

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) AND SCHEME  
2024

UPDATED TO INCLUDE VARIATIONS TO BSIP 2021

## Foreword

Buses play a crucial role in shaping the future of Worcestershire's transport network. They connect our communities, support economic growth, provide access to essential services, and contribute to a greener, more sustainable county. However, to meet the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors, we must reimagine and improve our bus services.

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) represents Worcestershire's commitment to enhancing public transport by delivering a network that is reliable, affordable, and convenient. It builds on our vision of a modern, integrated transport system that enables seamless travel while supporting our ambitions for reduced congestion, cleaner air, and improved accessibility.

Through collaboration with operators, stakeholders, and local communities, we are determined to create a bus network that works for everyone. Our approach includes investment in more frequent services, improved connectivity between urban and rural areas, enhanced passenger facilities, and the adoption of digital innovations to make journeys easier and more efficient. Importantly, we are also prioritising sustainable solutions, ensuring that public transport plays a leading role in Worcestershire's transition to a low-carbon future.

We recognise the challenges ahead, from changing travel patterns to the financial pressures facing the industry. However, we remain committed to delivering improvements that will encourage greater bus use and provide a viable alternative to car dependency. By working together, we can ensure that Worcestershire's bus services support a thriving, forward-thinking, and accessible transport system that benefits all.



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# 1. Our Bus Vision

## Our Vision

Passenger Transport services form the ‘backbone’ of Worcestershire’s transport network. We want to deliver an enhanced experience for public transport users and encourage them to move towards a more environmentally sustainable, accessible, and truly integrated transport network as an alternative to their personal vehicles. The BSIP will aim to tackle the countywide transport challenges

- To enable and promote growth
- To relieve congestion and enhance the transport network reliability and resilience
- To enhance journey time reliability
- To tackle air quality
- To improve all aspects of road safety
- To deliver transport schemes to mitigate the effect of the local plan to accommodate growth

Worcestershire’s Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 (2024 BSIP) builds upon the work undertaken for the Bus Service Improvement Plan in 2021, demonstrating the positive impacts it has had across the county between 2021 to 2024. Our vision for bus continues to align with the National Bus Strategy for England (NBSfE) objectives and presents a further opportunity to develop a long term sustainable and enhanced network. To build upon these and meet our goals, these foundations require the robust and dependable implementation of policy, technology, and innovation.

“Our vision for buses across Worcestershire focuses on enhancing public transportation across the County, improving service reliability, expanding coverage, and integrating new technologies and sustainable practices. Our commitment to creating a more efficient and environmentally friendly transportation network remains unwavering”.

Further to the vision, the 2024 BSIP Core Principles will help us achieve our overall aim whilst aligning with the NBSfE objectives. Our principles are summarised in Table 1.

*Table 1: 2024 BSIP Principles*

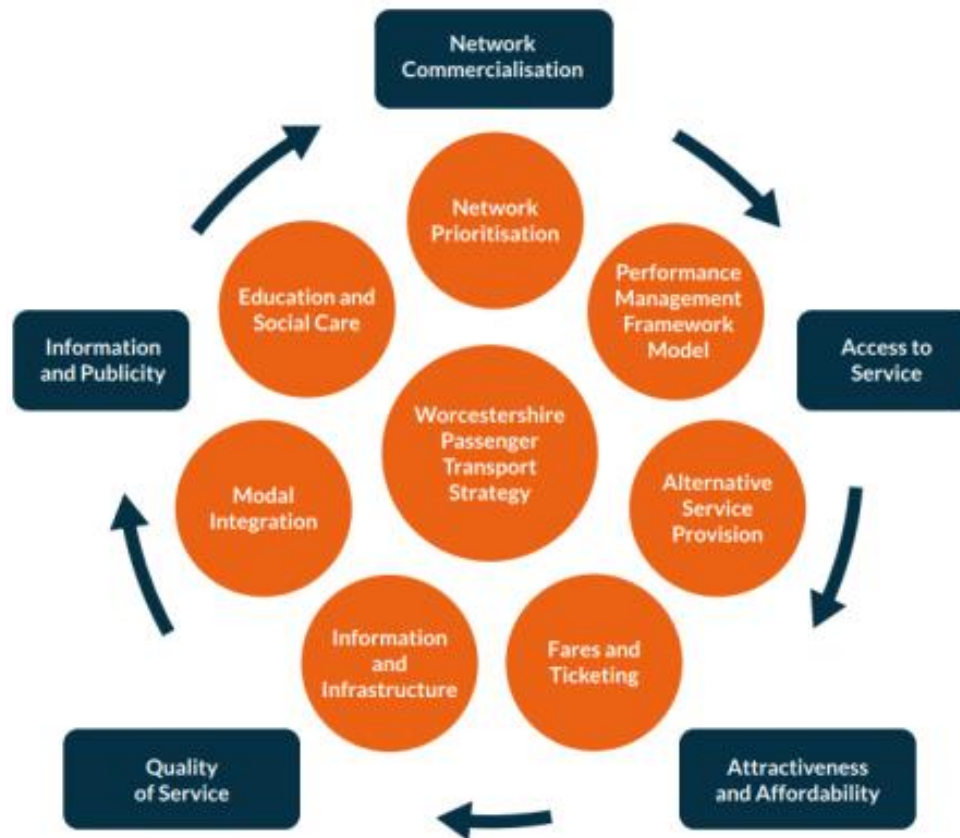
NBSfE Objective	WCC BSIP 2024 Core Principles
<b>Cheaper</b> , with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.	<b>Fares review and ticketing</b> promotions for more affordable journeys.
<b>More frequent</b> , boost the frequency of connections and provide demand	<b>Network enhancements</b> to increase frequency of services on the strategic

<b>NBSfE Objective</b>	<b>WCC BSIP 2024 Core Principles</b>
responsive vehicles for a higher level of service than conventional fixed routes services in lower-density areas.	bus network and improve integration of alternative service provision.
<b>Better integrated with other modes and each other</b> , including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers	<b>Modal integration</b> delivering next generation mobility hubs to integrate alternative service provision and active travel, with local bus and rail services.
<b>Faster and more reliable</b> , with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room	<b>Network prioritisation</b> by addressing operator congestion and pinch points on the network that impact services, through intelligent technology solutions and enforcement.
<b>Innovative</b> , harnessing entrepreneurship to constantly strive for a better product.	<b>Technology and innovation</b> exploring how software can be integrated to provide a seamless link between planning/ operations and usage (including ticketing).
<b>A safe mode of transport which is seen as safe</b> , addressing issues of personal safety and security on board and at stops as well as driver and vehicle safety standards	<b>Improving the image of bus travel</b> through our bus passenger charter and improvements to bus stop infrastructure and information provision.
<b>Accessible and inclusive network, by design</b> , not only bus vehicles but bus stations, bus stops, and access routes to bus stops	<b>Bus Infrastructure</b> progressing to a consistent, accessible, and quality provision of infrastructure for passengers both on- and off-bus.

Additionally, agreed by cabinet in 2019, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) launched its Passenger Transport Strategy.

The Strategy focusses on road and rail passenger transport services within Worcestershire, including Home to School, bus, taxi, Community Transport, and other community-based bespoke transport initiatives. Core to the strategy is the enhancement and improvement of passenger transport across Worcestershire.

Worcestershire County Council is committed to working closely with transport providers to provide a service that our residents, visitors and businesses need and expect. The Passenger Transport Strategy supports Worcestershire’s Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), where the overarching objective of this strategy (see Figure 1) is to ensure that residents and visitors can access services and facilities which contribute to a good quality of life.



*Figure 1: Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy (2019-2030) - Aims (blue) and Objectives (orange)*

Our Bus Service Improvement Plan Refresh covers the full geographical extent of Worcestershire (see Figure 2) and sets out the Local Transport Authority’s ambition to promote the use of buses across the County. It also acknowledges our cross-boundary services with adjacent Local Authorities.

The 2024 BSIP seeks to set out the funding envelope for the financial year 2024/25 as well as 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. This document has been developed in collaboration with local bus operators, Community Transport bodies, local businesses/services, and other relevant Worcestershire County Council stakeholders. Notwithstanding this, it is also recognised that cross-boundary services are also important. Therefore, collaboration with neighbouring authorities has been conducted to resolve any potential cross-boundary issues.

In this document, we demonstrate interventions that have been considered to attract lapsed, existing, and new users and to continue the growth in patronage witnessed within Worcestershire, as a result of Phase 2 and Phase 3 Bus Service Improvement Plan funding.

The 2024 BSIP builds on and summarises the changes in the bus network since the publication of the 2021 BSIP. This demonstrates the evolution of the local bus market



post-pandemic, its issues, achievements, and potential opportunities moving forward.

## Enhanced Partnership

On 29th June 2021, Worcestershire County Council's Economy & Infrastructure Directorate's Leadership Team confirmed their approval to proceed with the development of an Enhanced Partnership.

