



**National Bus Strategy
Bus Services Improvement Plan**

Devon County Council
Version 3.0 – June 2024



Contents

Contents	2
Foreword	3
1. Overview – Our Devon Bus Vision	5
1.1. Introduction.....	5
1.2. Vision, Aims and Objectives.....	6
1.3. Project Delivery	7
1.4. Devon and Torbay’s plans for a Combined County Authority	8
1.5. Transport Network.....	8
1.6. Population	9
1.7. Deprivation	10
1.8. BSIP in Relation to Wider Policy and Strategic Context	12
2. Current offer to bus passengers	16
2.1. Information about the Current Bus Network – Network Performance Data	16
2.2. Provision of information.....	30
2.3. Ticketing	32
2.4. Vehicle Fleets.....	35
2.5. Current Network Barriers and Opportunities	35
2.6. Views of stakeholders	37
2.7. Collaboration with other Local Authorities.....	38
2.8. Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention.....	39
2.9. Adaptations to face post-Covid challenges	39
3. Improvements Programme to 2025	42
3.1. Introduction & Scheme Summary	42
3.2. Individual Scheme Delivery	43
4. Ambitions & Proposals for 2025 & Beyond.....	67
4.1. Future Aspirations for Bus Services in Devon - Introduction	67
4.2. Summary of proposals	67
4.3. Bus network planning and improvements to bus services	68
4.4. Bus priority on priority routes and corridors	78
4.5. Improvements to Fares & Ticketing	80
4.6. Improvements to the passenger experience	82
4.7. Improvements to the bus fleet.....	83
5. Targets, Performance Monitoring & Reporting	86
6. List of Figures and Tables.....	87

Foreword

“When I was six years old, on the occasional Saturday afternoon, my family would set out to catch the bus to our local town. This was exciting! It usually meant we would be going out for afternoon tea at our favourite tea rooms. I can still picture the waitress, dressed in her formal uniform with cap and white apron, the delicious sandwiches, teeny cakes and lots of hot sweet tea! But to me the most wonderful part was the bus journey - the sense of freedom, being out on the open road, miles and miles of hedges, fields and forests - absorbing the beautiful scenery where I was lucky enough to grow up. I’ve never lost this sense of excitement when catching the bus, but it is perhaps only in more recent years that I have truly recognised and appreciated the value of the bus to society, and its importance to residents of Devon.



The bus network has never been more important - connecting different communities across Devon - from those living in deeply rural locations to others in more urban areas. Statistics show that there are 3 times more bus journeys in the UK than rail journeys. To many the bus is a lifeline - enabling commuters going to work, students to access education, hospital patients and visitors to access treatment and appointments - not to mention those accessing leisure facilities or simply enjoying a day out and the social aspect of the journey.

Devon’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is an opportunity. An opportunity to shape the future of the bus network in Devon, creating a sustainable network across the county.

We are delighted with the progress we have made so far since 2021. In this latest version of our BSIP we outline our ambitious plans for the future, when further funding becomes available. Our proposals continue our work to increase confidence in the network, to increase the number of services, to reduce fares, and to make the bus a more attractive proposition, encouraging people to use the bus more regularly. We cannot ignore the current climate emergency, and are thrilled that over 40 electric buses will be arriving on Devon roads in 2025. Given the geographic makeup of the county progress on alternative fuel solutions may take longer to develop, but one way we can all help to make a difference is to encourage people to get out of their cars and to give the bus a try.”

***Councillor Andrea Davis, Portfolio Holder for Transport
Devon County Council
June 2024***



SECTION 1

Overview – Our Bus Vision

1. Overview – Our Devon Bus Vision

1.1. Introduction

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) outlines Devon County Council's (DCC) ambitions, structured plans and supporting policies to improve buses (their service design, delivery, and vehicles) across the geographical area covered within this BSIP. The BSIP provides a traceable path of action from the current-state network to that desired in future, explaining how this growth will be delivered and the targets set for mileposts in 2025, 2030 and beyond.

The key themes in this third revision of our BSIP are:

- **Updating the baseline to 2023/24:** to reflect the current situation and reflecting on developments since the 2022 BSIP refresh. This includes the evolution of the local bus market post-pandemic, and highlighting achievements made on a local level through the Enhanced Partnership.
- **Setting out the short term improvement programme we will deliver in 2024/25:** to reflect schemes we are delivering as part of our BSIP funding allocation, and additional funding through DCC.
- **Getting ready for 2025 and beyond:** refreshing the plan's ambition and content to set out a high quality and flexible pipeline of prioritised proposals for the four years 2025/26 to 2028/29, and a longer term 10 year plus vision. Although funding has not yet been secured after 2025, our plan intends to be ambitious and attractive to funders, and ready for delivery as opportunities for funding arise.
- **Targets, performance monitoring and reporting:** in line with government guidance these have not been updated from the previous version. A new periodic monitoring report for the public reporting progress in delivering the BSIP and outcomes data against BSIP targets will be instituted later in 2024, replacing previous requirements.

DCC has now established an Enhanced Partnership with our Bus Operators, and an active Bus Users and Stakeholder (BUS) Forum. Both bodies have provided high-level stakeholder engagement to input into this BSIP and include representation from bus operators, statutory consultees, community and business voices, bus passengers, train operating companies and the voluntary and health transport sectors. Together we are focused on delivering a future-ready bus network.

1.2. Vision, Aims and Objectives

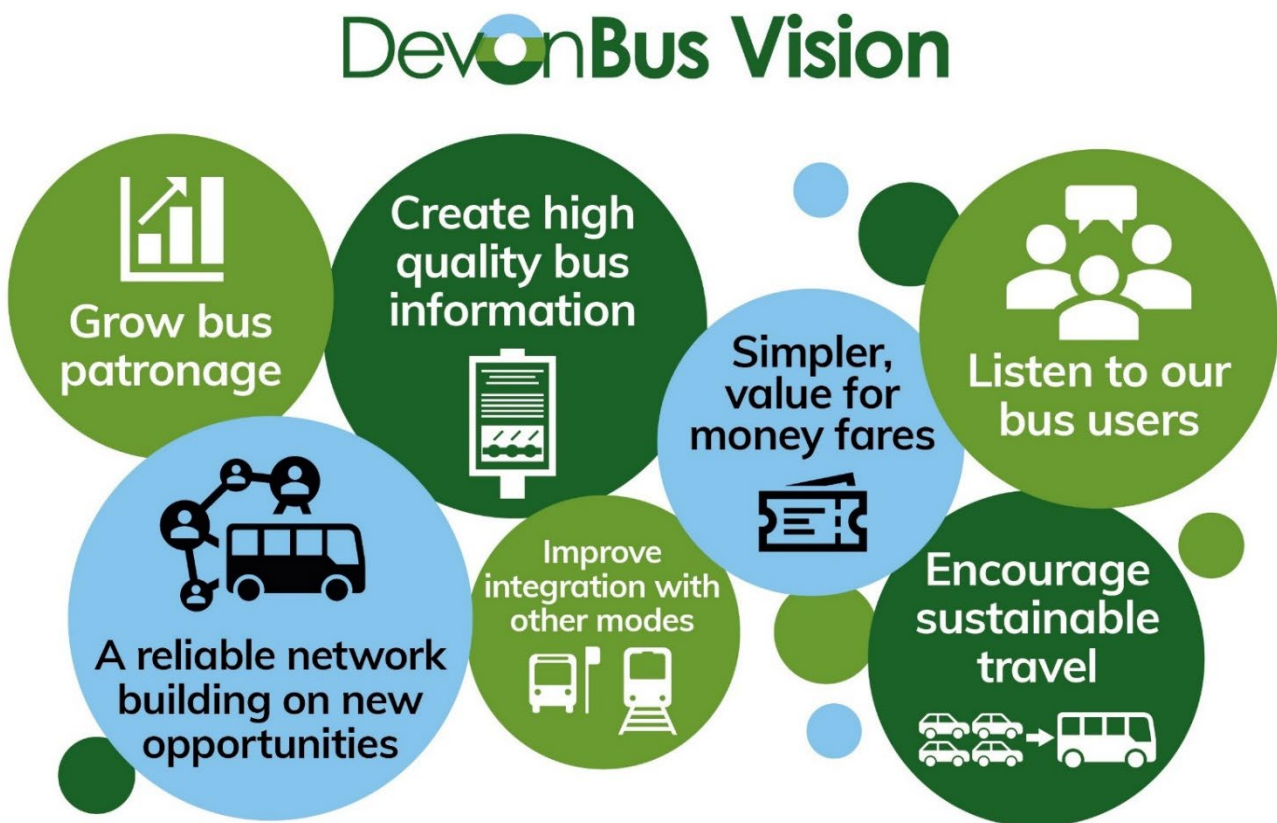


Figure 1-1 – Our “Devon Bus” Vision

Our BSIP has the following aims:

- Grow bus patronage across Devon
- Facilitate a positive step change in bus provision across the area
- Create a bus network that meets the needs of all potential users
- Create a framework to regularly consult bus users, and use this information to influence bus service provision in the future
- Ensure information regarding bus services is of the highest quality and accessible to all
- Ensure the bus is considered equally alongside other modes of transport

To meet these aims we have set the following objectives:

- Achieve 95% punctuality on all bus services by 2025
- Significantly increase passenger numbers and modal shift towards bus travel across Devon
- Improve the provision of bus services in all communities, on evenings and weekends, and strategic links between centres of population and rail interchanges
- Implement a universal fare strategy in Devon and the South West, that reduces the cost of bus travel, and is simpler and easier for passengers to understand
- Identify and implement a significant increase in bus priority, making the bus an attractive alternative to the car
- Develop a sustainable bus network, that with the improvements detailed in this document, will become self-funding as far as possible in the future

- Listen to the needs of passengers and key stakeholders and involve them in current and future planning of the bus service provision.

The aims and objectives fit with priorities to deliver our BSIP and we have reported on our progress up to 2025 in [Section 3](#). These include:

- Better Connected Communities
- Better Bus Journey Times
- Better Affordability of Travel
- Better Accessibility to Services
- Better Passenger Experience
- Better Environmental Outcomes
- Better Health & Education Outcomes

1.3. Project Delivery

DCC and its local bus operators welcome the opportunity of developing this BSIP and working towards our Enhanced Partnership. This BSIP will be updated annually, or as required otherwise by the DfT, and is aligned with the authority's Local Transport Plan.

From the outset DCC made the decision to develop the BSIP internally, with experienced staff, and only limited external support. This is possible as DCC has continued to invest in a strong team who have much expertise and industry knowledge. As we move towards the Enhanced Partnership and delivery of the BSIP this puts DCC in a strong position to deliver improvements quickly.

Below is an organogram detailing our delivery team:

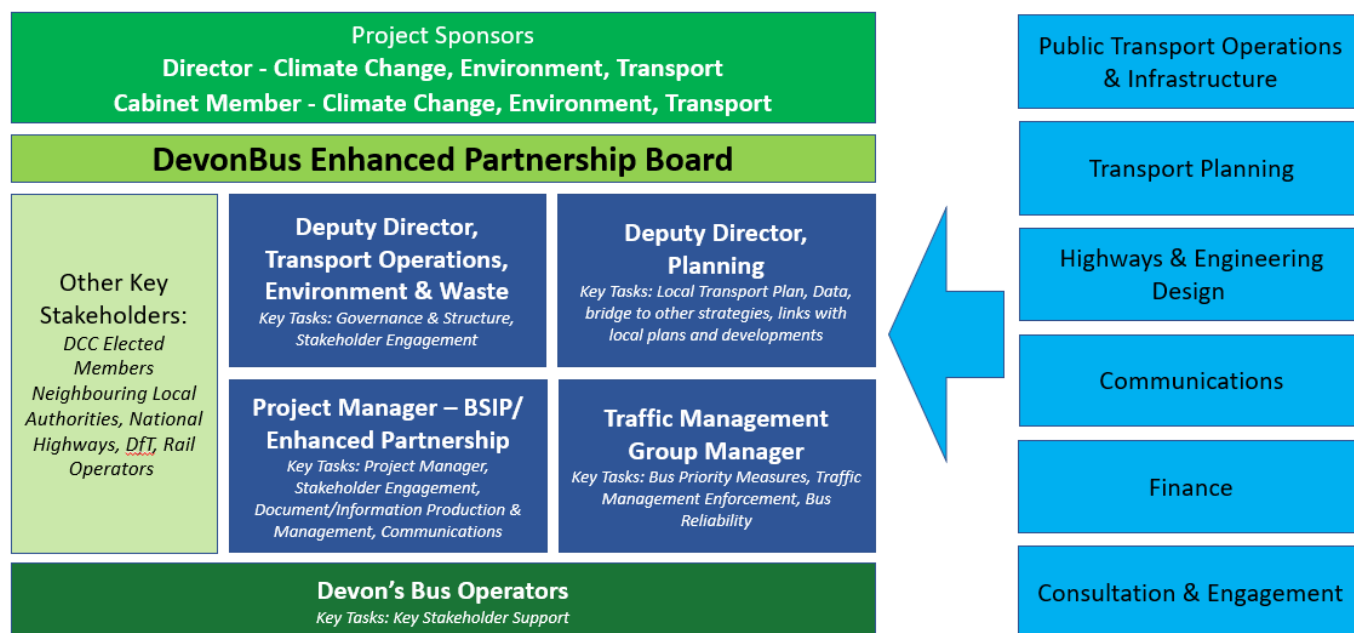


Figure 1-2: Organogram illustrating the DCC team and other stakeholders responsible for delivering Devon's BSIP.

1.4. Devon and Torbay's plans for a Combined County Authority

Earlier in 2024, Devon County Council and Torbay Council formally submitted a proposal to Government to create a Combined County Authority (CCA) to deliver the devolution deal in Devon and Torbay.

Whilst this proposal is still undergoing final approvals and the establishment of necessary legislative arrangements, Devon and Torbay have developed separate BSIPs. Although it is anticipated that in the future the CCA will have one BSIP and work together to deliver improvements to bus services across the area.

1.5. Transport Network

This BSIP covers the administrative area of DCC which is split into eight District Council areas, and includes the major urban centre of Exeter, plus other larger town areas around Newton Abbot, Barnstaple and Exmouth. There are also a number of traditional market towns across the County with numerous widespread villages and hamlets, covering an area of just over 2,500 square miles.

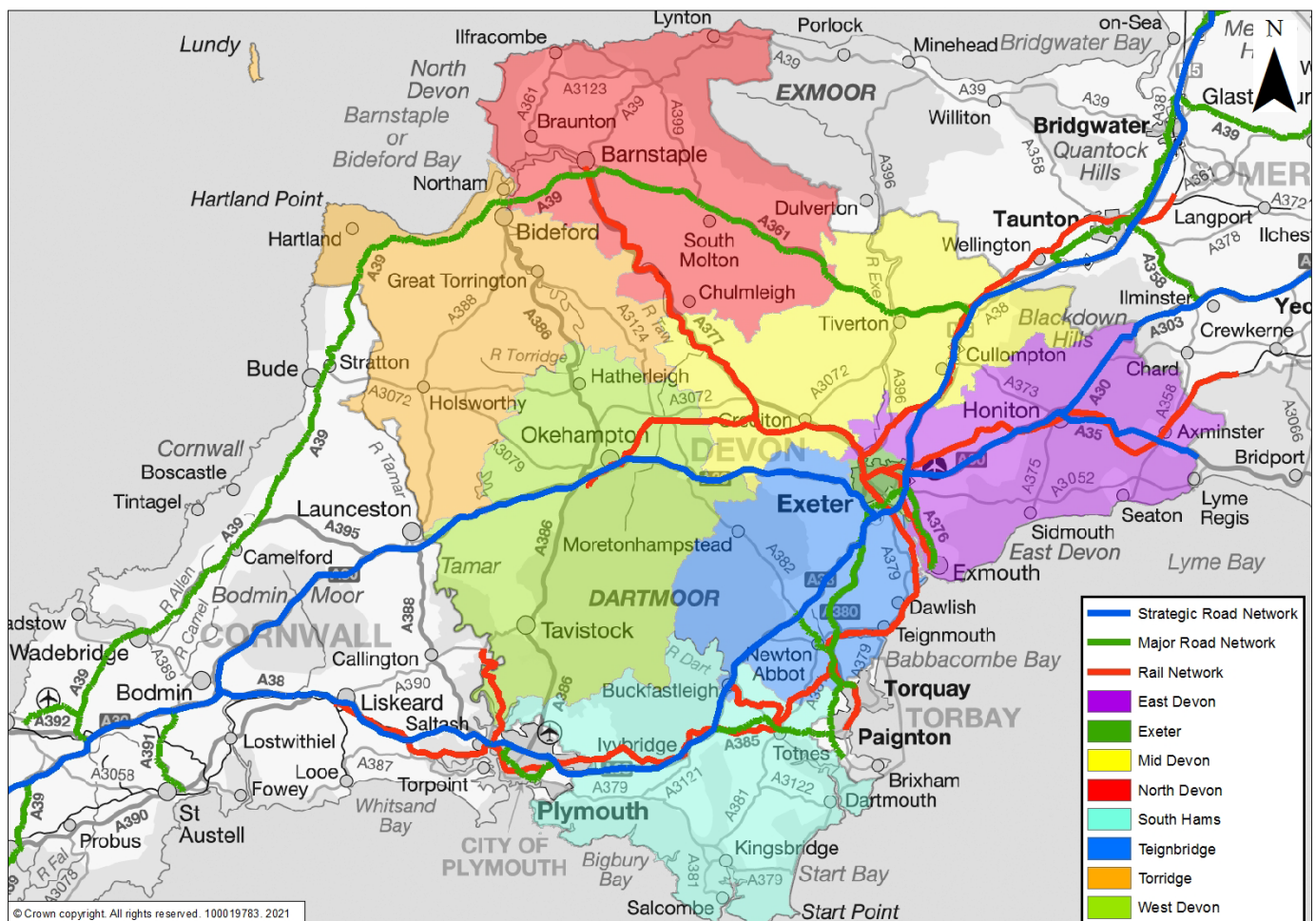


Figure 1-3 Map of District Council areas and transport networks within Devon.

Within Devon, the strategic transport network is principally comprised of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), i.e. the M5, A30/A303 and A38 roads, and the Great Western (London-Bristol-

Exeter-Plymouth) and West of England (London-Basingstoke-Salisbury-Exeter) mainline railways. These routes are complemented by the Major Road Network, including the A361 North Devon Link Road/Atlantic Highway, which links North Devon and Torridge to the SRN, and rail branch lines, including the Tarka (Exeter-Barnstaple), Avocet (Exeter-Exmouth), Riviera (Newton Abbot-Paignton), Tamar Valley (Plymouth-Gunnislake) and Dartmoor (Okehampton-Exeter) lines.

1.6. Population

At the 2021 Census, the population of DCC's administrative area was 811,700. With a total area of approximately 6,600 km², the average population density is approximately 120 people per km². However, there is significant variation in population density between and within districts, with Exeter having a population density of some 2,800 per km², whilst West Devon's population density is just 48 per km², the 5th lowest of 309 English lower-tier authorities. In the Dartmoor Forest Civil Parish within West Devon, the population density is even lower, at 8 per km², and many other parishes have fewer than 25 inhabitants per km² (see figure below).

District	Population (2021)	Area (km ²)	Population density (per km ²)		
			Overall	Rank of 309 lower-tier authorities	Rank of 181 non-metropolitan districts
East Devon	150,828	814	185	250	131
Exeter	130,709	47	2,780	65	14
Mid Devon	82,852	912	91	293	167
North Devon	98,611	1,086	91	293	167
South Hams	88,627	886	100	291	165
Teignbridge	134,803	674	200	241	122
Torridge	68,114	984	69	301	174
West Devon	57,096	1,160	49	305	177
Devon	811,640	6,565	124	-	-

Table 1-1: Population densities of Devon District Council areas.

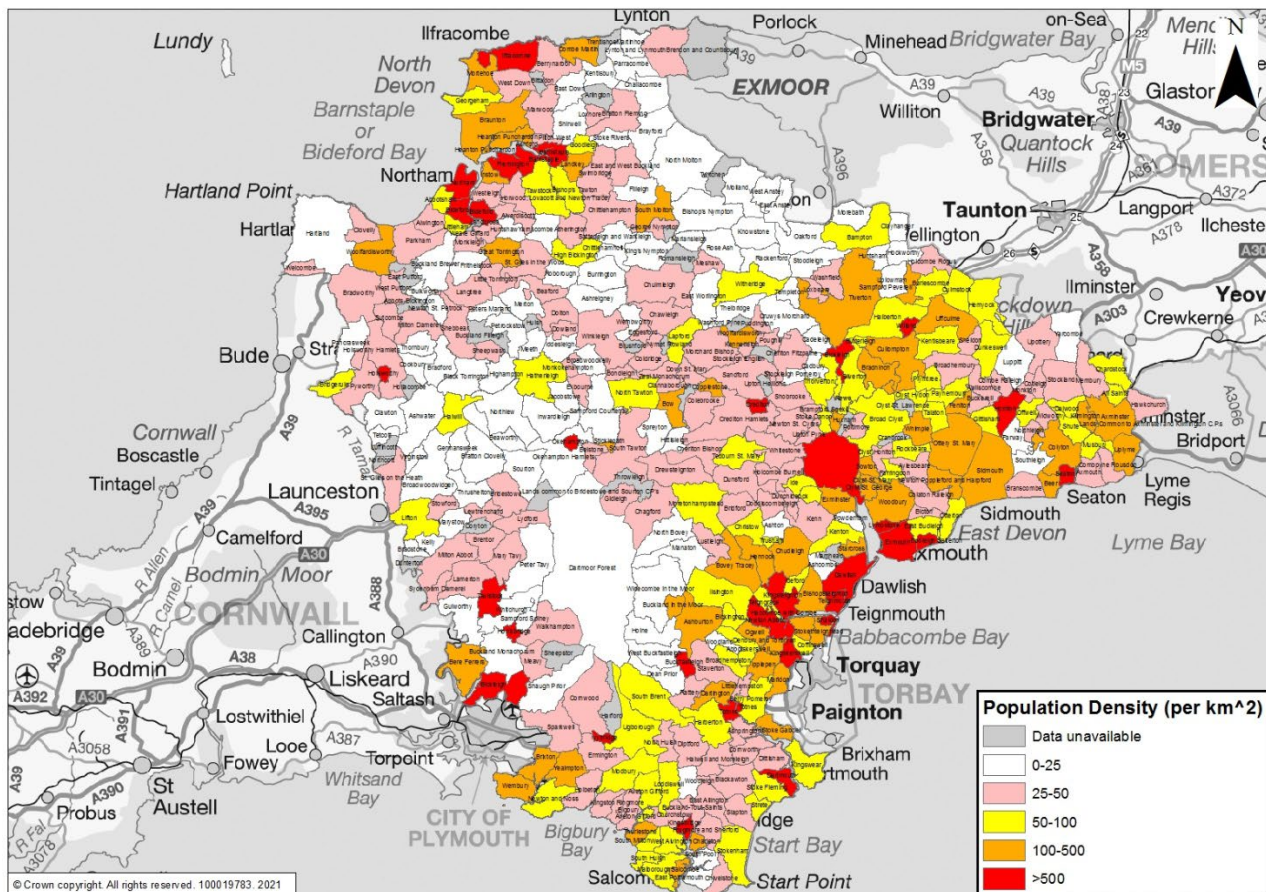


Figure 1-4: Map of Devon parish population densities¹.

1.7. Deprivation

As shown in the table below, much of Devon's population lives in neighbourhoods (Lower-Layer Super Output Areas, LSOAs) with average or below average levels of overall deprivation, i.e. in [2019 English Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) quintiles 3 to 5, where 1 is the most deprived. However, there are significant areas with higher levels of deprivation, particularly in the north and west of the county, as illustrated in the figure below:

District	% of Population in neighbourhood (LSOA) with given Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile, 2019 (1 = Most Deprived)				
	1	2	3	4	5
East Devon	0%	9%	31%	28%	32%
Exeter	9%	16%	25%	23%	28%
Mid Devon	0%	19%	45%	26%	9%
North Devon	12%	30%	26%	24%	9%
South Hams	0%	7%	46%	22%	24%
Teignbridge	4%	18%	30%	28%	20%
Torridge	7%	57%	23%	14%	0%
West Devon	0%	22%	55%	13%	10%
Devon	4%	20%	33%	24%	19%

Table 1-2: Populations in LSOAs with given deprivation levels.

¹ For the benefit of those using screen readers and other assistive technology, the data underlying this and other figures is included in Appendix A.

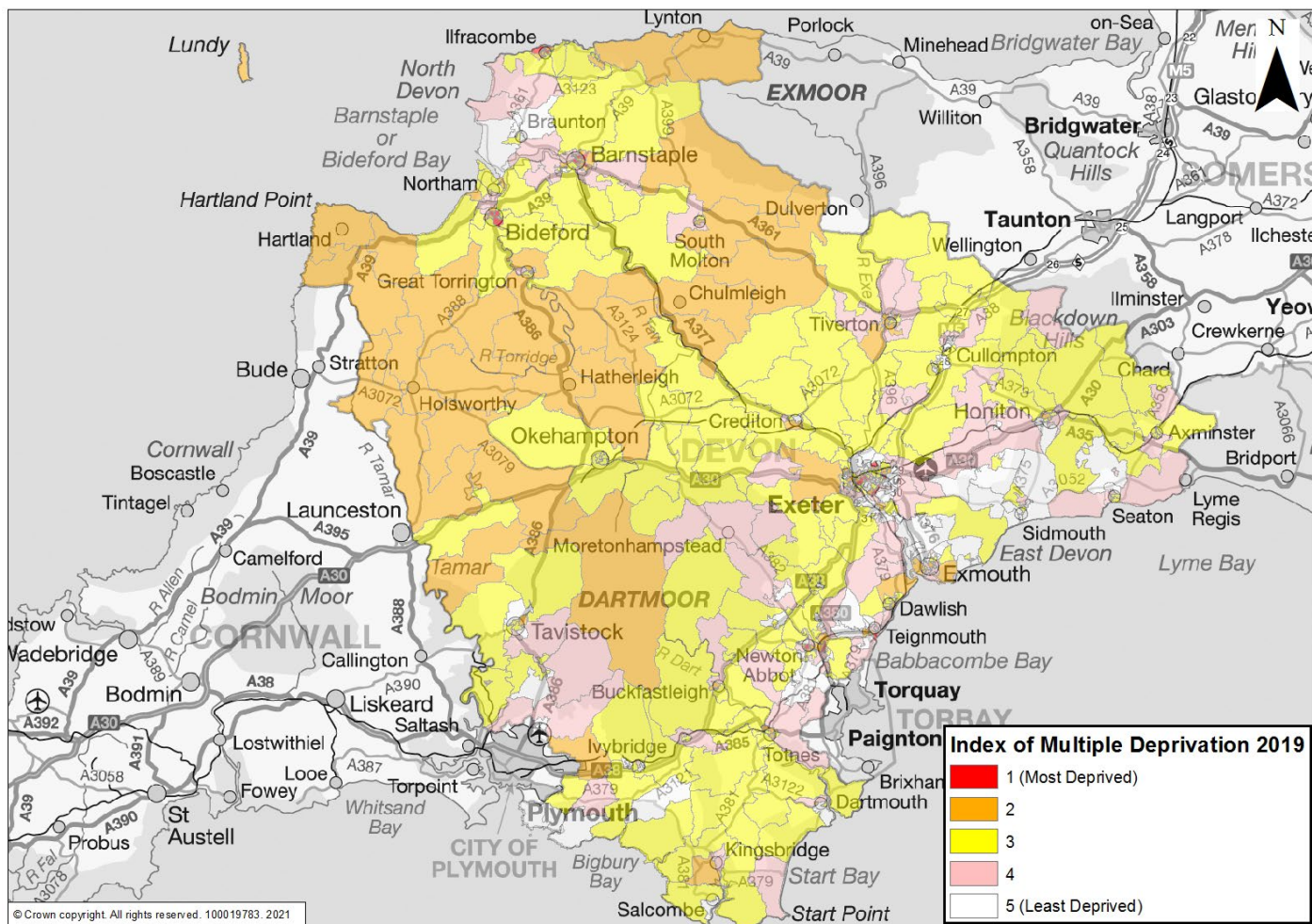


Figure 1-5: Map of Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) across Devon.

