

National Bus Strategy

Bus Service Improvement Plan

Slough Borough Council

October 2021

0.4

DRAFT

Notice

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1. Overview

DfT Guidance

Name of LTA(s) that the BSIP covers. This should also set out whether the BSIP covers a single LTA or more than one and the justification for that decision.

Map showing geographical area(s).

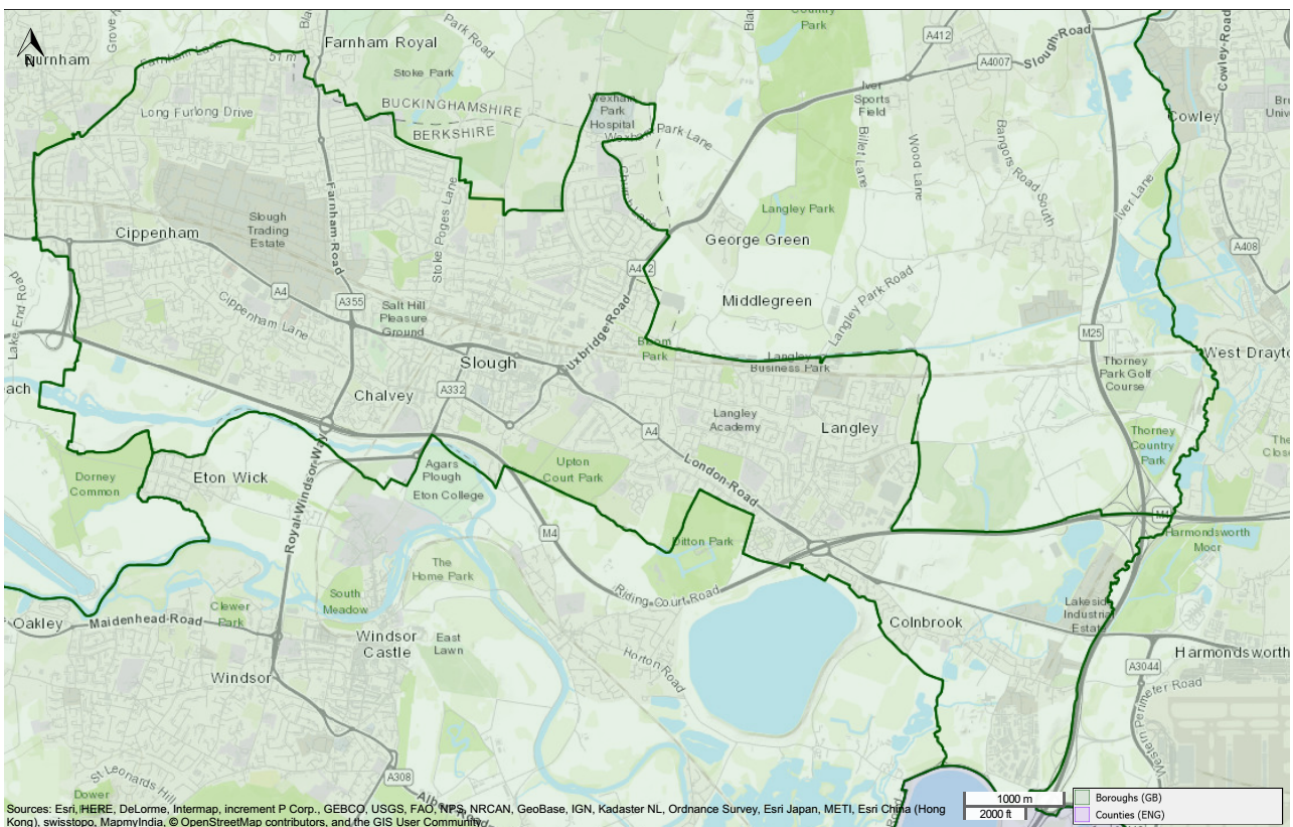
Explanation of whether that area(s) are proposed to be covered by an enhanced partnership scheme and/ or will form part of a franchising appraisal. All the LTA geographical area must be covered either by an EP or a franchising proposal

(Advice on using both an EP and franchising see advice on using both under Step 1 of the main guidance).

Duration of the published BSIP, arrangements for annual review and how it will be aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) covers the entire administrative area of Slough Borough Council illustrated at Figure 1-1. The Council has decided to prepare its BSIP covering only its own area following consultation with neighbouring authorities and in recognition of the fact that Slough differs from its neighbours significantly in terms of its geography and socio-demographic profile.

Figure 1-1 – Slough Administrative Area



Slough Borough Council intends to enter into an Enhanced Partnership. Its notice can be found here: [National Bus Strategy / Bus Back Better – Slough Borough Council](#).

This Bus Service Improvement Plan will be published on 29 October 2021 and the Enhanced Partnership will enter force on 1 April 2022. Slough Borough Council will publish a review of the BSIP by 31 October of each subsequent year for as long as the Enhanced Partnership is in force.

The BSIP is consistent with the Bus Strategy and wider Local Transport Plan 3 covering the period 2011 – 2026 and which can be found here: [Local Transport Plan – Slough Borough Council](#).

Slough Bus Station – courtesy Reading Buses



2. Current bus offer to passengers

DfT Guidance

The Strategy requires BSIPs to drive improvements to local bus services in a number of ways – for example, by setting targets for passenger growth and developing plans for multi-modal ticketing. This section should provide an analysis and data of how the current bus network compares to the BSIP aims and objectives set out in the subsequent sections.

- **Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes**
 - How current services meet or fall short of BSIP expectations as set out in this guidance and the Strategy.
- **LTA financial support for bus services**
 - Explain the financial support that the LTA(s) is providing for subsidised public bus services, listing the numbers of routes and route mileage supported.
- **Other factors that affect the use of local bus services**
 - This should include the extent and pricing of parking provisions in town and cities and the split between LTA and private sector provision. It should also include current LTA spending on parking enforcement.

This section describes the bus service offer to Slough, assesses its quality and suitability for Slough residents, and analyses the impact of background highway and socio-demographic conditions on buses. At a number of points it refers to “Slough BSIP Baseline Evidence Base” (SBBEB) which addresses these issues in some details and to which the reader is referred for more detail. This is provided alongside this BSIP document.

At the end of each section is a brief commentary on the existing situation and how it relates to the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

2.1. Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes

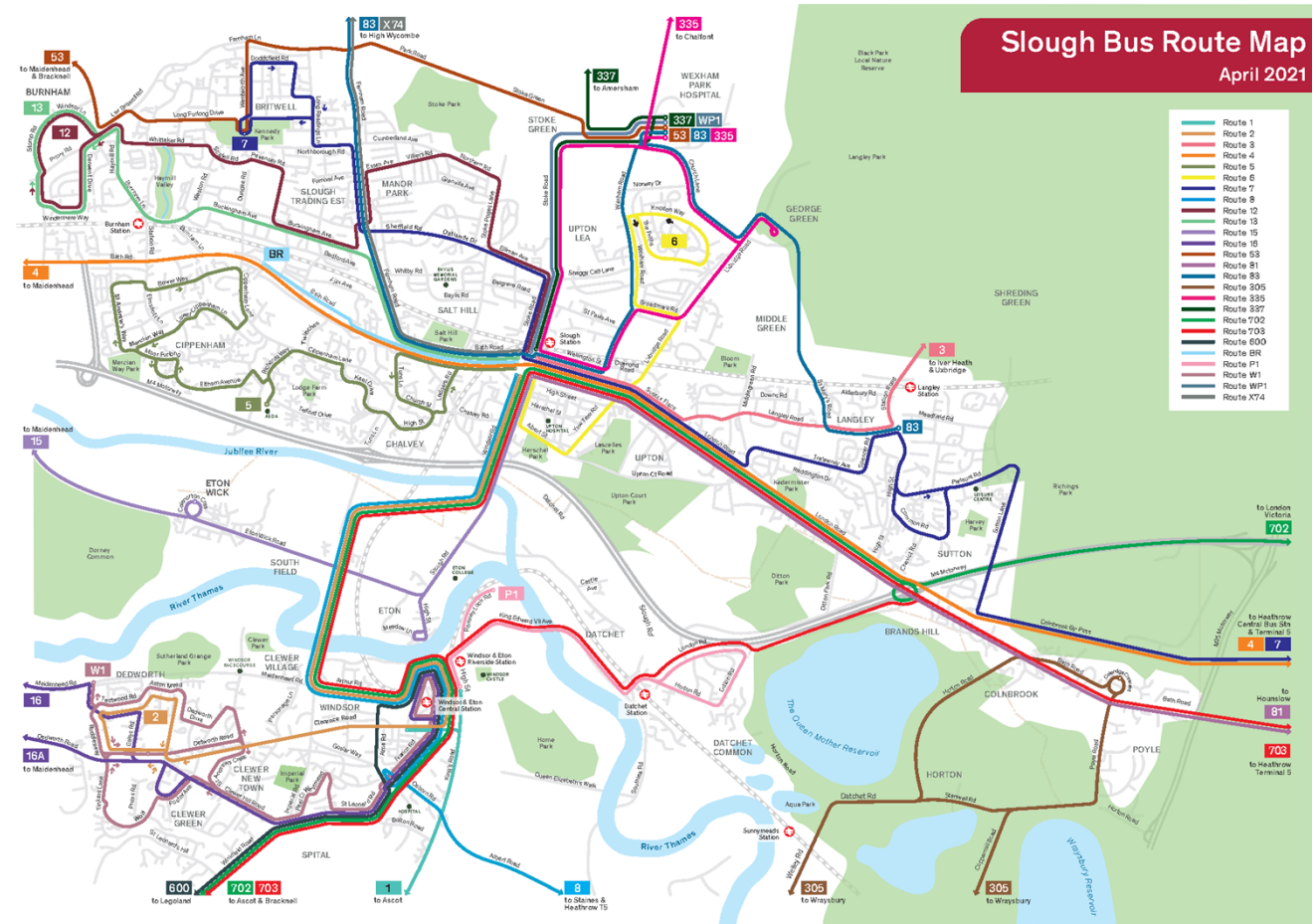
2.1.1. Operator Context

Slough’s bus network is provided by a number of operators, predominantly commercially, but some operating under tender to Slough Borough Council and other authorities. The major exception is bus route 81, which is procured by Transport for London and operated as part of the London bus network in order to fulfil TfL’s duty to secure local bus services in its area.

The major operator is First in Berkshire, with Thames Valley Buses (a subsidiary of Reading Buses) operating a significant number of services in Slough. Carousel Buses, Reading Buses and Redline Buses operate fewer services but are still a substantial presence in the authority. Carousel Buses re-started commercial operations in Slough at the end of August 2021. Bear Buses and Red Eagle operate limited services in Slough primarily under contract to other authorities, while Stewarts Coaches operates an innovative service connecting Slough rail station with major employers on Slough Trading Estate.