Worcestershire County Council entered into an Enhanced Partnership with Local Bus Operators in February / March 2024. The Enhanced Partnership has been updated in conjunction with the BSIP, in 2024, in collaboration with the Enhanced Partnership Board.

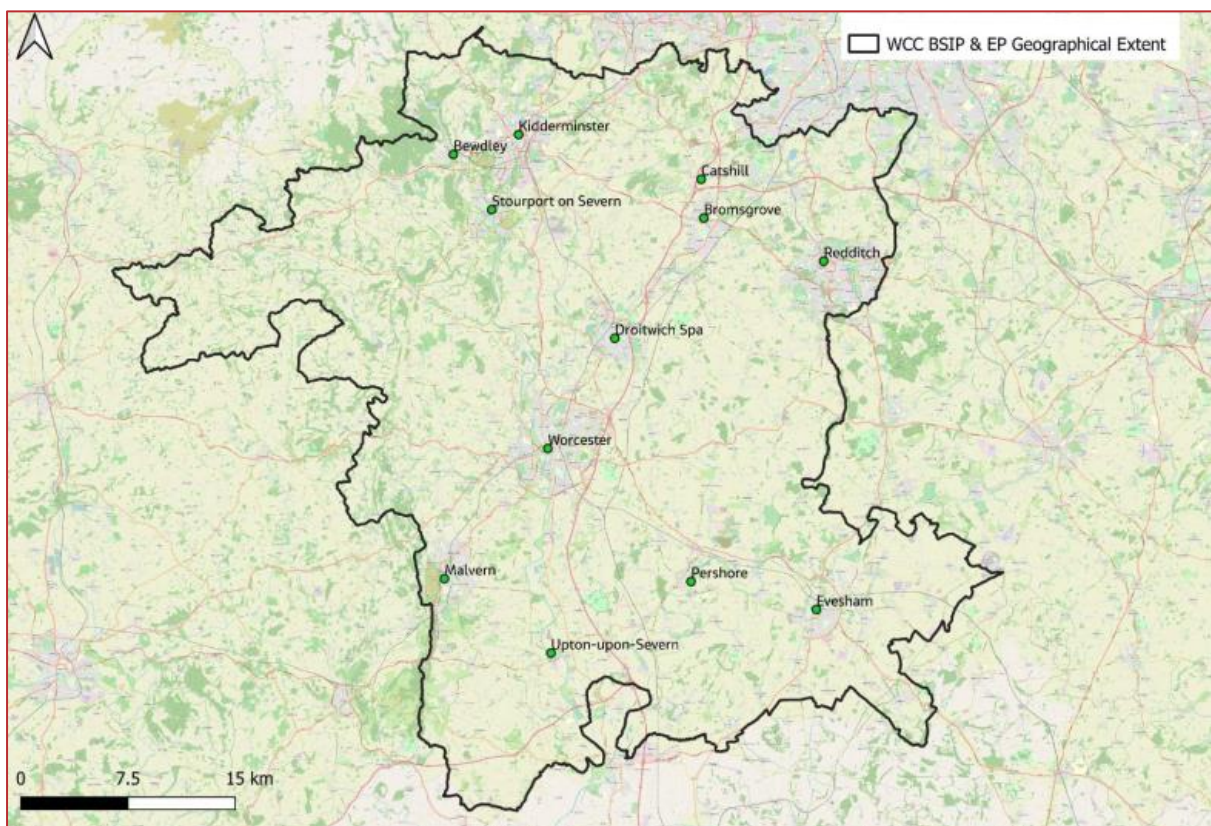


Figure 2: Worcestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan area

## Bus Service Improvement Plan Duration

The 2024 BSIP is a living document, with a strategy to 2030.

It is subject to an annual review, in conjunction with the Department for Transport's Bus Connectivity Assessment. An update report on progress against targets will be created every 12 months

## 2. Current Offer to Bus Passengers

### Worcestershire Bus Network

The current network of bus services in Worcestershire provides access between districts and major settlements and plays an important role in connecting users to key services such as schools, employment, and recreation.

The bus network also contributes to Worcestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership and Growth and Infrastructure Strategy.

Worcestershire's passenger transport is provided in a deregulated marketplace where many of the bus services across the County operate on a commercial basis by private companies, but supplemented by subsidy support for socially necessary journeys, typically in evenings and at weekends.

The County Council is committed to developing and enhancing the ability for operators to provide their services commercially. However, where socially necessary, the County Council will continue to work with commercial operators to deliver support to local bus services through subsidy agreements to help deliver increased efficiency and reliability on the bus network.

Currently, bus operator mileage totals over 187,000 kilometres, of which nearly 40,000 are in Worcester. The split of route distances by districts can be seen in Table 2.

*Table 2: Total Bus operator mileage (in kms) in Worcestershire*

Route distance by District (km) - all services, all time periods								
Local Authority	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Bromsgrove	4,548	4,919	4,905	4,919	4,920	3,439	563	28,212
Malvern Hills	4,002	4,822	4,815	4,815	4,801	3,121	51	26,428
Redditch	5,808	5,856	5,808	5,865	5,867	3,681	1,272	34,157
Worcester	5,470	7,236	7,228	7,228	7,228	3,596	691	38,677
Wychavon	5,605	6,864	6,824	6,914	6,826	3,948	687	37,668
Wyre Forest	3,776	3,718	3,776	3,728	3,810	3,307	214	22,327
County	29,209	33,415	33,356	33,469	33,452	21,091	3,478	187,470

The principal commercial bus operators providing services across Worcestershire are Astons Coaches, Diamond Bus, and FirstGroup (also referred to as First in the Midlands or First Bus in this BSIP). The total extent of the service areas covered by the network by district and kilometres is presented in Figure 3.



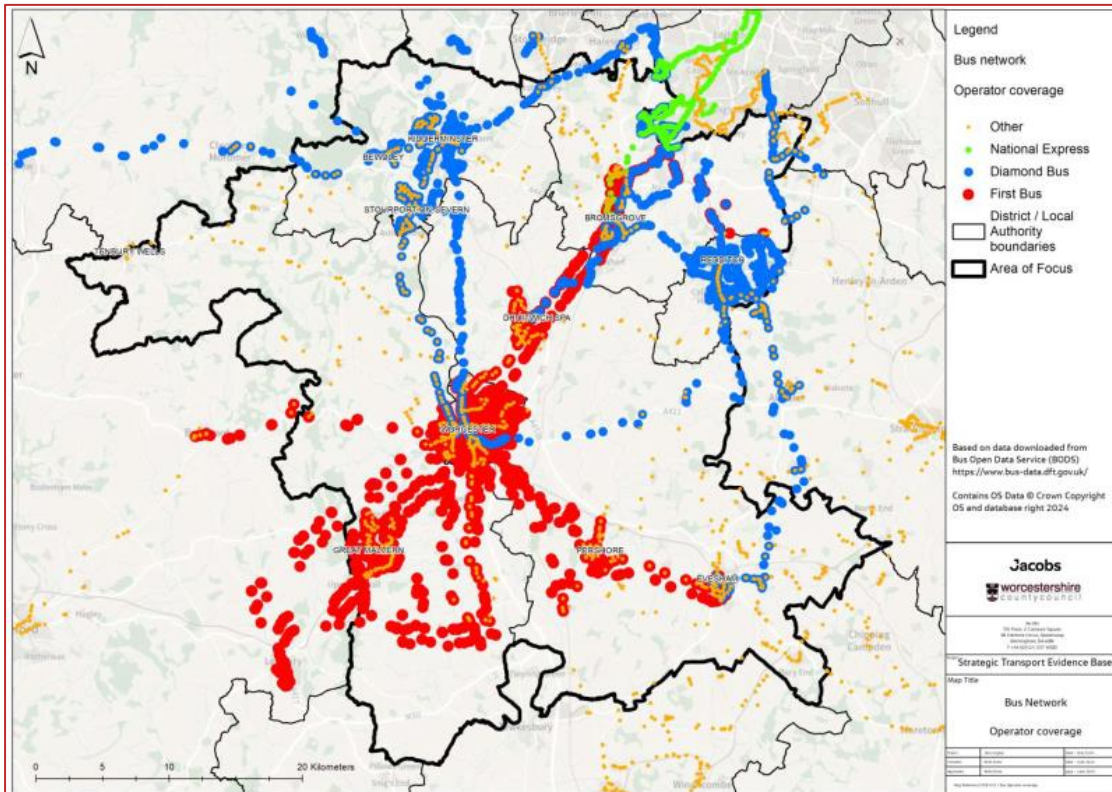


Figure 3: Principal Bus Operators in Worcestershire

The current network map is presented in Figure 4 and shows bus network coverage and weekday AM frequency respectively.