In relation to geographical barriers to housing and services, large swathes of Devon are classed as highly deprived (i.e. in deprivation quintile 1), as shown in the figure below. Therefore, in the absence of suitable transport options (either private or public), much of rural Devon would have poor access to housing and services, and so rural bus services play an important role in reducing deprivation in these areas.

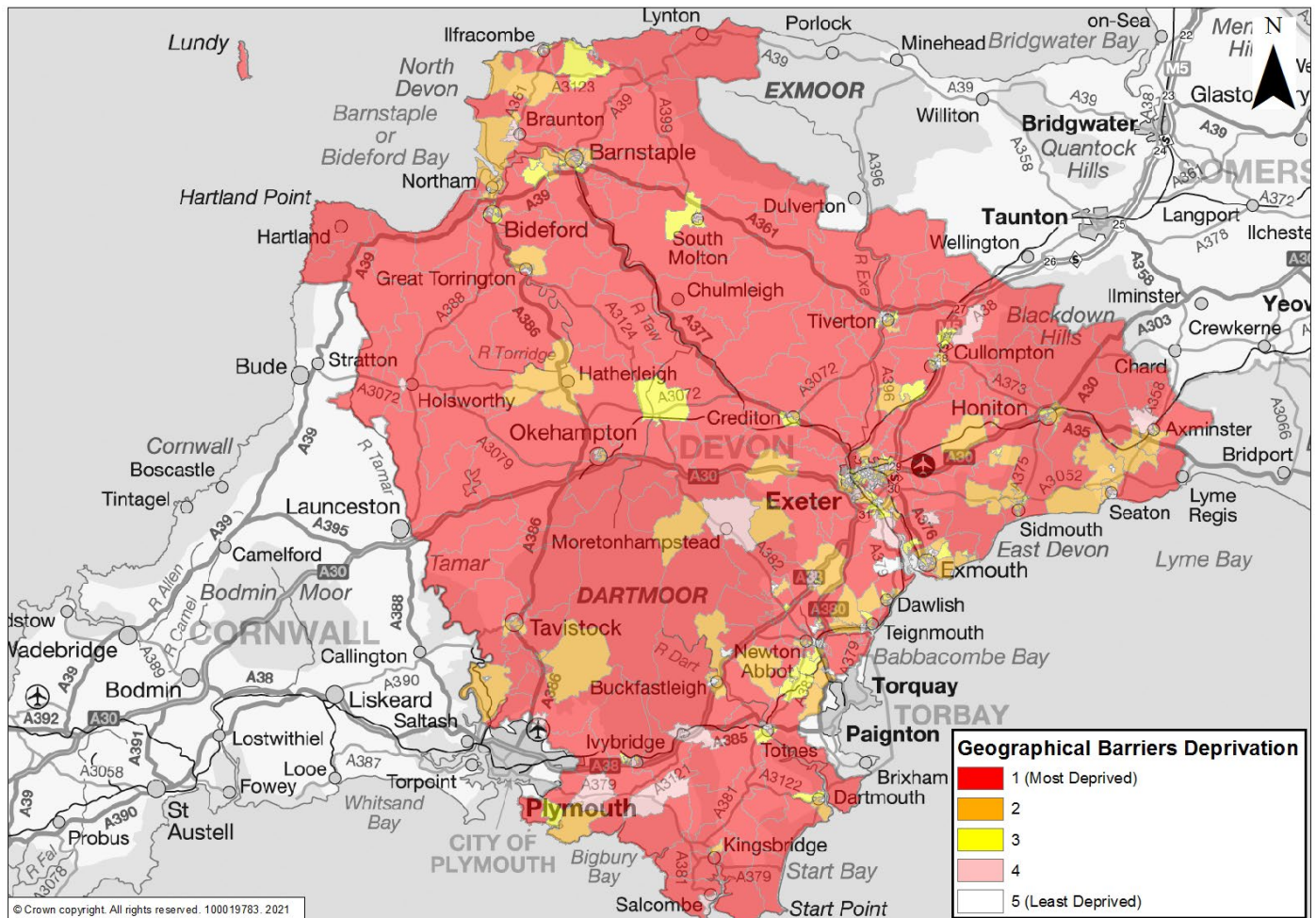


Figure 1-6: Map of Geographical Barriers Deprivation across Devon.

1.8. BSIP in Relation to Wider Policy and Strategic Context

The BSIP sits within a national and local policy context and has been developed to be complementary to existing and emerging strategic priorities. It aims to harness the power of buses to improve social mobility and economic productivity and support sustainable development.

In particular, the BSIP is aligned with the Department for Transport's [National Bus Strategy \(Bus Back Better\)](#), as it incorporates proposals to make bus services more frequent, more comprehensive, easier to use and better integrated with other modes. In line with the strategy's aspirations, the BSIP aims to deliver a step change in bus service provision, helping to grow patronage and making buses an attractive alternative to the car for more people.

1.8.1. Alignment with Devon's Local Transport Plan

At a local level, Devon County Council is currently in the process of drafting a new Local Transport Plan (LTP). This document draws together all of DCCs modal strategies, including the BSIP. The Devon and Torbay CCA will develop a provisional area-wide LTP by March 2025 to be finalised by the joint authority once established. The vision for this LTP is very much aligned to our BSIPs aims and objectives, albeit focused at a higher, strategic level. The LTP's Vision is:

'Transport will support reaching net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. Well-integrated, accessible and inclusive transport options will facilitate clean growth and support the health and wellbeing of everyone'

1.8.2. Alignment with Decarbonisation Commitment

Priority One in the Government's [Decarbonising Transport strategy](#) is the need to accelerate modal shift to active and public transport through a "cohesive, integrated, and affordable net zero public transport network, designed for the needs of the passenger". This is something that has come through strongly in the [Devon Carbon Plan](#), which has been produced in response to the climate emergency. Specifically, it recognises that overall public transport has not been attractive enough and has not been invested into the same extent as roads. The plan sets out the following recommended actions, which aim to incentivise modal shift to public transport and the transition to low emission vehicles:

Devon Carbon Plan Goal	Recommended Action
TB Using Active, Shared and Public Transport is Safe, Efficient and Affordable	T16 Support innovative transport solutions in rural areas, including long-term options for community and voluntary sector transport
	T17 Enhance bus priority measures
	T18 Protect and enhance funding for local bus routes, to ensure people can access services, employment and events without requiring a car
	T19 Explore opportunities to set fares to support equal opportunities to access mobility for all
TC Alternatives to Private Car Use Are Available Alongside Measures to Make Car-Use Less Attractive	T26 Employers to be encouraged and supported to make commuting by active, shared and public transport more attractive
TD It is Easy to Transition Between Different Types of Travel and Transport	T28 Local Plans to require mobility hubs for new developments of appropriate size
	T30 Introduce integrated ticketing
TH Larger Vehicles have Transitioned to Low Carbon Technologies	T42 Trial low-carbon propulsion for large vehicles and transition fleets to these new technologies

Table 1-3: Alignment of BSIP with Devon Carbon Plan.

1.8.3. Supporting the Growth Agenda

The BSIP also builds upon proposals laid out by regional strategies, for example the Exeter Transport Strategy, which aims to improve sustainable transport options for journeys into and within Exeter. Schemes delivered and future proposals set out in this plan include more frequent buses between Exeter and local market and coastal towns, such as Newton Abbot, Exmouth and Honiton, expansion of Park & Ride and improved multimodal ticketing.

Many of the delivered/proposed service improvements will improve links to strategic housing and employment sites, including the Exeter and East Devon Economic Growth Area. They will also facilitate the delivery of low-car and car-free developments, such as those laid out in the emerging Liveable Exeter Housing Delivery Programme, by providing attractive alternatives to the car for accessing jobs and services.

1.8.4. Alignment with Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body (STB) Vision and collaborative efforts

Peninsula Transport is one of seven Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) in England. Working closely with five local authority partners in Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset, they have recently adopted their vision to *“Transform transport across the peninsula to enable our society and economy to thrive and our unique and outstanding environment to flourish”*.

The [Peninsula Transport Strategy](#) is focused on establishing a more resilient and accessible transport system for the south west, boosting economic growth while supporting more sustainable ways to travel. Together with an implementation plan linking with local authority BSIPs, they will help to advise government on the unique transport needs of the peninsula and advocate for delivery of transport projects that will make a real difference to the region.

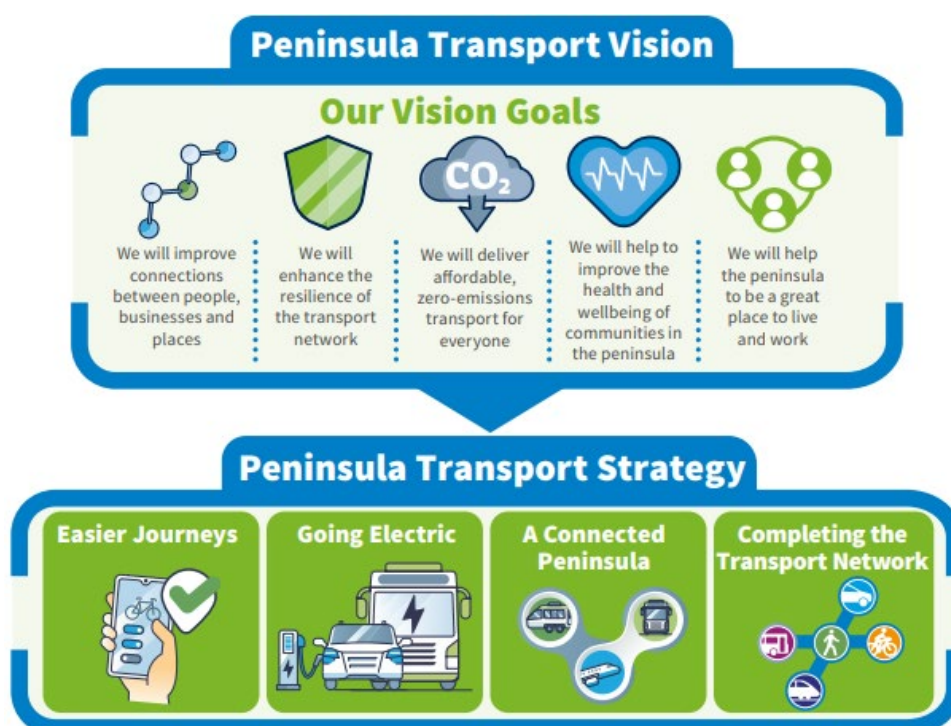


Figure 1-7: 2024 Vision and Strategy of Peninsula Transport STB

Although developing separate BSIPs at this stage, DCC is working jointly with its Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body partner authorities, principally Torbay Council, Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council. Work in this area in particular covers the journey to work and catchments areas around Plymouth (including from Cornwall) and Torbay. We have also identified cross-boundary bus routes with our neighbours in Dorset and Somerset and have worked towards solutions for bus users to ensure a seamless journey/ticketing experience.

We have considered the franchise option but do not think this is appropriate at this time due to:

- the substantial financial revenue risk a franchise would entail across the entire bus network
- the Devon bus network is relatively stable, and
- the successes achieved through COVID 19 and over a number of years beforehand through informal partnership working with our bus companies. We believe we can best build on this as a natural progression into the Enhanced Partnership framework.



SECTION 2

Current Offer to Bus Passengers

2.Current offer to bus passengers

2.1. Information about the Current Bus Network – Network Performance Data

This section intends to set the scene with regards to bus service provision in Devon, as well as to provide an analysis, evidenced with data, as to how the current bus network compares to the BSIP aims and objectives set out in previous sections. Analysis of data has been developed collaboratively between DCC, local operators and key stakeholders. A shared understanding of the urgent priority areas that need addressing will enable a more joined up delivery of the current network and any improvements identified through the BSIP.

2.1.1. Overview of the Bus Network in Devon

Devon is a rural and diverse county, bordered by two coastlines and boasting two national parks. In addition to this it has one of the longest highways networks in the country at over 7,700 miles. The current scale and frequency of the bus network is best illustrated by our interactive bus map, which can be accessed on the [Travel Devon](#) website – this shows coverage of the bus network across the County (click on the image below to access the interactive version of the map). Individual town maps for local bus services can also be accessed through the platform.



Figure 2-1: Devon Interactive Bus Map.

In Devon, approximately 80% of the local bus network is commercially operated. However, geographically, the 80/20 proportions are reversed – without DCC financial support, almost 80% of the county would be wholly or substantially without a bus service. This is shown on the following graphic which depicts the extent of the commercial and supported network, in comparison to just the commercial network:

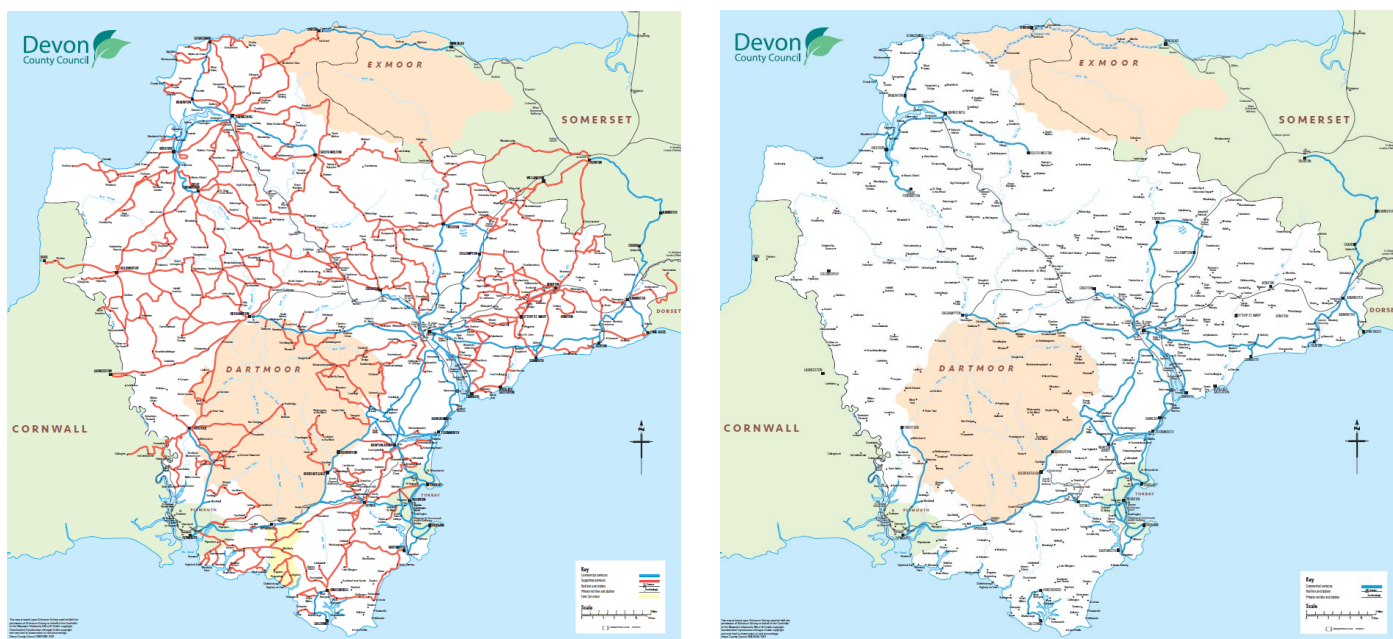


Figure 2-2: 2024 Maps of DCC supported services (in red) and commercial services (in blue).

2.1.2. Network Stability

In comparison with other rural counties, over the past 10 years the bus network in Devon has remained relatively stable, with DCC largely maintaining its bus service support (see [section 2.1.16](#)).

There were budget reductions in 2011 and 2015 which reduced services, concentrating on removing support for non-entitled school children's services (many of which were taken over commercially), small town services, access to leisure and some evening and Sunday services.

More recently, the impact of high inflation has significantly raised contract rates on supported services and the requirement to support surrendered commercial services. Devon has absorbed these additional costs using the Local Transport Fund and BSIP+ funding. There is significant risk to the network if additional funding is not continued.

2.1.3. Other Services

The local bus network is supplemented in some areas by demand-responsive services based on the [Devon Fare Car model](#). We also have a thriving network of community transport groups and schemes, providing support and transport to those individuals unable to access public services (more information on these services can be found in [2.1.16 – Community and Voluntary Transport](#)).

2.1.4. Integration with Other Modes

2.1.4.1. Rail Link Services

Since developing our BSIP, DCC, in partnership with our local train and bus operators, have successfully launched six “Rail Link” bus services across Devon, with plans for the introduction of additional services in the pipeline. More information on these services is provided in section 3 under the delivery of BSIP schemes ([section 3.2.9](#)).

2.1.4.2. Electric Car/Bike Schemes

Due to the recent demise of Co Cars and Co Bikes in Exeter, we currently do not have a provision to link bus services with these shared modes of transport for onward travel. DCC are hoping to relaunch an electric bike scheme within Exeter, and we would welcome opportunities to link this with the existing provision of bus services, creating opportunities for sustainable onward travel for bus passengers.

2.1.5. Passenger numbers

Total patronage on Devon’s bus network in 2018/19, the last year unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, was approximately 23.7 million. During the pandemic patronage dropped to a low of 8.1 million. Since then, numbers have shown a steady recovery, despite a period of considerable unreliability due to driver shortages and other issues affecting the local industry. In 2023/24 passenger numbers increased by 2.2 million over 2022/23. It is anticipated that this growth trend will continue through 2024/25.

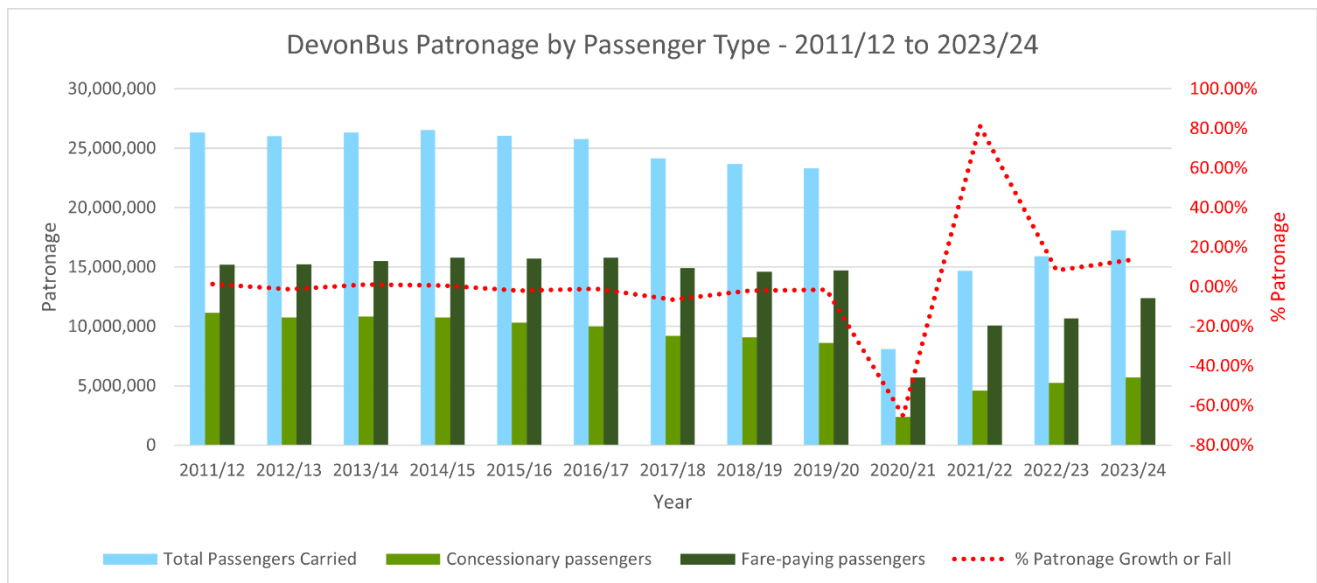


Figure 2-3 Patronage by passenger type (total/concessionary/fare-paying), 2011/12 to 2023/24

It is worth noting the following:

- Over the past decade, patronage has typically been split approximately 40:60 between concessionary and fare-paying passengers
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, concessionary patronage had proportionally reduced more than fare-paying patronage, meaning concessionary passengers now make up just 30% of patronage, compared to approximately 40% pre-COVID-19. This trend continued in

2023/24 with concessionary passengers making up 31% of total patronage.

- There is continuing trend for weaker rural services to decline; this can be attributed to population changes (loss of older, traditional bus users / incomers to the area having no interest in bus services) and increasing numbers of second homes and holiday properties.
- In recent years, the age of eligibility for the concessionary bus pass has increased in line with the State Pension age, leading to a reduction in pass-holder numbers and a reduction in travel. Younger pass-holders had generally always been the most frequent travellers.
- Throughout the last decade, the significant majority (75-80%) of patronage has been on commercially operated services, with smaller proportions on financially supported services (15-20%) and Park & Ride services (5-10%).
- Devon bus patronage per capita declined from 37 trips per annum in 2014 to 29 trips per annum in 2019 and 21 trips per annum in 2023, according to Department for Transport data. Devon bus patronage per capita has typically been approximately 40% of the national (England) average and 80-90% of the regional (South West) average.

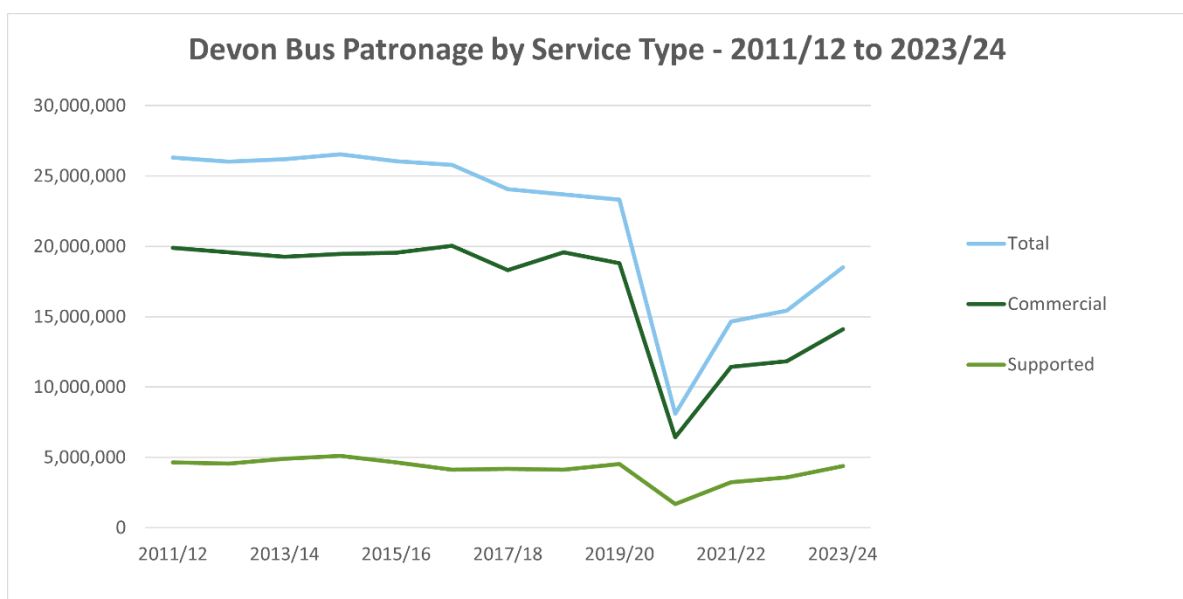


Figure 2-4: Patronage by service type (supported/commercial), 2011/12 to 2023/24. Note that commercial includes part-supported routes.

