

THE SOUTHEND-ON-SEA ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2023-2028

AND

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

INTRODUCTION.

- 1 This Enhanced Partnership is intended to deliver the vision and ambition set out in the Southend-on-Sea Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- 2 An improved local bus service will help the Council to achieve a number of its outcomes as outlined in Southend 2050:
 - Facilitate a wide choice of transport that improves accessibility, connectivity, and mobility to all residents. Including, working with public transport providers to deliver these long-term aspirations.
 - We are leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean and green.

BSIP Objectives and Enhanced Partnership approach

BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
Improve the reliability of local buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver bus priority at major traffic signal junctions in Southend • To undertake a review of major corridors with the view to delivering solutions that could improve bus journey speeds and reliability of services
Make bus journeys quicker, especially on the key routes into and out of Southend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver bus priority at major traffic signal junctions in Southend • To review major corridors with the view to delivering solutions that could improve journey speeds and reliability of services • To upgrade ticket transactions to contactless and mobile payments, speeding up bus boarding times
Improve the quality of local bus stops and waiting facilities for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver a series of Mobility Hubs across Southend to improve connections between buses, trains, walking, cycling, car clubs and other forms of transport • To review major corridors to identify solutions that will improve journey speeds and reliability of services, as well as improving the quality of local bus stops • Ensure that all local bus stops meet minimum standards of accessibility and information
Deliver a more integrated public transport network that is easier for people to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver a series of Mobility Hubs across Southend to improve connections between buses, trains, walking, cycling, car clubs and other forms of transport • To expand the current Octopus ticket to all operator mobile apps and contactless payment and to be accepted on local rail services • To develop and deliver a single brand identity to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services.
Improve the quality and accessibility of bus information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver a single brand identity for local buses, to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services. Expand the range of media for static and real time information.

<p>Improve the quality standards of local bus services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To retrofit existing buses in Southend to an improved emissions standard • To ensure that all new buses in Southend are low emission.
<p>Market and promote local bus services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver a single brand identity for local buses, to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services. • To undertake a marketing campaign to promote bus use

3 Part 1 of this document contains the Southend-on-Sea City Council Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan).

4 Part 2 of this document contains the Southend-on-Sea City Council Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EP Scheme).

PART 1 - EP PLAN

THE SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

Definitions

Term	Definition
ADR Notice	A notice in writing in relation to the referral of a dispute to mediation.
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan, which sets out the strategy and the plan for improving bus services in Southend. This will be revised annually where appropriate.
CEDR	Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution, Registered charity number: 1060369 Company registration number: 2422813.
CMA	The Competition and Markets Authority, the competition regulator for the United Kingdom.
EP	Enhanced Partnership, referring to both the Enhanced Partnership Plan and the Enhanced Partnership Scheme unless otherwise stated.
EPP	Enhanced Partnership Plan, as defined under Section 138A of the Bus Services Act 2017.
EPS	Enhanced Partnership Scheme, as defined under Section 138A of the Bus Services Act 2017.
Large operator	Any operator of a qualifying bus service operating within the Enhanced Partnership Plan Area whose total route mileage within the Enhanced Partnership Plan Area is equal to or in excess of 30% of all route miles. The number of route miles for all operators will be calculated at least once every year, and The Council will always maintain a list of large and small operators for the avoidance of doubt.
Qualifying bus service	A registered local bus service with one or more stopping place within the geographical area of the Enhanced Partnership, except for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any schools or works registered local bus service not eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant; • Any services operated under section 22 of the 1985 Act; • Any other bus service defined as being exempt from the requirements of this Enhanced Partnership as defined in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme. <p>For the avoidance of doubt, a list of Qualifying Bus Services will be published at the start of each financial year by Southend-on-Sea City Council.</p> <p>In addition, any tendered service on which the tendering authority takes the revenue risk will not be subject to the Operator Objection mechanism, consistent with The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018</p>
Small operator	Any operator of a qualifying bus service operating within the Enhanced Partnership Plan Area whose total route mileage within the Enhanced Partnership Plan Area is less than 30% of all route miles.

	The number of route miles for all operators will be calculated at least once every year, and the Council will always maintain a list of large and small operators for the avoidance of doubt.
The Board	The Local Bus Board. The Board will be responsible for duties relating to advising, agreeing on, and managing, the delivery of the EP Plan and Scheme.
The Council	Southend-on-Sea City Council, the local transport authority and the local highway authority for Southend-on-Sea. Southend was awarded City status in October 2021.
The Forum	The Local Bus Forum. The Forum will bring together representatives from a wide range of key stakeholder groups to review the progress of the BSIP and EPP annually and to recommend to the Board the priorities for improving the bus network that it should consider for the following year.
The Partnership	Both the Local Bus Forum and the Local Bus Board collectively.