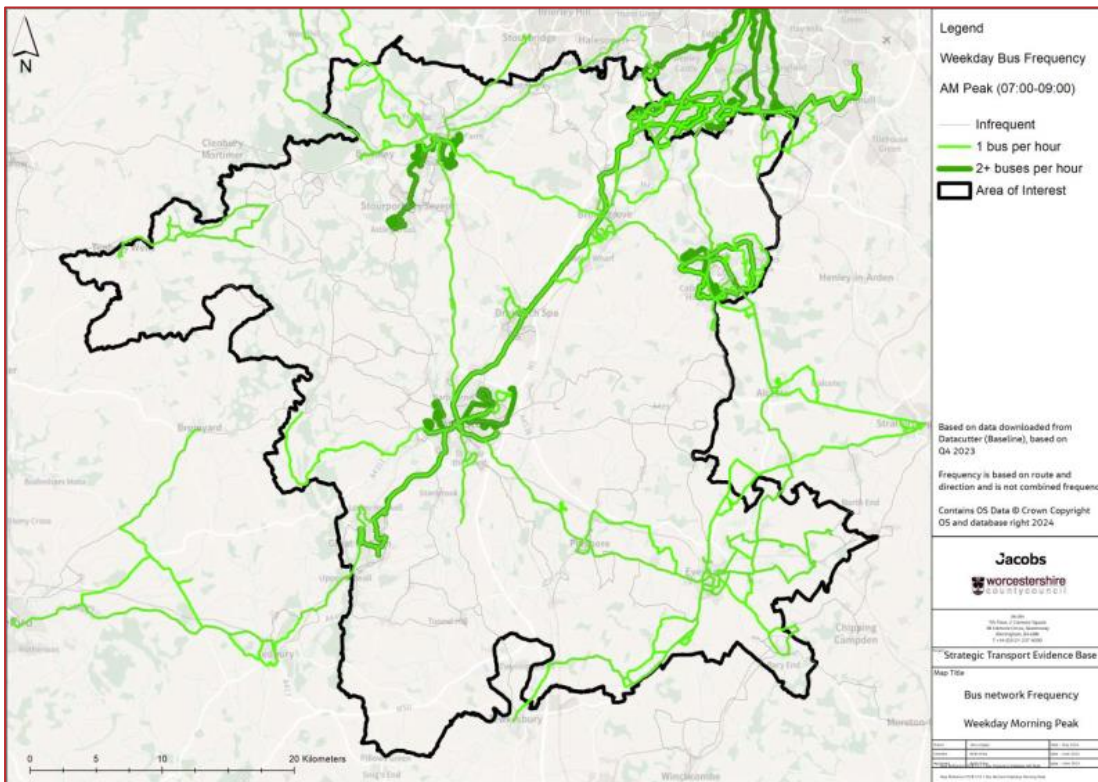


Figure 4: Current bus network map (weekday AM frequency) in Worcestershire

Table 3 shows the bus frequencies by weekdays and Saturdays, and is further disaggregated by Morning Peak, Between (or inter-) Peak, Evening Peak and Off-Peak operating periods. The results exclude bus services that do not operate within the time periods stated.

*Table 3: Bus Frequency Mode by Type of Service*

Morning Peak (AM) -07:00-09:00; Between Peak (BP) -09:00-16:00; Evening Peak (EP) 16:00-18:00; Off Peak (OP) 18:00-00:00								
Type of Service	Weekday (mins)				Saturday (mins)			
	WeekAM	WeekBP	WeekEP	WeekOP	SatAM	SatBP	SatEP	SatOP
Town/Urban	60-120	120+	15-30	120+	30-60	15-30	15-30	120+
Inter-Urban	60-120	120+	30-60	120+	60-120	30-60/60-120	30-60	120+
Rural	60-120	120+	60-120	120+	60-120	120+	60-120	120+

Of the 61 Town/Urban services, there is consistently more than 50% of the network of bus services operating during the time periods shown above. The portion of the network that is considered 'rural services' equates to 74 bus routes in Worcestershire. For the Weekday Evening Period, circa 50% of these bus routes do not operate, and for the Weekday Off Peak period some 86% of the rural network does not operate.

This suggests broadly that gaps exist in the evening network and gaps in operation for rural services.

Similar trends occur for all Saturday time periods, from Morning Peak through to Off Peak on Saturdays less than 50% of the bus network (comparably to that of the Monday to Friday operation) does not operate.

There are 48 bus routes which are defined as 'Inter-urban' services across Worcestershire, and it is only during the Weekday Off Peak period where less than 50% of these services operate.

The route types for each of these different service 'types' are shown separately in Figure 5. This includes network mapping by Urban, Inter-Urban, and Rural bus routes.



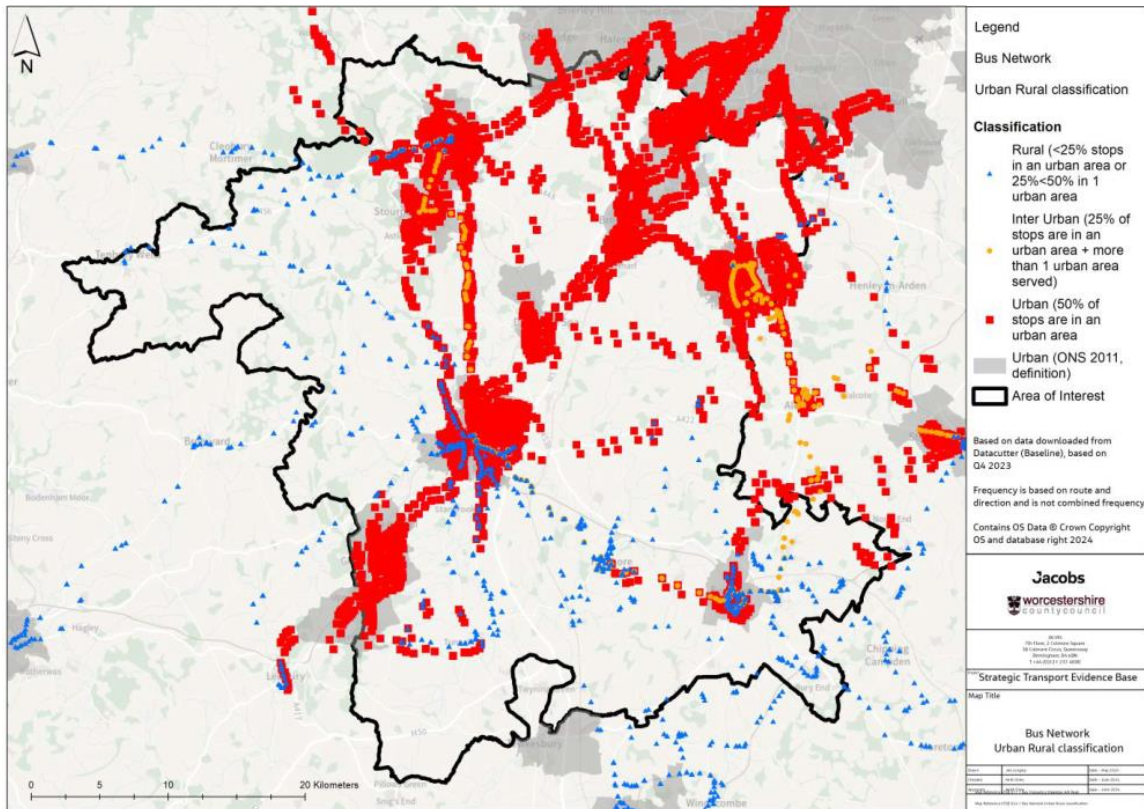


Figure 5: Bus Network Classification – urban, inter-urban and rural services

## Demand Responsive Transport

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) offers a bespoke, alternative bus service to complement the residual local bus network. With this service offering, DRT provides a flexible, affordable, and sustainable mode of public transport to access employment, education, health, shopping and leisure facilities and services.

For DRT services (In both Malvern and Bromsgrove) vehicles have been ‘wrapped’ with the Worcestershire on Demand (WoD) livery branding.

To use DRT services across Worcestershire, passengers request a journey through a mobile application (or app) or sometimes via a telephone call and they are collected quickly and within a few metres of their origin location. Passengers share journeys with others (in accordance with safety guidelines) with similar needs and alight at their pre-arranged destination.



To maximise route efficiency and eliminate the need for lengthy detours, passengers may be required to include a short walk to their pre-arranged origin or destination location.

It is generally regarded that DRT can be integrated with other bus or transport modes, where collectively this can offer a composite and joined-up service for passengers and a ‘one stop shop’ for all transport needs.

The overarching ‘Worcestershire on Demand’ (WoD) initiative has been piloted in Bromsgrove as the ‘Bromsgrove on Demand’ (BoD) service and is focused on essential travel in and around the town of Bromsgrove. The BoD services offers increased sustainable links between the town centre and Bromsgrove Railway Station.

In 2021, a further pilot was conducted in Malvern Hills. The second zone in Malvern Hills District offers the opportunity for how a modern DRT scheme could be operated in more rural areas of the county. The scheme was re-branded to Worcestershire on Demand at this time to emphasise that this was now a County based DRT scheme.

As part of this scheme, points of interest were considered outside of a traditionally based zone arrangement (i.e. point to point service) that allowed for more integrated onward journeys.

The map in Figure 6 illustrates the WoD operating areas.