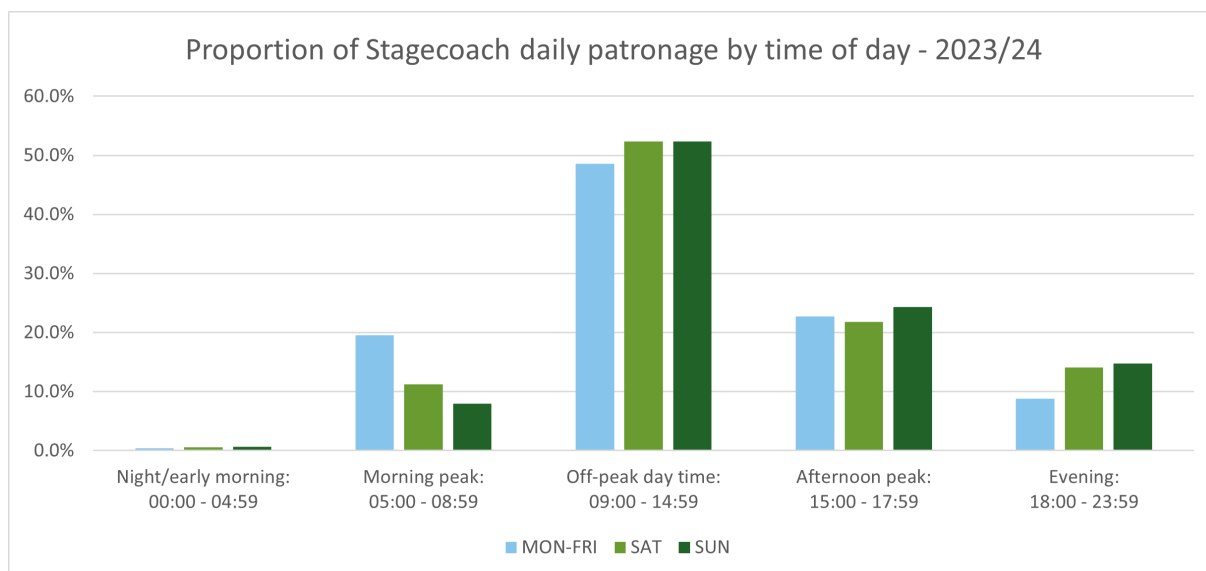


Figure 2-5: Proportion of Stagecoach South West bus patronage occurring during given times of day, 2023/24

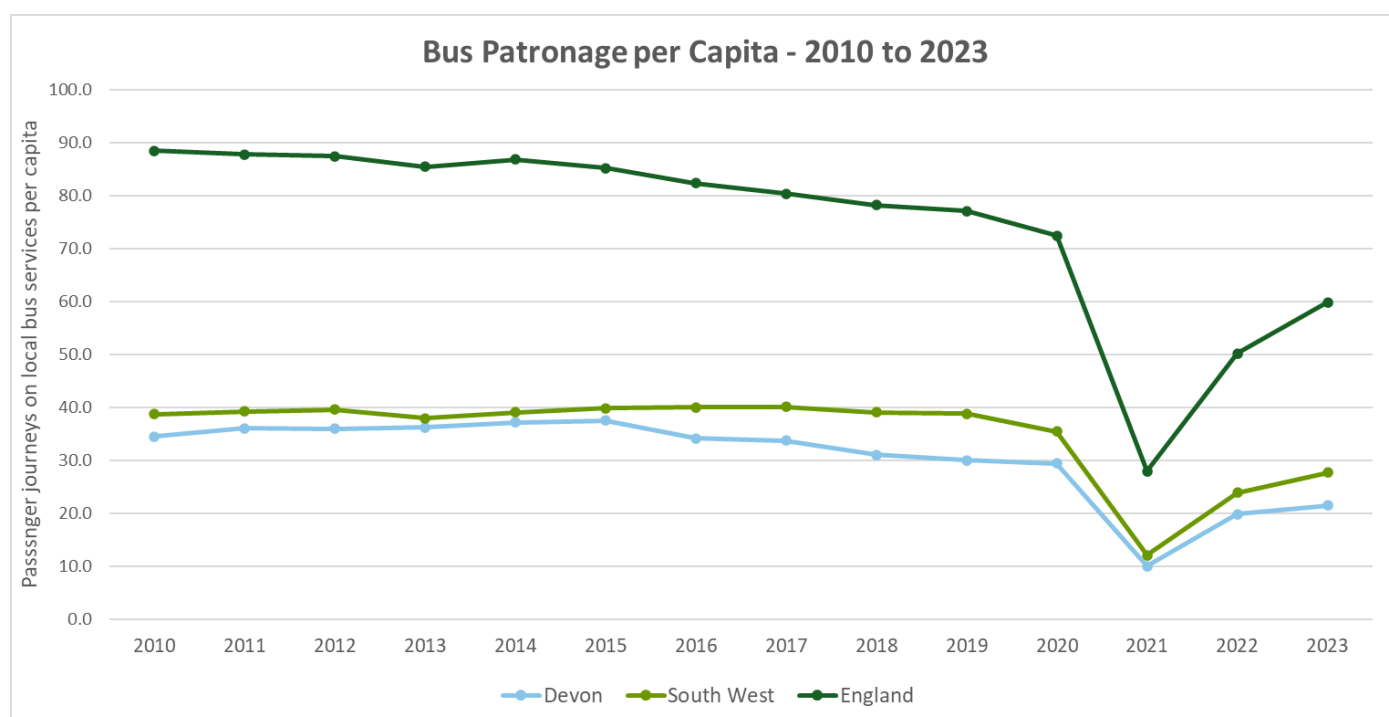


Figure 2-6: Bus patronage per capita for Devon, South West region and England, 2010 to 2023.

2.1.6. Journey Time Data

As indicated in the table below, bus journey times into Exeter vary significantly between the inter-peak and peak periods, due to congestion on many of the key corridors. For example, inter-peak service 7 departures from Kingsteignton (Woodmere Way) typically take just 45 minutes to reach Exeter Bus Station, whereas the 07:21 departure takes 59 minutes, an increase of over 30%.

Town	Service	Typical Inter-Peak Journey Time (min)	Inter-Peak Speed (kph)	Slowest Peak Journey Time (min)	Slowest Speed (kph)	Absolute JT Increase (min)	% Increase
Exmouth	57	42	24.1	49	20.7	7	17%
Sidmouth	9/9A	55	28.9	67	23.7	12	22%
Dawlish	2	55	24.9	62	22.1	7	13%

Teignmouth	2	71	23.1	77	21.3	6	8%
Seaton	X30	78	34.6	88	30.7	10	13%
Crediton	5/5A/5C	31	28.8	33	27.1	2	6%
Cranbrook	4	38	17.2	45	13.1	7	18%
Kingsteignton	7	45	36.3	59	27.7	14	31%
Newton Abbot	7	52	33.9	65	27.1	13	25%
Honiton	44	68	27.1	77	23.9	9	13%
Cullompton	1	45	28.7	53	24.3	8	18%
Tiverton	55	40	36.9	42	35.1	2	5%

Table 2-1: Peak and Inter-Peak bus journey times into Exeter, based on 2024 school day timetables.

2.1.7. Comparison of journey times to other modes

The table below compares these peak bus journey times with the corresponding journey times for car, rail and cycle. Car and cycle journey times were taken from Google Maps estimates, assuming an arrival for 9:00 AM on a Tuesday (car journey times were taken to be the average of the minimum and maximum predicted), whilst rail journey times were based on direct services to Exeter Central arriving before 9:00 AM (walk/cycle/drive times to/from the rail stations were neglected). This shows that bus journey times were an average of 17 minutes greater than car journey times for the selected towns, and 27 minutes greater than rail for the towns with rail stations. Bus journey times were an average of 28 minutes less than cycle journey times, but for Cranbrook the bus journey time was greater than the cycle journey time, whilst for Exmouth, Dawlish and Cullompton there was less than 15 minutes difference between the bus and cycle journey times.

Town	AM Peak Journey Times into Exeter (min)				Excess JT for Bus (min)		
	Bus	Car	Rail	Cycle	Car	Rail	Cycle
Exmouth	49	45	28	57	4	21	-8
Sidmouth	67	50	-	92	17	-	-25
Dawlish	62	45	41	72	17	21	-10
Teignmouth	77	48	46	95	30	31	-18
Seaton	88	63	-	159	26	-	-71
Crediton	33	30	17	58	3	16	-25
Cranbrook	45	33	10	38	13	35	7
Kingsteignton	59	42	-	119	18	-	-60
Newton Abbot	65	48	53	129	18	12	-64
Honiton	77	42	26	92	36	51	-15
Cullompton	53	41	-	64	13	-	-11
Tiverton	42	34	-	76	8	-	-34
Average	60	43	32	88	17	27	-28

Table 2-2: Comparison of bus journey times in AM Peak with journey times for car, rail and cycle.

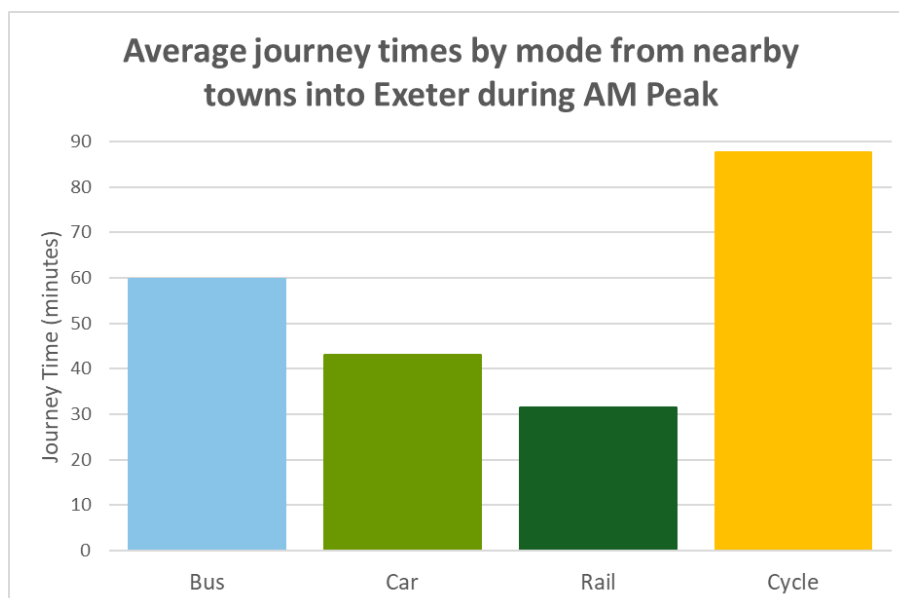


Figure 2-7: Comparison of average journey times into Exeter by mode.

2.1.8. Service Reliability Data

Bus punctuality surveys undertaken between 2010 and 2020 have assessed punctuality against three key indicators, summarised in Table . No punctuality surveys have been carried out since 2020 but we hope this survey work will resume in 2025, following the delivery of BSIP bus priority schemes.

No.	Description	Target
1	The percentage of buses starting their route on time	>95%
2	The percentage of buses on time at intermediate 'Timing Points'	70-90%
3	The percentage of buses on time at 'Non-Timing Points'	Not set

Table 2-3: Bus punctuality indicators used in punctuality surveys.

2020 data was collected in November (for consistency with previous years), during which England was under a lockdown, with the public instructed to remain at home unless their journey was essential. Therefore, traffic congestion was significantly lower than normal at the time of the surveys, and reductions in demand for public transport reduced dwell times at bus stops, meaning bus punctuality according to indicators 1 to 3 was almost 100%.

In previous years, the percentage of buses starting their route on time (indicator 1) averaged approximately 80%, with a range of around 70-90%, and the percentages on time at intermediate points (indicators 2 and 3) averaged some 70% (range 60-80% for indicator 2, 65-75% for indicator 3). Consequently, the target for indicator 1 was not met in any previous years, whilst the target for indicator 2 was met in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2019, but not met in 2013, 2016 and 2017.

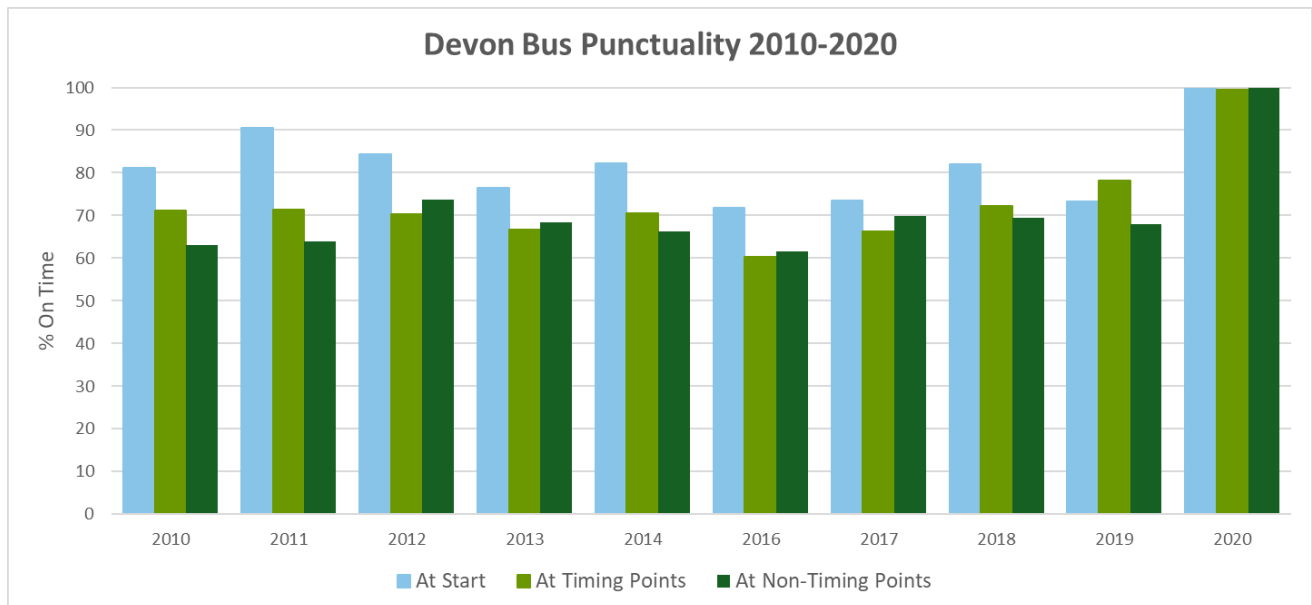


Figure 2-8: Bus Punctuality at start of route and at intermediate timing/non-timing points, 2010 to 2020.

2.1.9. Bus Priority Measures

As part of the initial BSIP process in 2021, an audit was undertaken of existing bus priority measures within Devon. This focused on the settlements of Exeter, Barnstaple, Exmouth and Newton Abbot. These are the larger urban areas in the County, which experience higher levels of congestion which can impact negatively on bus journey time reliability. This revealed a handful of bus priority measures in Barnstaple and Newton Abbot, including bus gates and bus lanes, but none in Exmouth. Within Exeter, there are existing bus lanes on some of the key bus corridors, particularly on Pinhoe Road, Heavitree Road, Topsham Road and Cowick Street, however several of these apply only at peak times, with other vehicles allowed to use and/or park in the lanes at other times.

During this process we identified a set of proposals to deliver further infrastructure enhancements and increase bus priority. Many of these proposals received funding and have now been progressed and we are working towards delivery. Details of these are provided in section 3 of this report.

2.1.10. Passenger Satisfaction

Listening to our bus passengers to gauge opinion on bus services in Devon is an important factor in measuring the success of our BSIP. Prior to the pandemic, DCC took part in the national bus passenger survey conducted by Transport Focus. The last survey they did in Devon was in 2019. In 2023 we resumed our survey work but decided on a more local approach in conjunction with our bus operators. The 2023 survey was funded and delivered jointly between Devon County Council, Torbay Council and Stagecoach South West, and will be carried out on an annual basis going forward.

In 2023 more than 2,400 responses were received through the survey. It found that 87% of all respondents were “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” with their experience on their bus journey. The survey found that most people said they were making their bus journey to travel to work, a shopping trip or for a day out. More than 80% were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the punctuality of the service they used, and more than 79% considered it value for money.

The results of the 2023 survey have been published and can be viewed on our [Travel Devon website](#).

2.1.11. Current Bus Market Share

The Devon bus market share can be estimated by dividing the number of bus trips per head for Devon, from the Department for Transport's [Bus Statistics](#) (Table BUS01f), by the number of total trips (by all modes) per head for the South West², from the [National Travel Survey](#) (Table NTS9903). According to this metric, the bus market share has generally varied between 3% and 4% over the last decade, but reduced to 1.2% in 2020 and only recovered to between 2% and 3% in 2021 and 2022, likely influenced by government guidance and ongoing concerns regarding travel by public transport during parts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to see this figure continue to increase over the coming years.

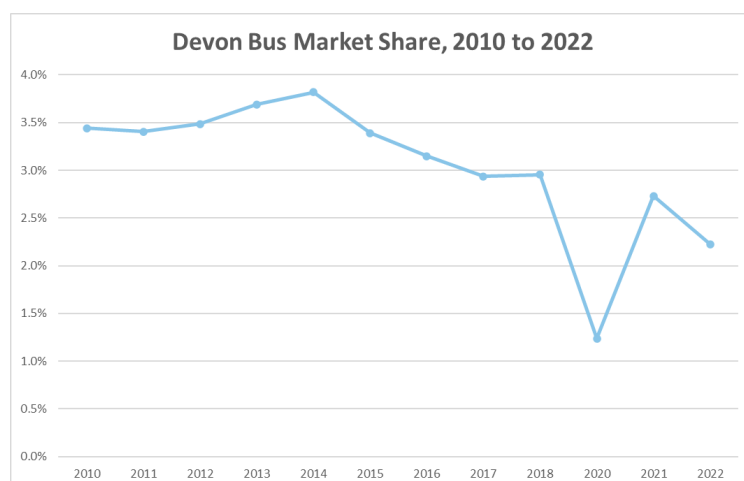


Figure 2-9: Devon bus market share, 2010 to 2022.

Many of Devon's bus services operate along corridors or to destinations not served by rail, thus the bus and rail networks are largely complementary rather than competitors. Figure 2-12 below shows the level of bus versus rail patronage in the county. The proposals in [Section 4](#) seek to build upon this by further improving connections between bus and rail.

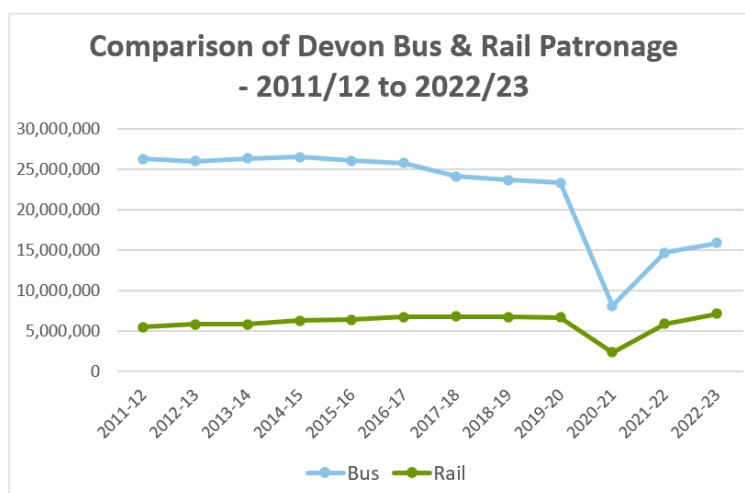


Figure 2-10: Comparison of Devon bus and rail patronage, 2009/10 to 2022/23³.

² Local authority-specific figures are not available from the National Travel Survey.

³ Rail patronage based on Office of Rail and Road estimates of station usage, assuming 2 entries and exits per trip.

2.1.12. Service Frequency

Typical service frequencies vary markedly between different parts of Devon, with many parishes around Exeter, Newton Abbot and Barnstaple having hourly or greater services, whilst many parishes in more remote areas have a less than daily service. The higher frequency service areas correspond well with the maps in Section showing where future growth within the County.

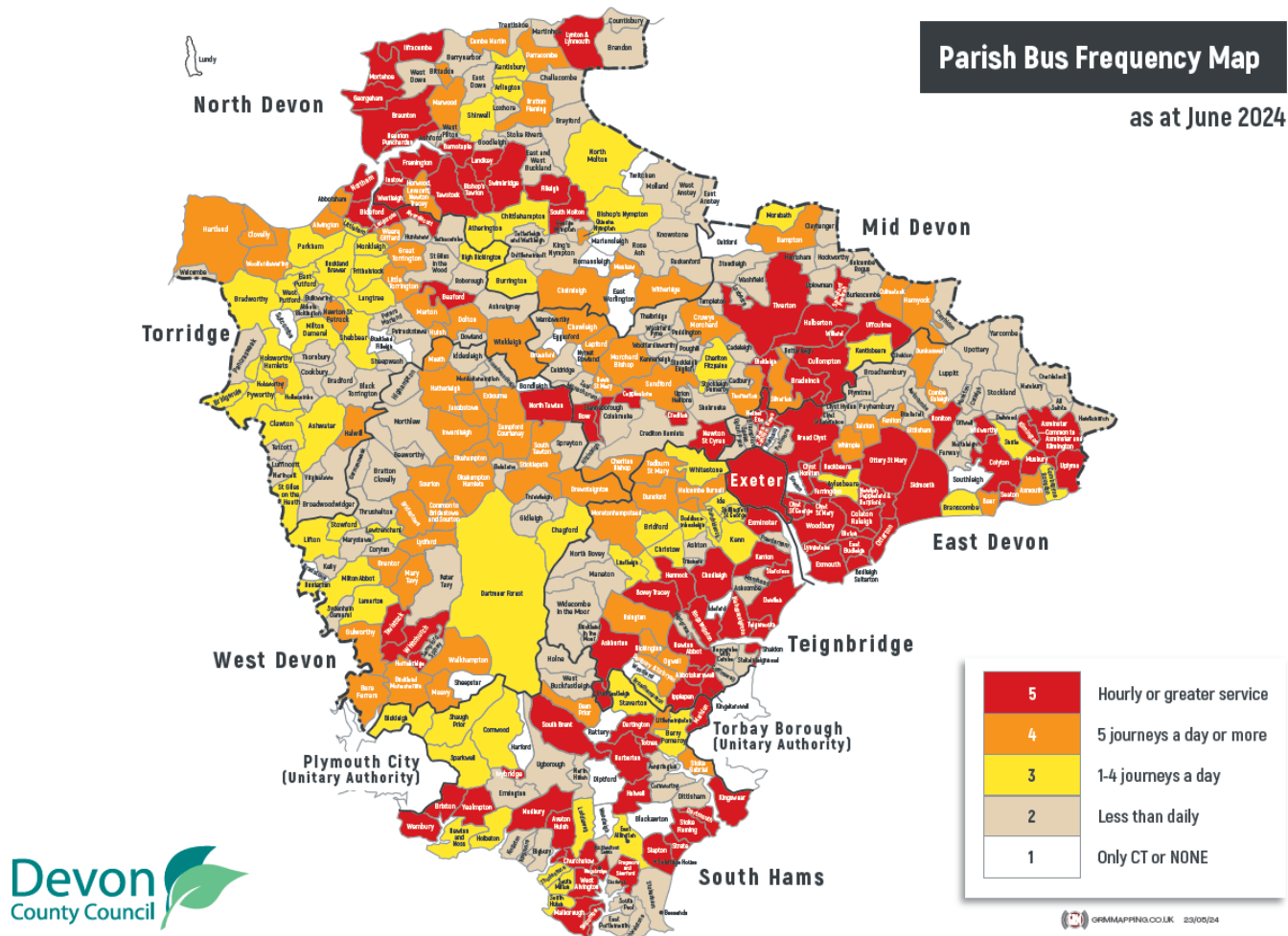


Figure 2-11: Service frequency by parish.

Some 45% of Devon's parishes have a less than daily service (or no service at all), but these parishes contain only some 10% of Devon's population. In contrast, only 25% of Devon's parishes have an hourly or greater service, but 73.5% of Devon's population lives in such parishes.

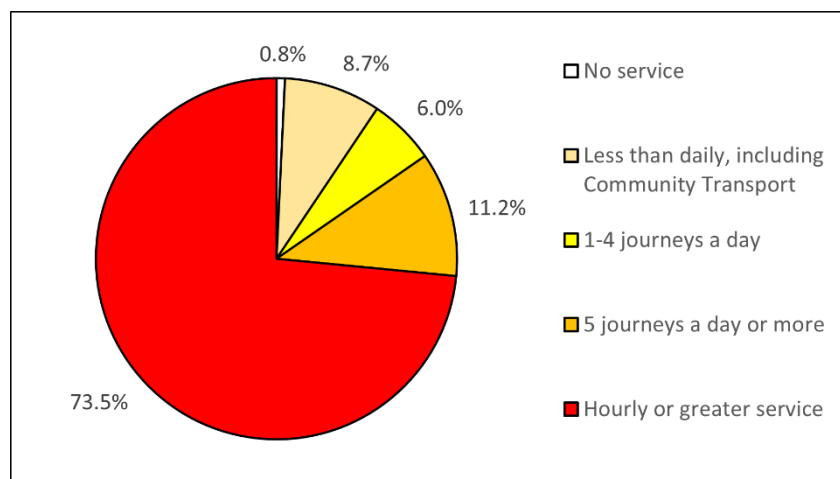


Figure 2-12: Proportion of population in parishes with given service level.

Parish service frequencies are largely correlated with the population and population densities of the parishes. However, some parishes with low populations have disproportionately high service frequencies, by virtue of being on a main road connecting larger settlements which have frequent bus services. For example, Newton St Cyres has a population of only 880, but is on the A377 between Exeter and Crediton, which is served by 5-6 buses per hour. Conversely, some larger parishes more remote from large urban centres, such as Holsworthy, Okehampton and Great Torrington, have a lower service frequency than would be expected given their populations.

2.1.13. Bus Stop Density Network

Within Devon as a whole, there are some 6,000 active bus stops within an area of 6,600 km², amounting to slightly less than 1 bus stop per km². However, the service frequency these stops receive varies significantly, with some stops within town and city centres having a 'frequent' combined service (i.e. 6 or more buses per hour), whilst others are served less than daily. Overall, stops in Exeter typically have better services than those in other districts, with some 85% having at least hourly journeys, and 20% having a frequent service, whereas for West Devon, the corresponding figures are 15% and 0%, respectively. The data in the table below was collected in 2021 and we do not believe this picture has changed significantly.

District	Stop Density (per km ²)	% with Daily Journeys	% with 5+ Journeys	% with Hourly Journeys	% with Frequent Journeys
East Devon	1.30	80%	75%	45%	0%
Exeter	14.64	95%	95%	85%	20%
Mid Devon	0.73	60%	55%	30%	0%
North Devon	0.71	85%	75%	40%	5%
South Hams	0.85	85%	70%	40%	0%
Teignbridge	1.34	75%	70%	40%	5%
Torridge	0.52	70%	60%	25%	5%
West Devon	0.48	70%	60%	15%	0%
Devon Overall	0.90	80%	70%	45%	5%

Table 2-4: Bus Stop Density by District Council area.

2.1.14. Local Bus Operators

Bus services in Devon are provided by 14 local bus companies. In addition, nine community groups operating local services under a Section 22 permit.

Stagecoach Southwest is the largest operator, running around 93% of all bus services operating in the county. The next two largest operators are Country Bus and Dartline. It is however interesting to note that geographically the picture is slightly different with the largest operator's dominance not being as apparent. Small and medium-size operators tend to be more significant providers in their own local areas and on the important but less frequent rural network.