Figure 2-1 shows the bus map for Slough as at April 2021. Changes since then are that Carousel Buses has commenced operation of a service linking Slough town centre, the Wexham Court Estate, Wexham Park Hospital and Chalfont Common (routes 106 and 107). Operation of routes 335 and 337 has ceased.

Figure 2-1 – Slough Bus Map (April 2021)



2.1.2. Bus Service Supply

The highest frequency service is TfL’s route 81 with up to 6 buses per hour (bph) at peak times. Transport for London provides this service in fulfilment of its duties under section 181 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and its provision reflects the high volume of movement between Hounslow, Hillingdon and schools in Slough, but also to key employment locations such as Poyle Industrial Estate.

The next highest frequency is on First’s route 7 which before Covid ran up to 4 times an hour between Britwell, Slough Town Centre and Heathrow Airport, and on Redline Buses’ route WP1 between Slough Bus Station and Wexham Park Hospital (on the northern fringe of Slough), also at 4 buses per hour.

Most parts of Slough are serviced by routes running to a half-hourly frequency, with (where they exist) hourly services on evenings and Sundays. Most residents are within 400 metres of the line of bus route.

Services operate to a number of locations outside Slough. Heathrow Airport has been mentioned, but others include Windsor, Egham, Staines, High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Uxbridge. With the exceptions of Windsor and Heathrow, these also operate to half-hourly frequencies.

Bus journey speeds are relatively slow. We estimate an average scheduled journey speed in the morning peak (as at August 2021 timetables) of around 18 km/hour within the Slough boundary.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- Only one bus service provides a ‘walk-up’ frequency of 5-6 bph. Other services are regular but relatively low frequency. NBS: More frequent; Intensive services on key corridors;
- Regular but low frequency services to major settlements outside Slough – typically 2 buses per hour. NBS: More comprehensive;
- Low scheduled speed of around 18km/hour in the AM peak. NBS: Faster and more reliable.

2.1.3. Bus Fares

Bus fares in Slough vary substantially. SBBEB Section 5-3 provides a summary of published fares. From this there is substantial variation in fares and the offers to different groups, notably younger people.

Table 2-1 illustrates some key fares charged and benchmarks these against other nearby towns.

Table 2-1 – Bus Fare Comparison

	Day Ticket	Weekly Ticket	Carnet Product
Slough			
First in Berkshire	£6.50 (on-bus); £6.00 (electronic)	£22.00 (on-bus); £20.00 (electronic)	10 trip: £24.00
Thames Valley Buses	£5.50 (£4.00 for route 5)	£17.00 (£15.00 for route 5)	5-day saver: Cippenham £15 / Slough & Windsor 5-day saver £17
Transport for London	£4.65 (daily cap)	£21.80 (weekly cap)	-
Benchmark			
Stagecoach: Basingstoke	£4.60 (on-bus); £4.40 (electronic)	£12.30 (on-bus); £11.80 (electronic)	n/a
Reading Buses: Reading	£4.00	£16.00 (electronic)	10 single journeys £16.00
High Wycombe Smartzone	£4.60	£16.00	Any 5 days £20.00 / 10 trips £18.00
High Wycombe: Carousel Buses	£4.00	£15.00	Any 5 days £17.50 / 12 trips £18.00
High Wycombe: Arriva	£3.90	£15.00	3-day flexi £11.00

This analysis suggests that fares in Slough are significantly higher than those in neighbouring towns in the Thames Valley, and that therefore there may be a need to reduce them in order to provide an attractive offer to passengers. For example, day tickets for the two commercial Slough operators considered lie in the range of £5.50 to £6.50, compared to a range of £3.90 to £4.60 in the towns considered outside Slough.

Bus fares are also generally higher than rail fares: between Slough and Windsor a peak rail return is £4.00 (falling to £3.10 off-peak) compared to £4.50 return on Reading Buses' services.

The provision of concessionary travel to older and disabled people is mandated by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, and Slough Borough Council operates the scheme between 09:30 and 23:00 on weekdays and all-day on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

The provision of discounted travel to young people varies considerably. Redline Buses and First in Berkshire offer child fares to the age of 16. Reading Buses and Thames Valley Buses offer child fares to the age of 19, or 21 with a valid student identification. TfL offers free travel to the age 16 provided the user has an Oyster ZipCard. Between 16 and 18 residents outside London gain a 50% discount on bus fares, again provided they have an Oyster ZipCard.

There is no multi-operator ticketing scheme in Slough. First period ticket products are valid on Redline Buses' route WP1 between Slough Bus Station and Wexham Park Hospital.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- With the exception of single journey fares on TfL services, many bus fares in Slough are relatively high compared to nearby towns. NBS: Fares must be lower and simpler;
- There is no multi-operator ticketing scheme. A passenger wishing to travel from Cippenham to Wexham Park Hospital, for example, has to pay twice for their journey: once on the Thames Valley route 5 bus,

and again on Redline's route WP1. NBS: passengers should not have to buy a new ticket when changing buses.

- Complex range of discounts for young people which varies by operator: NBS: expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to consider youth fares.

2.1.4. Bus Passenger Information

Much information is available on channels which are universally available across the UK: Traveline, google maps, and a variety of open-source websites such as Citymapper.

Slough Borough Council has historically maintained a bus map which it has made available on its website [CO-5723 web version \(slough.gov.uk\)](#). It does not provide other bus service information itself but signposts to Traveline and operators' websites.

For journey planning purposes most bus operators provide websites with service information. Provision of fares information is variable. For instance, First provides information on period ticket products such as day or weekly tickets, but not for 'point-to-point' fares, nor does it produce a map showing fare zone boundaries. Thames Valley Buses by contrast provides information on all fares. Real-time information is generally available by app.

Transport for London provides bus stop flags at stops it serves. Slough Borough Council provides flags at other locations showing route number and direction, though coverage is not universal. For the most part bus operators post their own timetable information at bus stops. Slough Borough Council has provided information at some stops where there is more than one bus operator's services or at other locations. SBC operates a real-time passenger information system with displays at most busy stops and in the bus station. Most operators provide a data feed to this – the major exceptions being Redline Buses, Transport for London and Stewarts Coaches.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- The environment of different operators providing services results in presentation of information in a variety of formats and with different levels of information provided. This makes the bus product unclear to prospective or occasional passengers. Information on fares is particularly variable. NBS: Bus information provision needs to be substantially improved

2.1.5. Bus Fleet

Much of the bus fleet in Slough is mid-life:

- TfL route 81 (operated under contract by Metroline) – Volvo double-decks dating from 2010;
- First in Berkshire – a mixed fleet of single-deck buses including 15 hybrid buses dating from 2009 to 2015.

The exceptions to this are the Thames Valley Buses fleet allocated to Slough are generally less than two years old; and the Stewarts Coaches vehicles allocated to route BR operating between the rail and bus stations and the Trading Estate.

Emission standards are for the most part Euro VI. There are currently no zero-emission buses in the fleet.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- A mixed fleet, albeit generally to a high emission standard, but no zero-emission buses in the fleets. NBS: Buses are a key part of delivery of net zero by 2050.

2.1.6. Bus Priority Measures

Slough Borough Council has implemented a significant amount of bus priority over the last few years. Most of this has been located on the A4 London Road, with two stretches on the A355 Farnham Road. The Farnham Road measures were implemented using DfT 'Better Buses For All' funding, while the recently-implemented measures on the A4 followed award of funding by the Berkshire Thames Valley LEP. At this point there were nearly 3km of bus lane.

Further, there are bus gates at the entrance to Slough High Street and connecting the Bath Road Service Road with the A4 Bath Road at Galvin Road.

This bus lane provision was supplemented in 2020 using funds made available under DfT's Emergency Active Travel Fund. These experimental bus lanes are located on the A4 London Road and Bath Road and stretch between the junctions of Cippenham Lane and Uxbridge Road. This has increased bus lane provision by around 6km. At the time of writing public consultation on whether to retain the experimental bus lanes was underway.

Further bus lanes are currently being implemented at Brands Hill as part of a further highway scheme on the A4 London Road funded by the LEP.

Most of the bus lanes in Slough operate between 07:00 and 10:00 and between 15:00 and 19:00. A range of vehicle classes are permitted. Camera enforcement is undertaken.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- Extensive bus priority but a number of pinch-points on the bus network remain as do opportunities to implement more bus priority. The peak-only operation of bus lanes can lead to buses experiencing delays off-peak. There is not yet any 'whole route' priority applying to any bus route. NBS: bus lane on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one. Bus lanes should be full-time and...part of a whole corridor approach.

2.1.7. Slough Borough Council Staffing

As explained in Section 8 of the SBBEB, three staff are engaged in public transport operations and delivery, but all three have a wide range of duties of which public transport is only one. To date they have been supplemented by specialist resource provided by Atkins Ltd. Contact with bus operators has in recent years been around specific operational and commercial issues.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

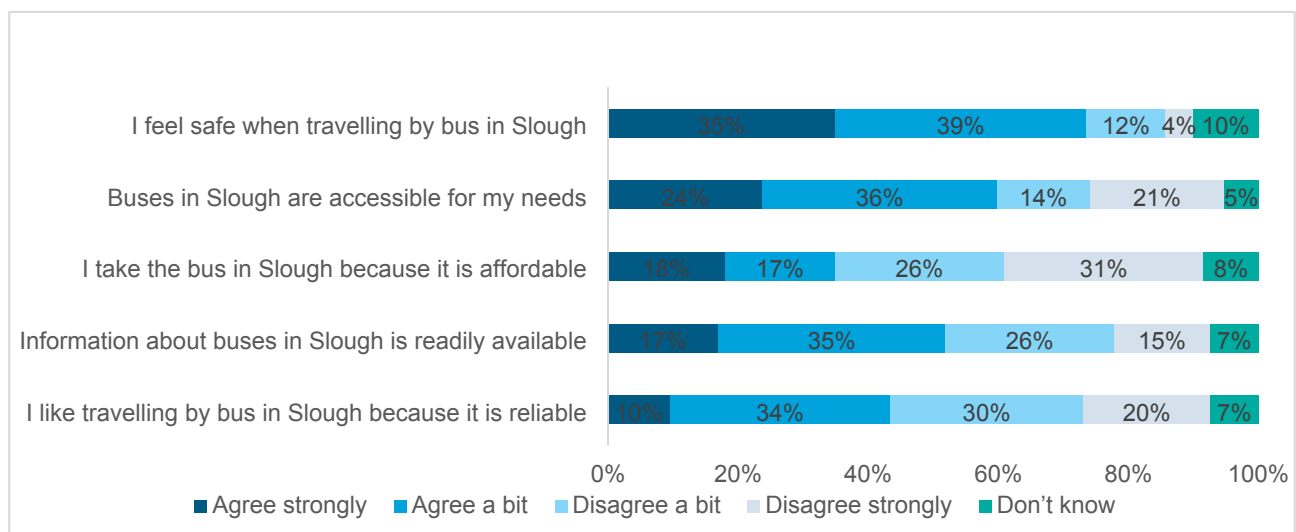
- Limited officer capacity to engage with bus operators and to provide proactive policy and operational direction.

