accessible boarding.	Ongoing
Operators	OP4.3 If through agreement with KCC, operators are delivering bus stop infrastructure directly (e.g., flags, cases), operators will work to conditions and standards agreed by KCC.	Ongoing
Operators	OP4.4 When laying over between journeys, ensure buses are parked up at appropriate positions which are communicated with KCC and Borough / District Councils.	Ongoing
Operators	OP4.5 Where new standing & or driver meal break / toilet facilities are provided, to propose reciprocal operational benefits where achievable.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP4.6 To work with KCC to trial new technologies at bus stops where funding permits.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP4.7 Continue to work with KCC on the identified Kent Thameside Bus Priority scheme for Rennie Drive, Dartford and implement the agreed benefits for customers as outlined in Annex C. Ensure that any disruption during construction is minimised and well communicated to passengers. Work with KCC for future potential Bus Priority schemes for 24/25 where congestion has a high impact on bus reliability and through use of date consider reciprocal network benefits which could be offered up if improvements were delivered.	September 2024.

OP5 HIGHWAY AND NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP5.1 Where bus-related interventions are made that result in resource savings as a result of faster journey times operators will reinvest at least the benefit gained in more frequent services, new or newer buses, or other improvements of mutually agreed value in conjunction with local network reviews. Agreed benefits to be delivered by the operators will be outlined in Annex C	Ongoing.

Operators	OP5.2 Engage fully with KCC when consulted on new road schemes and their operational impacts and consider any improvements to bus services that can be facilitated by their implementation.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP5.3 Send appropriate representation to PIPs, Roadworks Taskforce meetings and the Local District Focus Groups etc and work constructively with KCC, including providing supporting data, to identify areas of concern and to deliver solutions within budget constraints.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP5.4 Report on soft landscaping issues affecting buses in a timely manner.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP5.5 Through use of the roadworks planning tool, ensure roadworks diversions / stop suspensions are appropriately planned and communicated to passengers.	Ongoing.

OP6 ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MODELS

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP6.1 To work to ensure that the Fastrack and Superbus bus networks and surrounding local bus networks are organised in a way to complement each other. Operators must take part in the seamless ticketing products outlined in Annex C to enhance these links.	Ongoing
Operators	OP6.2 To work with KCC to ensure that park & ride, coach services, community transport services and DRT schemes are integrated with the conventional bus network, including in marketing and ticketing schemes. Any new funded DRT schemes will need to accept ENCTS passes.	Ongoing

OP7 ENVIRONMENT AND AIR QUALITY

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP7.1 To continuously improve bus emission standards through new investment in fleets, as funding permits.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP7.2	Ongoing.

	Work with KCC and Borough / District Councils as appropriate to form bids to any future funding sources to support conversion to zero emission vehicles.	
Operators	OP7.3 To commit to minimise idling when at bus stops and stands or in queuing traffic.	Ongoing
Operators	OP7.4 To work with KCC on advertising campaigns to promote the role of the bus in meeting environmental challenges.	Ongoing.

OP8 INNOVATION AND DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP8.1 Maximise the use of innovation in conjunction with KCC as funding permits or legislation requires – e.g., audio / visual on bus announcements, passenger occupancy tools etc.	Ongoing.
Operators	OP8.2 To ensure that live information feeds to BODS and other real time systems cover all local bus services	Ongoing.
Operators	OP8.3 To work with KCC to deliver a MaaS scheme to include bus and rail ticketing and wider multi modal products, commencing with a pilot scheme in Kent Thameside. Terms and conditions on ticketing and data feeds will be subject to a separate negotiated agreement. Operators in the affected area will actively promote the scheme and feature it on operator websites and in bus service publicity.	September 2024

OP9 PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Operators	OP9.1 Ensure that appropriate and up to date timetable and fare data feeds are being fed into KCC / BODS to meet legislation and support the Kent single comprehensive bus information portal.	Ongoing
Operators	OP9.2 To work with KCC to deliver publicity campaigns (particularly where funded) to encourage higher use of the bus post recovery and to support key strategic priorities. This will be conducted under the Kent brand with inclusion of Government branding where supported by BSIP.	Ongoing

Operators	OP9.3 To ensure that bus stop publicity postings comply with the minimum standards as set out in Annex C	Ongoing.
Operators	OP9.4 To provide and support a website which includes clear, accurate and up to date information, including but not limited to, timetables, contact details and provide a link and promotion to the KCC Passenger Information Portal	Ongoing.
Operators	OP9.5 To agree any numbering for new services with KCC to avoid passenger confusion or duplication.	Ongoing.