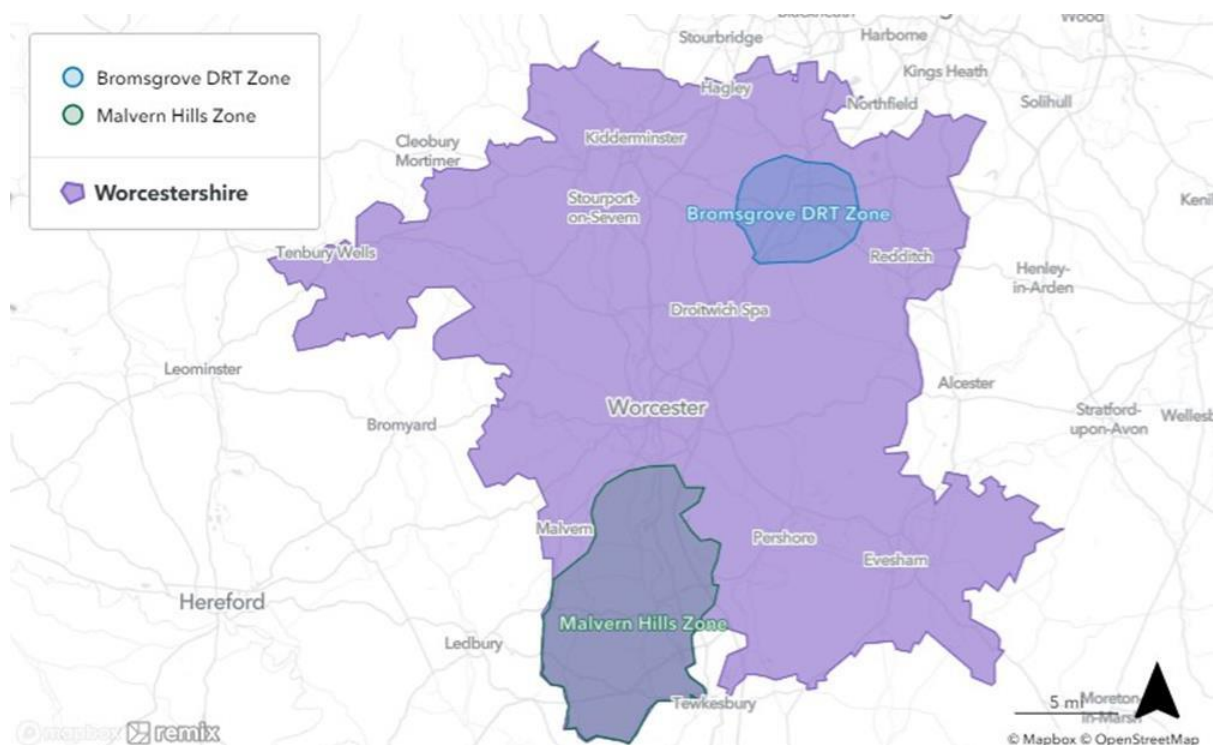


Figure 6: Worcestershire on Demand (DRT service area)

It is now our intention that all newly developed DRT services delivered elsewhere in the county will offer future mobility principles with a commitment to our residents and visitors of a DRT network which is:

- Easy to use,
- Easy to access,
- Easy to understand, and
- Easy to interchange between different modes.

Following the success of the initial pilots in both Bromsgrove and subsequently in Malvern Hills, WCC has moved both schemes into 'live' services (from both previously being pilots) and the county is considering future expansions.

The first expansion, beyond these, will be to the Bromsgrove Zone and would include an extension to the northeast and southwest covering the areas of Upton Warren, Wychbold and Rashwood. The proposed expansions also head eastwards, covering areas such as Lickey, Cofton Hackett, Blackwell, Alvechurch, Rowney Green, Wythall and Hollywood.

## Home to School Transport

Worcestershire County Council continuously considers the likely impact on the Local Bus Network and its integration with home to school transport requirements.

Worcestershire County Council, under its statutory obligations, transports significant numbers of school aged, eligible pupils on dedicated home to school transport services, with an aspiration of the opportunity to further integrate home to school transport within the wider public transport network.

This integration will offer a series of complimentary benefits to wider transport provision including:

- the possibility for increased capacity,
- the potential for increased passenger user across a broader mix of journeys or services,
- the potential contribution towards enhancing commerciality of some services on the local bus network, and
- a mix of additional and related measures in reducing (bus on bus and wider vehicular) traffic congestion, improving air quality and the overarching environmental sustainability of local bus services.

The policy for Home to School Transport and travel assistance is currently under review. The policy considers all legislative requirements including the most recent Education and Transport Acts. The policy objectives also form part of the current Worcestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (2018 to 2030) document.

The policy enables Worcestershire County Council to meet its statutory obligations and to address its aspiration of '**Every Child Matters**'.

The aim of the policy is to provide high quality transport services as efficiently, economically, and sustainably as possible to ensure that pupils travel in a safe environment, arrive on time and are ready to learn.

The policy is used in conjunction with Worcestershire County Councils School Admissions policy and the arrangements for the placement of pupils and students with Special Educational Needs.

Free Transport will be provided to those children of compulsory school age and attending the nearest, designated, or re-designated school for their home address, provided the distance between home and school is in excess of the statutory



requirement for the pupil's age. The statutory walking distances to the nearest or designated school are:

- Up to 2 miles for pupils up to the age of 8; and
- Up to 3 miles for older pupils.

Pupils will be awarded transport assistance as appropriate for the needs identified within their Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs.

If the relevant criterion is met, free transport or assistance with transport will be provided to the nearest suitable establishment indicated on the Statement or Plan, based on the individual child's needs. This applies to further education establishments and High Schools where students are continuing at the Sixth Form of the designated school or attending the nearest establishment.

Worcestershire County Council will no longer provide transport assistance to an alternative establishment if the chosen programme level is available locally. Transport assistance for post 16 students will comprise a place on the contracted school bus, or assistance with a multi-operator concessionary ticketing scheme.

## Social Care Transport

Worcestershire County Council has a duty under the Social Work Act (2017) to assess a person's community care needs and to determine what services are required.

In doing so, any provision of assistance should be based on a detailed assessment of the individual's care needs and should take account of their preferences.

The Council operates 102 passenger transport services providing access to Adult and Older People's Day Services. Transport is also provided on a 'call out' basis for social care service users as and when required.

Home-to-Day Service transport will be provided to Adult Day Service users where:

- the distance involved is too long to walk independently without support;
- the service user is unable to access public transport; and
- the service user has no, or insufficient, state benefits to support the cost of the transport required.

The Council will also provide, at the discretion of the Social Care Service:

- Home-to-Day Service transport for users of Older People and Physical Disability Services, where a comprehensive needs assessment has identified that the user requires assistance with transport to access day services; and,
- Appropriate transport for users of the Children's Services, where a comprehensive needs assessment has identified the need for assistance with transport.

## Community Transport

There are a substantial number of Community Transport operators in Worcestershire. A list of these operators and the services they provide can be found at the following website link: <https://www.communitytravel.org.uk/> where each scheme has differing demographics.

All parts of the county are covered by a Community Transport service or example Dial-a-Ride (more commonly referred to as 'Worcester-Wheels') using fully-accessibly MPVs and minibuses mostly for multi-trip purposes and voluntary car schemes.

There are also several schemes which are focused on providing access to medical appointments.

## Local Transport Authority Financial Support for Bus Services

There are a number of Worcestershire residents whose transport needs will be met by commercial services. One of the county's key priorities is to support the commercial local bus market with support for services or journeys which offer a social need or are socially necessary.

Where some transport needs cannot be met by the commercial local bus market, the council has to consider whether it should intervene, by offering organisational, operational, or financial support for any additional service provision.

Worcestershire County Council will assess its priorities, in the context of its available funding.

Typically, the subsidising of local bus services is based on satisfying social needs and is designed to meet the wider transportation policy objectives of the county and its users.

All subsidised services are monitored closely to ensure that certain specifications are being met and operated in line with local and national transport policy and legal requirements.

In determining whether or not to award contracts for the operation of subsidised local bus services (or journeys), the council seeks to achieve best value with the financial resources at its disposal and, in addition to tender price, will consider the ability of prospective operators to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

The provision of subsidised cross-boundary services will be secured on the basis of negotiated agreements with neighbouring local authorities and will take into consideration the respective policies (local and otherwise) and priorities of each funding local authority.