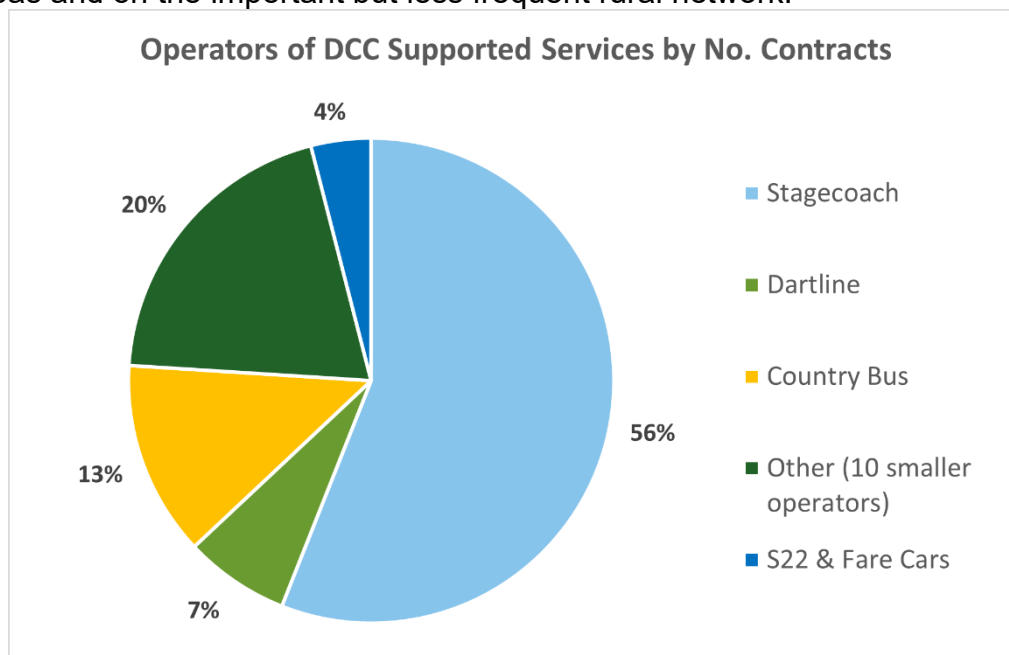


Figure 2-13: Operator provision of DCC supported services in Devon, 2023/24

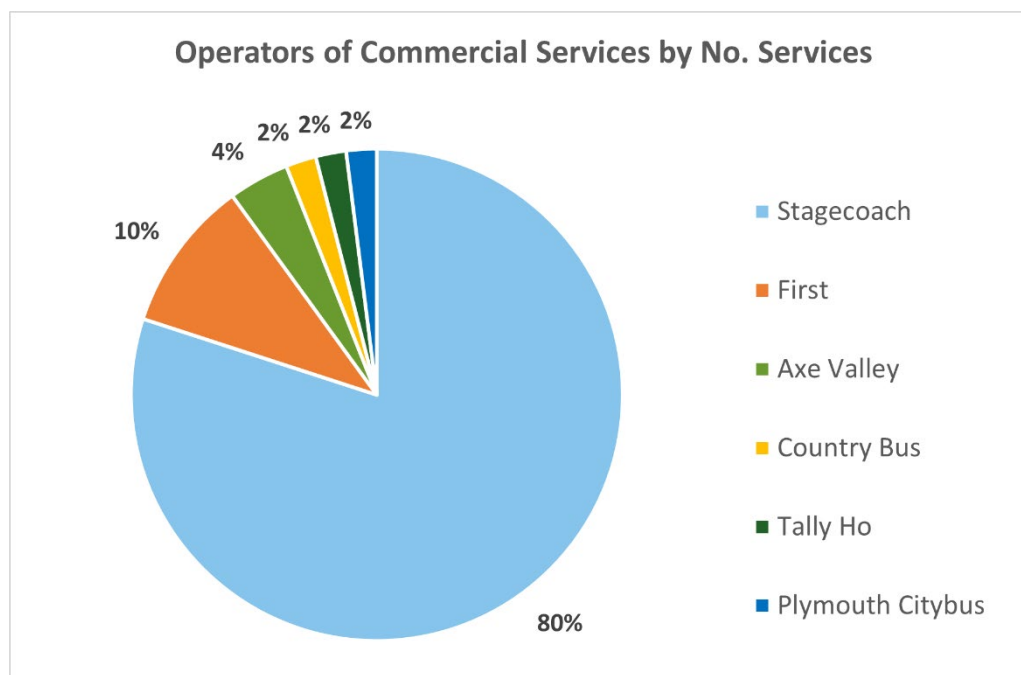


Figure 2-14: Operator provision of commercial services – by number of services operated, 2023/24

With the notable exception of the relatively self-contained North Devon network, which has seen more than one phase of competition, we have seen little disruptive competition of the sort frequently cited as a negative impact of deregulation.

Stagecoach Southwest, as our major operator, has demonstrated very little monopolistic behaviour during the past decade. However, during 2022, the company struggled to recruit

sufficient driver resources to operate their network, which resulted in significant lost mileage and poor reliability. The company were called to attend a Public Inquiry with the Traffic Commissioner in October 2022. This period of poor performance impacted passenger numbers, and reduced confidence in Stagecoach.

Due to these ongoing issues, as well as increased operating costs and reduced patronage Stagecoach have continued to review their network with an aim of returning to commerciality. This has resulted in some contracts being surrendered and more routes becoming supported. However, generally the situation is more positive; lost mileage and reliability have both improved and driver recruitment is no longer seen as a barrier to the delivery of services.

2.1.15. Community and Voluntary Transport

The following table illustrates the current provision of community transport in Devon – the majority of figures are for the period April 2023 – March 2024 unless otherwise stated:

Type of Service	Permit	Current Offer
COMMUNITY BUS - registered bus services accessible to all - helping isolated communities to reach local amenities	Section 22	7 schemes operating within the County in mainly rural locations 59,296 passenger trips (commencing in Devon) in 2023/24 <i>compared to 38,388 passenger trips in 2021/22</i>
RING & RIDE - Accessible door-to-door service for passengers unable to access or use conventional bus services. Offer weekly journeys to local market town and supermarkets. Pre-booked, flexible timetabled service.	Section 19	Approximately 77% of Devon parishes can access a service at least once a week. 11 independent Community Transport groups providing Ring & Ride services in Devon 21,379 return passenger trips in 2023/24 <i>compared to 21,202 return passenger trips in 2021/22</i> <i>It is interesting to note: Traditionally, we have only reported on the Core (essential shopping) Ring & Ride journeys. Whilst the Core Ring & Ride passenger numbers have not increased significantly, the numbers undertaking journeys for other purposes (leisure to combat loneliness and isolation) has risen to 10,014 in 2023/24 compared to 2,355 in 2021/22 for the same journey purposes. So overall, the passenger numbers have increased with demand for activities other than shopping increasing.</i>
COMMUNITY CAR - Schemes offer volunteer drivers who use their own cars to give lifts to those without private transport or other public transport options to reach medical, health or wellbeing appointments.	N/A	60 schemes across Devon, supported by 3 regional Car Forums. Size of schemes vary with pools of drivers from 1 - 61 volunteers 115,521 journeys in 2022/23 – 76% health journeys, 24% social welfare <i>compared to 93,520 journeys in 2021/22 – 81% health journeys, 19% social welfare</i>

		<i>Note: as yet figures are unavailable for 23/24</i>
WHEELS 2 WORK – offer loans and support for two-wheeled transport to help people to access work and training	N/A	Since its inception in 2006, the scheme has helped over 12,000 people into work and education. Helped 46 people with scheme bikes in 2023/24 <i>compared to 49 in 2021/22</i>

Table 2-5: Community transport provision in Devon.

2.1.16. Current DCC support for local bus services and community transport

The level of support from DCC for public transport in 2024/25 is set out below. We have also included figures for 2023/24 as a comparison.

FUNDING SOURCE	23/24 CAPITAL	23/24 REVENUE	24/25 CAPITAL	24/25 REVENUE
Supported Bus Services				
DCC Supported Bus Services Revenue budget		£ 7,699,000		£ 8,382,578
Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)		£ 184,374		£ 577,913
DCC Local Transport Fund		£ 308,003	-	
Other LTA's & Partners		£ 159,247	£	159,247
Funding for Supported Bus Services (20-21 Grant)		£ 566,514	£	83,333
Section 106		£ 920,126	£	920,126
BSIP+ Network Support		£ 1,677,393	£	1,677,393
BSIP Schemes		£ 968,098	£	1,683,891
Total		£ 12,482,755		£ 13,484,481
English National Concessionary Travel Scheme				
Devon County Council Revenue		£ 7,130,000		£ 7,500,000
Total		£ 7,130,000		£ 7,500,000
Bus Priority & Infrastructure Funding				
BSIP	£ 1,829,066		£ 5,848,196	
DCC LTP capital contribution	£ 100,000		£ 100,000	
DCC RTI System - revenue contribution for CMS		£ 40,000		£ 40,000
Total	£ 1,929,066	£ 40,000	£ 5,948,196	£ 40,000
Other Funding				
DfT Zero Emissions Bus Funding	£ 4,178,051		£ 1,142,102	
Other BSIP Funding (Promotions/Project Mgmt)		£ 145,700		£ 133,115
DCC Publicity & Marketing		£ 90,000		£ 90,000
	£ 4,178,051	£ 235,700	£ 1,142,102	£ 223,115

Figure 2-15 - DCC & External Funding for Public Transport 23/24 & 24/25

Apart from the unavoidable budget adjustments in 2011 and 2015, DCC has continued to maintain its support for local bus services and community transport. The budgets are managed by working closely with our bus companies and understanding the pressures and risks they face. The BSOG, LTF and BSIP+ grants from the DfT have been essential to mitigate against these.

To maintain stability with our contracts, we have avoided sudden repeated changes and have let contracts for the maximum permitted length. We also award an appropriate level of contract inflation each year to guard against contracts becoming undervalued, surrendered and then subject to high tender inflation.

We work with our bus companies to harness commercial initiative and to see that supported services complement this. This has been particularly successful with kick-starting services with Section 106 developer funding. Our strategy is to use short-term funding to develop services to either a commercial level or a reduced level of support. This allows us to recycle the savings back into the network to restart that network development cycle again.

2.2. Provision of information

DCC maintain a supply of reliable and quality passenger information, both in printed formats and electronically. We have ensured full compliance with Open Data regulations. Information is provided in different formats (e.g. large print) if requested.

2.2.1. Electronic Information

DCC provide and manage the [Travel Devon](#) website. As well as information on using bus services in Devon, this provides links to:

- [online timetables](#) of all services across the county
- an [interactive bus map](#)
- [ticketing information](#)
- information on [accessibility and community transport](#)
- [concessionary bus pass](#) – including how to apply

The website also provides a platform to link users in with other modes of travel such as Rail, Cycling and Walking.

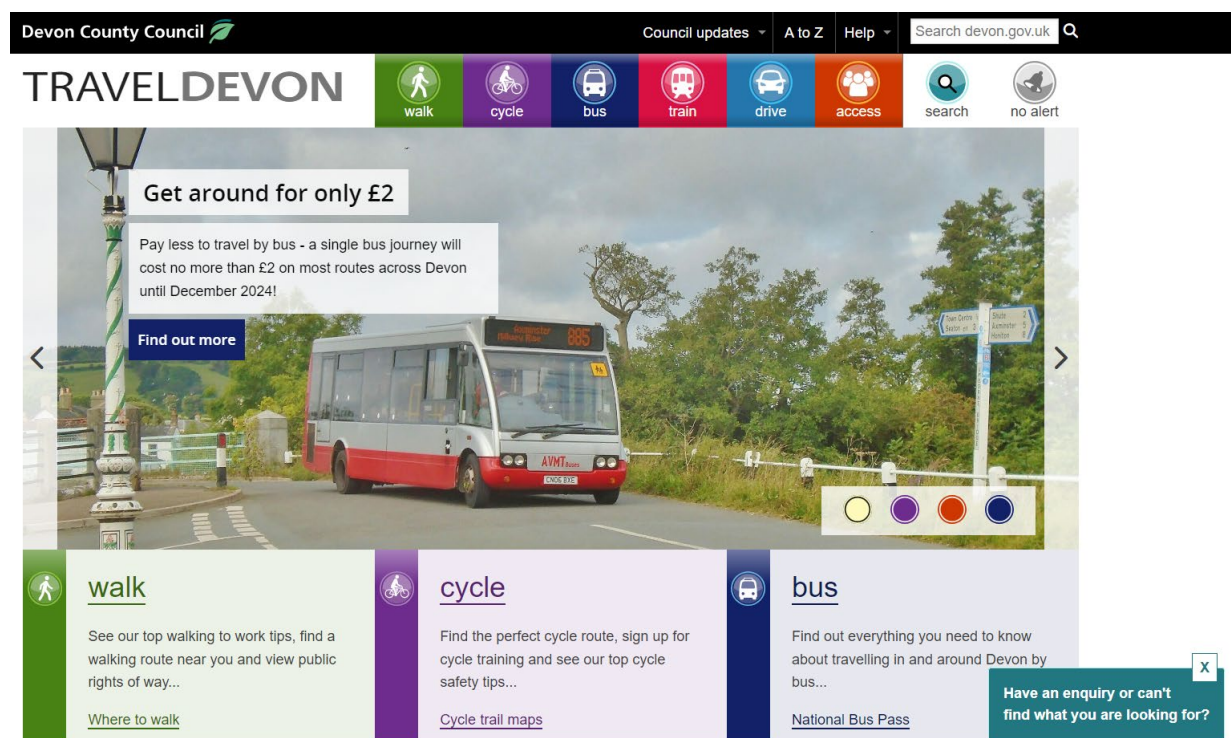


Figure 2-16: image showing [Travel Devon website](#) home page.

2.2.2. Printed Information

Although we have continually reviewed and reduced the quantities of printed bus information we produce in Devon, there is undoubtedly still a call for this media by many bus users. We currently produce the following on an at least annual basis:

- Printed timetable books for six regional areas across Devon (showing all services in each area, and bus maps for each regional town). Since 2022 we have also added a printed timetable booklet for all Exeter Bus Services – this replaced the Exeter map we produced previously.
- Devon Bus Map – showing a summary of services across the county
- Timetable displays at key stops for all services

The design of all our printed literature has been recently updated to reflect our “DevonBus” branding.

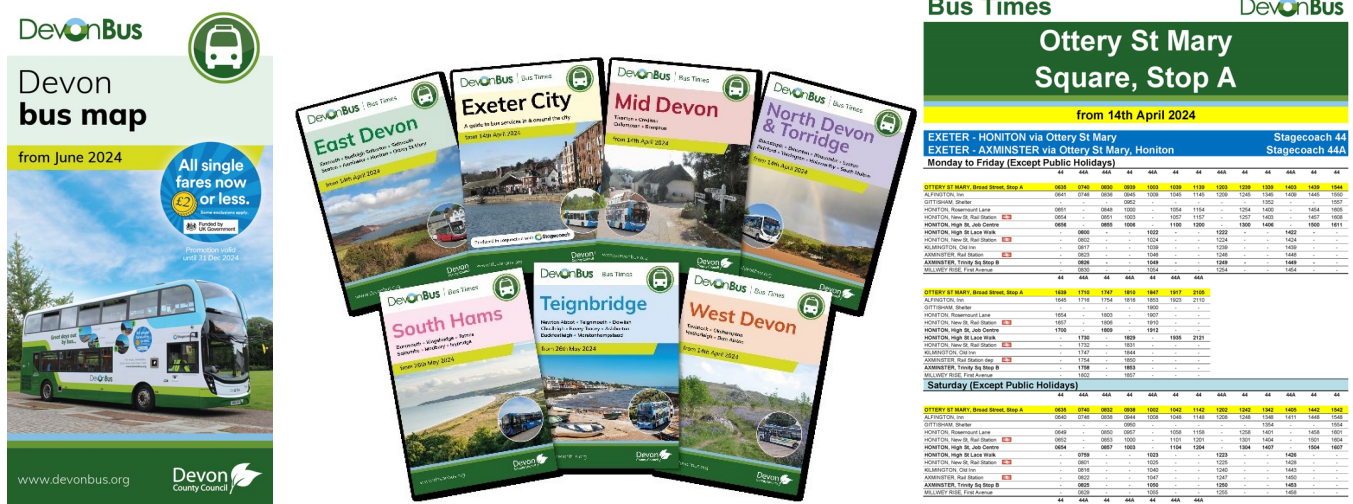


Figure 2-17: Printed bus information.

2.2.3. Operator Provision of Information

Although provision of information varies dependant on the size of the operator, there is a large reliance on the information provided by DCC. Stagecoach, through their corporate web presence, provide on-line journey-planning information with timetables and fares, and a mobile app with real time journey-planning and instant ticketing.

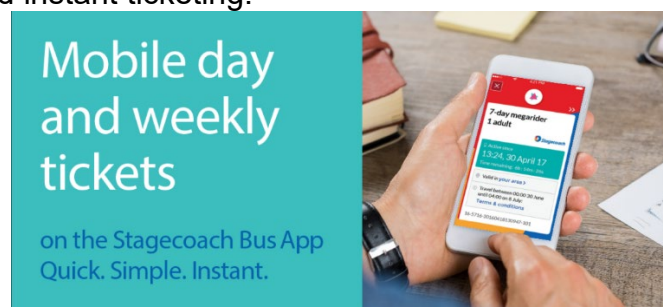


Figure 2-18: Advert for Stagecoach Bus App.

Other operators largely rely on DCC information although do provide:

- route leaflets are offered for a few commercially operated services
- web sites of varying standard and content
- real time feeds in compliance with Open Data regulations

2.2.4. Traveline (National Public Transport Information)



Figure 2-19: Traveline South West Logo.

We work closely with Traveline, which is largely funded by local authority and operator contributions, and provides:

- an on-line journey planner
- comprehensive route maps, timetables and fare information
- telephone enquiry service
- a Text for Times service
- a real time data feed for DCC and Stagecoach display screens
- an open data source which feeds other platforms such as Google maps

2.2.5. Real Time Information (RTI)

DCC currently provide a range of RTI-capable systems. There are currently over 50 RTI displays installed at bus stops across Devon, as well as digital versions of these displays available for any stop within Devon, accessed through a web-link or QR code.

More information on our RTI system and the improvements we have made with BSIP funding are details in [section 3.2.6](#).

2.3. Ticketing

2.3.1. Current ticketing - partnership arrangements

Individual service fares apply across the network and have developed historically with no standard fare scale, even within Stagecoach. Where a company has taken over a service from another, there has been no attempt to standardise fares. In areas and on individual routes where there has been competition in the past, fares have remained low after the period of competition ended.

The main commercial operator, Stagecoach South West, offers a range of period and multi-journey network tickets. There are other single-operator commercial offers. These are all set out on their websites and additional information can be found at www.traveldevon.info/bus/tickets/

Historically, on higher frequency supported services, in particular those transferring from the main operator to secondary operators, DCC has required the acceptance of certain network tickets issued by the main operator.

2.3.2. Devon Day Ticket

Since 2017, DCC has brokered the Devon Day ticket, by means of a voluntary multi-operator partnership agreement. The price is agreed by consensus each year, and revenue stays where it falls – hence there is no requirement for back-office administration. Marketing of the scheme is supported by DCC, mainly with printed literature and through social media. This is supplemented by individual company efforts. All but one operator with services in Devon participates, and all DCC-supported services are included within the validity of the ticket.



Figure 2-20: Devon Day Ticket advert.

We have spoken to all train operating companies to engage them in the scheme. However, negotiations have not yet been concluded, mainly due to the potentially unattractive price of a bus/rail tickets and questions as to time-of-day validity.

2.3.3. Average Fares

As shown in the table below, the average adult fare in 2023/24 has fallen to £1.86, reflecting the impact of the maximum single fare of £2. The £2 fare cap has a significant impact on sales of day, weekly and longer period tickets, as these have increased in price and only offer savings for some regular travellers.

Ticket	Average Price – 2019/20	Average Price 2021/22	Average Price 2023/24
Adult Single	£2.28	£2.40	£1.95
Adult Return	£4.04	£4.11	£3.18
Day Ticket	£4.72	£4.92	£5.81
Weekly Ticket	£17.01	£17.33	£20.54
Carnet/Flexi Ticket	£23.22	£21.01	£19.30
Annual Ticket	£781.12	Not available	Not available
Adult Fare Per Trip	£1.87	£1.93	£1.86

Table 2-6: Average ticket prices

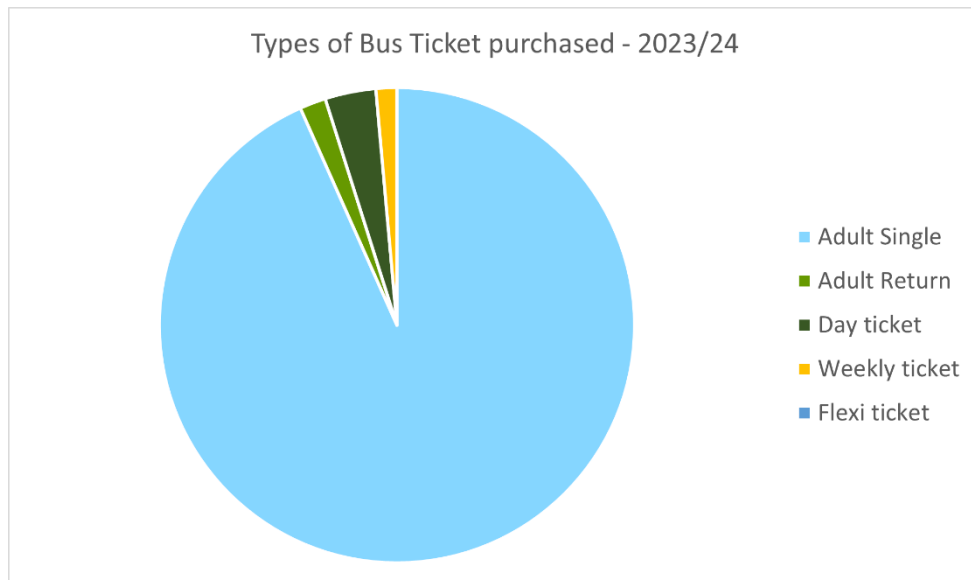


Figure 2-21: Types of bus ticket purchased, 2023/24

2.3.4. Payment Methods

Contactless payment is almost universally available on bus services in Devon, partly thanks to DCC financial assistance to small and medium-size operators for acquisition of the necessary ticket machines.

Over the past 5 years, there has been a huge increase in the proportion of fare revenues coming from card payments, from 30% in 2019/20 to over 65% by 2020/21. This was due to operators encouraging card payments and public concerns around handling cash during the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend has now stabilised with a slight increase in cash payments over the last year, which we believe is due to the £2 Fare Cap initiative.

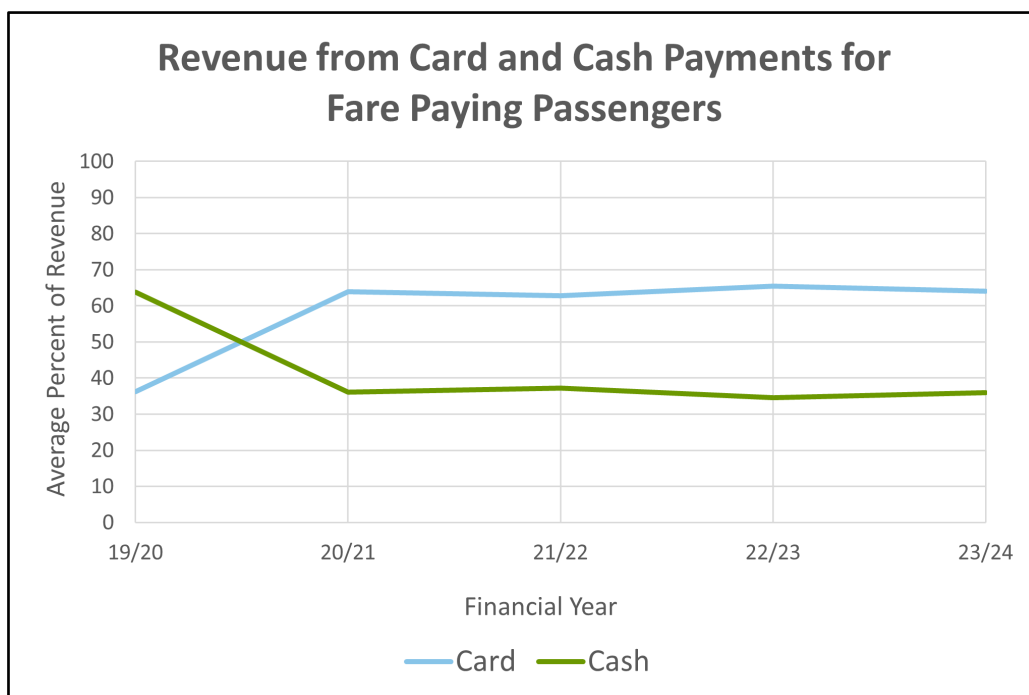


Figure 2-22: Revenues from card and cash fare payments, 2019/20 to 2023/24.

2.4. Vehicle Fleets

DCC collect fleet information for each bus operator in Devon and as of September 2022 June 2024, **the average age of a bus in Devon is currently 11 years.**

Most buses in Devon are operated by Stagecoach South West with a fleet size of **390 vehicles** and an average age of **11** years. Other operators run fleets of varying sizes, with around 170 vehicles on the Devon roads. Average fleet age varies from 6 to 15 years.

We do anticipate 20 new Optare Solo Minibuses being delivered to Stagecoach South West in the summer of 2024, with 41 new zero-emission electric buses to follow in 2025 funded through the ZEBRA 2 scheme. Whilst the introduction of these new vehicles decreases the average age, it also means that vehicles are cascaded throughout the Stagecoach fleet and onto the second hand market, offering opportunities for smaller operators. Together with these 61 new vehicles over the next 2 years, Stagecoach South West are also expecting up to 50 newer vehicles from elsewhere in the Groups fleet, which will further improve the quality, reliability and average age of their fleet.

In terms of emissions, 71% of buses in Devon are of the Euro VI or Euro V emission standard. A further 11% and 18% are Euro IV and Euro III standard respectively. Only 1 bus is Euro II standard. There are currently no electric or hydrogen powered buses in operation in DCC’s administrative area.

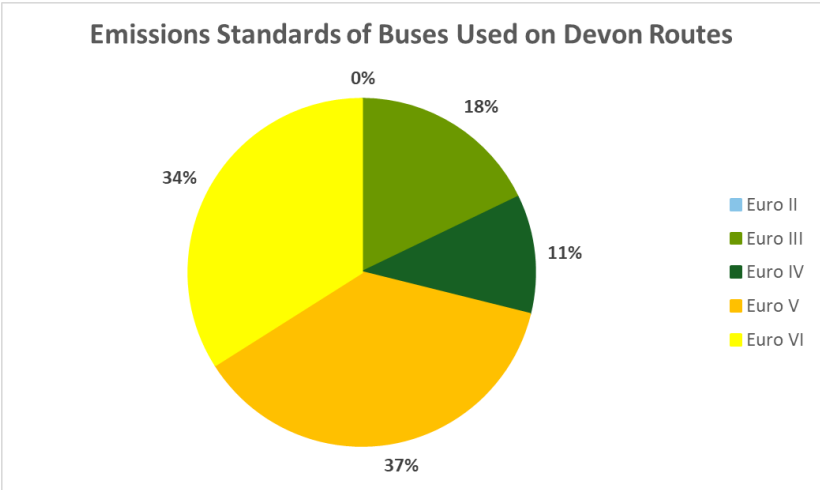


Figure 2-23: Emission standards of vehicles used on Devon bus routes.