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements

5.1 An Enhanced Partnership Board (EPB) has been formed which has the role of overseeing such matters as the success and fitness for purpose, variation and revocation of the Enhanced Partnership Plan, Enhanced Partnership Schemes and downward governance structures, through formal voting and variation mechanisms.

Kent has three EP Schemes in place and as such an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Monitoring Group (EPSMG) will also be formed for each EP Scheme area.

The EPB will:

- Oversee the formation and content of the EP Plan, ensuring consistency with the Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- Oversee the introduction and continuously monitor the progress of Kent’s EP Plan and three EP Schemes ensuring consistency across the county.
- Form and agree terms of reference for each EPSMG and ensure they are delivering EP Scheme outcomes.
- Table and vote on measures, facilities, and obligations for inclusion in the EP Schemes, which will subsequently be subject to formal variation.
- Consider proposals for variation from Kent’s three EPSMGs for changes affecting the county as a whole (i.e., applicable to all EP Schemes).
- Consider reports and proposals for variation affecting individual EP Schemes, proposed by the relevant EPSMG.
- Review progress against BSIP Targets (see Annex B).
- Ensure that each party is fulfilling its obligations within the overall EP.

The EPSMGs will:

- Oversee the delivery of existing measures, facilities, and obligations in the EP Schemes, with reference to the EP Board.
- Provide reports to the EPB on EP Scheme progress and performance against all targets.

- Give consideration to how well the EP Plan and EP Schemes are working and recommend any potential changes required to the EPB.
- Agree and promote items for potential EP Scheme variation to the EPB, which may be applicable to the EP as a whole or the relevant EP Scheme.
- Address feedback from the EP Scheme Passenger Charter Group, Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP) and Local Focus Group.

5.2 - The EPB will consist of a maximum of nine (9) persons representing voting Core Members, those persons being the below (or a substitute attendee nominated by the core member who has authority to vote):

1. The KCC Cabinet member
2. The KCC Director of Highways and Transportation
3. The KCC Head of Public Transport
4. The KCC Traffic Manager
5. Five (5) operator attendees. This will include an automatic invite to any operator operating over 25% of scheduled mileage in Kent. Any remaining operator positions will be subject to nomination by an operator agreed process with the aim of ensuring coverage of all EP Scheme areas and inclusive representation for all operator types – i.e., inclusive of group and smaller, independent operators.

5.3 – The following will be invited to all EPB meetings:

1. Transport Focus
2. Traffic Commissioner for the South-East and Metropolitan traffic area
3. A Borough / District representative nominated by each EPSMG.

Additional non-voting Members will be subject to invitation to the EPB dependent on the content of meetings (e.g., Medway Council, KALC, TfL etc) as agreed by EP Core Members.

5.4 – The EPBs will be arranged one meeting in advance to cater for the BSIP and EP Schemes being ever evolving. Extraordinary meetings may be proposed by any EPB member. Voting Core Members should advise of attendance within 7 days of the scheduled meeting with 80% of attendees needing to be present for the meeting to proceed.

5.5 – It is expected that the EPB will predominantly meet virtually.

5.6 – In the interest of transparency and to enable all stakeholders the ability to comment and inform the considerations of the board and their resulting decisions, meeting papers for the EPB will be circulated to all board members and scheme monitoring group members fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting date, with items subject to formal vote and potential variation clearly identified.

5.7 – The EPB will undertake to consider all comments received from any party referenced in 5.6, so long as comments are received no less than 5 days prior to the meeting date.

5.8 – Meeting notes (including action points and variations to be enacted) will be circulated within 14 days of the meeting date and published on the EP website. Meeting notes will be subject to KCC's normal FOI procedures.

5.9 – Meetings will be administered by KCC.