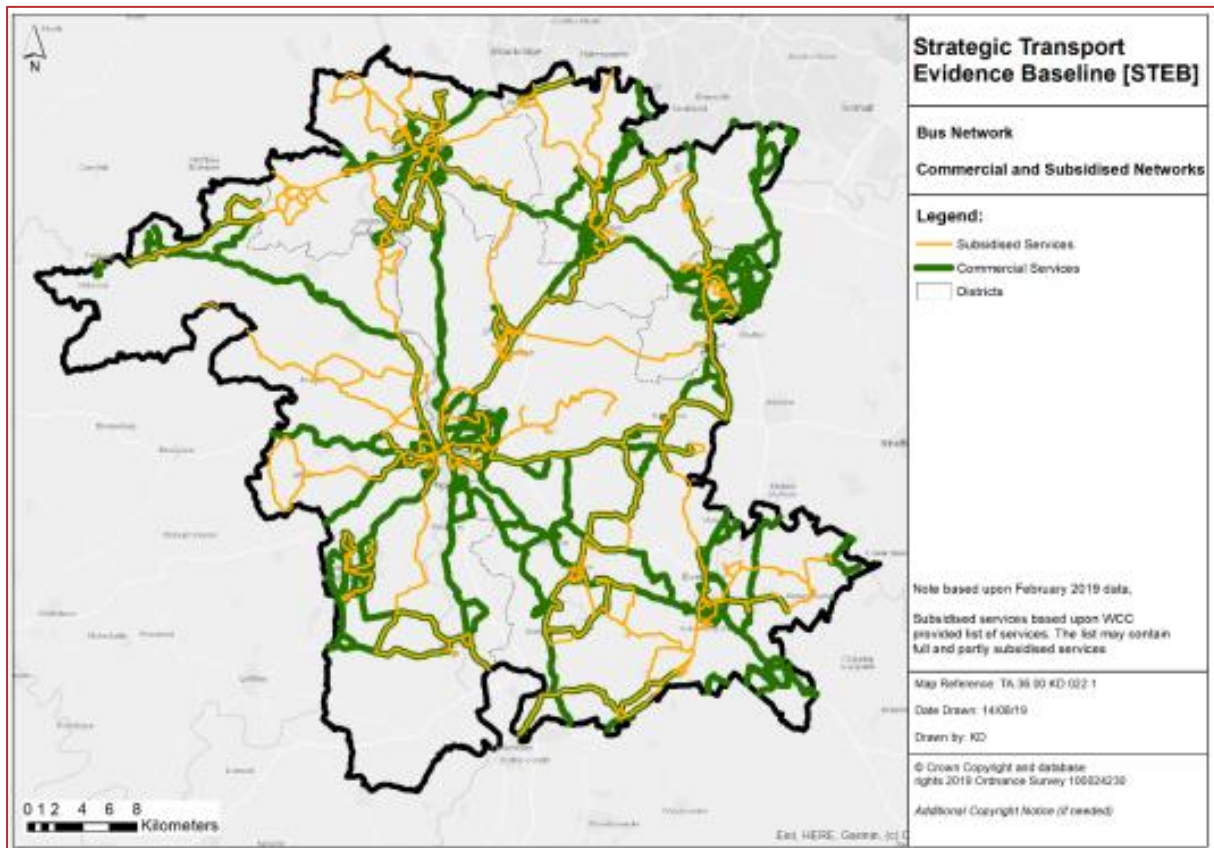


Figure 7: Commercial and subsidised local bus services in Worcestershire

The calculated subsidy bus network mileage is approaching 55,000 km, over 28%, (see Bus kilometres all services - subsidised only) and bus kilometres (percentage of all services that are subsidised) for full analysis.

From recent analysis there are differences across the wider network of bus services. For example, the bus networks in Redditch are largely commercial with less than 10% of the local network is receiving subsidies.

In Malvern Hills, Wychavon, and Wyre Forest, which are broadly more rural areas of the county, around 1 in 3 kilometres of the local network is subsidised.

Worcester has seen an increase in the proportion of subsidised services in recent times with up to around 1 in 4 kilometres subsidised.

Additional analysis suggests that very little of the Sunday network is subsidised, with only 35 kilometres calculated in Bromsgrove and Redditch, just 1 percent across the county.

*Table 4: Bus kilometres by district (km) – subsidised services*

Route distance by District (km) - subsidised services (part/full), all time periods								
Local Authority	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Bromsgrove	1,862	1,862	1,862	1,876	1,862	1,239	30	10,594
Malvern Hills	1,524	1,528	1,542	1,542	1,528	1,370	-	9,033
Redditch	399	445	399	456	399	336	5	2,440
Worcester	1,492	1,745	1,745	1,745	1,745	864	-	9,336
Wychavon	2,214	2,346	2,307	2,396	2,309	1,305	-	12,877
Wyre Forest	1,465	1,407	1,465	1,417	1,499	1,255	-	8,507
County	8,956	9,333	9,319	9,432	9,342	6,370	35	52,788

*Table 5: Bus kilometres (proportion of route subsidised)*

Proportion of route distance by District (km) that are subsidised services, all time periods								
Local Authority	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
Bromsgrove	40.9%	37.9%	38.0%	38.1%	37.9%	36.0%	5.3%	37.6%
Malvern Hills	38.1%	31.7%	32.0%	32.0%	31.8%	43.9%	0.0%	34.2%
Redditch	6.9%	7.6%	6.9%	7.8%	6.8%	9.1%	0.4%	7.1%
Worcester	27.3%	24.1%	24.1%	24.1%	24.1%	24.0%	0.0%	24.1%
Wychavon	39.5%	34.2%	33.8%	34.7%	33.8%	33.1%	0.0%	34.2%
Wyre Forest	38.8%	37.8%	38.8%	38.0%	39.3%	38.0%	0.0%	38.1%
County	30.7%	27.9%	27.9%	28.2%	27.9%	30.2%	1.0%	28.2%

## Accessibility

### Access to a bus stop

Improved access to and around our local bus stop infrastructure is a critical component of being able to use the Worcestershire local bus network.

The table in Figure 8 presents the number and percentage of people within Worcestershire with access to:

- At least one bus in the time period, and
- 2+ buses per hour in that time period.

500m of at least one bus service per hour in the time period						
Total Population	Weekday Morning Peak 07:00-09:00	Weekday Between Peaks 09:00-16:00	Weekday Afternoon Peak 16:00-18:00	Saturday Morning Peak 07:00-09:00	Saturday Between Peaks 09:00-16:00	Saturday Afternoon Peak 16:00-18:00
Census 2021						
99,183	76,019	75,459	80,922	64,718	71,352	78,525
79,486	35,329	26,496	36,010	24,561	24,915	26,985
87,036	78,852	80,948	80,948	73,271	81,812	78,852
103,872	100,623	101,873	100,772	95,006	101,416	101,331
132,492	83,580	71,750	76,885	39,631	65,509	67,783
101,607	87,790	80,908	87,545	73,468	80,344	87,262
603,676	462,193	437,434	463,083	370,654	425,346	440,739
99,183	76.6%	76.1%	81.6%	65.3%	71.9%	79.2%
79,486	44.4%	33.3%	45.3%	30.9%	31.3%	33.9%
87,036	90.6%	93.0%	93.0%	84.2%	94.0%	90.6%
103,872	96.9%	98.1%	97.0%	91.3%	97.8%	97.8%
132,492	63.1%	54.2%	58.0%	29.9%	49.4%	51.2%
101,607	86.4%	79.6%	86.2%	72.3%	79.1%	85.9%
603,676	76.6%	72.5%	76.7%	61.4%	70.5%	73.0%

Figure 8: Percentage of population within Worcestershire with access to at least one bus service per hour (500m), by time period.

To derive this data, accessibility analysis has been undertaken to gather intelligence on the relationship between where people live and where they need/would like to get to.

These places include sites offering education, employment, health, leisure and shopping services or facilities. An assessment was undertaken and has been analysed as part of the ongoing work WCC is developing as part of redeveloping its Strategic Transport Evidence Base or STEB, including analysis of the nearest local facility (in the analysis this is known as a 'threshold' calculation) to users across Worcestershire in their local areas and the total number of facilities of each type (typically known as an 'opportunity measure').

Accessibility has been calculated using TRACC software and, for public transport calculations, using 2024 Quarter 1 data obtained from Basemap's Passenger Transport data download facility (source of which is Traveline).

The accessibility to the nearest city/key district centres across Worcestershire is outlined in Figure 9 by district.



Destination	Mode	Catchment (minutes)	County	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest
City Centre / District Centre	Cycle	<=30	84%	70%	65%	99%	100%	80%	90%
	Walk	<=30	34%	31%	22%	27%	43%	37%	37%
	PT Weekday Morning Peak	<=60	90%	86%	74%	94%	99%	88%	94%
	PT Weekday Daytime	<=60	91%	94%	77%	95%	99%	86%	95%
	PT Weekday PM Peak	<=60	88%	90%	58%	94%	99%	87%	94%
	PT Weekday Evening	<=60	65%	74%	40%	78%	93%	48%	57%
	PT Saturday Daytime	<=60	90%	93%	71%	94%	99%	86%	95%
	PT Sunday Daytime	<=60	56%	64%	38%	74%	71%	41%	55%

Figure 9: Proportion of population within Worcestershire, by district, with access to the city centre or district centre within desired travel time

## Bus Usage

Over many years, bus use across Worcestershire has declined as a result of several factors.