Enhanced Partnership Plan Area and Time Period

- 1 The Southend-on-Sea Enhanced Partnership Plan will cover the administrative area of the Council, and this is shown in the map below.



- 2 The plan is for an initial period of five years covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028. The plan will be reviewed annually by the Board.

Impacts on the local bus market

- 3 Several external factors are likely to impact upon the viability of the bus market in Southend, some of which are within the control of the signatories to the Enhanced Partnership. These have been recognised as the plan has been developed:

- **The long term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel patterns.** Currently, bus use is below pre-pandemic levels. Whether this is a permanent change is uncertain, particularly for trips to and from work placing financial pressure upon the bus operators and this could affect the ability to deliver against this EP;
- **Local authority resourcing and capacity.** The Council has made a bid to government to resource the delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan. The funding to be awarded by government will determine what can be delivered over the initial years of the EP. Over the longer term, local government funding is likely to come under renewed pressure and will affect the ability to deliver against this EP;
- **Changes in the network and levels of congestion.** Congestion has a significant impact on the reliability and journey times of local buses. This may necessitate changes to the bus network to minimise the impacts of congestion on key bus corridors;
- **Climate change and air quality.** The Council has declared a Climate Emergency, and is considering actions to cut emissions including transport. Additionally, seafront areas and roads are more at risk from climate-related major events such as flooding. Poor air quality is also a concern in some areas of the town.

Passenger Experience

- 4 Data on the passenger experience of local buses across Essex is shown below, which is the most locally relevant data on the experience of passengers. Although it should be noted that this covers all areas of Essex.

Key results									
Satisfaction (%)	2016 all satisfied	2017 all satisfied	2018 all satisfied	2019 all satisfied	2019 very satisfied	2019 fairly satisfied	2019 neither /nor	2019 all dissatisfied	2019 base size
Overall journey satisfaction									
All passengers	86	85	80	86	46	40	8	5	795
Fare-paying passengers	78	79	72	82	37	44	11	7	307
Free pass holders	95	95	90	92	58	34	5	3	485
Aged 16 to 34	75	70	70	80	21	59	12	8	96
Aged 35 to 59	85	87	79	82	48	34	10	8	159
Passengers commuting	76	73	68	80	28	51	13	7	186
Passengers not commuting	94	95	89	90	57	33	5	4	580
Passengers saying they have a disability	89	87	78	87	44	43	8	5	258
Value for money									
All fare-paying passengers	46	51	44	53	23	30	17	29	290
Aged 16 to 34	31	41	37	47	23	24	22	31	86
Aged 35 to 59	63	60	54	58	22	36	15	27	133
Passengers commuting	43	43	41	50	19	32	20	30	166
Passengers not commuting	52	67	50	59	30	29	13	28	118
Punctuality and time waiting for bus									
Punctuality of the bus	70	68	61	65	38	27	12	23	700
The length of time waited	70	68	63	69	37	32	13	18	764
On-bus journey time									
Time the journey on the bus took	85	83	81	86	53	33	9	5	795

Data on journey speed and the impact of congestion

- 5 Data from our real time system indicates locations where there are issues on the highway network that hold up buses. What this indicates is that whilst there are areas where delays are worse than other areas, delays to buses is a consistent issue across the network.



Outcomes

6 The outcomes that the partnership expects to achieve are contained within the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Achieving these outcomes is subject to funding secured from the Department for Transport through the National Bus Strategy, as specified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan or any replacement, successor, or additional schemes established for a similar purpose:

- a 25% reduction in average delay to weekday daytime bus services over the course of the BSIP;
- a reduction of 15% of the number of buses arriving late at their destination;
- all key corridors in the town to have coordinated timetables to even out service frequencies with a bus every five minutes throughout the day;
- all core services to provide a service frequency of at least 15 minutes between 1900 and 2200 on weekdays;
- to increase the number of trips on local bus services by 500,000 trips per annum above the 2019/20 baseline by April 2028;
- to increase the proportion of trips undertaken by non-National Concessionary Bus Pass holders on local buses to 65% by April 2028;
- to establish a baseline for customer satisfaction on local bus services in Southend in 2023/24, with the view to set a specific target in the next BSIP;
- to improve the percentage of local people satisfied with local bus services to 75% by 2028

Interventions and Policies

7 The partnership believes the following key interventions are required:

- Make improvements to reliability and bus journey times, immediately through bus priority signalling and over the longer term delivering significant changes to key corridors;
- Develop the network through providing new services linking key hubs across the town;

- Improved networks supported by better infrastructure, offering clearer information, better ticketing, higher quality, frequency and better integration

Review and Consultation Process

- 8 The EPP will be reviewed by 31st March every year alongside the BSIP. This review will be led by Southend-on-Sea City Council, in partnership with the Forum and the Board, annually as set out in Section 5 of the EPS.