5.10 - Decisions of substance or with financial impacts on KCC will be subject to the KCC constitution and governance policies and processes, which may affect the timing items are brought to the EPB

Review of EP Scheme

5.11 - Once the EP Scheme is made, its progress and any potential variations will be reviewed by the EPB through its meetings - see 5.1. Any review will consider as a minimum the effectiveness of the measures taken, facilities provided, and requirements imposed on operators - particularly in relation to their impact on the objectives for improving services set in the EP plan and BSIP and, if relevant, on bus journey times, passenger satisfaction and growth of the market.

5.12 - Once the EP Scheme is made, it will be formally reviewed by the EP Board on an annual basis. Variations may be made to the EP Scheme outside of this formal review date as set out in section 5.13. Reviews will ensure any necessary action is taken to deliver the targets set out in the BSIP. Kent County Council will initiate each review.

Bespoke Arrangements for Varying the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

5.13 - Under powers at s.138E of the Transport Act 2000, Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations relating to commitments in sections 3, 4 and associated annexes where section 5.13 is quoted, will be subject to the bespoke voting mechanism also set out in section 5.16.

5.14 – If changes to or new flexibility provisions under s.138E of the Transport Act 2000 are not in the existing EP Plan they must satisfy the statutory objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018

Proposer of a variation

5.15 - Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations, highlighted by one of the organisations represented on the EPB, or proposed by a EPSMG. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the BSIP, EP Plan or current local transport policies. Such requests should be in writing and submitted to kccnbs@kent.gov.uk KCC will forward

all requests onto all EPB members for information and arrange for an agenda item at the next available EPB meeting.

Decision-making process and bespoke variation mechanism

5.16 – Any material change affecting any EP scheme, including variations, will be subject to a vote by the Operator members at the EPB. If the proposed variation is agreed by the majority of bus operators, and if KCC are also in full agreement, the EP Scheme variation will be made within ten working days and the revised EP scheme will be published on the KCC website. If the agreed variation is not related to one of the elements of the EP scheme where the bespoke variation method is applicable (as detailed in section 5.13 and 5.14) they must satisfy the statutory objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018. All operator reps need to have voted either in person at the meeting or remotely in advance of the meeting. To avoid a tie, any operator abstaining from the vote will be deemed to have voted in favour of the decision.

5.17 – Should any material change referenced in 5.16 not be supported by either KCC or operators – the EPB chair will determine whether a re-vote can be held, by way of a further special meeting of the EPB. The further meeting should be held within 4 weeks of the original EPB, with the same administration process in place with respect to notification to EPSMGs etc.

Revocation of an EP Scheme

5.18 - If a member of the EPB believes it is necessary to revoke the EP Scheme, the EPB will be reconvened. If the decision is taken to revoke the EP Scheme, it will follow the full formal statutory process and not the bespoke arrangements.

5.19 - Any data required for the operation of the EP Scheme will be confidential between the parties, Data shall only be shared to the extent permitted by competition law and subject to any UK GDPR.

5.20 - Information provided to KCC under Section 143 of the Transport Act 2000 and associated secondary legislation will remain confidential, unless otherwise agreed or required by law.

ANNEX A - GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

The following terms have been used in the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme documents in Kent:

ABODS/BODS – The Government’s Analyse Bus Open Data service brings together data from bus operator systems, including ticket machines, to collate and summarise bus reliability by individual services.

AQMA – Air Quality Management Areas are defined areas where action is being taken to reduce air pollution.

ANPR – Automatic number plate recognition cameras may be used for bus lane enforcement, see below.

Bespoke Variation – A means to vary the requirements of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, described in Section 5, without invoking the full requirements of Section 138 of the Transport Act 2000.

BRT – Bus Rapid Transit systems offer high quality and frequent bus services on routes with a high level of bus priority measures which often include segregated bus lanes.

Bus Gate – A short stretch of road carriageway that is restricted to use by buses and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles as indicated on appropriate signage on the approach.

Bus Lane – A signposted lane, designated for use by registered local bus services and (where specified) taxis and other authorised vehicles, at the times also indicated by signage.