2.5. Current Network Barriers and Opportunities

In Devon we can identify the following factors which affect bus usage:

Priority	Barriers to bus usage and growth	Opportunity to explore
1. Reliability	• Congestion impacts reliability and increases perception of unreliable services. • Congestion levels vary significantly day to day and between Schooldays/Holidays. • Summer season sees increased congestion. • Parking issues delay buses.	Further develop working relationship between DCC departments (Planning, Highways and Transport Operations) and bus companies to improve reliability and mitigate the impact of short and long term disruption. Formation of the Bus Punctuality Group.

Priority	Barriers to bus usage and growth	Opportunity to explore
	- Roadworks and road closures impact service delivery and may mean sections of route are not served. - Driver shortages, although much reduced, still occasionally impact service delivery. - Need for a period of reliability and stability to rebuild confidence after driver shortages resulted in many journeys being lost.	Improve this reliability and rebuild passenger confidence to make the bus an attractive and reliable option.
2. Frequency	- Lower frequency services do not offer sufficient flexibility for work journeys. - Lower frequency services unattractive compared to car. - Lack of evening services may limit employment and leisure opportunities. - Lack of Sunday services may limit leisure and employment opportunities. - Many small communities are remote from a frequent service.	Building incrementally on stronger services with evidence of the effectiveness of this approach from previous experience either through Government initiatives or local developments (for example Section 106 developer funding). Attracting new bus users through improved service and image of the bus, particularly targeting younger people not acquiring cars or learning to drive. Improve the standard and consistency of the waiting environment, bus stop infrastructure and roadside information provision. Ensure people feel safer using the bus.
3. Stability	- Frequent changes to services undermine confidence in services. - Changes to routes are not always popular and disrupt established travel patterns. - Continuing reductions to frequencies undermine confidence in committing to use the bus.	Improve this reliability and rebuild passenger confidence to make the bus an attractive and reliable option. Work with the business sector and major employers to develop services to better meet need. Promotion of services on peak days taking into account revised working patterns (for example Wednesdays)
4. Journey Times	- Congestion extends journey times and makes bus a less attractive option. - In rural areas the need to serve a number of small settlements makes journeys slower and less attractive. - Many rural roads limit bus speeds.	Measures on the highway to give the bus advantages over general traffic, without a significant impact on other traffic. Faster more efficient boarding and alighting Improved direct links to and from strategic centres offering the range of essential services – health, education, shopping, employment, leisure. Exploring simplified route networks and exploration of feeder routes, including with DRT and Fare Car development.

Priority	Barriers to bus usage and growth	Opportunity to explore
		Provide secure cycle parking at bus stops on direct bus corridors to better connect communities to bus network and improved end-end journey times.
5. Fares	£2 fare has overcome most concerns about fare levels and value for money. - Uncertainty about its continuation after December may influence journey choices. - If it is not continued passenger numbers are likely to reduce as many fares will more than double.	Greater promotion and awareness of what is available. The introduction of the £2 fare makes clear the value of using the bus. As we move on from this national initiative simplified lower fare initiatives and more attractive fare structures will be developed, both to encourage usage and to reduce passenger boarding times.

Table 2-7: Current barriers to bus usage and opportunities to explore.

Opportunities to explore further are expanded on in section 4 of this document.

2.6. Views of stakeholders

Prior to writing our first BSIP in 2021, we conducted a high-level consultation with key local stakeholders, including representatives and officers of councils at all tiers of local government, bus operators, action/user groups and other public bodies (e.g. NHS, National Park authorities). The key findings of this consultation were used to write our BSIP in 2021 and can be found in Appendix 1.

Since establishing our Enhanced Partnership board and the BUS Forum, we now have a two-tier model which enables us to consult with and inform key stakeholders of our plans to deliver BSIP schemes and wider strategy around public transport in Devon.

2.6.1. Devon Bus Enhanced Partnership

In November 2022 Devon County Council formed the **DevonBus Enhanced Partnership** with our bus operators. An Enhanced Partnership is an agreement between a local authority and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the partnership is aiming for and accompanying actions to achieve them. The local authority has formal responsibility to form the partnership. They can only proceed with proposals if they have the support and input of local bus operators. Information is provided on our website, including our published [Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme](#).

2.6.2. Devon BUS Forum

In addition to this, the **Devon BUS (Bus User and Stakeholder) Forum** was set up in 2023 and is linked to the formation of our Enhanced Partnership.

The forum meets a minimum of three times each year and acts as an informal body to consider current issues and opportunities relating to all aspects of bus services across the Devon County Council (DCC) administrative area. The forum represents the views of bus users and stakeholders across the county and provide a united voice through the invited representatives.

Membership to the forum is by invitation only and meetings are not open to members of the public. More information can be found on [our website](#) along with notes from previous meetings. The terms of reference for the group can be viewed [here](#).

2.6.3. Passenger Charter

The [DevonBus Passenger Charter](#) has been designed to improve bus services across Devon in partnership with local bus operators, bus users and other stakeholders. It covers all local bus services in Devon, including commercial services and those services which are supported through funding by Devon County Council (DCC).

The Charter outlines commitments by both bus operators and the local transport authority (Devon County Council) as well as expectations from bus passengers. The Charter does not create a legal relationship but does set out an expectation that certain standards are met, as well as signposting who to contact when things go wrong.



Figure 2-24 Image of collateral advertising our Devon Bus Passenger Charter

2.7. Collaboration with other Local Authorities

As set out in section 1.4 there are plans for DCC and Torbay Council to work closely to deliver strategic transport priorities through the devolution deal. DCC is also working in close partnership with its Sub National Transport Body partners, principally Cornwall Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council on the improvement of services and are seeking to develop flexible, multi-modal ticketing for the Peninsula region. We hope this is something which can be explored further by Peninsula Strategic Transport Board and have included this in our proposals for 2025 onwards.

We are also working together on the development of our bus services with all cross-boundary routes identified. Whether commercial or LTA supported, we have identified a lead authority for the future development of these services and how they can better link with wider strategic network across the region including longer distance rail and coach connections.

DCC is also working with Somerset Council and Dorset Council, although the level of cross boundary movement is currently less than with our southern and western neighbours. With Somerset we are keen to explore, with Exmoor National Park, improved access for leisure and

with Dorset the gateway between the two authorities through Lyme Regis and along the Jurassic Coast.

2.8. Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention

During 2022, Devon bus operators, along with many other local authority areas in England, faced severe staffing difficulties, which had been an ongoing challenge since the pandemic. In June 2022, Stagecoach South West were 10.5% below the required level of drivers to be considered “fully staffed”, with vacancies at an all-time high. This had reduced to 5.6% in September 2023, and staff retention also showed a significant improvement.

In 2024, Stagecoach are now fully staffed. This has been achieved through significant investment in the employee proposition - pay rates, culture and workable rostering.

Stagecoach will continue to maintain this proposition as we move into 24/25, ensuring that they are on the front foot with recruitment and spotting any retention trends early to ensure that they remain able to deliver services reliably.

2.9. Adaptations to face post-Covid challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic posed an existential threat to the bus industry. From the start of the first lockdown in March 2020 losses of patronage of up to 95% were reported, with overall patronage among operators submitting monthly returns falling 90% in April 2020 compared to the previous year.

DCC, with funding support from the Government were able to maintain local bus service contract payments throughout the pandemic even where operations were suspended, and to provide concessionary reimbursement payment support to operators up until March 2024.

As the global economy started to return to normal, the local bus network tried to follow, albeit with several challenges. For example, we saw a large number of service reductions and significant changes to the commercial bus network in 2022, and this trend has continued at a slower pace in 2023/24. Where there has been a withdrawal from a commercial service, DCC has been able in most cases to use the government funding and our Local Transport Fund to reinstate some of those services on a subsidised basis. It has not been possible in all cases to reinstate services to the previous commercial levels, which has shown in a further reduction of patronage on some routes, and we have not restored pre-pandemic patronage levels.

It is felt nationally that much of this patronage loss will now not be recovered, and we are now working in a “new norm” for the bus industry. We must now work to find new markets to increase bus patronage, in line with our BSIP objectives. In Devon, in common with most places, we see several post pandemic challenges, and opportunities, to enable and encourage recovery:

- Impacts on work travel brought about by a shift to home-working and business closures, particularly shops, saw a decrease of 20% following the pandemic. Traffic flows in cities are now increasing so a key challenge is to make bus services appeal to commuters in these areas. Working with operators we have re-modelled some “commuter” services to appeal to workers and students travelling into Exeter and larger towns for work or education.

- Concessionary travel is taking time to recover, with figures still at 63% of pre-pandemic levels. We believe there are several reasons for this:
 1. It is evidenced that passes used more for leisure than essential travel than before the pandemic, with many individuals choosing, for example, to shop via the internet rather than in person.
 2. Devon in particular has seen extensive growth in the retired population moving into Devon from other areas of the country – these individuals have more disposable income and do not necessarily need to use the bus for essential travel.
 3. Trends were showing there was a gradual decline in concessionary travel before the pandemic – the pandemic has simply sped up the rate of decline that otherwise may well have happened naturally over a longer period of time.
 4. Age of eligibility is now 66 as opposed to 60 in 2008 when the scheme started.
- School and college travel underpin much of the Devon bus network, this has now returned to pre-pandemic levels, and we are exploring future opportunities as to how we can use this market to complement the commercial bus network.
- The joint working with our bus companies through and after the pandemic has been a tremendous success. This has been essential in seeing the bus network through difficult times and will have a lasting positive effect. The development of the Enhanced Partnership constitutes a formalising of working relationships already forged out of mutual trust and recognition. If we can get through a global pandemic together, we can also deal with future challenges.



SECTION 3

Improvements Programme to 2025

3.Improvements Programme to 2025

3.1. Introduction & Scheme Summary

In 2022 DCC was allocated a £14.1 million BSIP funding package by the DfT. This is split into capital (£8.8 million) and revenue (£5.3 million) funding areas. The funding was for a three-year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25 and all schemes were subject to final approval from the DfT.

In addition to this, to support the Devon BSIP, DCC received an additional revenue funding allocation of £3,354,786 (BSIP+ funds, to be spent over a two year period 23/24 and 24/25).

Although the BSIP funding allocation was significantly less than DCC had requested to deliver our initial plans, we have been able to deliver schemes which offer a real benefit to bus passengers in Devon. The schemes we have delivered, or are working towards delivering before March 2025 with current funding, are outlined in this section.

Our BSIP still remains ambitious with the hope that future funding may be available. Section 4 goes on to outline our Future Aspirations for Bus Services in Devon, should additional funding become available.

All schemes (in both section 3 and section 4) seek to stimulate and drive significant improvements to local bus services across our area. These improvements will:

- see a step change in local transport provision delivered to current and new bus users
- seek to redress the balance in modal share between private and public transport, and
- ensure a future-ready buses approach is taken at every delivery step

Priorities identified through the stakeholder engagement process (see Section 2 above), placed significant emphasis on expanding the bus network, by providing new daily journeys to many rural settlements, and increasing frequencies on existing routes. Our funding allocation only supported a small amount of revenue projects, so these aspirations have been put on hold pending the announcement of future funding streams.

The schemes we will have delivered by March 2025 are based on the priorities in the table below. These are subject to consultation, political approval and planning processes where required.

Capital Schemes

Bus Priority Measures – an ambitious programme to improve bus priority across the county, which includes schemes in:

- Exeter – Northern, Eastern, Western and Central Corridors across the city
- Newton Abbot Western Corridor - linked to access and improvements to Newton Abbot Bus Station at Sherborne Road
- Barnstaple Northwest and Western corridors plus Bus/Rail Integration at Barnstaple Railway Station
- Countywide Bus Pinch Point Removal Programme

Bus Station Enhancements - Funding to upgrade Newton Abbot, Tavistock, Barnstaple, and Tiverton Bus Stations. To include refurbishment, provision of information, signage, seating and improve safety.

Bus stop infrastructure - standardisation of flags and information points with clear information to assist passengers, significant upgrades to bus shelters and Real Time Information displays at key stops.

Improved & upgraded street lighting - for a safer environment in and around bus waiting areas/stops.

Bus Stop Multi-Modal Integration Upgrades

Upgrade to Ticket Machines - to enable all to read QR Codes.

Revenue Schemes

Bus Service Support new services introduced to appeal to commuters and students, plus limited enhancements to evening & Sunday services.

Fares Support regional initiatives to encourage people to try the bus (following on from the end of the £2 fare scheme)

Promotional Events and Marketing development of our DevonBus branding, marketing campaigns including “Back on the Bus” and “Miles of Smiles”; aimed to raise awareness and increase patronage

Project Management costs to support BSIP schemes.

3.2. Individual Scheme Delivery

3.2.1. Better Bus Journey Times Achieved by Bolder Bus Priority Measures: Significant increase in bus priority – make the bus an attractive alternative to the car

- DCC have developed a programme of key corridor interventions across the City of Exeter and the towns of Barnstaple and Newton Abbot.
- DCC will undertake further feasibility studies and develop suitable additional programmes as required under guidance from the Bus Punctuality Group that deliver additional measures at remaining locations across the county, should additional funding be available.
- DCC will pursue delivery of enhanced digital infrastructure, including Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) systems at identified locations in addition to digitally enabled information provision as identified from time to time.
- Column entitled “Outcomes at Scheme Level” includes estimations as to journey time savings, additional modelling of these savings is currently being undertaken and will be used to develop the design of the schemes.

Scheme title or intervention (includes DFT Scheme ID)	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
DEV01 ENC Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Priority	Bus priority to provide more direct access to city centre for Countywide bus services approaching on 4km northern corridor between Cowley Bridge roundabout (northern edge of city) and Bus Station (city centre). Bus gate would avoid circuitous route via narrow residential streets and reduce route distance by 0.5km (12.5%) and enable stops closer to High St)	Project design, consultation and approval process completed. Construction to start in June 2024 with completion in July.	Intervention achieves approximately 3-minute journey time saving per bus with 8 services per hour across 8 routes, which represents a 17% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor. Passengers can disembark the bus nearer to City Centre. Over 200 buses daily would be diverted from narrow streets, improving air quality on York Road, which has a school and was near the AQ objective level in 2019. The intervention would reduce the percentage of PSVs on York Road by 29% and on Longbrook Street by 45%.
DEV01ECC	• Upgrading the signal-controlled sites along the	Project design and consultation now	Time savings. The proposed interventions have the potential for an approximate four-

Exeter Central Corridor: Heavitree Bus Enhancement Package Significant investment on a 3km corridor between the Paris St roundabout and Middlemoor roundabout. The corridor has up to 30 buses per hour in each direction, Monday to Saturday.	corridor with bus priority technology to help extend the green signal when a bus is detected on the approach or to adjust the signal timings to reduce the waiting time of a queuing bus. This is predicted to reduce bus journey times at signal-controlled sites, especially during interpeak and off-peak periods. • Adaptive traffic control solutions to monitor and remotely take control of junctions, including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV • Variable message signs (VMS) • Improvements to bus stop infrastructure including real time • Changes to Bus Lane operational times • Provision of improvements to Heavitree Rd/Polsloe Rd/Barrack Rd junction to improve bus priority • Provision of an additional northbound bus lane on Barrack Rd	complete. Awaiting Cabinet approval in July 2024. Scheme completed and operational by March 2025	minute journey time saving per bus, with up to 30 services per hour in each direction across 11 routes. This scheme is intended to deliver a 20% reduction in bus journey times, on this corridor which will benefit all bus users and would help attract more users to use bus services instead of cars. Air quality. The Exeter Central Corridor is the only route in the city which exceeds the national air quality objective and journey average emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM). This scheme may contribute to improved air quality by reducing the stop-start acceleration events for buses and by supporting a shift from car use to bus. Improve the bus stop infrastructure and Real Time Information (RTI) offering along the route - there is also an opportunity to link with other infrastructure, long term schemes and BSIP outcomes. When completed there is further potential to undertake promotional events to encourage people to use the bus.
DEV01EEC Exeter Eastern Corridor: Pinhoe Road to City Centre Bus Lane and Signals Upgrade The Exeter Eastern Corridor is approximately 3.4km in length between Pinhoe Sainsburys and the City Centre (High Street) predominantly along the B3212. It includes Sidwell Street, Blackboy Road and Pinhoe Road. This is a key corridor into the city centre serving the suburbs of Whipton, Pinhoe and the eastern urban expansion of the city.	• Upgrading the signal-controlled sites along the corridor with bus priority technology to help extend the green signal when a bus is detected on the approach or to adjust the signal timings to reduce the waiting time of a queuing bus. This is predicted to reduce bus journey times at signal-controlled sites, especially during interpeak and off-peak periods. • Adaptive traffic control solutions to monitor and remotely take control of junctions, including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV • Variable message signs (VMS) • Improvements to bus stop infrastructure including real time • Changes to Bus Lane operational times	Project design and consultation no complete. Awaiting Cabinet approval in July 2024. Scheme completed and operational by March 2025	This scheme aims to improve priority and journey times for buses as well as address road safety difficulties for people walking and cycling on busy radial routes. For the Exeter Eastern Corridor, the anticipated benefits are: Journey time savings. There is potential for an approximate 4-minute journey time saving per bus, with up to 8 services per hour in each direction across 4 routes. This scheme is intended to deliver a 27% reduction in bus journey times, on this corridor. Improve the bus stop infrastructure and Real Time Information (RTI) offering along the route Support more locations for cycle and bus interchanges at nodal points on key corridors. When completed there is further potential to undertake promotional events to encourage people to use the bus.
DEV01EWC Exeter Western Corridor: This corridor connects St Thomas with the City Centre along Cowick Street, Exe Bridges, Fore Street / Preston Street and	• Preston Street / Western Way Junction - Early bus detection installed at the junction will help reduce waiting times for buses. • Cowick Street / Buller Road Junction - Technology upgrade to introduce bus	Project design, consultation and approval process completed. Awaiting construction schedule.	Journey time savings Intervention achieves approximately 2 mins journey time saving per bus with 7 services per hour across 5 routes, which represents a 33% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.

Western Way. This connects passengers between residential areas and key employment, education and leisure opportunities in the city centre and is one of the busiest public transport corridors in the city with approximately 12 buses each hour in both directions.	• priority on Cowick Street inbound approach during the AM & PM peaks • Intelligent Corridor Upgrade • Adaptive traffic control solutions to monitor and remotely take control of junctions, including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV • Variable message signs (VMS) • CCTV cameras and bus priority detectors will be installed • Devon's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgrade for technology-based priority systems to function in the city. • Cowick Street Bus Lane - proposals to extend the operation hours of the inbound bus lane to improve bus priority	Scheme completed and operational by September 2024	When completed there is further potential to undertake promotional events to encourage people to use the bus. There is also an opportunity to link with other infrastructure, long term schemes and BSIP outcomes.
DEV01NAW Newton Abbot Western Corridor: Town Centre Signals Upgrade plus investment in infrastructure at Sherborne Road Bus Station	This scheme is yet to be finalised but we are currently reviewing options. Details include: • Upgrading the signal-controlled sites in Newton Abbot town centre with bus priority technology to help extend the green signal when a bus is detected on the approach or to adjust the signal timings to reduce the waiting time of a queuing bus. This is predicted to reduce bus journey times at signal-controlled sites, especially during interpeak and off-peak periods. • Adaptive traffic control solutions to monitor and remotely take control of junctions, including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV • Improvements to bus stop infrastructure including real time, with a focus on the Sherborne Road bus station facility	Project design is still underway, as the previous scheme to alter the Highweek Street junction was rejected, as it offered little benefit to bus users. We hope to finalise designs by July 2024, with an aim for the scheme to be completed and operational by March 2025	Improved access for bus services between new development on western edge of town and the town centre (estimated 10% journey time saving in peak hour), reduction of congestion in Newton Abbot and enabling stronger multi modal integration. Increase bus patronage in to Newton Abbot by 5% Improve provision of bus stops, information and real time information.
DEV01BNB Barnstaple Northwest Corridor: Braunton Road Bus Lane and Bus Priority	Bus priority on northwest corridor between Chaddiford Lane junction (north western edge of town) and the town centre, with straight through priority at Pilland Way and A361, effectively removing the need for buses to stop at two sets of traffic signals.	Project design completed – this scheme is currently in consultation as of January 2024 Scheme completed and operational by March 2025	The scheme aims to improve bus journey times for services from Braunton towards Barnstaple, therefore improving existing user experience and encouraging the further use of public transport services. It promotes priority for buses and taxis to avoid the queuing traffic. There are currently a total of 292 buses that would benefit from the bus lane per week,

			approximately 50 buses per day from Monday to Saturday. Journey time savings Intervention achieves approximately 2 mins journey time saving per bus with 4 services per hour which represents a 29% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.
DEV01BNN Barnstaple Northern Corridor: North Road Bus Lanes	<i>This scheme was removed via the PAR process and approved by the DfT. Funds have been allocated to other schemes.</i>		
DEV01BBC Bideford/Barnstaple Western Bus Corridor	Scheme is for a new bus lane to give bus priority between Gratton Way and Roundswell roundabout. The scheme will improve bus journey times for services from Barnstaple towards Roundswell roundabout, and promotes priority for buses and taxis to avoid the queuing traffic, ensuring more reliable bus services onto the A39.	Project design, consultation and approval process completed. Awaiting construction schedule. Scheme completed and operational by September 2024	Journey time savings Intervention on Roundswell approach achieves approximately 1-minute with 2 services per hour across 4 routes, which represents a 6% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.
DEV01BRS Barnstaple Railway Station Scheme – improved integration and access to the station for buses and bus passengers	Bus/rail integration project at Barnstaple Rail Station. This project will greatly increase access for buses to the station, help to integrate rail and bus journeys, and also provide a bus only priority link to reduce congestion and improve bus journey times to the town centre and beyond. Bus stops and real time provision will be improved, and the relocation of these will help to promote the bus as a first choice for passengers arriving at the station.	Project design complete – consultation in June 2024. Scheme completed and operation by October 2025 (DfT approval for this extension has been received)	The changes at Barnstaple Rail Station will provide a massive benefit to public transport users, promoting the bus a first choice for onward travel. There are also currently safety concerns for pedestrians arriving at the station, and moving in between modes. Changes to the road layout and improved infrastructure, including the introduction of a bus only gate for bus journeys departing from the station, will make this a safer environment for all public transport users, and improve bus journey times by allowing buses to avoid congestion.
DEV01CBP Countywide Bus Pinch Point Removal Programme	Pinch Point Removals, i.e., minor civils works (kerbs / realignment) or traffic management measures (i.e., removal of on-street parking) to ease flow of buses through Market Towns, using Bus Operator data/intelligence to highlight locations where bus reliability is impacted.	These will be smaller projects which will be identified, designed, and delivered throughout the course of the project. Work is progressing to schedule with some schemes already completed and the remainder to be completed and operational by March 2025	Improve journey times and access for buses at a range of identified locations across the county.

Table 3-1 Details of individual schemes for Bus Priority

3.2.2. Examples of BSIP Bus Priority Schemes

DEV01 ENC – Proposed design for Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Priority. This scheme will be delivered in June 2024.



Existing and Proposed bus routes



Figure 3-1 Proposed design for Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Priority

DEV01BRS - Barnstaple Railway Station Scheme – improved integration and access to the station for buses and bus passengers



Figure 3-2 Proposed design for Barnstaple Railway Station – Bus Integration Enhancements

3.2.3. Delivery of Bus Priority Measures

A team comprising of officers from the Transport Operations, Transport Planning and Highways departments at DCC and our private sector partner WSP has been formed to deliver the Bus Priority Measures project. This team combines local knowledge with national expertise to enable the best solution to be realised.

3.2.4. Bus Punctuality Group

Linked with the formation of the EP, DCC and its bus operators have established a Bus Punctuality Group. This aims to continually improve and maintain punctuality across the County.

The group involves colleagues from within the Highways, Transport and Planning departments and the relevant bus companies across the County.

The group meets monthly and plays a key part in managing and improving the network for the benefit of public transport.

Workstreams to consider will be to:

- identify areas where timekeeping and reliability fall outside agreed targets.
- identify areas/ factors which delay services or increase journey times.
- produce an agreed action plan with targets and funding to ensure identified areas of poor performance are improved and meet targets.
- prioritise local bus provision and minimise the impact of roadworks on bus services.
- provide timely information about works which may have an impact on a service.
- deal with parking issues which obstruct or delay services.
- identify areas to improve the bus stop environment.
- work towards interventions, such as improved bus or signal priority, as part of an integrated approach across the road network.
- explore long term planning opportunities and the impact on bus travel – demand and frequency.

3.2.5. Better Accessibility to Services by Integrating Bus with Other Modes: Stronger links with modes including but not limited to; bus, coach, rail, cycle, and ferries

AND

3.2.6. Better Passenger Experience

As detailed in the table below, DCC is delivering the following schemes:

- Delivering a programme of bus station and interchange improvements, including Multi-Modal Integration Hubs, in partnership with District Council's where appropriate.
- Delivering a programme of targeted bus stop improvements across The Scheme area. Such upgrades and improvements may be, but not limited to, bus stop poles, bus stop flags, bus stop shelters, additional bus stop furniture, lighting, timetable displays (facilities for printed formats), accessible kerbing, and bus stop cages, borders and pedestrian access.
- Delivering a programme to identify and roll-out real time information (RTI) at further key locations across the local bus network in parallel with some bus stop upgrades and corridors subject to wider bus priority measures through 'facilities' to The Scheme.
- Delivering a programme to upgrading lighting at key locations to provide a safer environment for bus passengers.

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
DEV01BSE Bus Station Enhancements	Funding to upgrade Newton Abbot, Tavistock, Barnstaple, and Tiverton Bus Stations. To include refurbishment, provision of information, signage, seating and improve safety.	Projects at Barnstaple, Tavistock and Newton Abbot are already underway. Tiverton will follow in Y3 Scheme to be completed by March 2025	To increase safety, satisfaction and confidence of passengers using bus station facilities, leading to the overall growth of bus patronage across the county.
DEV01BSI Bus Stop Infrastructure & Real Time Information	Extensive programme to upgrade and standardise bus stop infrastructure across the county, to include: - Standardisation of flags and information points with clear information to assist passengers. - Upgrade of Devon's real time estate and increased provision of real time at key stops – we have commissioned a complete replacement of Devon's real time system, and added many new locations. This will see around 90 new real time information signs installed across Devon. - Upgrade of bus shelters in key locations – we have now installed over 70 “living roof” shelters across the county with more to follow before next March.	Ongoing upgrade across the lifespan of the BSIP project. Scheme to be completed by March 2025	Improve offering to bus passengers, to increase confidence in information provision. We hope this will lead to an increase in patronage. Upgrade end of life bus stop infrastructure. Improve reliability of outdated real time displays.
DEV01EDB East Devon Business Parks and Leisure Park - Bus stop waiting facilities upgrade (Crealy, Hillbarton & Greendale)	<i>This scheme was removed via the PAR process and approved by the DFT. Funds have been allocated to other schemes</i>		
DEV01ISL Improved Street Lighting	Improve and install lighting for a safer environment in and around bus waiting areas/stops. Upgrade lighting in existing locations to incorporate a lighting management system, to increase safety for of bus users.	This scheme was completed by March 2023	Safer waiting environment increases confidence of a wide range of people with protected characteristics and so advances equality of opportunity to travel by bus.
DEV01MMI Bus Stop Multi-Modal Integration Upgrades	Bus stop upgrades to improve multi-modal integration between cycle, rail, and access to bus services. We have identified	Drumbridges has been approved and is awaiting construction; the other two locations	Increased multi-modal journey options for commuters, thereby reducing journey to work times and providing a sustainable public transport option

	three location which we are currently progressing: • A38 Drumbridges roundabout • Tavistock • Yelverton	are in the final stages of design. All schemes completed and operational by March 2025	
DEV03UTM Upgrade to ticket machines to enable all to read QR Codes	<i>This scheme is currently on hold due to disparity between systems used by our bus operators – we are still trying to find a solution.</i>		Enable seamless multi-operator ticketing and acceptance on all bus services.