Analysis of local bus services

- 9 Southend-on-Sea is characterised as having a frequent core commercial bus network, with bus operations focussing on high frequency services (10 to 30 minutes frequencies between 0700 and 1900 on weekdays and Saturdays) radiating from the City Centre. Frequencies are often lower after 1900, and on Sundays.

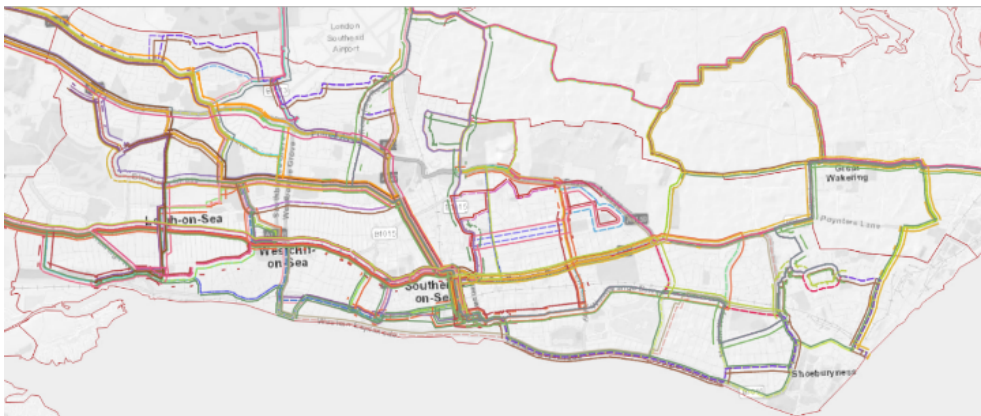


Figure 1: Bus routes in Southend

- 10 The routes are a mixture of urban services operating within the city, and interurban bus services operating to nearby towns such as Basildon, Rochford, and Chelmsford. The corridors in the town with the highest frequencies of services are the A13 London Road, Victoria Avenue, Prittlewell Chase, Chichester Road, Rochford Road, and the A127.
- 11 As of 1st July 2021, there were 23 registered local bus services, open to the general public operating in Southend. In financial year 2019/20, local bus services carried 7.1 million passengers, down from 8.7 million in 2009/10.
- 12 As of 1st September 2021, the majority of local bus services are operated by two companies: First Essex and Arriva. Stephenson's is the largest small operator of services. Additionally, a seasonal bus services also operates, serving visitors and residents to the town.

Objectives of the Enhanced Partnership Plan

- 13 The Objectives of the Enhanced Partnership Plan are those of the Bus Service Improvement Plan:
 - Manage the highway network in a manner that improves the reliability of local bus services;
 - Make local bus journeys quicker, especially on key routes in Southend;
 - Improve the quality of bus stops and waiting facilities for all users of local bus services;
 - Deliver a more integrated public transport network that is easy for everyone to use;
 - Improve the quality and accessibility of bus service information through all media channels;
 - Improve the quality standards of local bus services, including reducing emissions;

Market and promote local bus services in a holistic manner.

Enhanced Partnership Plan and relationship to schemes

14 The first Enhanced Partnership Scheme is focused on delivering the following elements of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and BSIP objectives:

BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
Improve the reliability of local buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver bus priority signalling at major junctions in Southend • To review major corridors to identify solutions that will improve journey speeds and reliability of services
Make bus journeys quicker, especially on the key routes into and out of Southend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver bus priority at major traffic signal junctions in Southend • To review major corridors to identify solutions that will improve journey speeds and reliability of services • To upgrade existing tickets to contactless and mobile payments, speeding up bus boarding times
Improve the quality of local bus stops and waiting facilities for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver a series of Mobility Hubs across Southend to improve connections between buses, trains, walking, cycling, car clubs, and other forms of transport • To review major corridors to identify solutions that will improve journey speeds and reliability of services, as well as improving the quality of local stops • Ensure that all local bus stops meet minimum standards of accessibility and information
Deliver a more integrated public transport network that is easier for people to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver a series of Mobility Hubs across Southend to improve connections between buses, trains, walking, cycling, car clubs, and other forms of transport • To expand the current Octopus ticket to all operator mobile apps and contactless payment, and to be accepted on local rail services • To develop and deliver a single brand identify to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services.
Improve the quality and accessibility of bus information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver a single brand identify to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services. Expand the range of media for static and real time information.
Improve the quality standards of local bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To retrofit existing buses in Southend to an improved emissions standard • To ensure that all new buses in Southend are low emission
Market and promote local bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and deliver a single brand identify to be applied to all bus information, stops, and services.