Bus Lane Enforcement – action taken to ensure that bus lanes and bus gates are used only by authorised vehicles. This is often carried out by using cameras to record unauthorised use, with the issue of civil penalties to offenders under section 144 of the Transport Act 2000

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – A document published in June 2021 containing proposals to improve bus services, available to download at www.kent.gov.uk/busfuture

Bus Stand – A bus stop clearway which permits a local bus to stand within the carriageway for as long as may be necessary up to a period of 10 minutes.

DRT – Demand responsive transport schemes are flexible bus services using pre-booking via an app or telephone booking line.

Enhanced Partnerships – Formal partnerships between local authorities and bus operators created under the Bus Services Act 2017, designed to improve bus services by setting out firm commitments which are binding on both authorities and operators.

Enhanced Partnership Board – The committee of operators and the LTA responsible for managing the Enhanced Partnership, including decision making.

Enhanced Partnership Scheme Monitoring Group – The group formed of local authorities and all bus operators running in this EP Scheme area to oversee the delivery of existing commitments and to promote potential variations to the Scheme to the EP Board.

Enhanced Partnership Plan – The document made pursuant to section 138A of the Transport Act 2000 and which is required to be in place for an EP Scheme to be made.

Enhanced Partnership Scheme Area – The area to which this EP Scheme document applies.

Facilities – physical assets that are provided at specific locations along particular routes (or parts of routes) within the EP scheme area or new and improved bus priority measures. This is deemed for such purposes of section 138D (1) of the Transport Act 2000.

Fare Capping – A multi-operator ticketing scheme which will cap a user's travel cost according to the lowest price available for the journeys made.

Fastrack – Kent's well established and successful BRT service.

LTA – Local Transport Authorities have responsibility for transport matters in their area. In the case of this EP Scheme, this means Kent County Council.

Local Focus Group – Each borough or district in Kent will have a local focus group, looking at their local bus services and how they can be improved. This group will replace Quality Bus Partnerships, where these exist.

MaaS – “Mobility as a Service” platforms bring together a number of transport modes on one app, offering details of each service together with ticket booking facilities.

Measures – improvements with the aim of:

- Increasing the use of local bus service serving the routes to which the measures relate or ending or reducing a decline in their use; or
- Improving the quality of local bus service.

Memorandum of Understanding – In this case, an agreement between KCC and each borough or district council to work closely together on issues such as planning in relation to bus services, roadworks, bus stop infrastructure and bus priority measures.

Multi-Operator Ticketing – common fares and ticketing products applied and accepted by multiple operators.

National Bus Strategy – The national strategy for England as set out in the Government document “Bus Back Better”.

Passenger Charter – A document setting out bus users' rights to defined standards of service including a mechanism for redress. The Passenger Charter will be a single

Countywide document. Each EP Scheme will have its own Passenger Charter Group to monitor the performance of local bus services.

Passenger Charter Group – An independently hosted group consisting of a range of stakeholders and user groups formed to monitor fulfilment of the Passenger Charter in each EP Scheme area.

PIPs – Punctuality Improvement Partnerships are forums where bus operators and local authorities discuss locations where bus services are regularly delayed and seek to find solutions to reduce these delays.

Quality Bus Partnerships – Voluntary agreements between KCC, borough or district councils and bus operators in that district designed to work closely together to improve local bus services.

Real Time Information – Technology used to track the location of buses in real time. Information is transmitted to bus stops or devices to indicate to passengers the predicted arrival time at a particular point.

Rural Shelter Grant – A KCC scheme designed to assist in providing improved bus shelters in rural areas.

Soft Landscaping – Features such as trees and bushes that can obstruct the highway.

Superbus Network – A well promoted network of higher frequency, lower fare bus services, ideally in intermediate areas, such as a group of individual towns.

TransXChange – A common standard that ensures that timetable information can be exported by bus operators into service information portals.

UK GDPR: the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679).

Zebra Funding – A Government scheme designed to implement a comprehensive zero-emission bus network in a defined area.

Zero Emission Vehicle – A vehicle that emits no pollution from its tailpipe.

ANNEX B – TARGETS

This annex may be varied using the Bespoke variation method described in Section 5 of this EP Scheme.