2.1.8. Views of Passengers and Stakeholders

Slough Borough Council undertook on-line consultation with existing bus users, non-users and with stakeholders. This survey concluded on 1 October 2021.

Results from 389 respondents (of whom 189 identified as bus users and 200 identified as non-users) are shown below.

Figure 2-2 – Perception of Bus Travel: Responses from Bus Users

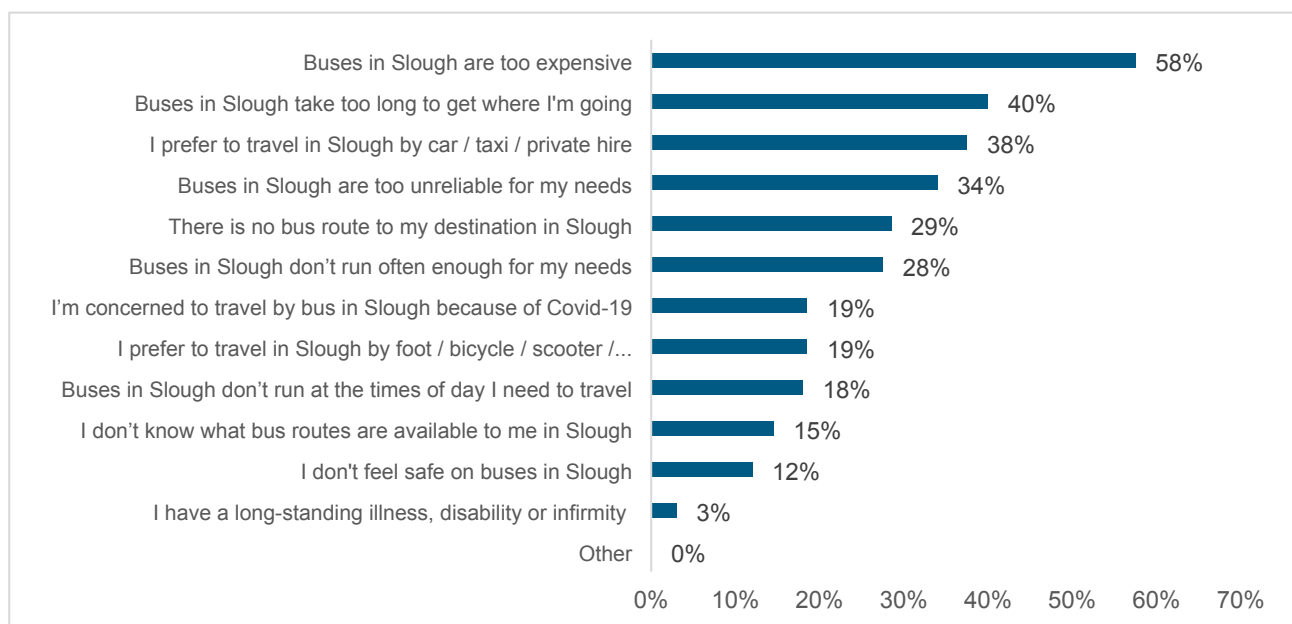


Around three quarters of bus users agreed either strongly or a bit that they felt safe or very safe travelling by bus in Slough. Around 40% agreed that they travelled by bus because it was reliable and affordable. The percentage agreeing that they travelled by bus rose to 59% amongst concessionary bus pass-holders. A similar proportion agreed that information was readily available, but the score improved to around 60% of bus users who felt that bus was accessible for them.

As a point of comparison, the nationwide Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey of autumn 2019 (the last one available) found satisfaction with value for money in a range of 50% - 77%, and satisfaction with punctuality in a range of 53% and 84%. Accepting that the sample size is limited and the methodology different, these figures suggest that satisfaction with buses in Slough may be towards the lower end of the range. Caution needs to be exercised in making comparisons, however, since the two survey methodologies are very different.

Non-bus users were asked why they don't travel by bus at present.

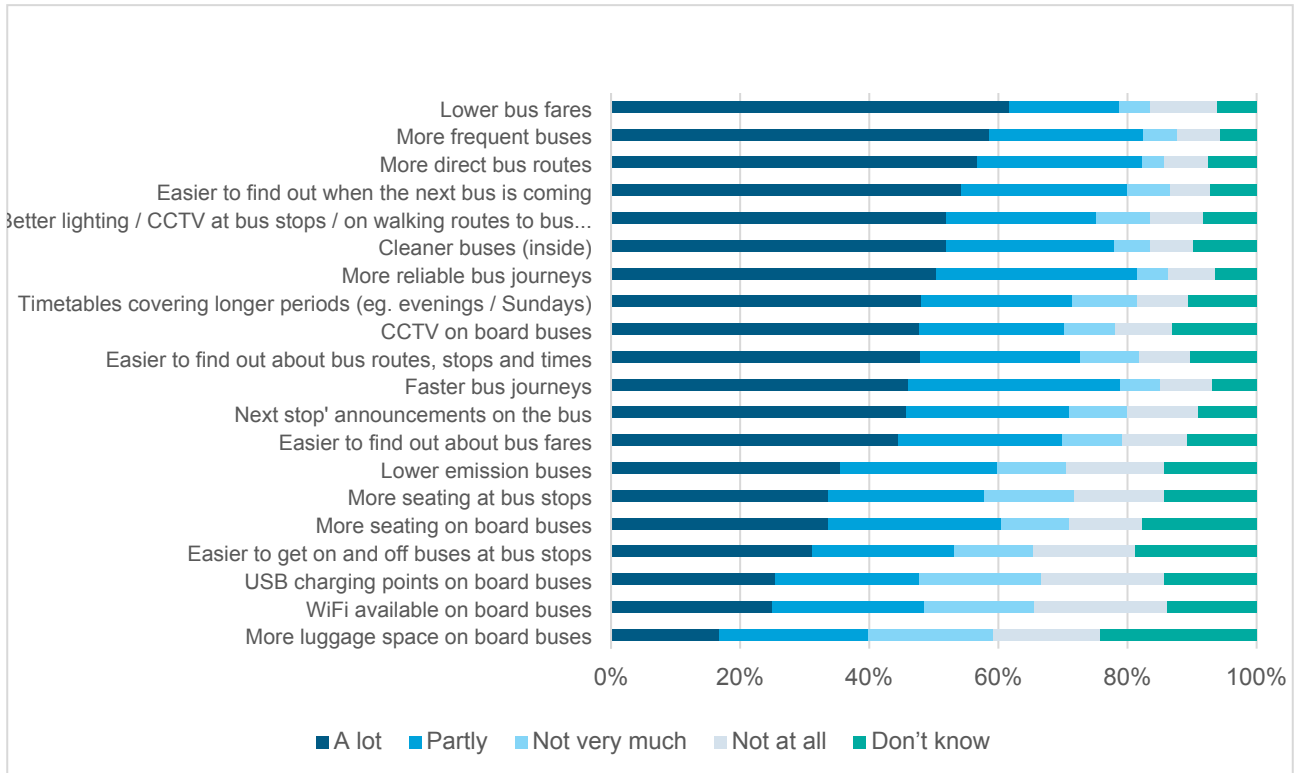
Figure 2-3 – Reasons Cited by Non-Bus Users for not Using Buses



The most frequently cited reason is that buses are too expensive, followed by buses taking too long to reach respondents' destinations, and a preference to travel by other modes. Reliability was cited as the top fourth-equal response. Consistent with bus users, personal safety was cited by few respondents.

Both users and non-users were asked what attributes would make them use bus, or use bus more.

Figure 2-4 – How much would the following make you start travelling, or travel more often, by bus in Slough?



Responses that led over 75% of respondents to answer that they would use buses more, or start using buses, 'a lot' or 'partly' focused on basic journey characteristics (fare, reliability, speed, frequency, duration of services into evenings and Sundays) and information (making it easier to find out about routes, times, fares). The high response rate for fare is despite the fact that 34% of respondents had a bus pass, so amongst fare payers this also is likely to be above 75%.

Fifty-nine percent of responses were provided by females. The survey achieved responses from all age groups from 17-20 to over 70, with a quarter of respondents aged between 40 and 49, but only 10 aged 17-20. Seventeen percent of respondents stated that they had a long-standing illness or disability. Fifty-three percent of respondents identified as white, and 25% as Asian or Asian British, with 14% declining to provide a response on ethnicity.

Respondents were able to provide their comments on bus services. These mainly related to fares being high, peak-period overcrowding, poor reliability, some services being circuitous and poor amenity at Slough bus station.

2.1.9. Bus Service Outcomes

According to DfT bus statistics, the bus passenger trip-rate is a little under 30 per year and has been falling over recent years (SBBEB Figure 6-2). This rate is significantly higher than in neighbouring Berkshire authorities but lower than would be suggested by the level of zero car ownership amongst households in Slough. This suggests that the bus passenger trip-rate could be expected to be around 50% greater at around 45 trips per year (SBBEB Figure 6-3).

There are a number of exogenous factors for this:

- There is a high level of congestion on Slough's highway network, though this appears to have fallen slightly in recent years (SBBEB section 6-8). There are two main causes. The first is a high level of both in-commuting and out-commuting. The in-commuting in particular takes place over a very wide geographical area, much of it to the Slough Trading Estate, some distance from the town centre (SBBEB Figure 3-10). It is therefore difficult for public transport to capture these trips at either trip origin or trip end. Slough Borough Council has sought to address this by combining four business shuttles into one publicly-available bus service linking Slough Station and the Trading Estate. On the other side of the coin the link from Burnham Station to the Trading Estate has been lost;

- SBC is close to the M4 motorway, and experiences variable levels of congestion resulting from incidents on the motorway, which then affects the reliability of local bus services;
- Slough town centre has lost a significant amount of retail activity over recent years;
- There is no university in the town – universities are associated with higher levels of bus usage; and
- Slough has an ethnically highly diverse population, elements of which are understood to place a high value of the ownership and use of a car as a status symbol.