On a national scale, bus patronage has declined due to the increase in private car ownership and this pattern of increase is also replicated in Worcestershire. This has added not only to a steady decline in bus use, but to a wider set of impacts, including for example national traffic congestion issue and worsening of air quality issues for example.

Table 6 evidences the changes in bus patronage (2010 – 2023) and shows that the annual number of passenger journeys on local bus services in Worcestershire has decreased from 17.2m in 2010/11 to 7.15m in 2022/23, a decrease of 58.46% over a longer thirteen-year period. It is worth noting that this period also includes bus use statistics during the Covid pandemic period.

This downward trend can be seen in both regional and national figures but is more pronounced in Worcestershire due to the greater decline in patronage. In comparison, the total number of passenger journeys on local bus services per year declined by 33.36% in the West Midlands and by 26.74% in England.

Table 6: Total number of passenger journeys on local bus services (DfT Bus Statistics)

Passenger journeys	Worcestershire	West Midlands	England
Total 2010/11	17.2m	380.0m	4,618.4m
Total 2019/20	9.3m	299.8m	4,069.5m
Total 2022/23	7.15m	253m	3,383m
Change 2010 - 2020	-45.93%	-21.11%	-11.89%
Change 2010 - 2023	-58.46%	-33.36%	-26.74%
Change 2020 - 2023	-23.17%	-15.53%	-16.86%

Similarly, Table 7 shows the reduction in passenger journeys per head (2010 – 2023). The number of passenger journeys ‘per head’ has decreased by 61.27% from 30.5 to 11.8 journeys per person per year.

*Table 7: Bus passenger journeys per head by geography (DfT Bus Statistics)*

Passenger journeys	Worcestershire	West Midlands	England
Total 2010/11	30.5	62.9	87.70
Total 2019/20	15.6	50.5	72.3
Total 2022/23	11.8	42.5	59.8
Change 2010 - 2020	-48.85%	-19.71%	-17.56%
Change 2010 - 2023	-61.27%	-32.38%	-31.77%
Change 2020 - 2023	-24.28%	-15.78%	-17.23%

This decrease in patronage in Worcestershire is higher than those observed throughout the West Midlands and nationally across England. The passenger journeys 'per head' are at much lower levels in Worcestershire (11.8) than in the West Midlands (42.5) and England (59.8), though the latter two are explained by the higher numbers of journeys per head in the metropolitan areas and in London (and urban areas elsewhere) which disproportionately affect the average.

Within Worcestershire there are two main bus operators, Diamond Bus, and First Bus.

In 2018, these operators transported 80% (8.3m) of all passengers and 87% of all commercial passengers. This is summarised in the following tables. The Cost/RG (revenue generating) services are largely operated by Aston's and Diamond (accounting for 57% of all passengers on these types of services), while services attracting subsidy are operated by First in the Midlands (43%) and to a lesser extent LMS Travel (21%), ATG (16%), Kev's Cars (11%) and Diamond Bus (10%).

*Table 8: Bus patronage, percent (excluding those operators with 0%)*

Operator	All	Commercial	Cost /RG	Subsidy
Astons Coaches	2%	0%	34%	0%
ATG (Formerly WMSNT)	1%	0%	0%	16%
Cleanways Coaches	1%	1%	0%	0%
Coniston Coaches	1%	0%	9%	0%
Diamond Bus (Rotala)	40%	44%	23%	10%
Dudley's Coaches	0%	1%	0%	0%
Finesse Travel	0%	0%	1%	0%
First in the Midlands	40%	43%	0%	43%
Henshaws	0%	0%	5%	0%
Johnsons Coach Travel	1%	1%	8%	0%
Kev's Cars	1%	0%	4%	11%
LMS Travel	4%	2%	9%	21%
MRD Travel	1%	1%	0%	0%
N.N. Cresswell	1%	1%	0%	0%
R & B Travel	1%	0%	8%	0%
Stagecoach South Midland	2%	2%	0%	0%
Travel West Midlands	3%	4%	0%	0%
Yarranton Brothers	1%	1%	0%	0%
Total (passengers)	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Fares and Ticketing

As part of the County’s partnership with commercial operators, Worcestershire encourages private operators to keep fares as low as possible within commercial viability.

The County also encourages operators to offer discounted fare products and concessions to help grow bus patronage. Children’s fares are available throughout Worcestershire, with children being defined as aged 5 to 15 inclusive.

*Table 9: Worcestershire Bus Fares*

	Main operator	Adult day ticket	Child day ticket	Adult week ticket	Child week ticket
Worcester	First Bus	£5.00	£3.20	£17.50	£12.50
Redditch	Diamond	£4.00	£3.50	£17.00	£15.00
Kidderminster	Diamond	£4.80	£3.50	£20.00	£15.00
Malvern	First Bus	£8.00	£5.00	£25.00	£21.00
Bromsgrove	Diamond	£4.80	£3.50	£20.00	£15.00
Evesham	First Bus	£8.00	£5.00	£25.00	£21.00
Droitwich	First Bus	£8.00	£5.00	£25.00	£21.00

Since January 2023, most bus operators across Worcestershire have used the DfT’s Bus Fare Cap Grant to cap single fares on journeys at £2. This will continue until December 2024 for single fares.

The data in Table 10 highlights the disparity in bus fares between north and south Worcestershire, with bus prices in general being cheaper in the north of the County than they are in the south.

In general, the services provided by Diamond Bus are cheaper than those offered by First Bus in rural areas, and this might be attributable to First Bus serving more rural towns surrounding Worcester (Malvern, Evesham, and Droitwich).

However, First Bus is more expensive than Diamond Bus in the more urban areas. There is a clear divide between the areas served by Diamond and those served by First, with very few areas of overlap. This leads to a lack of competition in the areas served by only one operator, which is a key factor in the setting of fares.

*Table 10: Cost of fares per kilometre in Worcestershire without the £2 fare cap*

Origin	Destination					
	Worcester (per km)	Malvern (per km)	Pershore (per km)	Redditch (per km)	Kidderminster (per km)	Bromsgrove (per km)
Worcester	58p	14p	13p	5p	8p	9p
Malvern	14p	153p	13p	8p	10p	11p
Pershore	13p	13p	226p	8p	10p	11p
Redditch	5p	8p	N/A	173p	13p	14p
Kidderminster	8p	10p	N/A	13p	126p	11p
Bromsgrove	9p	11p	N/A	14p	11p	233p

Since the £2 fare cap was introduced in January 2023, the disparity in bus fares between the north and south of Worcestershire has been reduced, with urban bus fares becoming cheaper but less so than rural and inter-urban bus fares.

## Multi-Operator and Smart Ticketing

Worcestershire County Council is committed to implementing multi-operator ticketing as this brings several significant advantages that enhance the overall efficiency, accessibility, and attractiveness of local bus services in the County.

One of the primary benefits in current schemes is the convenience it offers to passengers. Multi-operator ticketing allows passengers to use a single ticket across different bus operators.

This seamless integration means passengers no longer need to purchase separate tickets for each leg of their journey, simplifying travel plans, reducing waiting times, and minimising the need to carry multiple tickets or handle various payment systems.

Worcestershire is also considering how MaaS (Mobility as a Service) journey planners can be developed to include multi-operator ticketing.

Worcestershire's Severn Card is a multi-operator student bus pass (under 19's or mature students at sponsor colleges) and is valid 24 hours per day and 7 days per week on bus services in Worcestershire which participate in the scheme.

The Severn Card operates on a zonal basis where:

- Zone 1 and Zone 2 spatial extent varies by District and town, and
- Zone 3 operates Countywide.

Fares and ticketing differ between each zone. This scheme is under review to identify ways to further promote multi-operator and integrated ticketing. There is currently a system of smart ticketing in place in Worcestershire: the 'Connecta'.

The Connecta scheme covers the entirety of the County (the County Connecta), as well as three area-specific schemes:

- Kidderminster Connecta (Kidderminster/Bewdley/Stourport),
- Redditch Connecta, and
- City Connecta (Worcester).

These tickets allow the user to travel on any bus operator in the region or the specific area, all under one ticket and price.

## Bus Infrastructure, Vehicle Fleet and Public Transport Information

Supplementary and complementary measures to encourage increased bus use across the county are being reviewed and considered as part of subsequent priority schemes within the BSIP programme.

This section sets out the current provision for each of the following aspects that could contribute toward increased bus use and an ongoing confidence in using bus services across Worcestershire. These supplementary measures include **(a)** Existing Bus Priority and Infrastructure measures, **(b)** Public Transport Information provision and **(c)** Vehicle Bus Fleet Age.

## Existing Bus Priority and Bus Stop Infrastructure

Worcestershire County Council defines Bus Priority as various techniques used to improve service and reduce delays for buses at intersections or junctions, including intelligent signals, bus lanes and bus gates. We aspire to look at this more holistically from a bus network perspective.