Table 3-2 Details of individual schemes for “Better Accessibility to Services & Integration” and “Better Passenger Experience”

3.2.6.1. Examples of BSIP schemes delivering a Better Passenger Experience

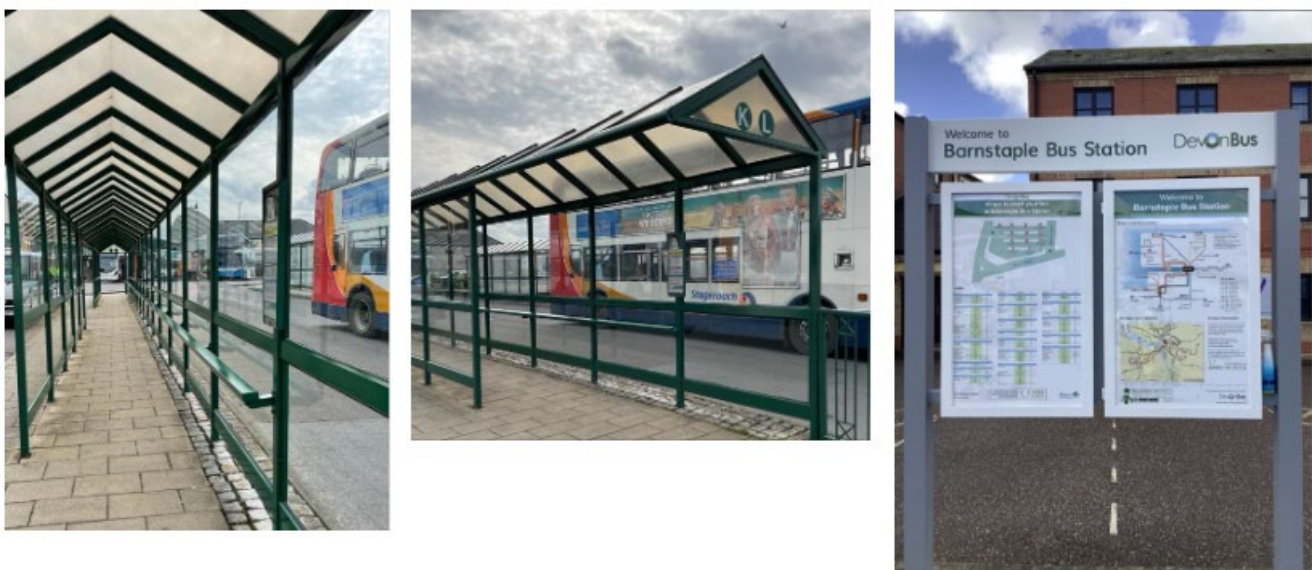


Figure 3-3 Improvements to infrastructure at Barnstaple Bus Station



Figure 3-4 Real Time Information improvements – example of a new sign



Figure 3-5 New “Living Roof” Shelters installed with BSIP funding in Devon

3.2.6.2. Bus Stops

There are just over 6,000 bus stops across Devon which vary from having full facilities, such as a shelter with living eco roofs, real time display, and a fully descriptive timetable case and a flag, to the other end of the scale - a simple hail & ride stop which lacks any such features.

We currently maintain 121 “Key Stop” displays, at principal bus stops throughout Devon. These show all services and are updated when timetable changes occur. They are in a consistent format, and we aspire to offer this standard of information across more stops on the bus network. Investment through BSIP funding has helped us to improve our information offering and update current bus stop infrastructure as explained in section 3.2.6. We hope to continue this work through to March 2025 and extend through any future BSIP funding.

Bus Times

Exeter St David's Station, Stop B

From 3rd July 2021

EXETER - OKEHAMPTON via Crediton & Hatherleigh Stagecoach 5A											
Monday - Saturday (Except Public Holidays)											
	0600	0700	0800	0900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600
EXETER, St David's Station Stop B	0600	0700	0800	0900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600
WEST GARTH ROAD, Top	0704	0729	0829	0929	1029	1129	1229	1329	1429	1529	1629
NEWTON ST CROSS, Green & Orange	0712	0736	0836	0936	1036	1136	1236	1336	1436	1536	1636
CREDITON, Bus Station	0716	0744	0844	0944	1044	1144	1244	1344	1444	1544	1644
CREDITON, High Street Layby Bank	0723	0749	0849	0949	1049	1149	1249	1349	1449	1549	1649
COPPELSTONE, Bus	0731	0757	0857	0957	1057	1157	1257	1357	1457	1557	1657
BOW, The Square	0738	0804	0904	1004	1104	1204	1304	1404	1504	1604	1704
NORTH TARTON, Square	0748	0814	0914	1014	1114	1214	1314	1414	1514	1614	1714
CAMPFORD COURT, New Inn	0754	0820	0920	1020	1120	1220	1320	1420	1520	1620	1720
EXMOUTH CROSS, Garage	0757	0823	0923	1023	1123	1223	1323	1423	1523	1623	1723
JACOBSTOWN, Church	0800	0826	0926	1026	1126	1226	1326	1426	1526	1626	1726
HATHERLEIGH, Market Car Park, W	0802	0828	0928	1028	1128	1228	1328	1428	1528	1628	1728
HATHERLEIGH, Market Car Park, W	0810	0836	0936	1036	1136	1236	1336	1436	1536	1636	1736
HOLLY GATE, Greenway Inn	0813	0840	0940	1040	1140	1240	1340	1440	1540	1640	1740
OKEHAMPTON, Weymouth	0820	0851	0951	1051	1151	1251	1351	1451	1551	1651	1751
OKEHAMPTON, College	0827	0858	0958	1058	1158	1258	1358	1458	1558	1658	1758
OKEHAMPTON, Market Street	0832	0903	1003	1103	1203	1303	1403	1503	1603	1703	1803

CODE: 5A - STOPS CLOSE TO RAIL STATION NB - NOT SATURDAY S - SATURDAY ONLY

Figure 3-6 Example of Bus Stop flag at Key Bus Stop (left) and Key Stop timetable display (right).

Bus stop infrastructure is developed to the following standards, depending on:

- Number of passengers on routes serving the stop
- Frequency of services
- Profile of stop

Element	Components	Description
Bus Stop Flags	• Devon Logo • Bus Symbol/"Bus Stop" • Stop location name • Bus Service Number • Traveline contact information	We have introduced a standardisation of flags with clear information to assist passengers locate the correct bus stops and services. Flag print should be durable and consistent across the whole network, taking into account the need to change service information regularly.
Bus Stop Poles	• Proprietary Modular Bus Stop Pole	We will aim for a durable anodised aluminium alloy pole that is modular with the timetable cases without the need for banding.
Timetable Cases	• Proprietary Modular Timetable Case at Key Stops	A standardisation of smaller cases will enable an easier replacement of clear polycarbonate fronts
Timetable Displays (within Table Cases)	• Water resistant polypropylene • UV ink • Stop specific information • QR Code for real time information • Devon Logo • Bus Symbol/"Bus Stop" • Stop location name • Direction of travel for services and destination • Bus Service Number • Traveline contact information	Current key stop printed timetables is the optimal product with UV protected ink and water-resistant polypropylene. The production of timetables on a larger scale needs to be examined to see what the best practice is. An automated system needs to be accurate and efficient if each bus stop is to have stop specific information.
QR Codes	• We aim to supply a QR code at each bus stop which users can scan to access real time information on their smart phone. This will either be incorporated into the printed timetable display, or on a separate dedicated casing.	This enables bus users to access real time information for individual stops on their smart phone or other device.
Bus Shelters	• Not owned by DCC • District/Town or Parish provision • Shelter may be either an	We will work with our existing bus shelter partners to build on the relationships we have developed and work with

Element	Components	Description
	Advertising or Non-advertising Shelter	District, Town and Parish Councils to ensure advertising and non-advertising shelters are in keeping with the local area, for example those in an AONB (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Table 3-3: Proposals for bus stop infrastructure.



Figure 3-7: Example of a rural bus shelter – joint funded by DCC and Woodbury Parish Council



Figure 3-8: Example of a “living roof” bus shelter – part-funded by advertising revenue through Fernbank.

Infrastructure improvements are an ongoing project – it would be impractical to bring all elements of infrastructure up to standard within the three years of BSIP funding due to manpower and resource restraints.

Ongoing Revenue Costs will be needed to maintain poles, timetables, flags, and shelters.

DCC has commercial contracts with two companies to provide, maintain and clean bus shelters within the county (Clear Channel within the city of Exeter and Fernbank for the rest of the county). Advertising revenue (from both printed and digital media) generated by these companies enables the shelters to be maintained at zero cost to us as a local authority. In addition, we receive a share of advertising revenue which allows us to purchase shelters at new sites. New advertising and non-advertising shelters are jointly purchased by the local authority and the company.

3.2.6.3. Lighting at Bus Stops

DCC are currently in the process of upgrading all our streetlights to LED. This provides huge carbon and energy savings across the county. Additionally, as part of the LED upgrade programme, we have been installing a lighting management system in central Exeter and trial areas around the county. The lighting management system enables DCC to have full control over every individual light, turning lights on / off and dimming the brightness at infinite specified times.

It is recognised that personal safety, in particular lone females at night, is currently a major concern to the public following recent events and could provide a blocker to bus usage if bus stop locations feel unsafe.

As part of the BSIP, DCC will further extend the lighting management system to well used bus stop locations and connecting active travel routes to provide lighting coinciding with bus timetables, giving these locations a safer feel through hours of darkness.

3.2.6.4. Real Time Information

DCC has been running a RTI (Real Time Information) system since 2014, involving on-line information and on-street display screens across the county. Hardware on this system is now at end-of-life and in need of replacing. Through BSIP funding we are now replacing all this equipment in our estate, and in addition adding more RTI signs at key locations across Devon. To achieve optimum efficiency in data inputting processes, we are making the transition to using data feeds from National Public Transport Information (NPTI), who are also acting on behalf of DCC and our bus operators with respect to achieving Open Data compliance. As a result, on-line and mobile app information is also now provided by Traveline.

The NPTI data feed has been successfully tested through the RTI system at Exeter Bus Station. The DCC funded system involves summary departure screens as well as screens and information totems at each of the twelve departure stands.

For passengers with smartphones, conventional timetable displays at bus stops without RTI displays can include a QR code which links to the on-line departure board for that stop. This facility is ready to start being rolled out to Devon stops.

Although it is often voiced that there should be an electronic real time information sign at each bus stop, in reality this is cost prohibitive and not always feasible. RTI displays require an electricity supply, as well as an internet connection via a sim card or hardwired connection.

3.2.6.5. Audio Visual Announcements on Buses

A further function to the RTI system is the integration of an on-bus audio-visual announcements system. This type of system is invaluable to people with disabilities and provides confidence for tourists or passengers who lack knowledge in where they are going. Bus operators are currently encouraged to provide accessible information onboard their services when introducing new or upgraded vehicles. However, the age profile of buses in Devon tends to be older than those observed in urban authorities. For the larger operators, replacement buses are cascaded from the wider company and the smaller operators will often buy mid-life used buses. Based on this, it could take some time for the trickledown effect of the technology to become established in the county.

The DfT have been clear that investment in this technology is expected to be continued by operators, and BSIP funding should not be used to speed up the implementation of this. The DfT have recently announced the [Accessible Information Grant](#), which is available to operators with less than 20 public service vehicles. We have provided support to our operators regarding applications for this grant and will continue to seek out additional funding opportunities.

3.2.6.6. Travel Devon Website and production of online information

As explained in section 2, Devon already has a well-established website - [Travel Devon](#) – which provides information on all bus services in the county, timetable information, and links to Traveline for fare data. The website is refreshed and updated regularly and will incorporate the Devon Bus Brand.



Figure 3-9 image showing [Travel Devon website](#) home page

We do recognise that improvements can be made in making sure the public are aware of the information available, and we will promote electronic resources, such as the Travel Devon website, the Stagecoach app and other resources such as bustimes.org which can be used to track vehicles in “real time”.

3.2.6.7. Branding

DCC and the bus companies are working to develop our brand around “Devon Bus”. This sits as part of the “Travel Devon” covering all aspects of transport with the area. Devon Bus has been developed with bus companies and stakeholders to give confidence in the consistent level of services we aim to deliver as part of the Enhanced Partnership. We were excited this summer to launch our first liveried vehicle and hope many more will follow across the county. The brand will be flexible to build on the strength of existing bus company identities.



Figure 3-10 our first “DevonBus” liveried vehicle

3.2.6.8. Promotion of Services – including non-bus user engagement

Throughout the BSIP programme, DCC have promoted bus use to a range of potential users for both regular and casual use. DCC aim to meet modal shift and passenger growth targets by working with Bus Operators and other stakeholders, to identify potential opportunities. Details of the schemes we have delivered, along with campaign examples, are shown below.

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
DEV06PET Promotional events to encourage people to try the bus - for example: Fare Sale, nominated weekends or school holiday promotions offering reduced fares, child add-on fares for £1,	In association with our Bus Operators, we have designed a calendar of events to promote ticket sales and encourage people to try the bus. Revenue costs include promotional activities and fare subsidies. Campaigns already delivered have included:	Promotional activities to run from October 2022 for length of project	Improve bus patronage and encourage people who have not tried the bus before or for a long time to give it a go. Deliver key messages – such as the £2 Bus Fare Cap

special offer on Devon Day ticket	• Miles of Smiles campaign – promoting days out by bus • £2 Fare Promotion • North Devon “Free Sundays” • Concessionary Bus Pass campaign		
-----------------------------------	--	--	--

Back on the Bus Campaign – 2021/2022



Figure 3-11: examples of collateral used during Back on the Bus outdoor advertising and social media campaign.

Miles of Smiles Campaign – 2023

- Our “Miles of Smiles” campaign ran throughout 2023 – the first tranche focused on the £2 Fare, and the second tranche encouraged **National Bus Pass** holders to use the bus.
- The campaigns included radio, social media, direct mailing, outdoor displays (bus side/rears), local magazines and surgery prescription bag advertisements.




**Take a sip.
Take a chance to explore.
Take a breath of fresh air.
Take the bus.**

There are *miles of smiles* to enjoy with your National Bus Pass. Enjoy a cuppa with family or friends, enjoy the park without parking or treat yourself to some retail therapy.

www.traveldevon.info






X30 Exeter Express
via Seaton – Colyton – Honiton – Exeter

New service from 2nd April 2023 



**BUS
FARES
£2
or
LESS**

Go easy on your pocket & the environment
with £2 or less bus fares until end of June 2023

Funded by UK Government 

**BUS
FARES
£2
or
LESS**

Westward Ho! to Ilfracombe
27.5 *Miles of Smiles*

 #MilesOfSmiles
www.traveldevon.info

Figure 3-12 Examples of Miles of Smiles campaign collateral

3.2.7. Better Connected Communities

- DCC will use a proportion of the available BSIP revenue funding to support limited bus service improvements, building on the success of the existing network, and to provide more opportunities for travel to access employment, health, leisure, and education.
- DCC will also increase promotion of existing demand responsive Fare Car services, and the introduction of a digital booking service.

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
Service 85 improvements: Barnstaple - Tavistock	Extension of service 85 beyond Holsworthy to Launceston and Tavistock.	Improved service started April 2023	Provide a direct service from Barnstaple to Tavistock. Provide improved service for villages between Holsworthy and Tavistock.
Service 174 improvements:	Extended to Torbay Hospital (incorporating previous 184 route) and	Improved service started June 2023	Improve access from Teignmouth and Newton

Teignmouth - Torbay Hospital	increased 2-hourly frequency across whole route		Abbot to Torbay Hospital and The Willows retail park.
Service X30: Seaton - Exeter	New route linking Seaton, Colyton and Honiton with east of Exeter growth point and Exeter city centre.	Service started in April 2023	Improve journey opportunities between East Devon and Exeter. Improve access to east of Exeter growth point.
Service 358: Otterton - Exeter	New weekday peak-time return journey linking Otterton, Budleigh and Woodbury with Exeter.	Service started in January 2024	New direct service improves journey opportunities for students and commuters from Budleigh area into Exeter.
Service A improvements: Exeter - Alphington	Increased 15-minute frequency across whole route.	Service improved in September 2023	Increase patronage on key city service.
Service 19 improvements: Barnstaple	Improved to a half-hourly frequency Monday – Saturday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improve service to North Devon Hospital, Barnstaple Railway Station and residential areas to increase patronage.
Sunday service 155: South Molton - Barnstaple	Introduce Sunday service 155 between South Molton and Barnstaple	Service started in September 2023	Re-introduce popular service to increase bus patronage between two main towns in North Devon.
Service 301 improvements: Barnstaple - Combe Martin	Service increased to hourly and extended to Barnstaple Railway Station on all journeys	Improved service started July 2023	To improve bus-rail connectivity from Barnstaple Railway Station to Ilfracombe and Combe Martin and improve links from Combe Martin and Ilfracombe to North Devon Hospital.
Service 92 improvements: Totnes - Dartmouth	Service increased to hourly and connects with service 7 to/from Exeter at Totnes.	Improved service started September 2023	Improved journey opportunities to/from Totnes railway station, Newton Abbot Torbay Hospital and Exeter
Service 149 improvements: Totnes - The Willows	Simplified, more frequent service between Totnes, Marldon and The Willows via Torbay Hospital.	Improved service started January 2024	Improve access from Totnes and Marldon to Torbay Hospital and shopping facilities.
Sunday service 15: Bideford Town	Service now operates 7 days a week	Service started in September 2023	Access to services on a Sunday
Service 372 and 646 improvements: Torridge	Improved service 372 extending to Holsworthy with new journeys operating Monday to Friday. Additional 646 journeys between Holsworthy and Ashwater Monday to Friday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improved journey opportunities to/from Holsworthy
Service 6A improvements: Exeter - Okehampton	Additional journeys introduced Monday to Saturday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improve journey opportunities from Sticklepath, Whiddon Down, Crockernwell, Cheriton Cross, and Tedburn St Mary to Exeter and Okehampton
Night Bus Service – Barnstaple to Ilfracombe	Night bus journeys on Saturday evenings	Services starting Summer 2024	Initiative working with Devon & Cornwall Police to provide night journeys for the summer season

3.2.8. Better Affordability of Travel Through Implementing a New Devon Fares Strategy

DCC were awarded a substantial amount of BSIP funding to reduce fares across the County, to meet the objective **“fares must be simpler and lower to attract more passengers”**. However, due to the introduction of the £2 Fare Cap, which has since been extended several times (now until December 2024) it was not felt that it would be effective or appropriate to implement additional fare schemes at this time. Instead, the funding was re-allocated by the DfT, through the PAR (Project Adjustment Request) process to provide additional revenue support for bus services.

A new fares strategy for Devon still remains very much a priority and is discussed in section 4 as a future ambition. Additionally, we have retained a small amount of revenue for fares support which will be used from January 2025 when we are clearer on the government’s exit strategy for the £2 Fare Cap scheme.

3.2.9. Better Accessibility to Services by integrating bus with other modes

3.2.9.1. Stronger links with rail services

DCC, in partnership with our local train and bus operators, have successfully launched six “Rail Link” bus services across Devon, with plans for the introduction of additional services in the pipeline. Working together to offer more multi modal journey opportunities, we hope to help communities across the region switch to greener public transport. The project has connected journeys on buses and trains seamlessly, providing onward travel opportunities across the region. This has helped improve sustainable access to a variety of services, including work, leisure activities and access to education and health.

The Rail Link bus services receive financial support from DCC which enabled upgrades to existing timetables to improve frequency, retiming to ensure good connections with rail services, and re-routing via the railway station if necessary.

Train operators have invested into the partnership by adopting these bus routes and including them as though they are part of their own rail network.

Together with our operators, and utilising BSIP funding, we have:

- Developed our “Rail Link” branding on vehicle liveries, at bus stops and on promotional materials. We have also put together several associated marketing campaigns to promote the rail link services.
- Made infrastructure and information improvements at railway stations and adjacent bus stops – including wayfinding, signage, improved bus stop facilities, joint real time information and audio announcements.
- Included Rail Link bus services in the National Rail timetable database and journey planning on websites.
- Enabled customers to buy through, joint ticketing online for rail and bus services, and continued to promote “plus bus” fares where available.



Figure 3-13 “Rail Link” bus on the 164 Route in South Devon



Figure 3-14 Improved bus infrastructure and information improvements at railway stations and adjacent bus stops

3.2.9.2. Longer distance coach connections

We recognise that longer distance coach services also provide excellent passenger transport services to parts of the South West and further afield, not always possible by rail. In Devon operators include National Express, Megabus and FlixBus provide services operating out of the county. We continue to work with these operators to link local bus services to their networks.

An example of what can be achieved is the SW Falcon service. This is an innovative interurban coach service that connects Plymouth, Exeter, Cullompton, Wellington and Taunton with Bristol Airport and Bristol city centre. Launched in 2016, it was the first direct public transport link from the South West to Bristol Airport. 2024 saw the launch of a new Megabus service which links North Devon to Taunton, Weston Super Mare and onwards to Bristol Airport and Bristol city centre.

We will work with neighbouring councils along the route and National Highways about how we can improve interchange facilities to give more confidence to travellers transferring from car, bike or local bus-based transport. As we look to develop longer distance strategic links across the County these could follow a similar based concept.

3.2.9.3. Active Travel & links to cycling strategies

DCC has successfully implemented several active travel initiatives across the County, many of which are now being retained permanently. All have been introduced considering the needs of access for local bus services with improvements wherever possible. These are now being considered as to how they can help form longer corridors for improved bus access, alongside walking and cycling.

The Exeter LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Improvement Plan) proposes ambitious changes to cycling and walking links within Exeter and between the city and neighbouring settlements. Building upon the improvements delivered through the Active Travel Fund, the LCWIP will look to deliver betterment for bus users as well as pedestrians and cyclists, and improve the connectivity between active travel and public transport networks. Similar LCWIPs are being developed for Teignbridge, North Devon and other areas in Devon.

It is hoped that the delivery of all these plans are considerate and complementary to the BSIP aspirations.

3.2.10. Better Carbon Outcomes: Through a modernised, cleaner bus fleet.

Earlier in 2024, DCC were delighted to receive £5.3 million of funding following a successful bid through the second round of the Department for Transport's [Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas \(ZEBRA\) scheme](#).



Figure 3-15 - Stagecoach electric bus

In partnership with our operator, Stagecoach South West, who will be investing a further £15 million into the project, we will be rolling out a fleet of 41 new electric buses in Exeter on Service 4, Service A and the Green Park and Ride service, while in North Devon and Torridge they will operate on Services 21/21A as well as town bus services in Barnstaple.

The introduction of the electric buses, which should be on the road by Autumn 2025, is expected to create a new image which we hope will appeal to new passengers, boost park and ride use and improve air quality by reducing pollution.

Stagecoach is ready to roll out EV charging infrastructure across its depots, including Exeter and Barnstaple. This new investment will form the basis for the bus company to expand its fleet of zero and low emission vehicles across the southwest, and there are also plans in place to develop a community charging hub at the Matford depot in Exeter.

DCC will continue to explore and explore and develop opportunities to bid for zero emission vehicles in partnership with Bus Operators from time to time as opportunities to access funding are made available.

3.2.11. Devon Carbon Plan

DCC declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has been developing the Devon Carbon Plan with 29 strategic organisations through the Devon Climate Emergency partnership. The aim is to achieve net-zero in Devon by 2050 *at the latest* and a 50% reduction in emissions from 2010 levels by 2030. The Devon Carbon Plan has been published and is being implemented, incorporating the findings from the Devon Climate Assembly (July 2021).

Reducing the need to travel is the first priority for transport in the Plan. The second priority is to provide access to sustainable travel and transport options for when we want and need to go further afield. We signpost in this BSIP a range of actions for finding solutions for bus services in Devon.

The schemes detailed in this BSIP work towards priorities in the carbon plan and the need to shift to these sustainable travel options which have a hierarchy of:

1. Active travel, followed by
2. Mass/shared transit (the focus of this BSIP), and then
3. Taxi travel

In the past public transport and active travel have not been attractive enough and have not been invested into the same extent as the roads resulting in greater use of cars. Merely substituting existing transport usage in Devon with electric vehicles and maintaining current behaviours could be a “successful failure”, missing a once-in-a-generational opportunity to realise the benefits for health and wellbeing that increased sustainable travel would realise and the transformational changes that this could bring to Devon’s town and city centres.

We need to encourage the use of sustainable transport by making it the most attractive choice, particularly in urban areas. Our plans in Section 4 set out our ambitions to achieve this while recognising the challenges in Devon to shifting rural transport to sustainable modes, where dispersed geography and the need to visit larger settlements some distance away to access services presents viability challenges.

3.2.1. Better Health and Education Outcomes: Through ‘Total Transport’ efficiencies

DCC is a leading authority in the coordination of passenger transport through its Transport Coordination Service (TCS). It coordinates and integrates all aspects of its passenger transport duties including education, social care, public and community transport, fleet management, and the administration of the National Bus Pass scheme in Devon, to provide efficiencies and a better level of service for all.