On the other hand, Slough has a relatively high bus mode share for journeys to work at 7.5% (SBBEB Figure 6-13). This reflects in part the influence of Heathrow Airport, which is a significant attractor of demand for out-commuting (SBBEB Figure 3-9). Here Slough Borough Council, working in conjunction with Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) and the bus operators, has over recent years expended some effort in tailoring bus services to meet shift start and finish times, while HAL has offered very low public transport fares and extensive financial support to bus services. HAL has suspended both of these during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Analysis by Urban Transport Group suggests that at a mode share of 7.5% for journeys to work, the overall demand for bus travel could be expected to be roughly 50% higher (SBBEB Figure 6-14). Hence journeys to work are strongly represented in the overall demand for bus travel which indicates some success in attracting work trips to bus but ties in with the narrative above on exogenous factors which suggests reasons for lower levels of bus usage for discretionary and education journeys. As patronage on the bus network is so strongly tied to work journeys, particularly to the Airport, it is strongly reliant on the recovery of these businesses from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Current situation summary:

- Demand for journeys to work is high but overall demand is lower than would be expected for the socio-demographic characteristics of Slough;
- The influence of Heathrow Airport in particular means that the recovery of demand for bus travel will be strongly aligned to recovering demand for air travel and associated activity;
- Figure 2-5 summarises the strengths and weaknesses associated with the bus network in Slough affecting the demand for bus travel.
-

Figure 2-5 - Summary of factors affecting the demand for bus travel in Slough



2.2. LTA financial support for bus services

The financial support that Slough Borough Council currently provides (at 2021/22 prices) is shown at Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Slough Borough Council Financial Support

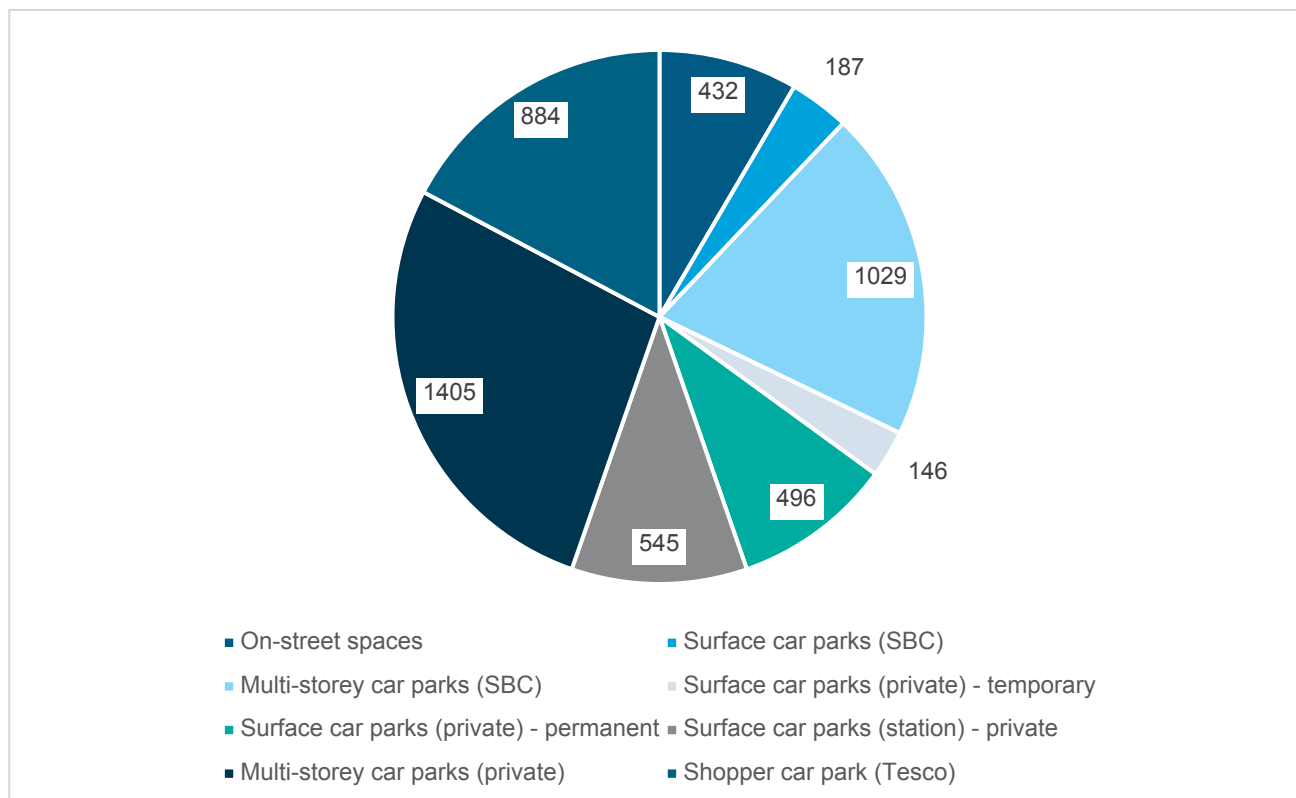
Route	Description	Annual Value	Funding Source
4	Monday – Sunday evenings between Slough Bus Station and Maidenhead	£65,200 (gross cost)	SBC
5	Cippenham ‘loop’; early morning and late evening journeys; Sunday operation	£89,997 (net cost)	SBC
6	Sunday daytimes	£22,050 (gross cost)	SBC
12	Monday – Saturday one evening journey; Sunday daytimes	£26,412 (gross cost)	DfT Better Deal for Bus Users
63/68	Minor diversion to serve Goldsworthy Way	£2,354 (net cost)	SBC

2.3. Other factors that affect the use of local bus services

This should include the extent and pricing of parking provisions in town and cities and the split between LTA and private sector provision. It should also include current LTA spending on parking enforcement.

A previous assessment by Atkins suggested just over 5,000 parking spaces in Slough town centre. The figure below shows the breakdown between on-street and off-street and ownership types.

Figure 2-6 – Slough Town Centre Parking Stock



It can be seen that SBC-managed car parking (on-street and off-street combined) accounts for 30% of the total, with private operators having a large proportion of the parking stock.

Table 2-3 below shows the pricing structure of the major car parks in the town centre.

Table 2-3 – Pricing Structure of the Major Car Parks in Slough Town Centre

Duration	SBC MSCPs (Hatfield and Herschel, 1,029 spaces)	Queensmere shopping centre MSCP (1,405 spaces)	Slough Rail Station (545 spaces)	SBC surface The Grove (45 spaces)	Tesco (884 spaces)	High Street (on-street parking)
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.00	£7.60	£1.20	Free to customers – maximum 2-hour stay	£1.80
1-2 hours	£2.00	£2.00		£2.20		-
2-3 hours	£3.00	£3.00		£3.20	-	-

3-4 hours	£4.00	£4.00	£4.20	-	-
8 hours	£5.00	£8.00	£5.20	-	-
12 hours	£5.00	£12.00	£5.20	-	-

It can be seen that for stays of up to half a day, there is significant competition between SBC and Queensmere shopping centre, and in consequence parking is low cost. There is certainly no price incentive for an adult travelling on their own to use the bus. The cheapest available bus fare is on TfL's route 81 (£3.10 round-trip): only 90p less than £4.00 for up to 4 hours parking.

For stays of a day's duration, SBC car parks offer the cheapest parking available, and at £5.00 all-day there is little or no price signal in favour of using the bus – a Thames Valley Buses day ticket is £5.50, a return trip using two First carnets is £4.80.

Car parking at Slough rail station appears to be cheaper than at large stations on nearby routes – examples are Staines (£9.40) and High Wycombe (£9.50). At £7.60 there is a price signal to use bus for a connecting journey to rail but it could be significantly stronger.

SBC earns £1.26m a year from parking charges.

3. Headline Targets

DfT Guidance

Targets for improvement should be covered in this section. Each section should include an explanation of how and why these targets were chosen and what the percentage increase is on existing performance. The key here is that these targets should be assessed using existing available data or data that the partnership has or can compile. It is also vital to think about clear objectives and how success will be judged and explain your thinking here.

- **Targets for journey times and reliability improvements**
- **These should cover the LTA(s) area as a whole and provide specific data for each of the largest cities and towns in its area.**
- **Performance against these targets must be reported against and published at least every six months.**
- **Targets for passenger growth and customer satisfaction**

This should include details of how this will be measured.

3.1. Bus Journey Times

3.1.1. Target Development

We estimate that the average one-way bus journey time in the AM peak¹, weighted by bus service frequency, is 24 minutes within the Slough boundary. We estimate an average journey time saving, again weighted by frequency, of just over 2 minutes, or a 9% reduction, as a result of implementation of bus priority and other traffic management measures described in Section 4. This estimate is at present a very high level one.

In addition, work undertaken by Atkins in 2019 estimated a reduction in journey time of 2% resulting from a conversion of 50% of on-bus fare-paying transactions to Tap On Tap Out (TOTO). Adding this gives a total journey time reduction of 2.5 minutes or 11%.

We will review the target as design work on bus priority and traffic management measures proceeds, and as SBC gains a more in-depth understanding of the scope for journey time improvements.

3.1.2. Monitoring Proposal

We propose to measure performance in two ways:

- Analysis of bus scheduled journey times within the Slough boundary; and
- Analysis of real-time data from bus operators, both including and excluding bus stop dwell times.

We then propose to control the bus journey time results using results for car journey times using Slough's 'Drakewell' real-time database of Bluetooth car journey time data. Experience with monitoring the results of the A4 bus lane suggest that it is important to understand the effects of bus priority on bus journey times in the context of the change in car journey times in response to changes in traffic volumes and other capacity effects on the highway network.

3.2. Bus Journey Time Reliability

3.2.1. Target Development

DfT Bus Statistics give a figure of 78% 'on-time' performance for the latest year for which data are available, 2017/18. Further information including a time-series is shown at Figure 5-5 of SBBEB. According to the DfT definition of high frequency services (at least 6 buses per hour), no services in Slough currently operate to a

¹ Defined as the last arrival time in Slough Bus Station or at the destination of the journey before 09:00 Mondays to Fridays

high frequency. The highest frequency bus service in Slough, route 81, operates at a frequency of 5 buses per hour for most of the operating day.

Therefore no services should currently be measured using the 'Excess Wait Time' (EWT) formula. EWT measures the additional time that, on average, a passenger who turns up at a bus stop at random can expect to wait for a bus and is considered to be a measure that better reflects the passenger experience of reliability for high frequency services than deviation from the timetable.

However, at that frequency route 81 is measured as a high-frequency service by TfL. The performance standard is an EWT of 1.1 minutes and the service achieved an EWT along the whole route of 0.96 minutes in 2019. Interestingly, in 2020 it achieved 0.53 minutes – in other words as a result primarily of lockdown but possibly also the additional bus priority implemented by SBC under the Emergency Active Travel Fund the route achieved punctuality twice as high as the minimum standard.

We propose to implement a target of a 10% improvement in reliability to be achieved by 2024/25. This will see:

- The target for low-frequency services move from 78% to 86% 'on time' at all timing points within the Slough boundary; and
- The target for any services meeting the definition of high-frequency move from the 1.1 minutes minimum standard of Excess Wait Time currently applied to route 81 to 1.0 minutes.

3.2.2. Monitoring Proposal

Reliability will be monitored using real-time data provided by operators and by SBC's real-time passenger information system. In the case of route 81 we propose to use whole-route data published by TfL.

3.3. Passenger Numbers

3.3.1. Target Development

The development of the target increase in patronage resulting from measures implemented under the BSIP is summarised at Table 3-1 below. These are structured according to elements of Generalised Cost, which is a helpful framework in which to consider the changes to a passenger's journey from walking to a bus stop, waiting for a bus, paying a fare, travelling on a bus, and experiencing 'soft' measures like real-time passenger information and on-bus audio announcements.