At the time of preparing this refreshed BSIP the following key aspects are being developed with BSIP+ funding:

- The requirement to conduct further feasibility into key junctions which experience the greatest level of delay, reliability, and punctuality issues for bus services across the county.
- A future programme of improvements will be developed and rolled out to support in the delivery of bus services across the county as part of this BSIP+ funding programme.
- The requirement to update Worcestershire County Council bus stop programme with improvements to bus stops across the county. This will form a general improvement which will consider the general quality of bus stop infrastructure, provision of key requirements at bus stops and a programme which will consider alternative mechanisms to deliver and maintain bus stops for the benefits of users and key stakeholder partners.

## Public Transport information

Missing, incomplete, inaccurate or damage public transport information is a general cause for concern for those who wish to use bus services across the county. A general programme of renewal, in line with key stakeholders has been a priority for Worcestershire County Council across many years.

Worcestershire County Council fully recognises the benefits and positive impact that good quality, clear and reliable public transport information, where electronic or paper based, can have on increasing patronage and confidence across bus use throughout the county.

It is the intention of the BSIP and subsequent funding to review and update – alongside stakeholder partners – the ongoing programme for public transport information, its quality and dissemination as changes to public transport and the rollout of DRT moves forward.

## Vehicle Bus Fleet Age

The average age of bus fleets used as Public Service Vehicles by local bus operators in English non-metropolitan areas had not changed for 15 years (2005/06



and 2019/20), yet this age profile of buses had reduced to around 13.6% between 2020 and 2023.

DfT bus statistics (BUS0605) state that the average age of the bus fleet in non-metropolitan areas is 8.8 years, which is slightly higher than the England average of 8.0 in 2019/20 (increase from 7.7 in 2005/06).

At the time of preparing this BSIP refresh that average age of buses across Worcestershire reflects that of the national average, for 'conventional' local bus services but where fleets are brand new for DRT services.

It continues to be the intention of Worcestershire County Council to work with local bus operators as part of the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership programme to deliver newer buses to Worcestershire as part of local renewal programmes.

### 3. Passenger Satisfaction

Worcestershire County Council is a member of the National Highways & Transport (NHT) network that delivers an annual survey by Ipsos Mori to measure and compare public transport satisfaction to identify and implement improvements and share best practice.

From the most recent survey which was undertaken in 2023, the overall satisfaction with a variety of aspects associated with the delivery of local bus services across Worcestershire is shown in Figure 10.

The table suggests that there have been general improvements in some areas on the recent year and decreases in other areas. This accounts for both bus and non-bus users, where non bus users for example may never be inclined to use bus services and may not wholly reflect the improvements specifically to bus users across key areas.

PTBI07	Bus fares	47%	1%	50%	-3%	3	82
PTBI08	Quality and cleanliness of buses	56%	2%	63%	-7%	4	99
PTBI09	Helpfulness of drivers	62%	5%	68%	-6%	4	106
PTBI10	Personal safety on the bus	61%	1%	68%	-7%	4	101
PTBI11	Personal safety at bus stops	60%	0%	63%	-3%	4	85
PTBI12	Raised kerbs at bus stops	59%	0%	66%	-7%	4	107
PTBI13	The amount of information	49%	1%	56%	-7%	4	104
PTBI14	The clarity of information	52%	3%	58%	-6%	4	102
PTBI15	The accuracy of information	52%	3%	58%	-6%	4	106
PTBI16	Ease of finding the right information	48%	0%	55%	-7%	4	102
PTBI17	Information about accessible buses	47%	5%	53%	-6%	4	102
PTBI18	Info to help people plan journeys	51%	0%	59%	-8%	4	106
PTBI19	Reliability of electronic display info	50%	4%	52%	-2%	3	68

Figure 10: Overall public satisfaction with bus services

One of the opportunities of using NHT is to compare our performance against both national averages as well as peer authority averages which allows us to set improvement targets based on these figures. The NHT survey can help assess year on year trends and identify recommendations for improvements, whilst also adopting best practice from other authorities.

### Public Transport: Worcestershire



In Worcestershire, the NHT survey was sent to 3,300 households and 933 members of the public responded (including online responses).

The overall response rate in Worcestershire was 28.3%, higher than the national average of 23.8%.

The NHT found that in Worcestershire, only 48% of respondents were satisfied with Public Transport, significantly lower than the NHT average of 60%. This 12% gap between Worcestershire's average and the NHT average suggests that the Worcestershire County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan will be starting at a lower baseline than some authorities. Local bus service (aspects) is included in the 10 lowest scores for Worcestershire County Council with a 36% satisfaction level, and additionally satisfaction with public transport information scored even lower at 31% representing two of the lowest scoring indicators. Local bus Services (overall) and Local bus services (aspects) ranked 12 regionally. Key descriptors used in the NHT; punctuality, frequency, information, and provision are significant areas of concern addressed throughout this document and will be used to monitor public perception of how the new Worcestershire Network is performing.

## Demand Responsive Transport Feedback Analysis

A new and innovative method of obtaining feedback is via the DRT application.

This technology provides a real-time view of services and passengers can select a rating to describe their experience. The Worcestershire on Demand programme continues to receive excellent feedback via the app and surveys.

DRT is still highly thought of, receiving 4.8/5 with over 10% of journeys receiving a rating where Passengers have awarded a five-star rating (maximum) with 'route' and 'booking procedures' being notable contributions to its success.

It is a recommendation that feedback will continue to form part of our BSIP Passenger Charter.



Figure 11: Snapshot of DRT feedback

## Barriers to Bus Use

There are a small, but key selection of barriers to using bus services across Worcestershire. Whilst they are known, it is the intention of the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership process to actively target key measures that could contribute to alleviating blockers to delivering an efficient and effective network of bus services to meet our users' needs.

A selection of the known key areas is highlighted within our emerging STEB analysis, shown further within this section.

## Punctuality and reliability

The Worcestershire County Council Travel and Transport data report shows that traffic flows in Worcestershire are currently at 95% of pre Covid-19 levels. Key areas of congestion are illustrated in Figure 12 and Figure 13 for AM and PM peak periods respectively.



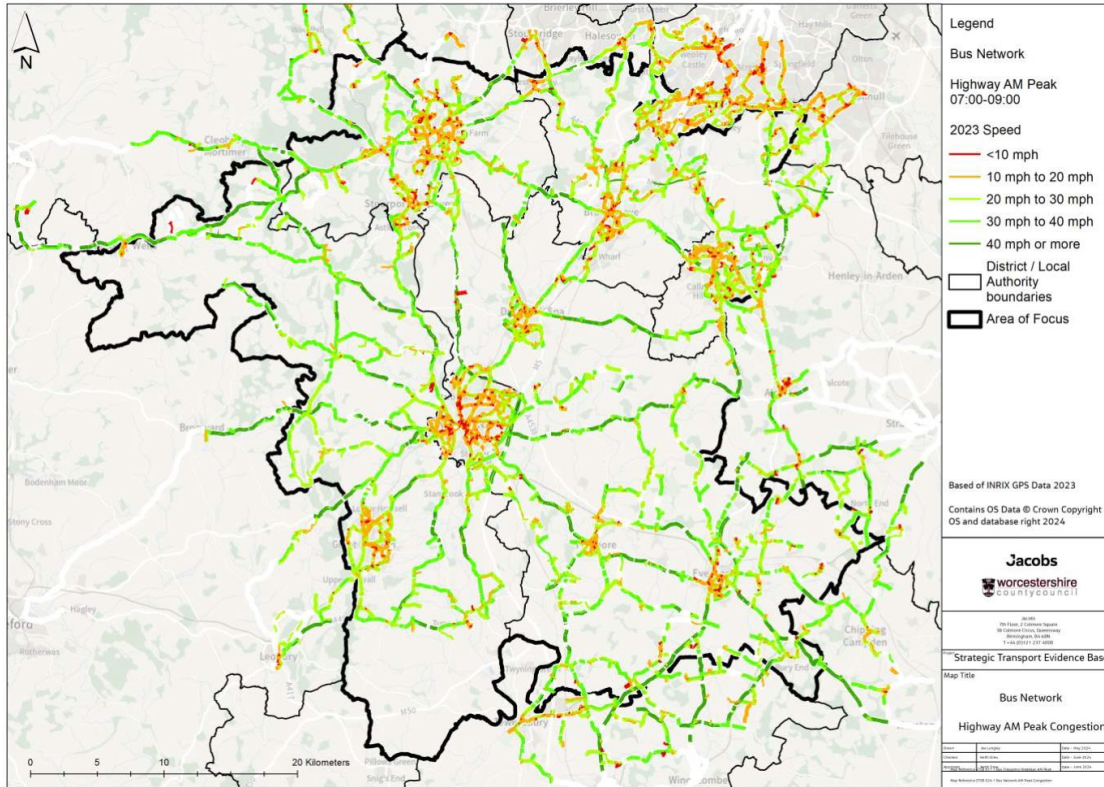


Figure 12: Map showing the speed of traffic on Worcestershire County Council bus links, 2023, AM