15 The measures and facilities to deliver these are set out in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme in Part 2.

16 The expectation is that future schemes will emerge from the network reviews and potentially for cross-border services, and when additional funding becomes available.

17 Discussions have been undertaken with all neighbouring authorities and cross boundary services and co-operation will form a significant part of the network reviews.

PART 2 – EP SCHEME

THE SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

EP Scheme Content

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 will set out:

Section 2 - Scope of the Scheme and commencement date

Section 3 - Obligations on the Authority

Section 4 - Obligations on Local Bus Operators

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements

2 This document should be considered alongside the associated Enhanced Partnership Plan.

3 The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by Southend-on-Sea City Council and the bus operators that provide local bus services in the EP Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the local transport authority and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated EP Plan.

4 The delivery of the obligations set out in this scheme are subject to funding secured from the Department for Transport through the National Bus Strategy, as specified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan or any replacement, successor, or additional schemes established for a similar purpose.

Section 2- Scope of the EP Scheme and Commencement Date

Description of Geographical Coverage

5 The EP Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating in Southend-on-Sea, as defined by the administrative boundary of The Council.

6 The Enhanced Partnership Scheme covers the same geographical area as the Enhanced Partnership Plan.

Commencement Date

7 The EP Plan and scheme are to be made on 31 March 2023, covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2028.

8 The EP Scheme will expire on 31 March 2028, and will be reviewed by Southend-on-Sea City Council, in partnership with the Forum and the Board, annually as set out in Section 5.

Exempted Services

9 Local bus services registered to operate only between 1st May and 1st September every year for the primary purpose of serving visitors to Southend-on-Sea will be exempted from the requirements of this EP.

Section 3 - Obligations on the Council

10 The scheme places the following obligations on the Council. The successful delivery of these obligations and their outcomes is also subject to the successful delivery of the obligations on operators as set out in Section 3. The delivery of the obligations set out in this scheme is subject to funding secured from the Department for Transport through the National Bus Strategy, as specified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan or any replacement, successor, or additional schemes established for a similar purpose.

Facility	Responsibility	Action	Delivery date (subject to funding)
A set of facilities as set out at Annex A to this scheme	Southend-on-Sea City Council	To provide the listed facilities	April 2028

Measure	Responsibility	Action	Delivery date
Proposals to deliver the Southend Bus Service Improvement Plan	Southend-on-Sea City Council	The Council in collaboration with operators will deliver the proposals set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan, contained in Annex B to this scheme.	Ongoing
Improvements to customer information and to market and promote local bus services in collaboration with Essex County Council	Southend-on-Sea City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a Southend and South Essex bus brand, and implement on the Council's digital and physical assets To develop and deliver a 'Get back on the Bus' style promotional campaign and deliver with operators To develop and launch a joint marketing and promotional campaign with operators and Essex County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 2024 June 2023 <p>Ongoing</p>

To facilitate and make improvements to the Octopus ticket	Southend-on-Sea City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the existing Octopus ticket to contactless and mobile phone payments in collaboration with operators • Upgrade Octopus ticket to be accepted on local rail services, subject to acceptance by train operating companies • Work with the bus operators to identify options to promote value fares for Summer 2024 as outlined in the Bus Service Improvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2024 • December 2028 • August 2024
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Section 4 - Obligations on Local Bus Operators

11 The scheme places the following obligations on operators. The successful delivery of these obligations is also subject to the successful delivery of the obligations on the Council as set out in Section 3. The delivery of the obligations set out in this scheme and their outcomes is subject to funding secured from the Department for Transport through the National Bus Strategy, as specified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan or any replacement, successor, or additional schemes established for a similar purpose, and other existing funding streams being retained at their existing levels.

12 The obligations upon operators established in this EP Scheme constitute, unless otherwise specified or exempted, a collective obligation upon all bus operators, that they will endeavour to achieve through collaborative working established to achieve the aims of this EP. The delivery of these obligations will be cognisant of the appropriate legislation concerning competition.

13 Where any operator withdraws services in a manner that affects the collective ability of all operators to achieve a recommended or agreed service frequency on a corridor (as defined by the BSIP), and operators collectively are not able to maintain this frequency through changes to other services in a manner that is commercially viable, this will be considered as a substantial change. This would be subject to the variation procedure as set out in [paragraphs 67 and 68].