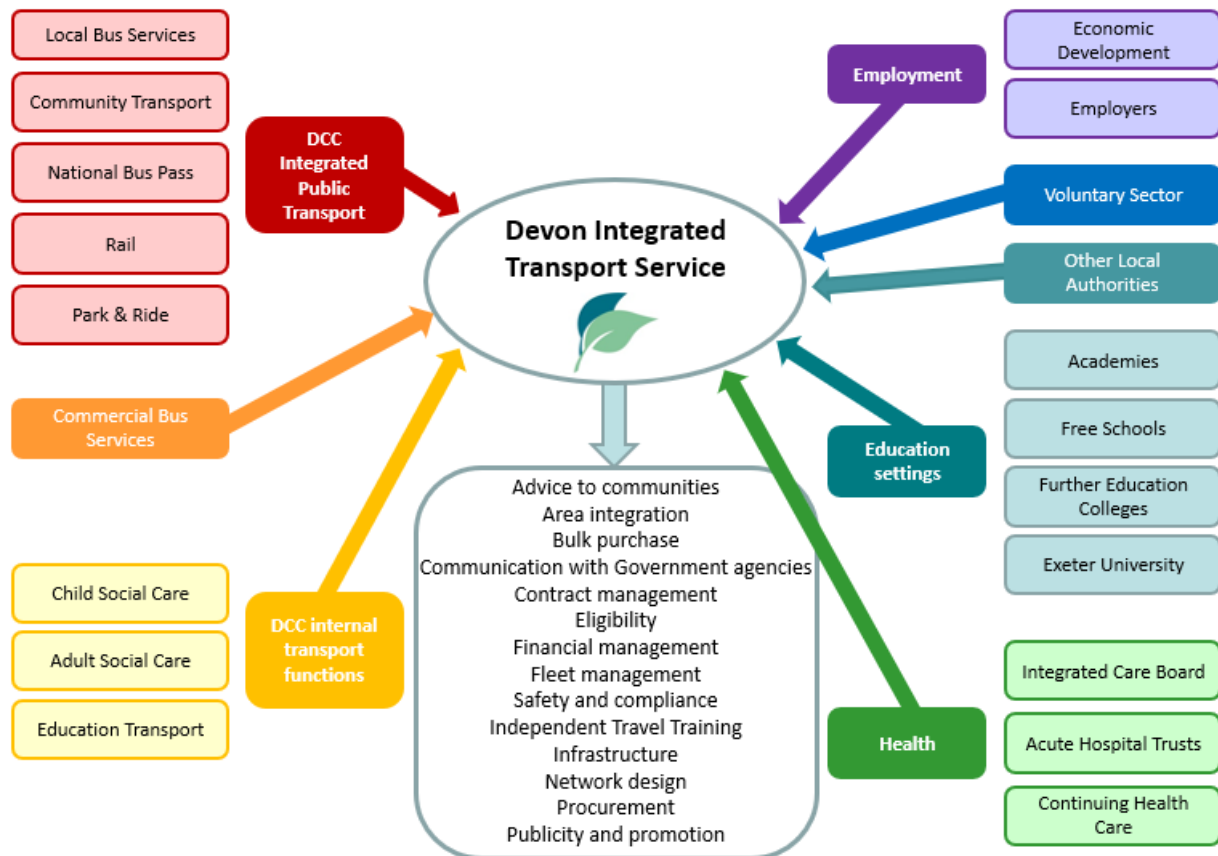


Figure 3-16: Devon's Integrated Transport Service.

We have worked closely with external stakeholders to develop this integrated approach. Examples include:

3.2.1.1. Access to Education

Access to education forms the backbone of many local bus service movements and the revenue generated helps provide a better level of service throughout the day. Through this integrated approach DCC contributes £1.5million per annum to the network through season tickets on the network for entitled scholars.

As part of proposed service improvements, we will continue to explore further opportunities for integration of school and college movements into the network. This will provide more passengers (and revenue) and offer greater travel choices for young people and other users of the bus network.

3.2.1.2. Access to Health Services

As a result of the Total Transport pilot in 2015, DCC has successfully managed Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPTS) on behalf of NHS Devon since May 2016. This sits alongside DCC's own transport functions and our success was recognised nationally in the final Total Transport report: [Total Transport: feasibility report and pilot review \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644441/Total-Transport-feasibility-report-and-pilot-review.pdf). Devon has also been acknowledged as a leader in the patient transport field by NHS England (NHSE), with Devon securing two rounds of development funding during 2022 and 2023, through the NHSE Pathfinder projects.

The NHS locally recognises the value of integrating with DCC and we work in partnership through a Section 75 (S75) agreement. This covers funding for the Patient Transport Advice Service (PTAS), which provides an eligibility screening and booking service for NEPTS on behalf of NHS Devon. Patients who are not eligible for NHS funded transport, are signposted to other options, including public and community transport.

Alongside working with NHS Devon for the provision of NEPTS, DCC also works closely with the Devon Partnership Trust and Livewell Southwest for the provision of NEPTS and secure mental health transport. The Adult Social Care transport function of DCC has been amalgamated with PTAS, allowing access to the NEPTS contract. This has resulted in an improved service for Adult Social Care clients, with a cost saving for DCC. NHSE are very interested in this development and would like to encourage other Integrated Care Boards to investigate this way of working.

Our work with NHSE is showcasing the Devon model of working and exploring ways to share learning, experience, and good practice with other ICBs across the country. The S75 agreement, developments in the NHSE review of transport support and this DfT strategy allow systems to work together to re-connect residents with good quality accessible transport rather than by-passing it. In this way the public-sector organisations enhance usage, confidence, and access to health in its widest forms.

Our leading position on the Total Transport concept gives an excellent opportunity to improve transport for all and how we develop Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) across the County.

DRT, due to the low volume of passengers, demands a high cost per passenger and we believe the only way of making this service sustainable in the future will be, alongside encouraging maximum use, linking it with the statutory functions of the NHS and local authority. In Devon, DCC and the CCG spends in excess of £50 million per annum fulfilling our statutory transport duties and these funds will be used to provide match funding against BSIP funding to improve access for all.



SECTION 4

Ambitions & Proposals for 2025 & Beyond

4.Ambitions & Proposals for 2025 & Beyond

4.1. Future Aspirations for Bus Services in Devon - Introduction

This section of our BSIP sets out our ambitions and proposals for improvement in both the medium term (with a firmer set of priorities and proposals for implementation in the 4 year period from 2025/26 – 2028/29) and a longer-term plan over the next 10 years.

Plans have been developed in conjunction with our draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) to ensure that strategic objectives are aligned and have been met. It should be noted that:

- Our Local Transport Plan (LTP) has yet to be published and therefore we are unable to provide a link to this document
- This section of our BSIP outlines the ambitions of the DevonBus Enhanced Partnership, and is not intended as a “bidding” document for future funding
- All proposals listed have been costed and this information has been provided to the DfT – no funding or indication of funding has yet been provided to deliver any of these proposals at the time of writing this report
- These proposals will form the basis of our application for future funding sources, should these become available
- All proposals build on the achievements and progress we have already made in delivering the first 3 years of our BSIP, up until March 2025.

4.2. Summary of proposals

Area of Improvement	Proposals
Bus network planning and improvements to bus services	• Develop plans for service level improvements and increased network coverage
Bus priority on priority routes and corridors	• Identify opportunities for increased bus priority in Devon • Deliver faster and more reliable services on identified priority routes and corridors
Improvements to fares and ticketing	• Develop a suite of fares that are attractive, simple and offer value for money • Develop contactless payment platforms that are easy to use and offer inter-modal opportunities
Improvements to the passenger experience	• Continue the delivery of high quality bus information • Further develop the Devon Bus brand • Continue our programme to improve infrastructure at bus stops, bus stations and key interchanges • Develop more multi-modal hubs across the county • Promote the Bus Passenger Charter • Improve accessibility, inclusiveness, personal safety and security for bus users

Area of Improvement	Proposals
Improvements to the bus fleet	• Continue decarbonisation of the bus fleet in Devon • Support smaller operators to get the investment they need to achieve electrification of their fleets

Table 4-1 showing summary of proposals for future BSIP funding

4.3. Bus network planning and improvements to bus services

DCC has continued to provide financial support for local bus services at a higher level than most comparable, larger rural authorities. The use of funding from DCC core revenue budgets, BSIP, BSIP+ and other sources has meant that it has been possible to maintain and develop the present network. The success of this policy is illustrated by the number of passenger trips per head of population of 21.4 in 2023 (source: [Bus statistics data tables - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/bus-statistics-data-tables)) compared to other similar local authorities.

Devon is a large rural County, one of the three largest in the UK. More than 50% of the County is classed as rural, with no settlements of more than 10,000 population. We believe achieving this level of bus use in such a rural area is a reflection of the continuing investment to retain the best possible network coverage, provision and levels of service.

4.3.1. Route development strategy

DCC's priority with regards to improving bus services will always be a **continued investment to maintain the existing service levels and network** where it is needed.

Beyond this, our next steps would seek to build on this success and make the bus a viable option for more of the residents and visitors to the county. We would use the following approach:

- Improve services using a “kick start” approach – heavily subsidised routes for the first 24-48 months of operation, which would hopefully lead to these services becoming commercially sustainable in their first 2-3 years.
- This approach of “pump-priming” improvements through to commercial sustainability have been used with the first round of BSIP funding.

All service levels are adaptable, and will depend on the future funding being available from:

- Central Government through the BSIP process,
- DCC revenue funding for public transport,
- DCC Local Transport Plan capital and revenue funding
- Current and future external sources of funding (for example s106 funding)
- Building on Devon's integrated approach to passenger transport, for example for access to Health and Education (see section 3.2.1.2)
- Potential current and future partner stakeholder contributions to deliver their transport aims

4.3.2. Improving the Exeter bus network

Our aim for Exeter is that it will be possible to make the majority of work, education and leisure journeys without the need for a car.

- Improve service frequencies on key corridors across the city to achieve a minimum of a 15-minute frequency from Stoke Hill, Whipton, Countess Wear, Alphington and St Thomas
- As passenger numbers grow, frequencies would be increased on these corridors to every 10-minutes
- Introduce early journeys from 0500 on all corridors for early work journeys
- Later last buses at midnight to cater for shift workers and those working late
- Improve Sunday services to operate every 30-minutes between 0930 and 1630
- Introduce a simpler fare structure and more flexible ticket options

4.3.3. Improving travel into Exeter by from surrounding towns

The aim is that it will be possible to make the majority of work and education journeys without the need for a car and reduce the number of vehicles travelling into Exeter.

- Improve service frequencies from main surrounding towns, Exmouth, Sidmouth, Ottery St Mary, Cullompton, Tiverton, Crediton, Teignmouth and Dawlish.
- In the first phase of improvements a minimum frequency of 20 minutes.
- In the second phase the minimum frequency increases to 15 minutes.
- Introduce early journeys at 0500 to cater for work journeys.
- Later last buses at midnight to cater for shift workers and those working late.
- Improve Sunday buses to operate hourly
- Introduce rural interchanges to allow access to these services from more rural areas
- Improve Park & Ride Services in Exeter

4.3.4. Improving bus networks in other main regional towns

The measures aim to improve access by bus to the main regional towns of Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Exmouth.

- Improve service frequencies from main surrounding settlements to a half-hourly bus service
- Increase the frequency on Town Services (those carrying over 150,000 passengers per annum) to every 20 minutes.
- Improve links to Railway stations in these towns by the extension of existing services, or provision of new links.

4.3.5. Strategic Links

- Further develop strategic links to provide access to employment areas and transport hubs
- Create connections to the rail and coach network.
 - Torbay – Newton Abbot – East of Exeter
 - North Devon – Tiverton Parkway – Cullompton – East of Exeter
 - Exeter – Axminster – Poole
 - Exeter - Plymouth

4.3.6. Rural Areas

Devon has worked to ensure that most deep-rural areas of the County retain access to a minimal level of public transport provision. This has proved increasingly difficult as finding operators willing to run infrequent local bus services, or Fare Cars and in some cases it has not proved possible to continue a service because of the lack of an operator. Additionally, most of the deep-rural services improved as part of the BSIP programme have proved unsustainable due to very low passenger numbers and high costs. In order to ensure that a level of provision is maintained we intend to implement a new approach to try and increase availability of operators.

4.3.6.1. Fare Cars

These have proved the most cost-effective option where passenger numbers are very low. However, it is no longer possible to find private hire car operators who are willing to operate the services based on the previous funding model. We will work with operators to create a new model which might include a retaining fee as well as paying for individual journeys at full cost and other measures to increase interest in providing services. Although this will result in an increased operating cost it is anticipated this will still prove the most cost-effective solution where passenger numbers are very low.

Fare Cars operating to the new model will initially be introduced in five rural areas based around Honiton/Axminster, Modbury/Kingsbridge, Holsworthy, South Molton and Ilfracombe.

4.3.6.2. Ring & Ride (Community Transport)

Funding from Devon County Council has meant a level of flexible provision has been maintained for frail elderly and disabled people via pre-bookable services provided by Community Transport Associations. It is intended to fund an expansion of this provision in order to incorporate areas of rural isolation where no other transport provision exists and guarantee that all areas have a shopping journey to the nearest town. Should we be successful with future funding bids, it is anticipated this work be linked to the feasibility study work we have done around Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) see section [4.3.10](#).

4.3.7. Summary of proposed service enhancements

Exeter City Services The proposals improve all services carrying over 300,000 passengers per annum		
Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
Exeter Circular	Introduce new Exeter circular service with 30-minute frequency in each direction	When 30-minute frequency achieves sustainability increase to every 20 minutes
A Alphington - Exeter City Centre	Maintain present 15-minute frequency	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 10 minutes
B Exminster - Science Park	Increase frequency to every 20-minutes. Introduce hourly evening service	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
E1/E2 Pinhoe - Exwick	Increase frequency to a combined 10 minutes	When 10-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 7-8 minutes - 15 minutes on each route
I/J City Centre - Digby circulars	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes each way round	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
R/S Rifford Road circulars	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes each way round	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes

Table 4-2 showing proposed improvements to Exeter City services

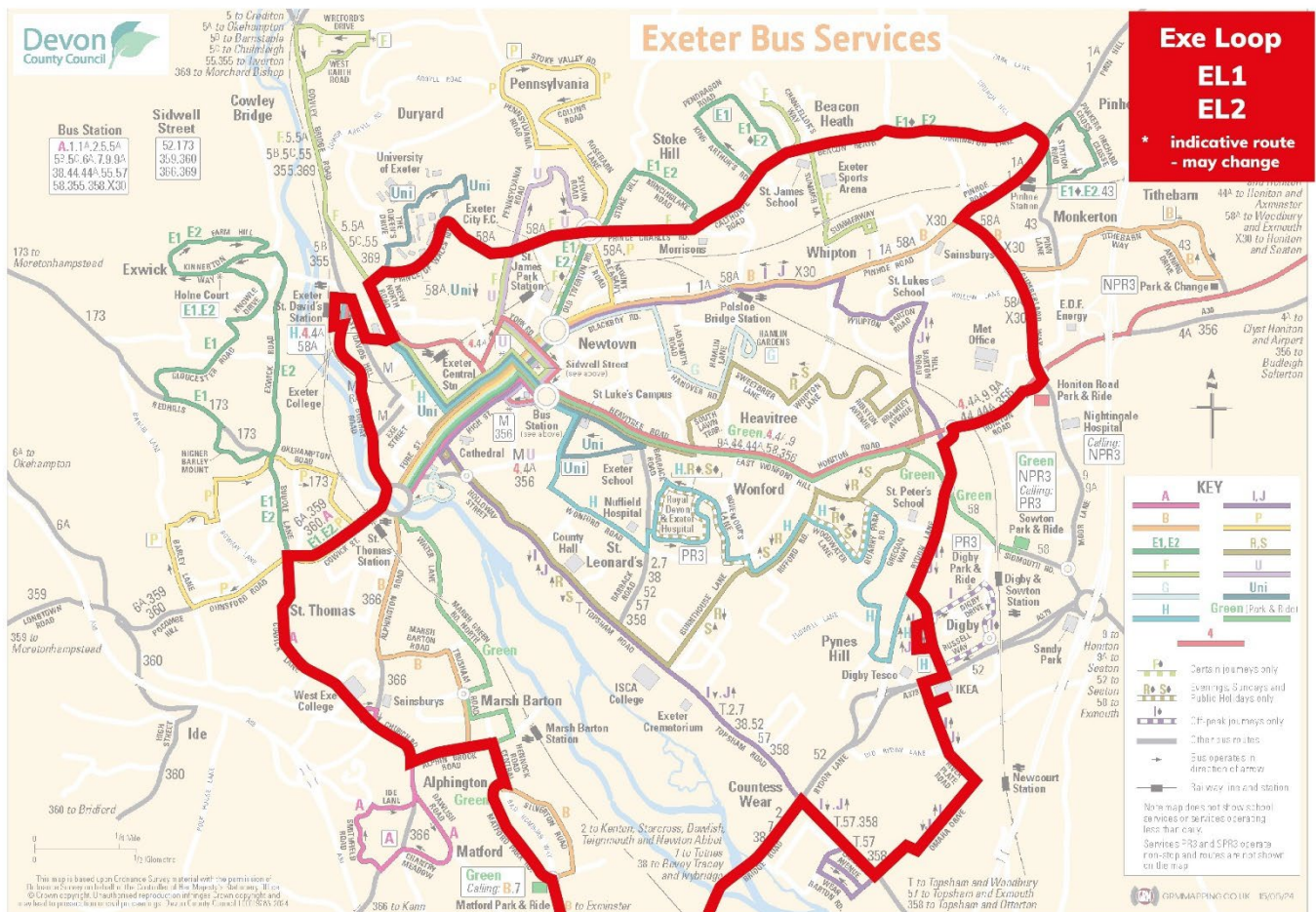


Figure 4-1 Proposed route for the Exeter Circular

Inter-urban Services

The proposals improve any service carrying over 300,000 passengers per annum and consider improvements for services carrying over 100,000 per annum

Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
1 Tavistock - Plymouth	Increase frequency to every 15 minutes.	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 10 minutes
1 Cullompton - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 15 minutes.	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 10 minutes
2 Exeter - Newton Abbot	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes.	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
3 Plymouth - Kingsbridge	Introduce Sunday service and later journey	
4 Cranbrook - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 10 minutes	Future frequency increases will be funded by S.106
4A Exeter - Exeter Airport	Increase frequency to every 30 minutes	When 30-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 20

Inter-urban Services

The proposals improve any service carrying over 300,000 passengers per annum and consider improvements for services carrying over 100,000 per annum

Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
5/A/B/C Crediton - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 15 minutes.	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 10 minutes
5B Barnstaple - Exeter	Introduce Sunday service	
7 Totnes - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 30 minutes. Extend alternate journeys from Newton Abbot to Torbay Hospital and possibly Torquay. With service 38 provide a fifteen-minute frequency between Kennford and Exeter	When 30 minute frequency is sustainable introduce improved Sunday and evening services.
9/9A Exeter - Sidmouth	Increase Exeter - Sidmouth to every 20 minutes. Operate set-down only between Honiton Road Park & Ride and City Centre to provide faster link.	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
12 Newton Abbot - Brixham	Increase frequency to every 10 minutes	When 10 minute service achieves commerciality introduce 24-hour service
19 Roundswell - Barnstaple - N.D.Hospital	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
21/21A Ilfracombe - Westward Ho!	Increase Braunton - Bideford to every 15 minutes	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality Bideford - Barnstaple to every 10 minutes and Barnstaple - Ilfracombe to every 20 minutes
22 Dawlish Warren - Paignton	No improvement proposed in Devon	
38 Ivybridge - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 30 minutes between Buckfastleigh and Exeter	When 30 minute frequency is sustainable introduce improved Sunday and evening services.
44/44A Axminster - Exeter	Increase Honiton - Exeter to every 30 minutes and Axminster - Honiton to hourly.	When 30-minute frequency becomes cost neutral increase Ottery - Exeter to every 20 minutes.
55 Tiverton - Exeter	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes.	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
57 Exeter - Exmouth	Increase to every 15 minutes. When Dinan Way extension opens consider more direct peak journeys to Exeter	When 15-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 10 minutes
77 Hele Park - Newton Abbot - Buckland	Increase frequency to every 20 minutes.	When 20-minute frequency achieves commerciality increase to every 15 minutes
88 Newton Abbot - Totnes	Increase Newton Abbot - Buckfastleigh to half-hourly and extend alternate journeys to Ivybridge	When increased frequency becomes sustainable introduce Sunday service
182 Chudleigh - Newton Abbot	Increase frequency to half-hourly	When 30 minute frequency achieves commerciality introduce earlier, later and Sunday journeys

Inter-urban Services

The proposals improve any service carrying over 300,000 passengers per annum and consider improvements for services carrying over 100,000 per annum

Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
301 Combe Martin - Ilfracombe - Barnstaple	Introduce hourly service with earlier and later journeys and Sunday service	When improvements achieve sustainability increase Ilfracombe - Barnstaple to half-hourly
373 Tiverton - Cullompton	Increase Tiverton - Tiverton Parkway to half-hourly	When improvements achieve sustainability increase entire route to half-hourly

Table 4-3 showing proposed Inter-urban improvements to services

Rail Link Services

Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
301 Combe Martin - Ilfracombe - Barnstaple	Improved as part of inter-urban proposals	
North Devon -Tiverton Parkway Station	Part of strategic link X61 proposal	
885 Seaton - Axminster Station	Introduce a later journey	
9 Sidmouth - Honiton Station	Introduce an earlier journey	
157, 357 Budleigh Salterton - Exmouth Station	Extend services 157 and 357 to Exmouth Station	
98, 98A Exmouth Town - Exmouth Station	Extend services 98 and 98A to Exmouth Station	
88 Buckfastleigh and Ashburton - Newton Abbot Station	Extend service 88 to Newton Abbot Station	
177 Ipplepen and Abbotskerswell - Newton Abbot Station	Extend service 177 to Newton Abbot Station	
New Kingsteignton - Newton Abbot Station	Extension of service 7 in inter-urban service will provide a direct link to Newton Abbot Station	
6 Bude - Okehampton Station	Increase frequency to every two hours. Additional funding to be split 50/50 with Cornwall Council.	When Okehampton Interchange station opens extend the service to the new station.
New Stations		Consideration of requirements for new stations when opened – e.g. Cullompton, Tavistock

Table 4-4 Table showing proposed Rail Link services

Strategic Links		
Route/Details	Stage 1 – immediate term (2025 – 2028)	Stage 2 – long term (2028 - beyond)
Torbay – Newton Abbot – East of Exeter (Map 1)	New service from Paignton to Sowton Industrial Estate, Honiton Road interchange, East of Exeter developments and Exeter Airport, operating via Torquay, Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton	When initial frequency is sustainable increase frequency
North Devon - Tiverton Parkway - Cullompton - East of Exeter (Map 2)	New service from Barnstaple to Tiverton Parkway, Honiton Road interchange, East of Exeter and Exeter Airport, operating via South Molton, Tiverton and Cullompton.	When initial frequency is sustainable increase frequency and extend to include Bideford/Ilfracombe
Exeter – Poole (Map 3)	New service from Exeter to Poole via Honiton, Axminster, Bridport and Dorchester to improve access to the South Coast without a circuitous rail journey. This would also include a peak Axminster to East of Exeter peak service.	When initial one journey in each direction becomes sustainable increase to two return journeys
Exeter – Plymouth (Map 4)	Reinstate more direct, through service from Exeter to Plymouth giving faster journeys from Ivybridge, Buckfastleigh and Ashburton to Exeter. Two hourly service.	When initial frequency is sustainable increase frequency to hourly
Newton Abbot – Ivybridge (5)	Provides connections at Ivybridge to other enhanced services and rail links. Hourly service.	When initial frequency is sustainable consider evenings and Sunday services

Table 4-5 Table showing proposed strategic links

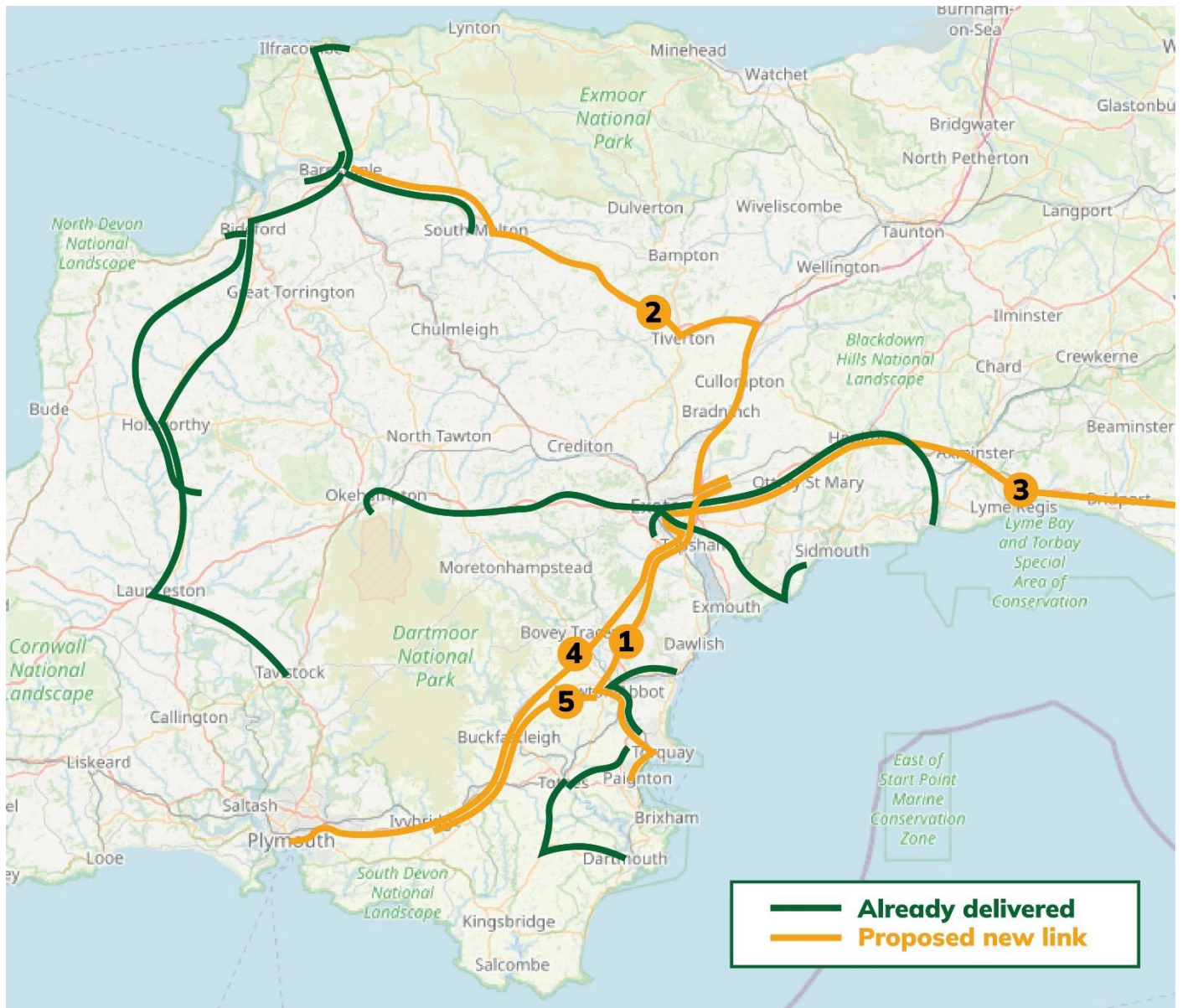


Figure 4-2 Map showing strategic links already delivered through BSIP and proposed new links

4.3.8. Exeter Park & Ride Services

During our planning we have identified a need to “re-think” Park & Ride services in Exeter. This is needed to reduce the number of cars using the main arteries to come into Exeter city centre, for both commuting and leisure trips. Park & Ride services were well established in the city prior to the pandemic but were stopped in March 2020 when the country went into lockdown. Since then, Park & Ride services have never really recovered. Data confirms that there has been a significant drop (60% reduction in average monthly usage between 2019 and 2022) in overall use of the P&R services following the COVID-19 pandemic, with Honiton Road experiencing the most severe decline. One reason for this is that the three P&R sites in Exeter are no longer served by dedicated, direct bus services, but by local “stopping” bus services which stop along the route. The time taken to reach the city centre from the P&Rs ranges between 10 to 25 minutes, with bus frequency ranging from approximately one to three buses per hour depending on the route.