Kent’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), issued in October 2021, included a number of high-level aspirational targets. Following the indicative funding award from DfT, these were revised to the targets stated in column “Target 2024-25”.

As per BSIP guidance issued in 2024, we are not at this stage setting further targets beyond 2025 however we will do so once further guidance is issued by DfT (anticipated in late 2024).

Updated Targets	Actual 2018/2019	Actual 2019/2020	Target 2024/2025	Actual 2023/24
Journey Time (bus speeds)	n/a	24.7 KM/hr	24.7 KM/hr	23.88 KM/hr
Reliability (Service timekeeping)	Nov19: 77.7%	Jun21: 85.0%	85.0%	Nov 23: 72.6%
Reliability (Service operated)	Nov19: 98.7%	Jun21: 99.0%	99.5%	Nov 23: 97.1%
Passenger numbers	55.4m	53.5m	10% growth on rebased network	44.8 m
Passenger satisfaction	86.0%	89.0%	95.0%	68.7%
Vehicle Emissions	n/a	26.1%	30.0%	30.0%

*In our 2021 BSIP we noted that the target for 24/25 was to grow the network by 10% when compared to the rebased (post covid) network. This rebased figure as of 22/23 was 42.3m

ANNEX C – DETAIL ON MEASURES, FACILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

This annex may be varied using the Bespoke variation method described in Section 5 of this EP Scheme.

When further detail has been agreed concerning the facilities, measures and obligations set out in sections 3 and 4 of this EP Scheme, this will be included as schedules within this annex.

Facilities

LTA1.1 The new criteria for the funding of socially necessary services will be set out here once adopted by the Council.

LTA 1.3 KCC has used NBS funding to secure 49 school transport routes until July 2025 that would have otherwise been at risk of withdrawal. These services are detailed below:

Service No.	Route	Days o	Operator
S6	Kemsing to Sevenoaks	SDO	Go Coach
TW6	Sevenoaks(Knockholt) to Tonbridge Wells	SDO	Go Coach
TW1	Shoreham/Otford-Tunbridge Wells	SDO	Go Coach
TW3	Riverhead-Tunbridge Wells	SDO	Go Coach
TW4	Kemsing-Tunbridge Wells	SDO	Go Coach
T3	Knockholt-Tonbridge	SDO	Go Coach
80/ 80B	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
80/81/B	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
80/80A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
80A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
80A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
81A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
88	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
88/88A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
80A/88A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
96	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
96A	Dover Schools	SDO	Stagecoach
S8	Westerham to Sevenoaks	SDO	Go Coach
82/82A	Deal - Kingsdown	M-F	Stagecoach
4	New Ash Green to Dartford Girls Grammar School	SDO	1st Bus Stop
570	Wrotham to Maidstone	SDO	Arriva
6	Mascalls School journeys	SDO	Arriva
S41	Edenbridge to Sevenoaks schools	SDO	Go Coach
S12	Crockenhill to Sevenoaks Schools	SDO	Go Coach
235	Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells Schools	SDO	Starline
Meopham 1	Higham to Meopham School	SDO	1st Bus Stop
11	Canterbury to Westwood Cross	M-F	Stagecoach
334	Sheerness to Sittingbourne	Mon - Sat	Chalkwell
515	Singleton to Towers School	SDO	Stagecoach
516/518	Kennington - Willesbrough - Singleton	SDO	Stagecoach
519	Stanhope to Towers School	SDO	Stagecoach
G Liine	Godinton Park - Ashford Town Centre	M-S	Stagecoach
215	Aylesford to Mascalls Academy	SDO	Autocar
221	Wrotham Heath to Tunbridge Wells Schools	SDO	Autocar
222	Wrotham to Tonbridge Schools	SDO	Autocar
230	Tunbridge Wells via Penshurst to Tonbridge Schools	SDO	Autocar
W3	Ditton Corner to Wrotham School	SDO	Nu-Venture
403	Dunton Green to Weald of Kent	SDO	HAMS
73	Hawkinge to Folkestone (M-F)	M-F	Stagecoach
74	Broadmead to Downs Road (M-F)	M-F	Stagecoach
975/73	975 – Hawkinge to Folkestone/ 73 – Folkestone to Park Farm AM	SDO	Stagecoach
972	972 – Hawkinge to Brockhill Park AM	SDO	Stagecoach
973	973 – Folkestone to Hawkinge PM	SDO	Stagecoach
974	974 – Folkestone to Hawkinge PM	SDO	Stagecoach
971	971 – Folkestone to Lympe PM	SDO	Stagecoach
423	New Ash Green to Wilmington Schools	SDO	1st Bus Stop
4	Aylesford to Bennett Memorial School	SDO	BL
3/S3	Orpington to Sevenoaks	SDO	Go Coach
W5	Kings Hill to West Malling	SDO	Nu-Venture