Measure	Responsibility	Action	Delivery Date
Improvements to customer	Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage with the development of the single 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024

<p>information and to market and promote local bus services in collaboration with Essex County Council</p>		<p>Southend and / or South Essex brand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the brand on digital and physical assets (e.g. buses) in a light touch way e.g. vinyls not wholesale re-livery and at a suitable and agreed scale • To develop and launch a joint marketing campaign with the Council • To implement a Bus Passenger Charter • To agree a set of common network/timetable/registration change dates per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 • April 2024 • July 2023 • Ongoing
<p>To work jointly with the Council on major improvements to bus corridors</p>	<p>Operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work jointly on the improvements to main bus corridors as set out in the BSIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
<p>To make improvements to ticketing options and information</p>	<p>Operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the Octopus ticket readily available on all ticketing platforms and to publicise the ticket (with a review of operation and apportionment by July 2024) • Work with the Council to identify options to promote value fares for Summer 2024 as outlined in the BSIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2024 • August 2024
<p>Reinvesting in an improved network</p>	<p>Operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where highway network changes are made that result in resource savings as a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

		result of faster journey times operators will reinvest a proportion of the benefits in more frequent services, or new buses, or other improvements of mutually agreed value	
Introducing cleaner vehicles	Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new buses are built to a low emissions standard. Where brand new vehicles are introduced within the area, their allocation will be cognisant of local air quality concerns as one of the factors considered within the operator's business case. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements

14 The Enhanced Partnership will constitute two separate bodies: the Local Bus Board and the Local Bus Forum. The Local Bus Board's primary function is to advise and agree on, and manage, the delivery of the EP Plan and Scheme. The Local Bus Forum's primary function is to set the strategic direction of the Enhanced Partnership, and to appoint individual members of the Board, subject to the rules contained within these governance arrangements.

15 All members of both the Board and the Forum are expected to act with due propriety. This means that all members should act in accordance with the broader public interest and the needs of bus passengers, and in the spirit of working in partnership to improve bus services. All members of both the Board and the Forum are expected to exercise their own professional judgement in meeting this expectation, and must not act only with their own interests or those of their individual companies or constituents.

Local Bus Board

16 The Board will be responsible for duties relating to advising and agreeing on, and managing, the delivery of the Plan and Scheme. These duties consist of, but are not limited to, the following:

- To recommend to the Forum the future aims and objectives of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Enhanced Partnership Plan, Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Enhanced Partnership, including recommending to its constituent organisations changes that should be made;
- To develop policy recommendations to Southend-on-Sea City Council about planning and priorities for the improvement of the local bus network;
- To develop operational recommendations to operators for the improvement of the local bus network;
- To develop recommendations for any variations in the Enhanced Partnership agreement to be presented to the Forum;
- To be a consultee on any changes in policies such as the Local Transport Plan and Local Plan;
- Be responsible for setting Key Performance Indicators and measuring the progress of the delivery of the objectives and targets in the BSIP and EP Plan and Scheme;
- Monitoring and managing the Enhanced Partnership and BSIP and adherence to it by the relevant parties, agreeing any actions that need to be taken accordingly.

- 17 In exercising this role, the Board is expected to not act in isolation. It should seek the views and input of relevant others including (but not limited to) other operators, local bus users and passenger representative groups, neighbouring local transport and planning authorities, and other key stakeholders.
- 18 The Board will have equal voting representation from Southend-on-Sea City Council and from bus operators who run eligible registered local bus services within the Enhanced Partnership Plan Area.
- 19 The Chair of the Board will be nominated and approved by the Forum, serving a period of 12 months. The Chair must be independent of the both the Council and local bus operators, having no personal or financial interests in either. Should the Chair opt to rescind their role, a meeting of the Forum will be called no later than 28 days from the Chair notifying the Board of their intention, with the purpose of nominating a new Chair.
- 20 All large bus operators will have one nominated representative on the Board. All small bus operators will be represented by a single nominated representative.
- 21 Pursuant to establishing the Board, the Confederation of Passenger Transport will facilitate a meeting between small operators, who will then agree the representative of small operators on the Board. Should that representative opt to rescind their role as a Board member, the CPT will be asked to facilitate another meeting between small operators to select a replacement representative as required.
- 22 The number of Council representatives on the Board will be equal to the total number of large and small bus operator representatives combined, giving an equal voting representation from The Council and operators. The Council's representatives will be appointed internally and will include senior officers with responsibility for highways and public transport functions. As a minimum, one representative of the Council will be the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Transport.
- 23 All Board members will be responsible for ensuring attendance at all Board meetings that they are invited to. They should ensure that they have reviewed and understood all meeting papers in advance of the meeting, and where feasible the required mandate for whom they represent.
- 24 If a Board member cannot attend a particular meeting, they can nominate a substitute of another person of a similar level or role within the same organisation. The exception is the representative for small operators, who may nominate a substitute from another operator to attend in their absence.
- 25 The Board will also have two representatives attending in an observing capacity and where invited to do so by the Chair contribute to any of the discussions and agenda items. They do not have any voting rights on the Board. These representatives will be from Essex County Council and the Southend Area Bus User Group.
- 26 All Council representatives, all bus operator representatives, and the Chair will have a single vote on all matters requiring a decision. For a decision to be carried by the Board, both over 50% of Council representatives present at the meeting, and over 50% all bus operator representatives present at the meeting must vote in favour of the decision made by the Board.