Table 3-1 – Target Development

Generalised Cost Element	Change	Elasticity Factor ²	Target % Change	% Passengers the Change Applies to	Forecast Demand Response
Scheduled wait time	Headway	-0.25	-33%	25%	2.1%
Journey time variability	'On Time' or EWT performance	-0.25	-10%	100%	2.5%
Walk	Service Density	-0.25	0%	0%	0%
In-Vehicle Time	On-bus journey time	-0.60	-11%	100%	6.7%
Fare	Average fare / paid passenger journey	-0.30	-20%	50%	3.0%

² Bus fare and journey time elasticities and diversion factors for all modes, RAND Europe and SYSTRA, 2018

Real-Time Information	Number of passengers who receive RTPI while waiting at a bus stop	-0.25	-2%	33%	0.4%
Simplified Ticketing	Number of passengers who benefit from simplified ticketing	-1.1	-2%	50%	0.8%
On-bus audio announcements	Number of passengers who benefit from simplified ticketing	-0.6	-2%	61%	1.5%
Target					17.0%

Taking each of these in turn:

- Scheduled wait time: this is a function of the bus service headway, and reflects a target that a 33% reduction in headway will apply to 25% of passenger journeys – described further in Section 4;
- Journey time variability: again, this is a function of the bus service headway, and reflects a target that additional waiting time resulting from late or irregular operation will reduce by 10%;
- Walk time: no change to service density or coverage is proposed, so walk time remains ‘as is’;
- In-vehicle time: as per the journey time target, this reflects the target that on average 100% of passenger journey times will fall by 11%;
- Fare: we estimate that 28% of passengers travel on TfL’s route 81 and it is not proposed that fares will change on this route. Just over 20% are concessions. For the remaining 50%, we target a 20% reduction in average fare paid per journey as described further in Section 4;
- Real-time information: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to extend real-time to every bus stop in Slough, benefiting an additional 33% of users. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 1.47 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 2% reduction in GJT, applied to the headway elasticity;
- Simplified ticketing: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to simplify ticketing in Slough, benefiting the 50% of passengers who do not use the TfL service or who are concessionary passholders. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 0.84 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 1% reduction in GJT, applied to the total GJT elasticity; and
- On-bus announcements: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to extend on-bus announcements to every bus in Slough, benefiting the 61% of passengers who we estimate do not currently benefit from this. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 1.22 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 2% reduction in GJT, applied to the in-vehicle journey time elasticity.

We have used standard elasticities in this assessment. Given the high propensity to use buses in Slough for work and school education journeys, we think the demand response to reliability measures in particular may be greater than estimated. Similarly, fares elasticity may be higher, suggesting a higher demand response, given the relatively high fares charged in Slough. Finally, the assessment takes no account of the provision of information, which we believe will significantly improve as a result of measures described at Section 4.

We are therefore targeting a 20% increase in patronage, rather than the 17% outlined above. It will be noted that the target percentage increase in patronage of around 20% is lower than the 50% increase suggested by the comparison of bus passenger trip-rate and car ownership set out in section 2.1.9. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the target is derived from individual measures, and it is to be hoped that the combined effect of the measures put forward in the BSIP is greater than the sum of the individual parts. But it is also important to recognise the exogenous demand constraints also considered at section 2.1.9 – notably the limited retail offer in Slough town centre, the limited tertiary education opportunities, and the high level of congestion on the highway network that inevitably will continue to affect buses despite the extensive bus priority measures proposed for implementation under the BSIP.

3.3.2. Monitoring Proposal

We propose to monitor the patronage target using data collated from the bus operators in Slough, using passenger boardings in Slough to be consistent with the DfT's bus statistics.

Before the return of schools in September, bus patronage nationally was at around 60% of pre-Covid volumes. At the end of September with schools returning and the return of many people to workplaces demand had risen to around 75% of pre-Covid levels. The rate of Covid recovery has been considered in both the bus and rail industries and a number of scenarios constructed for rail reflecting the uncertainties around Covid recovery. Much of this recovery relies on exogenous sources such as the demand for travel to work. A particularly strong feature of Slough's bus network and its associated demand is the influence of Heathrow Airport, both as a source of employment and in terms of the support that it has previously provided to bus services in terms of financial support and to staff working at the Airport in terms of heavily discounted tickets. The rate of employment at the Airport will depend on the extent of the recovery in air travel, as will the Airport's ability to resume its financial support for services and to staff.

At this stage, therefore, we forecast a 20% increase in patronage by 2024/5 as a result of the measures implemented in the BSIP. This is based on the level of demand at the start of the Enhanced Partnership in April 2022. Our ambitious target is to deliver a return to 2018/19 passenger volumes by 2024/25 and to continue to deliver improvements beyond that date. We will of course monitor this target and will review it upwards should factors such as employment at Heathrow Airport suggest that it should increase further.

3.4. Passenger Satisfaction

Slough Borough Council has not been the subject of the regular 'Bus Passenger Survey' designed and administered by Transport Focus. There is therefore limited information available on the baseline. We have asked bus operators to provide information on customer comments and complaints which could form a baseline, and in terms of establishing a target or monitoring, could be used in future years. If this proves feasible, we will control this against patronage to provide a complaints or comments rate per 100,000 journeys.

In preparation of the BSIP we have undertaken an on-line survey of users and non-users, the headline results of which have been reported in Section 2. This has requested, amongst other things, residents' views on the perceptions of the bus service. We intend to repeat this survey each year to inform revisions to the BSIP, and so this will also provide an evidence base which we can use to monitor the trend on satisfaction as well as gain intelligence on how the perceptions of users and non-users change.

4. Delivery

DfT Guidance

This is the main body of the BSIP. Its purpose is to explain how the requirements set out in the Strategy are to be delivered. Many factors and interventions by the LTA and local bus operators will influence and contribute to delivering outcomes. The purpose of this section is for the BSIP to set out detailed policies in each of the areas, explain delivery in more detail and how they each will work together to improve local bus services. The BSIP should contain a separate section on each as set out earlier in this guidance (paragraph references are given for ease).

Slough Borough Council and the bus operators recognise that the bus has huge potential to cater for a larger share of everyday journeys and to better meet the needs of people to get around, and to and from, Slough. Through a programme of co-ordinated and sustained investment, we will deliver radical improvements to bus travel, which will see a year-on-year increase in people travelling by bus. The measures set out in this Bus Service Improvement Plan will be a catalyst for bus passenger growth across Slough by creating the conditions to achieve a virtuous circle of investment and passenger growth. Growing bus usage will contribute to a range of the Council's policy objectives, including de-carbonising travel, providing better opportunities to access employment, education, health and leisure activities, and achieving better use of roadspace.

Accountabilities and responsibilities for delivery of the measures proposed under this BSIP will be considered and codified as part of the Enhanced Partnership Plan. Some, such as the provision of highway measures, will clearly sit with Slough Borough Council. Given that all except two bus routes cross the Slough boundary, we will seek to co-ordinate these works with neighbouring highway authorities to deliver maximum effect across whole bus routes.

Many of the measures will require the agreement and active participation of the bus operators. These include, for example, measures to make it easier to pay bus fares or on pricing, or to improve bus passenger information, or on bus network development.

Delivery of measures is clearly reliant on feasibility. Proposals for bus priority, for example, are at outline stage at present, and we will expect to follow the usual processes of project development. In some types of intervention other forms of clarity may be required.

Key stakeholders will be consulted and informed and some – notably Heathrow Airport - will be closely involved in delivery of the measures proposed under the BSIP.

Finally, the implementation of the measures is reliant upon funding being available. SBC will follow its recent successes in seeking match-funding from other sources, but as with other local transport authorities SBC will rely heavily on funding provided by Government under the National Bus Strategy.

4.1. Make improvements to bus services and planning

We have found in recent years a willingness on the part of the main operator in Slough to consider minor changes to timetable proposals in response to suggestions to better meet shift change times at major employers or to make headways more consistent. This follows long-standing influence on the part of Heathrow Airport and Wexham Park Hospital to tailor services to the needs of their employees.

We will build on that co-operation to develop a more collaborative process as part of the Enhanced Partnership to consider proposals to change the bus network and to consider external influences, notably the planning of new development both in the context of opportunities to grow demand but also to ensure that bus services are able to meet the mobility needs in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Similarly we will work with neighbouring authorities and organisations to develop bus services which cross Slough boundaries. Our immediate neighbours are Buckinghamshire Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Transport for London. Other authorities with an influence on bus service provision are

Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Surrey County Council. We will seek to co-ordinate with them on highway schemes which will benefit buses but more specifically we will focus on:

- Bus links between Slough and Windsor – co-ordinating services between different operators to achieve improved service regularity, and increasing frequency between Dedworth and Slough;
- Bus links beyond Windsor to Staines, Legoland and Bracknell, and to High Wycombe and Gerrards Cross – seeking to create the conditions for service development; and
- The proposals for the A4 outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.4 will improve bus speeds and reliability on cross-boundary services from Maidenhead and Taplow to Slough and Heathrow, and we hope will help to create the conditions in which these can further develop.

4.2. Make improvements to bus services and planning: More frequent and reliable services

Subject to funding made available under the National Bus Strategy and other sources, we aim to develop a core urban network consisting of the A4 east-west spine between Cippenham and Heathrow Airport, links to the Britwell Estate and the link between Slough town centre and Wexham Park Hospital. On these links the target is for a 10-minute daytime headway with maximum 20-minute headways during evenings and Sundays, with services tailored to the needs of shift-workers particularly at Heathrow Airport and Wexham Park Hospital (see SBBEB Figure 3-13).

On other town routes we will seek standardised maximum 30-minute daytime headways with maximum 60-minute headways during evenings and Sundays.

In the case of services along the A4 and to Britwell, delivery of the bus priority measures described at Section 4-4 will help to reduce the vehicle requirement, in turn unlocking resource which can be directed at increasing the frequency on the core network or underpinning delivery of regular services on other routes. These bus priority and other highway measures will also promote reliability on this network, as will measures to reduce bus stop dwell times. These measures will also assist the development of interurban services crossing the Slough boundary as outlined at section 4.1 above.

A threat to service development is that patronage has yet to recover to pre-Covid volumes. The rate of this continued recovery is very uncertain, particularly in the case of Slough with its relationship with Heathrow Airport. We therefore seek current network support while patronage builds back for 2022/23 while changes are planned and implemented to make them better for passengers and to deliver growth.

4.3. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review service frequency

In addition, we have reviewed shift start and finish times with the major regional employer, Heathrow Airport, and will seek funding to enable more bus services to meet key shift start and finish times.

Also, we will seek funding for provide consistent service start and finish times across the core network, with the aim of providing last services at around midnight.

4.4. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase bus priority measures

We propose a range of measures, from bus lanes to reviewing Traffic Regulation Orders, in order to reduce bus journey times and facilitate reliable operation.