No BSIP 23/24 or 24/25 Funding has been utilised to replace any KCC supported bus services impacted by withdrawals that took place in February 2023.

KCC will comply with requirements set out by the DfT with respect to bus connectivity assessments. Gaps identified in the network will look to be addressed should any further BSIP network funding become available for the period 2025-29.

LTA4.8 and LTA4.10, OP4.7: Bus Lanes.

A schedule of bus lanes that are already in operation in Kent, including the facilities on the Fastrack routes, is included in the embedded file below:

Future Fastrack priorities planned for Bath Street and the Bean Rd Fastrack Tunnel are also included in the embedded file below.



Bus Lanes.xlsx

LTA4.8, LTA4.10, LTA6.2, OP5.1: Proposed bus priorities and operator contributions.

Full bus priority measures are outlined below:

Rennie Drive, Dartford Scheme:

KCC chose the Rennie Drive bus priority scheme because it provides significant end-to-end benefits on Fastrack services in Kent Thameside and is deliverable in line with Government requirements.

Improvements include optimising the layout and traffic signals at the junction. This will cut an average of two minutes off journey times and reduce congestion at the Dartford crossing. Changes as part of the scheme include:

- allowing Fastrack buses to travel along Rennie Drive in both directions.
- creating a new southbound bus lane within Rennie Drive that runs up to the Fastrack roundabout.
- adjusting footway and cycleway points to improve active travel and cycle use.

Works on the scheme commenced in March 2024. The saving from the scheme will be reinvested into an enhanced service between Ebbsfleet Garden City and Gravesend town centre.

Pencester Road, Dover Scheme:

The Pencester Road Bus Priority Scheme was chosen because it unlocks direct public transport access between Dover Town Centre and Dover Priory station and the Port of Dover.

It involves constructing a dedicated bus and cycle-only contraflow lane along the western side of Pencester Road, plus new traffic signals.

The scheme will enable:

- The Dover Fastrack Bus Rapid Transit system to seamlessly serve Dover Priority Station

- Significantly improved public transport travel to/from Dover Eastern Docks by creating an additional bus link between Dover Priory Rail Station and the Port of Dover. This is a significant operator-provided reciprocal benefit.

The detailed designs are currently being refined following public consultation in winter 2023. Construction should begin in summer 2024.

Thanet “Superbus” Scheme:

The Thanet Superbus scheme targets one of the most popular bus services in Kent. It was selected based on potential positive impacts on reliability, and reciprocal benefits offered by the operator in response to improved journey times. The scheme will improve journey times and reliability for Thanet Loop bus services connecting key locations in Ramsgate, Margate, and Broadstairs.

The design phase started in April 2023: delivery is split into two phases:

- Phase 1 includes road lining and bus build outs to improve bus priority. Delivery began in May 2024 and is due for completion by summer 2024.
- Phase 2 includes adding a new bus lane near the QEQM hospital. Public consultation begins in summer 2024, once detailed design and necessary utility works are completed.

The scheme will require strong enforcement of introduced parking restrictions, which requires close collaboration with Thanet District Council to enforce as much as possible. The bus operator has pledged to reinvest in the Loop service with a significantly increased frequency, starting from June 2024. The journey time saving will be closely monitored through Kent’s EP.