- 27 Representatives not exercising their vote, through not casting a vote at the meeting or through not attending the meeting and not nominating a substitute or their substitute not casting a vote, will be deemed to have abstained and will not have their vote counted.
- 28 Decisions on matters which are likely to be significant in terms of its effects on local communities and/or with financial impacts on the Council will be subject to the Council's constitution and governance policies and processes.
- 29 The Board and the Forum shall have no authority to commit the Council or operators to any action that either the Council or operators consider to be contrary to applicable law and statutory obligations.
- 30 Board meetings will only take place if the meeting is quorate. To be quorate, the following Board members must be in attendance:
- 50% of the total nominated bus operator representatives
 - 50% of the total nominated Council representatives
 - The Chair of the Board
- 31 The Board will meet quarterly (January, March, June, September), with additional meetings at the discretion of the Board. Meeting dates will be set and notified to members at least a month in advance.
- 32 All papers will be circulated by the Secretariat at least 2 weeks before a meeting. Should papers be submitted less than 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, its inclusion on the agenda is at the discretion of the Chair.
- 33 The Council will act as the Secretariat for Board Meetings, with the role being performed by a member of Council staff who is not one of the nominated representatives on the Board. The person undertaking that Secretariat role will not have the rights corresponding with representatives on the Board at Board meetings.
- 34 All papers will be circulated by the Secretariat at least 2 weeks before a meeting. Should papers be submitted less than 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, its inclusion on the agenda is at the sole discretion of the Chair.
- 35 Wherever feasible, Board meetings will take place in person at the Civic Offices, Victoria Avenue, Southend. They can also take place online via remote access, such as MS Teams.
- 36 Draft minutes of the Board meetings will be circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting to all representatives and observers.
- 37 The Board may be assisted by relevant working groups that may be formed based on the facility or measure that is being implemented, or by topic or area. Their primary purpose will be to provide expertise in the area of interest, to seek any wider stakeholder input or engagement, and recommend to the Board any appropriate actions or measures that could be delivered.
- 38 The membership of the working groups will be at the discretion of the Board. The Board may invite membership on any working groups from outside the membership of the Board and that of the Forum.

39 Any deliberations and recommendations by the working groups will be fed into the Board meetings as appropriate. The Board is not bound to accept any recommendation made by these working groups.

The Local Bus Forum

40 The Forum will bring together representatives from a wide range of key stakeholder groups to review the progress of the BSIP and EPP. It may also recommend to the Board the priorities for improving the bus network that it should consider for the following year.

41 The Forum will be responsible for advising the Board on the strategic direction of the EP, and may make recommendations to the Board about the priorities for improving the bus network that it should consider in the future. The Forum is an advisory body and has no formal decision-making powers over the Board, but it has two formal roles within the EP:

- To nominate and appoint an independent Chair of the Board, to serve a minimum period of 12 months;
- To consider and make recommendations of any variations proposed by the Board on the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme.

42 The following organisations will initially be formally invited to be members of the Forum:

- Southend-on-Sea City Council, constituting the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Transport, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning, and the appropriate Director with responsibility for Highways and Transport.
- All operators of qualifying bus services operating in the EPP Area;
- Essex County Council;
- Castle Point Borough Council;
- Rochford District Council;
- Southend Area Bus User Group;
- Transport Focus;
- Bus Users UK;
- Essex Police;
- Southend Business Improvement District.

43 The Forum may nominate additional representatives from other groups to attend future Forum meetings. Any additional members would be subject to a vote of the Forum, requiring a majority for additional members to be confirmed.

44 The Forum will be chaired by the Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highways and Transport.

45 The Forum will be a public meeting, advertised on the Council's website no later than two weeks prior to the meeting. An agenda will be made available no less than one week prior to the meeting. This will be sent to all invited participants and be made publicly available.

46 At each Forum, there will be a minimum of one agenda item at which members of the public will be invited to ask questions or make comment about any of the agenda items at the meeting. Each member of the public will have no more than 3 minutes in which to speak. For the rest of the meeting, members of the public can attend in an observing capacity only.