Subject to funding, technical and construction feasibility and consultation we propose a range of bus priority measures:

- Further priority on the A4 Bath Road and London Road in order to complete provision of priority on this route and provide 'whole route' priority for key bus services to Heathrow Airport and address congestion on the A4 identified at Figure 6-11 of the SBBEB;
- Priority measures on the A355 Farnham Road, and enhancement of existing measures, in order to help buses travel more quickly and reliably along a congested section of road – again, see Figure 6-11 of the SBBEB;

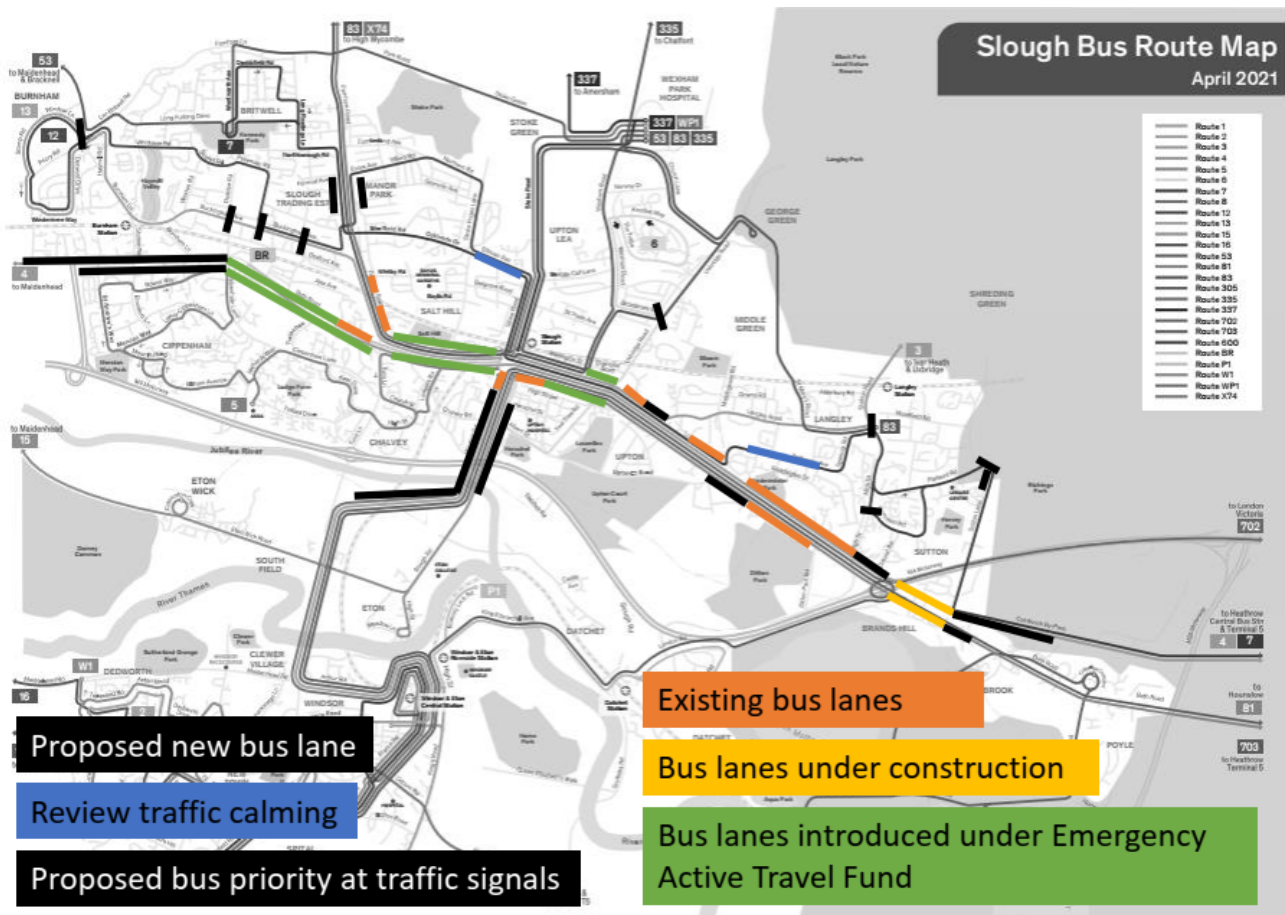
- Priority measures on the A332 Windsor Road, where an opportunity exists to convert the nearside lane in each direction between the town centre and the B3022 junction following recent highway enhancements. The opportunity exists to further enhance this by converting the nearside lane of the A332 inbound from its junction with the A355 to further insulate buses from the effects of highway congestion. We hope that this will help to re-invigorate bus service provision between Slough and Windsor;
- A northbound bus gate on Stoke Road as part of a wider urban realm improvement on this busy and congested link, which is a key part of the route utilised by the core service between Slough town centre and Wexham Park Hospital;
- Other more minor sections of bus lane to identify known issues – notably the westbound approach to the Brands Hill junction from Colnbrook, and the northbound approach on Sutton Lane to Parlaunt Road;
- Bus priority at a number of traffic light-controlled junctions, either to address issues of congestion or to provide an appropriate level of priority where bus service frequencies are low. Altogether 10 locations are currently proposed, subject to feasibility;
- Whilst not in itself bus priority, a proposed link between the A4 Bath Road and Chalvey Church Street will enable a significant reduction in the distance travelled by outbound route 5 buses; and
- Review existing traffic calming measures on Elliman Avenue and Trelawney Avenue, where existing road humps cause delays to buses and significant discomfort to passengers.

This package would increase the distance of bus lane provided in SBC by around 8.5km. Consistent with the requirements of the NBS, we propose to work towards the conversion of existing bus lanes to '24-7' operation in order to provide maximum protection to buses from fluctuations in traffic flow. We propose also that new bus lanes will be '24-7'. We will review the classes of vehicle to be permitted in the bus lanes, and comment that there are no current plans to allow electric vehicles to use these bus lanes.

We aim to work collaboratively with Buckinghamshire Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to deliver bus priority on a co-ordinated basis, recognising that the priority itself may take a number of forms depending on local circumstances and need.

These measures are shown below at Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1 – Proposed Bus Priority Measures



We recognise that there are other means by which journey times can be improved, and by which reliability will be enhanced. We propose to:

- Review the process of communicating roadworks with operators, with the aim of enabling better planning and communication of diversions;
- Give bus operations control staff access to traffic cameras such that bus service controllers can identify incidents emerging in real-time and take early appropriate action; and
- Review Traffic Regulation Orders in force at bus stop clearways, with a view to standardising on '24-7' operation.

Finally, we will undertake a review on each bus route. This will include identification of locations where minor works or a review of parking and loading controls could ease pinch points for buses. It will also review the potential to fill in bus stop laybys, which are identified as causing delays to buses on departing from the bus stop. Subject to funding we propose to commit to a rolling programme of reviewing 3 bus routes a year under the Enhanced Partnership, the routes to be distributed equitably amongst operators but focusing on the busiest routes first.

4.5. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase demand responsive services

No DRT services operate in Slough at present except for a 'Section 19' community bus operation. We are conscious of the financial and commercial risks involved in establishing a DRT operation at scale. We are also conscious that accessing employment opportunities is challenging in many circumstances.

We therefore propose to work with major employers to establish one or more DRT schemes. We propose to utilise the model developed by 'Tandem' and others which establish a brokerage scheme using local transport providers – in many cases local taxi companies where the demand is low. In this way the service can begin at a low scale (and low financial risk) and scale up easily in response to demand. Such a scheme would not necessarily be restricted to operation within Slough's boundary. Employers with whom we might work include the NHS at Wexham Park Hospital and SEGRO, who manage a large part of Slough Trading Estate.

4.6. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Consideration of bus rapid transport networks

The proposals for whole route priority along the A4 Bath Road and London Road represent the foundations for Bus Rapid Transit, and is reflected in SBC's proposals for Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT). Phase 1 is in operation between Slough rail station and the Bath Road Trading Estate and Phase 2 is under construction at Brands Hill. By further developing priority measures and working in co-ordination with Heathrow Airport and with neighbouring Buckinghamshire Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, we hope to stimulate operation of high-frequency BRT services on this corridor.

4.7. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Improvements to planning / integration with other modes

We propose to liaise with TfL Rail and Great Western Railway on timetable co-ordination.

Subject to funding we will re-focus cycle hire / e-scooter hire at Slough and Burnham stations at commuter journeys. We will review the provision of cycle racks at bus stops and consider the potential for mobility hubs.

The requirement is noted to integrate potential cycling infrastructure (subject to a separate Capability Fund bid) on the A4 with bus priority infrastructure.

4.8. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Integrate services with other transport modes

Subject to funding, we will implement a wayfinding project at Slough Bus Station to help passengers find their bus. This will be of particular value to occasional visitors to Slough arriving by rail and who need to identify the stand or on-street bus stop from which their service departs. Given the high rail service frequencies – particularly with the start of Crossrail services – we do not believe that there is a need to co-ordinate frequencies, but we will seek opportunities to develop early morning and late evening bus services, and bus services on Sundays, in order to improve opportunities to connect between bus and rail services.

Subject to funding, we will seek to re-establish the link between Burnham Station and the Trading Estate, which we believe is a valuable link for rail commuters from the west. We will seek to ensure timetable co-ordination between bus and rail as part of the re-establishment of the link.

We will also seek opportunities to improve timetable co-ordination between bus and rail services at Langley station.

4.9. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Simplify services

Services are already generally quite simple in Slough, but opportunities will be pursued, subject to funding, where these require more resource.

We will also seek to ensure that services remain simple – in particular, that bus operate on consistent routings throughout the day. We will prepare a short set of network planning guidelines under the Enhanced Partnership for agreement by operators.

To the north west of Slough a number of areas are served by one bus route with frequent changes in direction. This results in lengthy journey times for some users, as noted by some respondents to the residents' survey. These areas are amongst the more deprived in Slough (SBBEB Figure 2-4) and we will work with the bus operator to develop quicker and more direct services for the benefit of these residents.

4.10. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review socially necessary services

SBC has sought to retain Sunday and evening services previously lost, and will continue to do so with the target, subject to funding, of a maximum 20-minute headway on core network and 60-minute headway on secondary network at these times.

Again subject to funding it will seek to ensure that the majority of its residents are within 5 minutes' walk of a daytime bus service, as it has done to date with funding the 'Cippenham loop' of bus route 5.

4.11. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Invest in Superbus networks

Superbus consists of a comprehensive network of bus priority measures; fares caps; and increased service frequencies. Subject to funding and feasibility we propose to implement each of these elements and so we believe that our proposals qualify for 'Superbus' designation.

4.12. Improvements to fares and ticketing: lower fares

As set out in Section 2, fares in Slough (and east Berkshire generally) are significantly higher than fares in comparable towns. This reduces the competitiveness of bus with driving, getting a lift with a friend or relative, or even using a taxi or Uber. A minimum £5 applies to an Uber fare in Slough, but with a base fare of £2.50, it is highly likely that many journeys within the town will be charged at no more than £5³: Where more than one passenger is travelling, this is unlikely to represent a significant premium over many bus fares.