Further BSIP funding in 2023/24 was secured to conduct feasibility works for future potential bus priority schemes across the county. The previous corridor list is a key basis for identifying them, alongside operator feedback through our Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP) meetings. One example is the Downs Road junction in Canterbury, where we are looking at improvements to allow buses to turn right onto St Stephen’s Hill, bringing benefits improvements including frequency enhancements to the local network. Details of any schemes subsequently progressed will be added here once known.

LTA5.3 Bus Intervention Schemes being progressed with 2023/24 BSIP funding are detailed below, including a status update as of early June 2024.

	Location Detail	Village / Town	Work Type	Status
Silver Hill Road	o/s 26	Willesborough	DYL Extension	Works Completed
Osborne Road	Various	Ashford	DYL & Clearway	Designs complete, awaiting consultation

Tally Ho Road	South of Lonefield	Shadoxhurst	Clearway & Kerbs	Designs complete, job to be raised
Twelve Acres	Jct Hunter Ave	Willesborough	DYL	Designs complete, awaiting consultation
A2042 Station Road	Jct Vicarage Lane	Ashford	Yellow Box Jct	Design complete, awaiting technical approval
Various	Stagecoach Route G	Ashford		Design discussions ongoing
Brook Street	Jct Brattle	Ashford	Clearway & Posts	Designs ongoing
St Georges Street	Jct St Georges Lane	Canterbury	Give Way	Plans approved, awaiting road space for works
Westgate Court Avenue	Adj Joseph Conrad House	Canterbury	Clearway & Kerbs	Designs complete, works date booked (late August)
Riding Gate Roundabout		Canterbury	Widening	Ongoing liaison with Historic England
St Georges Roundabout		Canterbury	Widening/reprofiling	Investigations ongoing, including assessment of impact on subway
St David's Avenue	Various	Aycliffe	DYL & Clearways	Designs complete, awaiting road space
King Lear's Way, Aycliffe	layby Old Folkestone Road	Aycliffe	Clearway	Designs complete, final design progressing
St Radigund's Road	Various	Dover	DYLs	Designs complete, awaiting road space
Brookfield Avenue	Trefor Jones Court	Dover	Clearway & Kerbs	Designs ongoing
Heath Road	Barming	Maidstone	Relocate stop	Designs complete, final details in progress
Hildenborough Crescent		Maidstone	DYL	Designs complete, awaiting consultation
Tintern Road		Maidstone	Clearway refresh	In liaison with MBC

Fant Lane	Jct A26 Tonbridge Road	Maidstone	No Entry Issues	Traffic surveys completed, refresh and improvements to lining design complete
Old Tovil Road		Tovil	Various	Designs ongoing
Hermitage Lane	o/s Maidstone Hospital	Maidstone	Lining	Designs ongoing
Huntsman Lane		Maidstone	Parking restriction review	Designs ongoing
A26 Tonbridge Road		Maidstone	Clearway refresh	In liaison with MBC
A26 Tonbridge Road		Hadlow	Clearway extension	Designs complete, working on final details
Hermitage Lane		Aylesford	Clearway/ DYL	Designs complete, awaiting road space
Shepherds Lane		Dartford	Stop improvements	Designs ongoing

Information on the above schemes will be updated as schemes progress. Further schemes delivered utilising 2024/25 BSIP funding will be added once known.

LTA5.8 Bus Gates ANPR Enforcement

KCC is using 2023/24 BSIP funding to deliver ANPR enforcement at the following Kent bus gates:

- Beaver Road, Ashford
- Sackville Crescent, Ashford
- Bluebell Road, Ashford
- Avocet Way, Ashford
- Clive Road, Gravesham
- Ingress Park (Greenhithe Station), Dartford
- Hermitage Park (Howard Drive), Maidstone
- Great Easthall, Sittingbourne

Investigations are also ongoing at Maidstone High Street and Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells.

LTA4.6 Real time information screens

A schedule of real time screens at bus stops that are already in operation in Kent is in the embedded file below.

Further planned screen locations, to be delivered using 2023/24 and 2024/25 BSIP funding and identified through the bus stop hierarchy work will be added to the schedule, once finalised.



List of RTI screens
in Kent.xlsx

Measures

Fare and ticketing schemes:

The following ticketing schemes were supported by BSIP funding in the 2023-2024 period.