It is evident that in the medium to long term, Exeter's existing P&Rs could play an important role in working towards climate goals of reducing car usage in Exeter City Centre, whilst also meeting future parking demand as city centre car parks are repurposed to support housing and other needs.

Proposals and costings would require significant investment, from both capital and revenue funding streams. They include:

Exeter Park & Ride Proposal (Short Term 2025-2028)	
Summary	Details
Establish working party	In conjunction with Exeter City Council and DCC parking colleagues
Review of existing P&R offer including physical survey of all sites	- Review of all P&R operations (this can be linked to the Exeter Parking Strategy project which is already looking at this element) - Full site survey of all three sites
Delivery of new P&R bus services	- Proposals to increase frequency and improve reliability - Extend hours of operation at all sites to include evenings and weekends - A dedicated Park & Ride service from Honiton Road to Exeter City Centre, with extended duration of current service - Honiton Road P&R would offer improved access to business and education locations on Cumberland Way then a fast link to Exeter City Centre 15 minute frequency on all sites with an aspiration to move to 10 minutes after achieving sustainability
Fares/Charging Strategy	New set of fare offers/charging system (linked to ANPR at site and bookable online/via an app)
Infrastructure	- to improve facilities, signage, infrastructure and appearance - Increased provision of EV charging at all sites - Park & Change facilities at P&R sites for cyclists - Develop an "interchange transport hub" at Honiton Road P&R site, with improved customer waiting facilities and information offering
Additional locations	Look at the viability of increasing locations of P&R sites around Exeter (this would be a long term vision and costing for this element have not been provided)
Brand & Image of P&R Services	- Re-branding of all services to give them a cohesive identity as "Park & Ride" services - Campaign to raise awareness and benefits of P&R

Table 4-6 Proposals for Exeter Park & Ride

4.3.9. Evening and Sunday Services

As shown in our summary table we proposed several enhancements to evening and Sunday services, including improved inter urban and city corridors (a service of at least three journeys per evening and on Sunday) and the expansion of hourly night-time services for routes carrying over 2 million passengers per annum.

Working in partnership with Exeter City Council, Exeter Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Vision Zero road safety initiative, we would also like to re-introduce Night Bus services in Exeter and other principle areas across Devon. Although we did trial this in 2021, the service was stopped through a lack of available funding, and driver resource to deliver the scheme. An issue has been raised by the CSP about a lack of affordable ways to get home from an evening out. Trains stop running relatively early and taxis are not always favoured by lone females. This can then leave potentially vulnerable women walking home which puts them at increased risk. A reliable and convenient public bus service where the vehicles already have several internal CCTV cameras installed, is seen as a much safer alternative way to get home. The pilot scheme would offer four services on existing routes running hourly on a Saturday night from approximately 12am – 3am, to include the following services:

- A** Alphington to Thornpark Rise via City Centre
- I/J** Countess Wear to Whipton Barton via City Centre
- E1** City Centre to Exwick via St Thomas
- E2** City Centre – Pinhoe via Beacon Heath

Costs included in our proposals would enable the scheme to be extended long term, and we will also look at opportunities to extend this into other areas, including Barnstaple, Exmouth and Newton Abbot.

4.3.10. Demand Responsive Transport Solutions

What is Demand Responsive Transport?

- Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT), also known as “on-demand transport,” features flexible routing and/or flexible scheduling of vehicles, typically booked through a smartphone application.
- Services are designed to match demand (journey) and supply (driven vehicle) and extend the efficiency and accessibility of the transport network.
- Possible pick-up/drop-off stops are restricted to maximise the efficiency of service, usually within a geofenced area, known as the “service zone.” Vehicle type can vary, but DRT is usually operated by a shuttle or minibus, typically with capacity for 6 - 15 passengers.
- Conceptually, DRT blends the convenience of private transport (e.g. private cars or taxis) and public transport buses operating along fixed routes. Passenger fares are typically kept low (often equivalent to other public buses) and subsidised by a local government or public transport authority, as many services are offered in hard-to-serve areas and therefore do not serve a patronage high enough to operate commercially.
- To limit vehicle detours and improve service efficiency, passengers are typically asked to walk to the intersection nearest their desired origin, or from the drop-off point to their desired destination. Passengers’ total walking distance is seldom more than 400 metre
- When booking using the app, passengers will clearly see the geofenced service zone in which service is offered. Requesting a journey beyond this zone is not possible, so passengers always know where the DRT service is available.
- Once the passenger submits a journey request, they are given a proposal that tells them

when the vehicle will arrive and where to meet it. Typically, **passengers will wait between 10 and 25 minutes for a trip**, although this may vary depending on service design, as well as the level of demand and the number of vehicles available.

4.3.10.1. Proposition for Devon

As part of our work to develop our BSIP in 2021, DCC commissioned a feasibility study, with a DRT specialist, to look at introducing DRT solutions in Devon.

The aim of the study was to provide solutions to expand the reach of the public transport network, allowing it to serve broader populations in rural, suburban, or hard-to-serve areas where fixed-route buses have struggled to operate efficiently in the past. DRT is a proven approach to achieving the aims and objectives of our BSIP, including:

- Encourage modal shift from private cars to public transport
- Grow public transport patronage in lower-density, rural, or hard-to-serve areas by facilitating both point-to-point journeys and “first/last-mile connections” to train and bus stations
- Improve the quality of service and customer satisfaction, with shorter passenger wait times and walking distances to pickup locations
- Replace underperforming or coverage-oriented fixed bus routes
- Reduce carbon emissions from transport

4.3.10.2. DRT Feasibility in Devon

Methodology for evaluating potential DRT services in Devon was informed by an examination of the local physical environment, including roadway hierarchy, land use-type, and key activity centres likely to generate significant travel demand. We also drew upon the existing bus network and its performance indicators, such as patronage and productivity of subsidised services, and coverage and frequency patterns of existing services. In particular, areas of Devon with notably sparse bus network coverage, limited hours of operation, or under-performing subsidised services were prioritised for evaluation for potential replacement by DRT. These steps were essential to design DRT service zones with legible boundaries that make sense to customers and operators and serve the most common passenger journeys while also capturing sufficient passenger demand for a cost-effective service.

Based on the information above we have identified DRT trials to go ahead in four different areas across the county. We will confirm these areas upon confirmation of BSIP funding from the DfT. Any development of DRT would also be linked with DCC’s further development of its Total Transport work and the link with statutory services, including the NHS.

4.4. Bus priority on priority routes and corridors

As part of the initial BSIP process in 2021, an audit was undertaken of existing bus priority measures within Devon. This focused on the settlements of Exeter, Barnstaple, Exmouth and Newton Abbot as these are the larger urban areas in the County, which experience higher levels of congestion which can impact negatively on bus journey time reliability. This revealed a handful of bus priority measures in Barnstaple and Newton Abbot, including bus gates and bus lanes, but none in Exmouth. Within Exeter, there are existing bus lanes on some of the key bus corridors, particularly on Pinhoe Road, Heavitree Road, Topsham Road and Cowick Street, however several of these apply only at peak times, with other vehicles allowed to use and/or park in the lanes at other times.

During this process we identified a set of proposals to deliver further infrastructure enhancements and increase bus priority. Many of these proposals received funding and have now been progressed and we are working towards delivery. Details of these are provided in [section 3](#) of this report.

Our future plans for bus priority build on this work, and what we have already delivered, and look at further improving bus priority, delivering and more reliable services on identified priority routes and corridors.

The table below summarises these plans:

Bus Priority Proposals (Short Term 2025-2028)		
Scheme	Area	Details
Develop Express Corridors to Exeter City Centre	Exeter	To build on the delivery of schemes we have achieved with our BSIP1 funding, we would aim to extend the bus priority work across the city, to include the following corridors: • Topsham Road • Barrack Road • Alphington Road (incl Exe Bridges) • Cowley Bridge Road Schemes would include: • Intelligent Corridor Upgrades including adaptive traffic control solutions including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV and Variable Message Signs (VMS) • Devon's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgraded for technology-based priority systems to function across the county • Extension of bus lane (Barrack Road) • Upgrades to all infrastructure including bus shelters, real time and printed information displays to improve passenger experience
Extension of Bus Priority at Honiton Road to A30	Exeter (East)	Scheme would include: • Extension of bus priority measures to link with National Highways network • Extension of Bus Lane between A30 to Moor Lane • Intelligent Corridor Upgrades including adaptive traffic control solutions including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV and Variable Message Signs (VMS) • Devon's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgraded for technology-based priority systems to function across the county
Opportunities for Transport Interchanges on fringes of Exeter	Various – locations TBC	• Develop plan to identify locations for transport interchanges and multi-modal hub opportunities • Increase infrastructure at existing sites eg Exeter Science Park and Park & Ride sites
Barnstaple Southwest Corridor	North Devon	• Bus Lane and Bus Priority Link from A39 to Fishleigh Road/Old Bideford Road – improving journey times for buses travelling from Bideford to Barnstaple.

Bus Priority Proposals (Short Term 2025-2028)

Scheme	Area	Details
Barnstaple Town Centre (incl Severn Brethren junction)	North Devon	Linking to the schemes already delivered in Barnstaple, we would extend the schemes listed below to the town centre, scheme content to include: - Intelligent Corridor Upgrades including adaptive traffic control solutions including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV and Variable Message Signs (VMS) - Devon's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgraded for technology-based priority systems to function across the county
Resource allocation	Devon-wide	- Purchase tools to capture before and after traffic data on BSIP schemes. This automated data capture system would reduce manual input and therefore staff time, and aid with general traffic and event/incident management. - Dedicated headcount resource to manage Urban Traffic Control systems, monitor intelligent corridors and mitigate the impact of roadworks and other events to keep buses moving on priority corridors.

Table 4-7 Bus Priority proposals

4.5. Improvements to fares & ticketing

4.5.1. £2 Fare Cap

The £2 bus fare cap was launched on 1 January 2023 by the DfT. The scheme supported bus operators to implement a £2 cap on eligible single tickets for all bus passengers. The aims of the fare cap were to save passengers money and encourage more people to use the bus. The scheme has been extended twice, and is now in place until December 2024.

The success of the scheme has seen bus patronage levels increase across the country, although with varying results in different areas. Devon patronage has seen average patronage increases of 7%. Whilst the scheme has been welcomed by bus passengers, and offers incredible value for money on many bus journeys, there is no clear exit plan as to what will happen after December 2024, and the effect on the industry if fares were to revert to previous levels. This increase, without any extended support, would undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the industry as a whole.

4.5.2. New Devon Fares Strategy

One of our key BSIP objectives is “**fares must be simpler and lower to attract more passengers**”. Although we submitted previous proposals to the DfT to deliver this objective, these were largely put on hold due to the introduction of the £2 Fare. Although there is no clear exit strategy, we have revisited these schemes to provide what we believe is an attractive offer for bus passengers.

Devon Bus Fare Proposals (Short Term 2025-2028)

Scheme	Details
Single Fares	Simplified fare boundaries which are easier to understand offering £1, £3, £5 singles
City & Town Fare Zones	Create daily and weekly fare levels in defined areas and a fare cap for travel
DevonBus Day Tickets	We will work with Bus Operators to promote and improve the current Devon Day Ticket and create a subsidised product that would be interoperable across all Bus Operators, offering a significant saving on current fares.
Regional & Intermodal Ticketing Offers (led by Peninsula STB)	We believe an inter-operable suite of tickets at this scale, spanning the geographical area and population of Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, combined with all bus routes and operators in this area, will be unique in England and demonstrates our collective ambition to get more people travelling by bus. As a partnership we will look to build on the lessons learnt in Cornwall through their Interoperable Ticketing Agreement and National Fares Pilot and work together on a suite of tickets across our counties. This will deliver ticketing products that our residents and visitors in equal measure want and need. We recognise that many journeys don't neatly align with either LTA boundaries or within a single operator's network, nor should they need to. In order to make buses easier to understand and use, we commit to developing products which match the journeys people want and need to make and not inconvenienced by authority borders. This project work would also include development of a bus & rail ticketing offers.
Devon & Cornwall Bus/Rail Card (Family/Group Travel)	Building on the success of the Devon & Cornwall Rail Card, which is available for families and groups, we would like to develop an offer for discounted travel on the bus. This would attract more family/group patronage, which are often priced out of the market by other fare schemes and cheap car parking.
Back Office Payment Solutions	DCC welcome the development of "Project Coral", an initiative backed by the DfT and other local authority partners who are developing a nationwide back-office solution to make sure revenue is appropriately apportioned. This will ensure that the complexity of operation is experienced in back office systems and not by the user boarding the bus
Fare Promotions	Explore opportunities to support targeted discounts through promotional activity to encourage growth on specific services
DCC Corporate Parenting – Fare Schemes for Care leavers	In line with DCC's ambition and commitment to see care-experienced children and young people flourish and thrive in Devon. We are proposing a scheme through discounted bus travel in the region, to help them develop independence and enable them to take up further education, employment and training opportunities

Table 4-8 showing Bus Fare proposals

4.5.2.1. Long-term Sustainability

The intention with the Devon Day and town fare tickets would be that over a period of time passenger growth is sufficient to achieve commercial sustainability. With all the tickets there is likely to be a need to provide additional capacity where growth is strongest.

4.5.2.2. Contactless Payments & Future Technologies

All ticket options will be developed into options for contactless payment, building on the success of bus companies and DCC funding contactless ticket machines on all services. With available funding and the suggestion of a nationally developed back-office ticketing system, these options will also be developed to enable online purchasing, and revenue splits between operators. These will be expanded to harness new options as technology improves.

We will also explore moving DCC's passengers entitled to Education transport to contactless tickets.

4.6. Improvements to the passenger experience

[Section 3.2.6](#) outlines the schemes we have already delivered to work towards our priority of a **Better Passenger Experience**. This section and our proposals aim to build on this work, further improving the experience for bus passengers in Devon.

Improvements to the Passenger Experience (Short Term 2025-2028)	
Scheme	Details
Bus Stop Infrastructure	Continuation of the work achieved through our BSIP1 funding, to upgrade and standardise bus stop infrastructure at the 6,000 stops across Devon, to include: • This scheme will require both capital and revenue investment • Standardisation of flags and information points to provide the best possible standard of information to meet customer needs and expectations • Upgrade of bus shelters in key locations, and in association with Parish/Town Councils through our grant funding scheme
Real time information	• Continue expansion of our real time information estate across Devon to include key stops and interchanges • Continue delivery of QR codes to access real time information at all stops • Increase passenger confidence and trust in the accuracy of information in the current real time system • Manage customer expectations around disruption information
Accessibility and Safety	• Commit to a full audit and accessibility review of all "key stop" bus stops, to identify areas for improvement • Improvement program to make more stops DDA compliant, including measures to improve information provision, passenger safety, lighting, accessible kerbing, bus stop cages, borders and access to bus stops • Install CCTV at all key transport interchanges • Work in partnership with other organisations to find opportunities to

Improvements to the Passenger Experience (Short Term 2025-2028)

Scheme	Details
	- increase passenger safety and confidence when using bus services – eg Devon & Cornwall Police, Vision Zero Partnership - Work with our operators to bring all buses in line with legislative requirements around audio/visual announcements on buses - Work with groups with protected characteristics to ensure their needs are met and considered in the implementation of all schemes
Develop the DevonBus Brand	- Develop the DevonBus brand through the Enhanced Partnership to give passengers confidence in the DevonBus “hallmark” and what they can expect from Devon Bus bus services - Introduce DevonBus Livery on all public service vehicles in Devon
Promotions and Marketing	Continue our Miles of Smiles promotional campaign to promote the bus as raise its profile as a sustainable and convenient travel choice
Implementation of the Passenger Charter	- Work with our BUS Forum and other key stakeholders to promote the DevonBus Passenger Charter, and demonstrate the commitment of the EP Board and our operators to improve bus services for all in Devon. - Ensure our bus users have a voice if something goes wrong. - Work with groups with protected characteristics to ensure their needs are met and considered in the implementation of all schemes.

4.7. Improvements to the bus fleet

4.7.1. Introduction

As discussed in section 3.2.10 the first electric buses will be welcomed to Devon in 2025, with over 40 joining the Stagecoach fleet, made possible by DfT and local operator investment. The project will also enable vital charging infrastructure to be installed to support all of the Devon EV network, as well as providing valuable experience and knowledge in electric vehicles to the local bus industry.

We hope to take advantage of future government funding streams to enable more zero-emission vehicles to be introduced to Devon’s road.

4.7.2. Modern buses - Decarbonisation and Achieving Net Zero

As a large, mainly rural County, Devon faces challenges in decarbonising its bus fleet. The length of many routes means that they are not suitable for current battery powered vehicles, as the mileage and topography exceeds their capable range. For example, the route from Exeter to Barnstaple is 55 miles, via Torrington and Bideford. With existing vehicles covering up to three round trips it would not be viable to use an electric alternative, without increasing the number of vehicles employed to allow for charging cycles.

We hope that through the delivery of the new ZEBs in Devon, through working in partnership with Stagecoach, we can learn about the real-life operation of these vehicles. We are hopeful the next

generation of battery technology, and hydrogen alternatives, will give the required capacity to be viable options.

Current power supply limitations mean there are also very substantial costs in electrifying depots, particularly for our smaller operators in rural locations.

4.7.3. Future Plans

Should future BSIP funding become available we would like to take forward proposals based on the following:

- Following the success of projects in Exeter and Barnstaple, we would anticipate a move to electrification in the towns of Newton Abbot and Exmouth.
- For inter-urban services around these centres a move to electric, or hydrogen, dependent on how the range of electric buses develops.
- For longer-distance services we will monitor developments in electric and hydrogen power, to assess the best option in order to provide the range required and flexibility in use.
- For rural services primarily a move to smaller electric vehicles, unless a hydrogen alternative becomes available.
- For the moment some longer distance routes will need to retain diesel buses as they are unsuitable for full electric or hydrogen conversion. In this case we would like to specify Euro 6 Emission Buses to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

By moving forward incrementally we anticipate being able to benefit from future technological developments, which may mean more routes become suitable for electrification and that smaller buses suitable for rural routes become more widely available. Our aim is that by 2035 we will have eliminated diesel buses from Devon. In the interim we will move incrementally to zero emission vehicles, while at the same time improving emissions from the declining number of diesel buses wherever possible.

Consideration has been given to moving to Euro 6 diesel buses, to improve emissions until a suitable technology is available. Whilst we are not totally in favour of this option, as once the investment has been made, we would be constrained from moving to zero emission vehicles by the need to utilise the diesel buses for their complete lifespan, we have considered a solution for potential scheme.

Should future funding become available, DCC could look to purchase Euro 6 (lower emissions) diesel vehicles, to be used on their supported services. Currently, DCC do not specify Euro 6 buses in the tenders. This is partly linked to reducing the impact of high inflation. It is also not to exclude the many smaller operators from bidding for tenders, who do not always have the investment available to purchase newer vehicles. Purchasing these vehicles for use on tendered services would improve vehicle quality and emissions, without pushing up the tender price. It also de-risks the operator's investment as it is now difficult to project the life cycle of a Euro 6 bus with the emergence of ZEBs into the network.



SECTION 5

Targets, Performance Monitoring & Reporting

5.Targets, Performance Monitoring & Reporting

As per guidance from the DfT, this section has not been updated since 2022. A new periodic monitoring report for the public reporting progress in delivering the BSIP and outcomes data against BSIP targets will be instituted later in 2024, replacing previous requirements.

We have set the following targets for bus operations across the DCC area. These targets will be collected at county level, as well as split regionally, to cover Exeter, Newton Abbot, Barnstaple and Exeter. They will be reported to the Enhanced Partnership on a six monthly basis.

Patronage targets have been revised due to our reduced revenue funding allocation, and the current state of the bus industry in Devon. Targets were previously based on significant enhancements to bus services.

TARGETS		Historical Data		Baseline 2021/22	Target for 2025	Target for 2030	Measurement
		2018/19	2019/20				
Average Journey Speed - MPH		13.11	12.98	13.00	15.00	17.00	MPH - number of miles operated in a given time period divided by the number of operating hours in the same period
Network Punctuality & Reliability	Services operated	99.60%	99.30%	96.8%	99.6%	99.6%	% operated mileage
	Services on time [†]	74.5%	73.1%	NA	92%	95%	Annual bus punctuality survey carried out by the Council's consultants in compliance with existing DfT guidance.
Passenger Numbers		23.9 Million	23.6 Million	14.7 Million	20 Million	25 Million	Total numbers of bus journeys made. Established channels of data supply from operators to the Council backed up by data-sharing agreements as appropriate.
Customer Satisfaction Level		95%	93%	90%	93%	95%	Passenger satisfaction survey
Modal Shift – current market share		3%		3%	5%	10%	Devon bus trips per capita (from DfT Bus Statistics) divided by South West total trips (from National Travel Survey)

Table 5-1 BSIP Targets

[†] Average of DfT indicators 1, 2 and 3 (buses starting route on time, buses on time at intermediate timing points and buses on time at non-timing points)

6.List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1-1 – Our “Devon Bus” Vision	6
Figure 1-2: Organogram illustrating the DCC team and other stakeholders responsible for delivering Devon’s BSIP.	7
Figure 1-3 Map of District Council areas and transport networks within Devon.	8
Figure 1-4: Map of Devon parish population densities.	10
Figure 1-5: Map of Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) across Devon.	11
Figure 1-6: Map of Geographical Barriers Deprivation across Devon.	12
Figure 1-7: 2024 Vision and Strategy of Peninsula Transport STB	14
Figure 2-1: Devon Interactive Bus Map.	16
Figure 2-2: 2024 Maps of DCC supported services (in red) and commercial services (in blue).	17
Figure 2-3 Patronage by passenger type (total/concessionary/fare-paying), 2011/12 to 2023/24	18
Figure 2-4: Patronage by service type (supported/commercial), 2011/12 to 2023/24. Note that commercial includes part-supported routes.	19
Figure 2-5: Proportion of Stagecoach South West bus patronage occurring during given times of day, 2023/24	20
Figure 2-6: Bus patronage per capita for Devon, South West region and England, 2010 to 2023.	20
Figure 2-7: Comparison of average journey times into Exeter by mode.	22
Figure 2-8: Bus Punctuality at start of route and at intermediate timing/non-timing points, 2010 to 2020.	23
Figure 2-9: Devon bus market share, 2010 to 2022.	24
Figure 2-10: Comparison of Devon bus and rail patronage, 2009/10 to 2022/23.	24
Figure 2-11: Service frequency by parish.	25
Figure 2-12: Proportion of population in parishes with given service level.	26
Figure 2-13: Operator provision of DCC supported services in Devon, 2023/24	27
Figure 2-14: Operator provision of commercial services – by number of services operated, 2023/24	27
Figure 2-15 - DCC & External Funding for Public Transport 23/24 & 24/25	29
Figure 2-16: image showing Travel Devon website home page.	30
Figure 2-17: Printed bus information.	31
Figure 2-18: Advert for Stagecoach Bus App.	31
Figure 2-19: Traveline South West Logo.	32
Figure 2-20: Devon Day Ticket advert.	33
Figure 2-21: Types of bus ticket purchased, 2023/24	34
Figure 2-22: Revenues from card and cash fare payments, 2019/20 to 2023/24.	34
Figure 2-23: Emission standards of vehicles used on Devon bus routes.	35
Figure 2-24 Image of collateral advertising our Devon Bus Passenger Charter	38
Figure 3-1 Proposed design for Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Priority	47
Figure 3-2 Proposed design for Barnstaple Railway Station – Bus Integration Enhancements	47
Figure 3-3 Improvements to infrastructure at Barnstaple Bus Station	50
Figure 3-4 Real Time Information improvements – example of a new sign	50
Figure 3-5 New “Living Roof” Shelters installed with BSIP funding in Devon	51
Figure 3-6 Example of Bus Stop flag at Key Bus Stop (left) and Key Stop timetable display (right).	51
Figure 3-7: Example of a rural bus shelter – joint funded by DCC and Woodbury Parish Council	53
Figure 3-8: Example of a “living roof” bus shelter – part-funded by advertising revenue through Fernbank.	53
Figure 3-9 image showing Travel Devon website home page	55
Figure 3-10 our first “DevonBus” liveried vehicle	56
Figure 3-11: examples of collateral used during Back on the Bus outdoor advertising and social media campaign.	57
Figure 3-12 Examples of Miles of Smiles campaign collateral	58
Figure 3-13 “Rail Link” bus on the 164 Route in South Devon	61
Figure 3-14 Improved bus infrastructure and information improvements at railway stations and adjacent bus stops ...	61
Figure 3-15 - Stagecoach electric bus	62
Figure 3-16: Devon’s Integrated Transport Service.	64
Figure 4-1 Proposed route for the Exeter Circular	71
Figure 4-2 Map showing strategic links already delivered through BSIP and proposed new links	75

Tables

Table 1-1: Population densities of Devon District Council areas.	9
Table 1-2: Populations in LSOAs with given deprivation levels.	10
Table 1-3: Alignment of BSIP with Devon Carbon Plan	13
Table 2-1: Peak and Inter-Peak bus journey times into Exeter, based on 2024 school day timetables.	21

Table 2-2: Comparison of bus journey times in AM Peak with journey times for car, rail and cycle.	21
Table 2-3: Bus punctuality indicators used in punctuality surveys.....	22
Table 2-4: Bus Stop Density by District Council area.	26
Table 2-5: Community transport provision in Devon.....	29
Table 2-6: Average ticket prices.....	33
Table 2-7: Current barriers to bus usage and opportunities to explore.	37
Table 3-1 Details of individual schemes for Bus Priority.....	46
Table 3-2 Details of individual schemes for “Better Accessibility to Services & Integration” and “Better Passenger Experience”	50
Table 3-3: Proposals for bus stop infrastructure.....	53
Table 4-1 showing summary of proposals for future BSIP funding.....	68
Table 4-2 showing proposed improvements to Exeter City services.....	70
Table 4-3 showing proposed Inter-urban improvements to services.....	73
Table 4-4 Table showing proposed Rail Link services	73
Table 4-5 Table showing proposed strategic links.....	74
Table 4-6 Proposals for Exeter Park & Ride	76
Table 4-7 Bus Priority proposals	80
Table 4-8 showing Bus Fare proposals	81
Table 5-1 BSIP Targets.....	86