Subject to funding and feasibility, we propose to reduce the highest fares paid in Slough by around 20% to bring them into line with fares paid in other geographically similar locations and where possible to align with rail fares for equivalent journeys. In 2021/22 prices, our aim is for a day ticket price of around £5.00 and a weekly ticket price of around £17.50. In advance of periodic fares capping, we also want to see a more comprehensive and consistent offer for occasional users of bus, with a carnet of single journeys priced at around £2.00 per journey and a carnet of day tickets priced at around £4.50 per day ticket.

Passenger fares also increase as a result of a need to change between buses of different operators. For instance, someone wanting to travel between Cippenham and Wexham Park Hospital pays twice. Even where tickets are accepted (as with First period ticket products on Redline Buses route WP1) low awareness almost certainly results in passengers paying more. The proposed multi-operator proposition described in section 4.13 will eliminate the need for passengers to pay twice for journeys involving more than operator.

4.13. Improvements to fares and ticketing: simplify fares

Subject to funding and technical feasibility, in particular recognising the constraints imposed by the different technologies employed by TfL and by commercial bus operators, we propose to undertake this in two key ways.

The first is to address the current issue that fares for young people are applied inconsistently by standardising under the Enhanced Partnership (EP) on the age of 19 as the minimum cut-off for a youth discount, that discount being set at not more than 75% of the equivalent adult fare.

The second is a migration to seamless multi-operator ticketing in three stages.

Stage 1 is to mandate under the EP a QR-code paper-based and/or app-based multi-operator ticketing scheme with minimal or zero premium over operator own-price products. This would be based on the model being operated successfully in High Wycombe as Wycombe Smartzone. Some funding will be required from NBS to pay for establishment costs.

Stage 2 is to encourage a move to own operator account-based tap on tap out ticketing, subject to funding being made available under the NBS for second card readers on each bus to enable alighting passengers to 'tap out' separately from those those tapping in. We recognise that TfL in effect has this already – but with no 'tap out' since this is not required as flat fares apply.

³ [Taxi rates UBER in Slough \(taxihowmuch.com\)](https://www.taxihowmuch.com/).

Stage 3 is to pull together stages 1 and 2 to develop multi-operator account-based 'tap on tap out' ticketing mandated under the EP. This would be consistent with Project Coral being developed by the major group operators and we would hope to be able to adopt the infrastructure and processes developed under Project Coral. A significant advantage in Slough is that all operators except Bear Buses and Transport for London currently utilise 'Ticketer' ticket machines and therefore have access to the same 'Littlepay' back office. This may allow SBC to proceed more quickly than a nationally-based scheme would allow, but clearly we will keep this under review. A significant objective at Stage 3 is to integrate Transport for London into the multi-operator scheme. This requires that TfL's 'Pay As You Go' back office is integrated into the Ticketer / Littlepay back office, or whichever back office becomes available nationally, and we recognise that this may present significant challenges.

Stage 3 would substantially replace the multi-operator ticketing scheme, though we recognise that there are some issues around equality of access to the scheme for the unbanked and those eligible for youth fares which will need to be addressed during design phases. Partly for this reason SBC would seek funding from NBS to facilitate the introduction of this scheme.

4.14. Improvements to fares and ticketing: Integrate ticketing between operators and transport

A significant benefit of the 'back office' integration proposed to be developed between TfL's and the commercial operators' back offices is that opportunities would be opened up to integrate local bus fares with TfL Rail 'Pay As You Go'. This would maximise the opportunities for bus/rail multi-modal journeys.

4.15. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: higher specification buses

We will conduct customer research to establish customer priorities, but at this stage we envisage:

- Seeking funding from NBS to ensure as far as possible that buses are fitted with USB chargers as standard, since the ability to charge an iphone en-route is likely to be a significant bonus to bus passengers; and
- Seeking funding for improved vehicle specifications, such as air chilling or luggage racks for buses used on the core network and other long-distance journeys in order to provide a journey experience more akin to using a car.

Transport Focus research on attitudes of young people to using the bus in 2018 suggested that free on-board wifi was one of three top requirements. We will keep this under review: with improved data bundles this may not be the priority that it once was.

4.16. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services

Subject to funding, we will identify and develop solutions for bus stops which do not currently meet accessibility standards. It is considered that filling in bus stop laybys, where appropriate, will also assist.

We will seek funding to review the facilities at Slough Bus Station, and seek means of improving circulation particularly for those in wheelchairs or with buggies.

Subject to funding we will mandate 'next stop' screens and announcements on vehicles as standard on all bus services regardless of DfT moves to mandate AV equipment on the bus. We will investigate the scope of any on-bus AV equipment to accommodate information on diversions.

Finally, we will ensure that the new development takes appropriate account of the needs of bus users and efficient use by bus operators.

4.17. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Protect personal safety of bus passengers

Subject to funding, we will review access routes to bus stops including footpaths as part of the series of route reviews described at section 4.4.

Subject to funding, we will implement CCTV at Slough Bus Station and at selected bus stops.

Most buses in service in Slough are equipped with on-bus CCTV, but we will mandate its use on all but the most infrequent services.

Subject to technical feasibility and funding, we will consider developing a system in conjunction with bus operators whereby a parent is notified when a child's QR code / app is read by a ticket machine as he or she boards a bus.

4.18. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Improve buses for tourists

Buses serving tourist destinations travel through Slough, notably Reading Buses routes 702 and 703 providing links between central London and Heathrow and Legoland and Windsor. A number of visitors to the tourist attractions in Windsor stay in hotels in Slough. The bus priority and service development measures we propose will help these buses provide reliable journeys to tourists and visitors.

4.19. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in decarbonisation

We will seek funding opportunities to deliver a migration to zero-emission bus fleet with associated infrastructure over the coming years. We will co-ordinate with neighbouring authorities especially Transport for London, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Buckinghamshire Council in recognition of the fact that most bus services cross the Slough boundary.

We will in the meantime seek funding to investigate the feasibility of different types of technology applied to the constraints at bus depots and the mileages being operated on bus routes in Slough in order to establish the most cost-effective means of decarbonising the bus fleet. This also recognises our Carbon Management Plan, which sets the objective for Slough Borough Council to be carbon neutral by 2030.⁴

4.20. Improvements to passenger engagement: Passenger charter

We will develop a passenger charter in conjunction with operators. This will include commitments around:

- Ensuring that passengers can find out about their journeys in an impartial manner;
- Ensuring that accurate bus service information will be provided at bus stops;
- Ensuring that buses are clean and conform to an agreed specification for that service;
- Ensuring suitable redress for when things go wrong, including provision of a taxi if the last bus on a route is cancelled; and
- Regular reporting of key bus service performance metrics such as reliability.

4.21. Improvements to passenger engagement: Strengthen network identity

Slough's geography means that most bus services cross its boundary, so a Slough-specific brand is not considered appropriate. Indeed, we estimate that around half the operated mileage is outside the authority's boundary, and only two bus routes (routes 5 and 6) operate entirely within Slough's administrative area. First and Reading Buses have already adopted 'Thames Valley' branding which is considered to be more reflective of the area in which buses operate, and in addition buses on Heathrow services carry Heathrow branding.

4.22. Improvements to passenger engagement: Improve bus information

We propose a suite of measures to overcome the opaqueness that arises from a complex operator landscape and the multiplicity of information sources:

1. Explore potential for operators to share more service information on each others' services on websites and apps. This happens to an extent now in operators' journey planners and is likely to become more

⁴ [Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 – Slough Borough Council](#)

practical as operators begin to retail tickets for travel on each others' services under a multi-operator ticketing scheme;

2. Develop e-ink to provide static and real-time information at all bus stops in Slough as part of a large-scale demonstration project. Currently, paper timetable displays are labour intensive to post, prone to becoming out of date, and because of the logistical challenges changing a number of displays at once it is rarely possible to align changing the roadside at precisely the time of the timetable change. The cost of changing a paper display is around £4 - £5 a unit. It involves a significant amount of vehicle mileage and associated carbon and other emissions. Finally, with multiple operators at some stops but not others there is the potential for confusion about responsibility for posting the roadside. Paper-based roadside information is hard for people to read after dark and is vulnerable to vandalism. It would be tempting to abolish roadside information altogether but there is evidence that passengers value it: Transport Focus's research on attitudes of younger people to using buses found that a third gained their information from roadside displays, and this percentage is likely to increase for older people. Further, e-ink offers the potential to include real-time information at each stop rather than at selected stops, and may be able to integrate with Urban Traffic Management Control systems (see point 5 below). We are therefore keen, subject to funding, to pursue e-ink as a more accurate and engaging means of displaying information at bus stops. We would propose an early pilot project on one route, with fuller roll-out once the concept has been proved;
3. In the meantime we will revise processes for the provision of roadside information and, where possible, standardise provision of display cases;
4. Under the EP we will require co-ordinated timetable changes at set times during the year; and
5. We will seek opportunities to integrate Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) and bus passenger real-time systems to improve information about disruption and diversions.

Figure 4-2 – Sample e-ink displays



5. Reporting

DfT Guidance

This section should set out the arrangements for publishing six-monthly performance against BSIP targets. Please include the URL on your website where these reports will appear.

We propose to publish performance against the four key targets on our website every six months. These will include:

- Bus journey times on a sample of routes, controlled against car journey times so that the context for changes in journey times can be properly understood;
- Reliability on the same sample of routes;
- Patronage as measured by the number of passengers boarding buses in Slough, using figures provided by operators; and
- Bus passenger satisfaction and perceptions, using results of a rolling survey administered by SBC.

The reporting will also summarise changes made to the bus product such as the implementation of bus lanes, service development and fare changes.

The reporting process will be overseen by the Enhanced Partnership Board which we will constitute in the coming months. This body will be responsible for updating this Bus Service Improvement Plan will meet on a periodic basis to manage the development of outputs, monitor outcomes against targets and hold delivery partners to account. The frequency of these meetings will be such to ensure that any risks to delivery can be identified and raised in a timely manner to resolve.

6. Overview table

DfT Guidance

This section should summarise the key outputs of the BSIP and how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy. The purpose of this section is to give readers, including passengers and the Department, an overview of the commitments in the BSIP which LTAs and operators will work towards to improve local bus services. LTAs should complete all sections of the template.