A number of fares promotions were run in 2023/24 using BSIP funding. These included:

Kent Bus Weekend

The Free Bus Weekend was held in June 2023 and aimed to boost tourism trips, primarily on Kent's comprehensive inter-urban bus network. We tied in with the Big Weekend, promoted by Visit Kent, offering free tickets to venues and attractions in the county: The promotion was also marketed throughout Kent and Medway for travel on any bus service. Free travel was offered on both the Saturday and Sunday from first bus until 20.00. (After this time, most visitor trips have been taken, and previous experience of free travel on late buses had seen cases of unacceptable passenger behaviour.) Compared to a 'normal' summer weekend, passenger numbers were up 33.7% in total, with an increase of 27.6% on the Saturday and 48.4% on the Sunday. Visit Kent asked its competition participants how they travelled to their chosen venue; more used the bus compared to previous years.

Bus About Kent

During the 2023 Summer school holidays, the **Bus About Kent** scheme was run and aimed at low-income families, who qualify for free school meals. Tickets downloaded to mobile phones were valid for a family group travel only, rather than individual passengers. With the limited security measures, we could set up in a short timescale, some cases of fraudulent travel were detected. Nevertheless, the scheme saw an impressive 123,000 family trips over the six-week holiday period.

All Day August

Operator data clearly shows travel by **concessionary pass holders** has been much slower to recover since Covid 19 than the overall average, despite still being free and advertising to elderly and disabled passholders locally by bus operators and nationally by Government. Our promotion extended free travel to before 9.30am on Mondays to

Fridays during August 2023 to encourage days out at a time when buses are generally not as busy without home-to-school travel. The promotion encouraged 63,000 trips on these early bus services.

2024/25 BSIP funding will be utilised to deliver a major promotion campaign for buses, further details will be added here once known. Should any funding remain, further promotional fares and ticketing schemes will be run (eg free travel weekends) and detailed here.

LTA3.1, OP3.1 School Travel Promotion

Kent Travel Saver Price Freeze

Our Travel Saver (KTS) schemes offer free transport to and from school or college and includes free evening and weekend travel. Passholders must live in Kent, be aged between 11 and 19 and be in full-time education or training. They must pay for their pass, but our annual subsidy of around £5.8m roughly halves their travel costs over an academic year. In 2023-2024, we used BSIP funding to freeze the cost of passes at a time when family budgets have been under severe pressure.

A campaign to promote school travel in the County was implemented by KCC and the bus operators to compliment the freezing of the KTS pass price.

In 2024/25 BSIP funding will be utilised to reduce the cost of the Travel Saver pass from what its 2024/25 cost would have been. The pass will be priced at £550.

LTA3.2, OP3.2 ETM Equipment

To implement the requirements for multi-operator ticketing under LTA3.3 and OP3.3, operators will be required to use a minimum specification of ETM equipment.

A schedule of the minimum requirements will be provided here once the requirements of the smart platform are finalised and to ensure alignment with the Government's Project Coral.

As on June 2024, an ETM grant scheme is being rolled out for SME operators to provide assistance in meeting these standards.

LTA3.3, OP3.3, OP6.1 Multi-Operator Ticketing

Multi-operator ticket schemes:

Operators are positively engaged and supportive of proposed ticketing initiatives which are agreed in principle. Once finalised, requirements for participation and marketing of the following schemes will be added to this section:

KCC ran a trial in Swale in 2023 to maintain through-travel opportunities when a service was discontinued. This scheme involved only two bus operators and used low-tech solutions, so could not be scaled up easily and thus did not justify creating a new back office. Instead KCC will adopt the nationwide "Project Coral" back-office system when it is introduced at a later date.

Further multi-operator ticketing trials are planned for the future utilising BSIP funding for 2024/25.

LTA3.4, OP8.3 MaaS Scheme

A description of the Planned MaaS scheme for Kent Thameside will be outlined here, once agreed, and procured, together with operator obligations from the associated negotiated agreement.

OP9.3 Bus Stop Posting

Bus stop timetable information, whether produced by an operator or by KCC, will comply to a minimum standard (to be developed by March 2025).