- 47 Forum meetings will only take place if the meeting is quorate. To be quorate, the following Forum members must be in attendance:
- The Chair of the Forum
 - At least 50% of the nominated bus operator representatives or their substitutes
 - At least 50% of the nominated Council representatives or their substitutes
 - Of all non-Council and non-operator parties, at least one being in attendance.
- 48 The Forum will meet at least annually in September of each year, with additional meetings as required. Meeting dates will be set and notified to members at least a month in advance.
- 49 All Forum members will be responsible for ensuring attendance at all Forum meetings that they are invited to. They should ensure that they have reviewed and understood all meeting papers in advance of the meeting, and where feasible the required mandate for whom they represent.
- 50 If a Forum member cannot attend a particular meeting, they can nominate a substitute of another person of a similar level or role within the same organisation.
- 51 All Forum members will have a single vote on all matters requiring a recommendation to be made. For a recommendation to be carried by the Forum, a majority of votes from all representatives present is required.
- 52 Representatives not exercising their vote, through not casting a vote at the meeting or through not attending the meeting and not nominating a substitute or their substitute not casting a vote, will be deemed to have abstained and will not have their vote counted.
- 53 The Council will act as the Secretariat for the Forum, with the role being performed by a member of Council staff who is not one of the nominated representatives on the Forum. The person undertaking that Secretariat role will not have the rights corresponding with representatives on the Forum at Forum meetings.
- 54 Nominations for the position of Chair of the Board must be received by the Secretariat no later than one week prior to the Forum meeting. No representative of the Council or any operator of registered local bus services, or any person with a financial interest in either the Council or any operator of registered local bus services will be eligible for the position of Chair of the Board. All candidates for the position of Chair will be vetted by the Secretariat prior to being put to a vote.
- 55 All prospective Chairs of the Board will be invited to state their case to be Chair at the Forum for no longer than 3 minutes. Once all nominations who have chosen to state their case have done so, a vote will then be taken.
- 56 To elect a Chair of the Board, a minimum of 50% of the representatives present must vote in favour of a Chair of the Board. Where the vote results in no candidate securing the vote of at least 50% of representatives present, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated, and a further round of voting will take place with the remaining candidates. Further rounds of voting will take place, with the candidate with the lowest number of votes being eliminated in each round, until a candidate wins a minimum of 50% of the votes of the representatives present.

- 57 All papers will be circulated by the Secretariat at least 2 weeks before a meeting. Should papers be submitted less than 2 weeks in advance of the meeting, its inclusion on the agenda is at the sole discretion of the Chair of the Forum.
- 58 At each meeting, the Forum will receive an update on the Enhanced Partnership and the BSIP by a nominated representative from the Board.
- 59 Wherever feasible, Forum meetings will take place in person at the Civic Offices, Victoria Avenue, Southend. They can also take place online via remote access, such as MS Teams.
- 60 Draft minutes of the Forum meetings will be circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting to all attendees.

Competition

- 61 The Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of this EP Plan and Scheme to be made on 31 March 2023 on competition for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000 and believes that the majority of 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. Portions of the EP Plan and Scheme, particularly related to standardisation, route timetabling, and ticketing, may have a significantly adverse effect on competition. However, the authority believes those portions of the EP Plan and Scheme(s) are justified because:
- a) they are made with a view to achieving one or more of the following purposes:
 - securing improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used for or in connection with the provision of local services;
 - securing other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services; and
 - b) reducing or limiting traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
 - c) their effect on competition is or is likely to be proportionate to the achievement of that purpose or any of those purposes.
- 62 All members of the Board and the Forum are expected to carry out their duties in accordance with the rules and regulations governing competition in the bus industry. These are laid out in the relevant Acts of Parliament and guidance from the Department for Transport, Competition and Markets Authority, and other relevant best practice. Decisions to be made by the Board must consider their implications on competition, and such considerations should be part of the deliberations of the Board where relevant.

Dispute resolution

- 63 All members of the EP Board and Forum commit to working in partnership to resolving issues and disputes as they arise. It is anticipated that the majority of such matters will be resolved through the working of the EP. In exceptional circumstances, the Board may seek the opinion of the Department for Transport or the Competition and Markets Authority in assisting in resolving a dispute.
- 64 If a dispute arises out of or in connection with this agreement or the performance the EPP or EPS between the Council and a single operator, or the validity or enforceability of it the EP Plan or Scheme (Dispute), then except as expressly provided in the EPP or EPS, the parties shall follow the procedure:

1. The relevant party or parties shall give to the other written notice of the Dispute, setting out its nature and full particulars (Dispute Notice), together with relevant supporting documents. On service of the Dispute Notice, all parties shall attempt in good faith to resolve the Dispute;
2. If the representatives of the parties are for any reason unable to resolve the Dispute within 30 days, the parties agree to enter into mediation in good faith to settle the Dispute in accordance with the CEDR Model Mediation Procedure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties within 7 days of service of the Dispute Notice, the mediator will be nominated by the CEDR. To initiate the mediation, a party must give notice in writing (ADR notice) to the other party to the Dispute, referring the dispute to mediation;
3. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the mediation will start not later than 14 days after the date of the ADR notice. Where the Dispute is brought by more than one operator, the provisions set out above shall apply except that the operators may be represented by the Confederation of Passenger Transport should they so choose.
4. No party may commence any court or arbitration proceedings in relation to the whole or part of the Dispute until it has attempted to settle the Dispute by mediation and either the mediation has terminated or the other party has failed to participate in the mediation, provided that the right to issue proceedings is not prejudiced by a delay.
5. If for any reason the Dispute is not resolved within 30 days of commencement of the mediation, the Dispute shall be referred to and finally resolved by the courts of England and Wales OR arbitration proceedings.

65 This dispute resolution procedure will not be used to overturn decisions or recommendations of the Board or Forum.

Review of EPS

66 Once the EPS is made, it will be reviewed by the Board every year following publication of data on progress towards targets, as required by the BSIP – this will ensure any necessary action is taken to deliver the targets set out in the BSIP. Southend-on-Sea City Council will initiate each review, to report recommendations to the Board by 31st December of each year.

67 The Board can also decide to review specific elements of the scheme on an ad-hoc basis. Board members must contact the Council explaining what the issue is and its urgency. The Council will then decide whether to table the issue at the next scheduled meeting or make arrangements for all of the necessary Board members to gather more quickly.

Bespoke Arrangements for Varying or Revoking the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

68 Under powers at s.138E of the Transport Act 2000, Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations where this section is quoted will be subject to the bespoke voting mechanism also as set out in this section.

Proposer of a variation or revocation

69 Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations, or a revocation highlighted either by a local authority or an operator of local bus services. The proposer of a variation or revocation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the BSIP, EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be in writing and submitted to Southend-on-Sea City Council. The Council will forward all requests onto all Board members within 5 working days.

Decision-making Process

70 On receipt of a request for a variation or a revocation of part or all of an EP Scheme, the Council will convene the Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation or revocation proposal. To agree a proposal of variation or revocation, voting members of the Board or their substitutes must vote in favour of the variation or revocation in line with its standard rules on voting. If the proposed variation or revocation is agreed, the Scheme variation or revocation will be made within seven working days and the revised EP will be published on the Council website; or a statement will be issued confirming that the scheme has been revoked.

71 If at any point in the future the EP scheme area is included in a bus franchising area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP scheme document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the franchising scheme.

72 In the event that a number of operators which would trigger the default operator objection mechanism (as set out in the Enhanced Partnerships and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018) raise concerns in writing to a minimum of one subsequent Board meeting about a previous decision of the Board, the decision-making process for Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations will revert to the default operator objection mechanism contained in those regulations to review that decision and as appropriate for future decision-making purposes.

Annex A – Identified Facilities

The facilities that are subject to this Enhanced Partnership are outlined below. The planned facilities are subject to funding being available from the Department for Transport through the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

	Current facilities	Planned facilities
Bus stops	<p>All bus stops within the ownership of Southend-on-Sea City Council and within the administrative boundary of the Council in their state as of the making of this Partnership.</p> <p>These facilities include the following where they currently exist at each stop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flags • Poles • Timetable cases • Real time information screens • Shelters • Seating • Raised kerbs • On-road markings and parking restrictions • Lighting, including street lighting • CCTV • Drainage 	<p>Upgraded or new bus stops delivered through the Bus Service Improvement Plan, including additional facilities installed such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flags • Poles • Timetable cases • Real time information screens • Shelters • Seating • Raised kerbs • On-road markings and parking restrictions • Lighting, including street lighting • CCTV • Drainage
Bus priority facilities	None	<p>Planned facilities to be delivered as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Priority Signalling at major junctions in Southend • Bus priority measures delivered as part of major corridor upgrades (Southend Town Centre to Hadleigh, Southend Town Centre to Eastwood, Southend Town Centre to Shoeburyness Town Centre, and Southend Town Centre to Southend Airport)
Hubs and Interchanges	Southend Travel Centre, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2BD	<p>Mobility Hubs to be delivered as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, and subject to feasibility and agreement with land owners on ownership and maintenance of facilities where applicable. These hubs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southend Town Centre • Leigh-on-Sea • Southend Hospital • Thorpe Bay Railway Station • Shoeburyness Town Centre • Southend Airport