BSIP Overview Table Template

Name of authority or authorities:	Slough Borough Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication:	29 October 2021
Date of next annual update:	31 October 2022
URL of published report:	tbc

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey time	-	Based on current timetables (Aug 21) existing average one-way AM peak bus journey time weighted by frequency is 24 minutes within Slough	21.5 minutes (11% reduction)	Analysis of bus schedules and real-time information for bus services within Slough. This is because half of route mileage currently operates outside Slough: to measure the whole route would under-represent SBC's delivery of bus priority measures. Change in bus journey times to be controlled against change in car journey times (Bluetooth data).
Reliability	78% on-time (2017/18 figure)	78% on-time (2017/18 figure); TfL measures Excess Wait Time on route 81. EWT in 2019 0.96 mins against minimum standard of 1.1.	85% on-time for low-frequency routes; Excess Wait Time (for high frequency routes) 1.0 minutes	Values for timing points to be estimated from real-time passenger information systems for stops within Slough. In the case of TfL route 81 results to be drawn from TfL's published results.
Passenger numbers	4,655,093	4,536,793	?	20% increase in passenger numbers as a result of BSIP measures on a baseline of patronage at the end of the Bus Recovery Grant period (April 2022).
Average passenger satisfaction	-	-	-	Regular SBC residents' surveys.

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning	Yes	More collaborative process as part of the EP to consider proposals to change the bus network and to consider external influences, notably the planning of new development.

		Collaborate with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary interurban service design.
More frequent and reliable services	Yes	Subject to funding, core network of the A4 east-west spine, Britwell Estate and Wexham Park Hospital: target 10-minute daytime headway with 20-minute headways evenings and Sundays. On other town and core interurban routes target maximum 30-minute daytime headways (60-minute headways evenings and Sundays). Improved reliability through intensification of bus priority measures and reduced bus stop dwell times.
Review service frequency	Yes	See above. We will seek funding to provide more bus services to meet key shift start and finish times at Heathrow Airport and other major employers. Also, we will seek funding for provide consistent service start and finish times, with the aim of providing last services at c. midnight.
Increase bus priority measures	Yes	Subject to funding, feasibility and consultation new bus priority on various links and at various junctions. Review traffic calming measures, and bus stop laybys across the network. Minor works and review Traffic Regulation Orders on each bus route. Review TROs at bus stops. Review process of communicating roadworks with operators. Give bus operations control staff access to traffic cameras
Increase demand responsive services	Yes	Propose to establish shared transport services to major employer(s) using a transport brokerage model.
Consideration of bus rapid transport networks	Yes	The proposals for whole route priority along the A4 Bath Road and London Road represent the foundations for Bus Rapid Transit, and is reflected in SBC's proposals for SMaRT, of which Phase 1 is in operation between the rail station and the Bath Road Trading Estate. SBC hopes to stimulate operation of high-frequency BRT services on this corridor.
<i>Improvements to planning / integration with other modes</i>	Yes	Liaise with TfL Rail and First Great Western on timetable co-ordination. Subject to funding re-focus cycle hire / e-scooter hire at stations at commuter journeys. Review provision of cycle racks at bus stops. Requirement noted to integrate potential cycling infrastructure (subject to separate Capability Fund bid) on A4 with bus priority infrastructure.
Integrate services with other transport modes	Yes	Subject to funding, a wayfinding project at Slough Bus Station to help passengers find their bus. Timetable co-ordination between bus and rail as part of re-establishment of the link between Burnham Station and the Trading Estate, subject to funding.
Simplify services	Yes	Services are already generally quite simple in Slough, but opportunities will be pursued, subject to funding where these require more resource.
Review socially necessary services	Yes	SBC has sought to retain Sunday and evening services previously lost, and will continue to do so with the target, subject to funding, of maximum 20-minute headway on core network and 60-minute headway on secondary network.
Invest in Superbus networks	Yes	Superbus consists of a comprehensive network of bus priority measures; fares caps; and increased service frequencies. Subject to funding and feasibility we propose to implement each of these elements.
<i>Improvements to fares and ticketing</i>		
Lower fares	Yes	Subject to funding and feasibility, propose to reduce the highest fares paid in Slough to bring them into line with fares paid in other similar locations and where possible to align with rail fares. The proposed multi-operator ticket will eliminate the need for passengers to pay twice for journeys involving more than operator.
Simplify fares	Yes	Subject to funding and technical feasibility: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Standardise on age 19 as the minimum cut-off for a youth discount; 2) Mandate a QR-code paper-based / app-based multi-operator ticketing scheme; 3) Encourage operator own account-based tap on tap out ticketing;

		4) Mandate multi-operator account-based tap on tap out ticketing consistent with Project Coral.
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport	Yes	Subject to funding and feasibility, electronic PlusBus to allow Plus Bus tickets to specify bus at the start of the journey; Under stage 4 above, integrate local bus fares with TfL Rail Pay As You Go.
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
<i>Higher spec buses</i>		
Invest in improved bus specifications	Yes	We will conduct customer research on priorities, but at this stage we envisage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking funding from NBS to ensure as far as possible that buses are fitted with USB chargers as standard; Seeking a higher specification through vehicle refurbishment for buses used on the core network and other long-distance journeys.
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	Yes	Subject to funding, we will identify and develop solutions for bus stops which do not meet accessibility standards. Subject to funding, 'next stop' screens and announcements on vehicles as standard on all bus services. Ensure that the new development takes appropriate account of the needs of bus users and efficient use by bus operators.
Protect personal safety of bus passengers	Yes	Subject to funding, review access routes to bus stops including footpaths. Subject to funding, implement CCTV at Slough Bus Station and at selected bus stops. Mandate CCTV on-bus. Subject to technical feasibility and funding: Notifications to parents when a child's QR code / app boards a bus.
Improve buses for tourists	Yes	Bus priority and service improvements proposed will boost services to tourist attractions in Windsor.
Invest in decarbonisation	Yes	We will seek funding opportunities to deliver migration to Zero-Emission fleet with associated infrastructure over the coming years. We will co-ordinate with neighbouring authorities especially TfL, RBWM and BC.
<i>Improvements to passenger engagement</i>		
Passenger charter	Yes	We will develop a passenger charter in conjunction with operators.
Strengthen network identity	No	No specific proposals. Slough's geography means that most bus services cross its boundary, so a Slough-specific brand is not considered appropriate. First and Reading Buses have already adopted 'Thames Valley' branding. Heathrow branding in place.
Improve bus information	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Operators to share more service information on each others' services; Develop e-ink to provide static and real-time information at all bus stops in Slough; Co-ordinated timetable changes at set times during the year Seek opportunities to integrate UTMC and bus passenger real-time systems to improve information about disruption and diversions.
Other		
Other		

Appendices



A.1. Funding Template

See the table below entitled *Outline Funding Template for BSIP*

Also provided as an attachment in Excel format

Outline funding template for BSIP

* Within each category, please use multiple lines to show details of different projects or proposals where you can. For example, on bus priority, you should aim to include detail on specific corridors, or on bus service support, you may have a split between scheduled services and demand-responsive services to flag. This is particularly important where you wish to attach a different priority ranking to different parts of your proposals.

** Please rank each line with a number showing your view of priority to your BSIP outcomes: 1 being the highest priority, and every line receiving a different number thereafter.

*** Totals will automatically be calculated. Do not amend calculations in row 34 or columns Q and R.

Q1. Please complete the table below. All figures should be nominal (actual prices, unadjusted for inflation). Please delete guidance in [blue] when completing the template.

[Within all categories, please add more rows if required]	Title of scheme	Detail on aspiration [e.g. 'additional bus priority on X corridor', 'flat fares of Y across operators']	Priority Ranking**	Source of Funding		2022/23 (£ nominal)		2023/24 (£ nominal)		2024/25 (£ nominal)		Beyond 2025 (£ nominal)		Total cost of project or proposal (£ nominal) ***	
				DFT - £3bn	DFT other (please specify) Other Government (please specify) Private	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital
Bus priority infrastructure	Bus priority on primary road network not included in packages below	bus lanes Farnham Road and Windsor Road in packages below		DFT - £3bn	DFT - £3bn				730,000		1,670,000		600,000	600,000	2,400,000
	Bus priority on other roads not included in packages below	bus lanes, selective vehicle detection, bus stop geometry reviews			DFT - £3bn		230,000		740,000		470,000		360,000	360,000	1,440,000
	Other highway reviews not included in packages below	review bus lane operations hours; highway reviews		DFT - £3bn	DFT other (please specify) Other Government (please specify) Private		150,000		130,000				70,000	70,000	280,000
Other infrastructure	Improved timetable displays at bus stops	link displays not included in packages below		DFT - £3bn			1,410,000		1,410,000		1,410,000		1,050,000	1,050,000	4,230,000
	Bus stop upgrades & walk route reviews not included in packages below	review boarding and passenger facilities		DFT - £3bn			470,000		470,000		310,000		310,000	310,000	1,250,000
	CCTV in Slough Bus Station and at selected stops	CCTV		DFT - £3bn		80,000	120,000		80,000		80,000		400,000	640,000	120,000
	Slough Bus Station	wayfinding; review accessibility and facilities		DFT - £3bn									60,000	60,000	410,000
	vehicle upgrades	USB chargers, vehicle refurbishment, next stop announcements		DFT - £3bn			1,100,000		450,000				390,000	390,000	1,550,000
	decarbonisation	feasibility study		DFT - £3bn			100,000								100,000
Fares support	Fares reductions	Fares reduction		DFT - £3bn		700,000		700,000		700,000		3,500,000	5,600,000		
		Discounted fares for young people		DFT - £3bn		360,000		360,000		360,000		1,800,000	2,880,000		
Ticketing reform	Migration to multi-operator and account-based ticketing	second card readers		DFT - £3bn			80,000		80,000				90,000	90,000	160,000
		costs to establish multi-operator & account-based schemes		DFT - £3bn		50,000		50,000		200,000			300,000	300,000	
Bus service support	Support for enhanced bus services not included in packages below	Hospital access and evenings and Sunday		DFT - £3bn		420,000		400,000		380,000		1,880,000	3,080,000	1,880,000	
	Support for current bus service	Current network support, while patronage builds back. This is a one year request to enable a network review to be carried out with operators and service re-shaping to be properly planned, communicated and implemented		DFT - £3bn		2,530,000							2,530,000		
Marketing				DFT - £3bn											
EP/franchising delivery: LTA costs	additional staff costs	2 FTE and EP Board chair		DFT - £3bn		170,000		170,000		170,000		850,000	1,360,000		
Package 1	Langley corridor			DFT - £3bn		1,400,000	600,000	1,320,000	670,000	1,240,000	460,000	5,750,000	9,710,000	1,730,000	
Package 2	A4 London Road and Bath Road corridor			DFT - £3bn		160,000	450,000	160,000	2,970,000	150,000	2,120,000	2,150,000	2,620,000	5,540,000	
Package 3	North West Slough	bus priority, bus stop and bus stop access upgrades, highway reviews, bus service improvements		DFT - £3bn		280,000	640,000	210,000	700,000	130,000	620,000	1,150,000	1,770,000	1,960,000	
TOTALS***						6,150,000	6,630,000	3,450,000	8,480,000	3,410,000	7,060,000	20,410,000	-	33,420,000	21,170,000

Q2. [optional] Please provide any additional notes to explain the other funding sources outside of the £3bn for buses (150 words maximum).

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