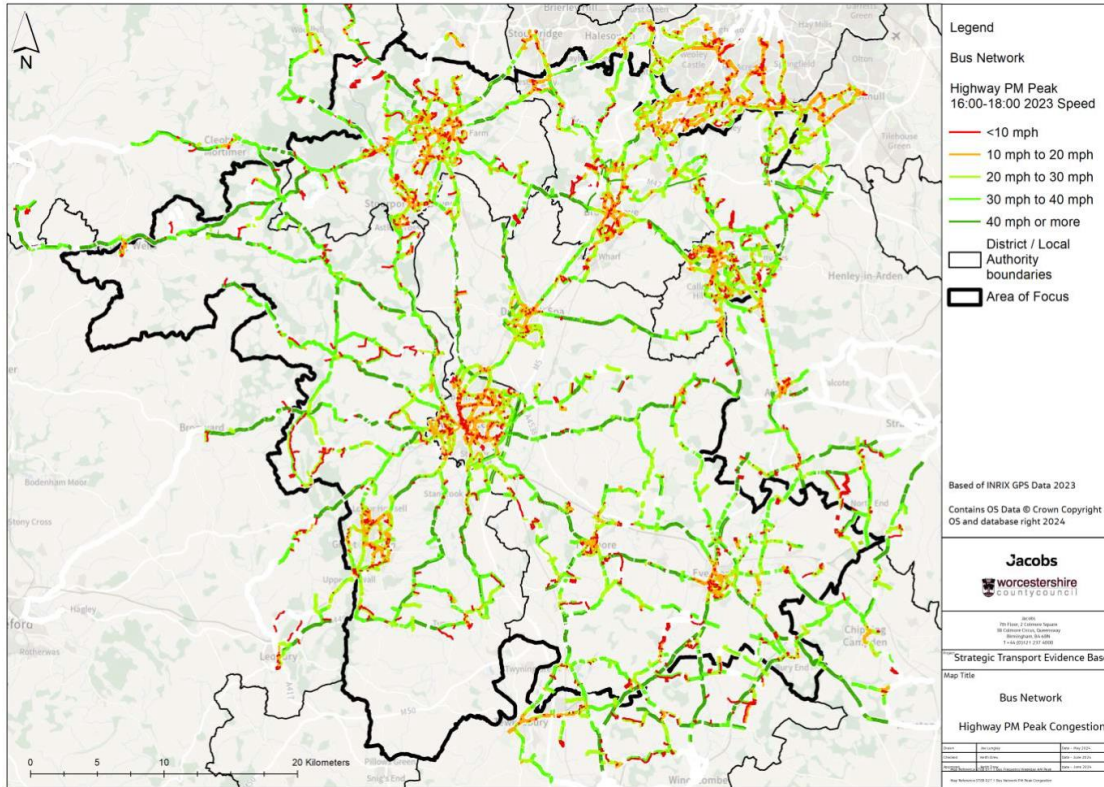


Figure 13: Map showing the speed of traffic on Worcestershire County Council bus links, 2023, PM



Bus Operators were consulted as part of the development of the BSIP and provided key factors that impact the bus network as a result of congestion and delay on the highway network. A response to this engagement includes the following key items for consideration:

- Poor parking, a particular issue on narrow streets,
- Heavy traffic leading to congestion at junctions and roundabouts, particularly in peak periods,
- Schools, retail, and leisure attractions, and
- Poor enforcement of existing bus lanes (prohibited parking and loading within bus lanes).

Worcestershire County Council has already implemented a number of schemes across the County to improve conditions for bus users, and to tackle congestion, and will continue to actively target improvements measures to meet bus operators requirements in delivering services, by balancing the needs of other road users with bus services and their passengers.

## Population and Car Ownership

The total population of Worcestershire was approximately 600,000 residents in 2021.

The data which has been derived, uses data availability for Worcestershire at the time of the 2021 census, alongside the West Midlands and England and Wales.

One of the most significant differences in age structures between Worcestershire and national figures is that of young people.

The 20-34 age group represents just over 17% of the total population, compared to 19% regionally and 20% nationally due to the 'outmigration' of younger residents to national urban centres for higher education and job prospects.

There is also a significant difference between Worcestershire and national figures for residents aged 65 and over. The figures are consistently higher for Worcestershire, constituting 23% of the population compared to 19% that makes up the national and West Midlands average. This may be particularly important for bus improvements at targeted audiences, currently given the age group of 65 and over continue to be more frequent users of local bus services across the county.

As a percentage of all households, comparing the England national figure to Worcestershire shows the County has less 'non-car' ownership at 15% within the county, compared to 24% nationally. At district level, Bromsgrove has the least percentage of non-car owning households, with 89% having at least one car. Worcester has the highest percentage of non-car owning households (20%).

For the 15% of Worcestershire residents who do not have access to a car it is acknowledged that an attractive, functional, and multi-modal passenger transport network is essential for a good quality of life, particularly in a predominantly rural setting. Some 81% of all people in Worcestershire are in employment, which is higher than the West Midlands average (75.2%) and where that figure is equal to the national average (75.8%).

## Parking

Currently across Worcestershire, bus fares within key towns and urban centres are not perceived to be competitive with car parking provision and tariffs.

Worcester City car parks are divided into zones, Green, Amber, and Red with Green being the cheapest Tariff zone and Red being the highest. For other key towns such as in Kidderminster, Evesham, Droitwich and Stourport-on-Severn, car parking tariffs are allocated according to whether the car park is short stay or long stay, whereas Malvern's car park tariffs are organised by daytime and evening charges.

All car parks have marked disabled bays where blue badge holders can park for free.

It is the intention of the county council as part of the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership programme to review local bus services across key towns and district, in line with the ongoing provision of car parking arrangements in urban centres, reflecting a fare structure that is competitive and can offer a financially viable alternative to the car.

## Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention

Bus driver recruitment and retention is challenging both nationally and also within Worcestershire, owing to a number of factors, where this relates to retaining existing bus drivers and attracting new bus drivers into the industry.

There are a number of general, national market conditions which place challenges on qualified, driving professional in the labour market. This included for instance a general shortage of qualified HGV drivers both during and following the pandemic resulting in:

- some bus drivers leaving the industry through retirement or ill health or in favour of more competitive salaries in the road haulage industry; and
- DVLA timescales in issuing provisional Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Licenses to new drivers, which impacted on new drivers leaving the industry before the completion of the hiring process or delays in delivering on service needs.

More localised issues impacting in driver retention and recruitment within Worcestershire may now or in the future include:

- proximity of those operating bus services in the districts to the north of the county to Birmingham and the wider West Midlands, where competitive salaries and schedules may be more attractive to some bus drivers, and
- exacerbating any current limitations in the number of local PSV licence-holders looking for work across the county.

As part of our Enhanced Partnership, we commit to working closely and discuss these key bus driver issues with our local bus operators and identify opportunities for further collaboration on improving prospects for recruitment of new, and retention of existing drivers across Worcestershire.

## 4. Improvements Programme to 2025

This section provides an overview of Worcestershire County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme to 2025 and its ongoing commitment to improve public transport, in line with key stakeholder groups, across the county.

This programme of initiatives is designed to enhance the overall quality, efficiency, and accessibility of bus services in the shorter-term, with available funding through the DfT BSIP programme, across the county.

### Progress since 2021 BSIP

Since the introduction of Worcestershire's BSIP in 2021 there has been ongoing support for the main commercial and subsidised local bus network.

Recognising the vital role that these bus services play in the daily lives of our local residents, the Council has prioritised BSIP+ Phase 2 funding in maintaining current service networks (and levels), as well as continuing to support multi-operator ticketing schemes.

This support is intended to ensure that urban and rural areas receive consistent and reliable levels of service which can facilitate easier commutes, support in reducing traffic congestion, and aim to promote bus service opportunities across the county.

In tandem with 'bolstering' the commercial bus network with service enhancements, Worcestershire has also placed a significant emphasis on delivering more and coordinated Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services to key parts of the County. Understanding the unique challenges faced by residents in less densely populated regions and in supporting the rural nature of the county, the council is committed to providing flexible and accessible transportation solutions that cater to the specific needs of users who are unable to use local bus services.

DRT services offer a tailored approach, allowing passengers to book rides as needed rather than relying on fixed schedules. This flexibility is crucial for connecting rural communities to essential services, employment opportunities, and social activities, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for those living in more isolated, rural parts of the county.

By balancing investment in both the core bus networks and innovative rural transport solutions, Worcestershire aims to create an inclusive, comprehensive, and composite public transport system offering different modes and needs to users.

In previous years, a lack of available resources has meant Worcestershire County Council has been unable to deliver an Enhanced Partnership (EP) until recently. Financial constraints, coupled with limited manpower and technical expertise, have posed significant challenges in advancing the EP's development and implementation.

Worcestershire's Enhanced Partnership (EP) is still in its infancy, having been adopted in February 2024, representing an early yet promising stage in the county's efforts to improve public transport.

This partnership, which constitutes a collaborative, legally binding arrangement between Worcestershire County Council and local bus operators, aims to deliver a more cohesive and efficient bus network, tackling key challenges around reliability and punctuality and the domestication of financially sustainable bus services which attract service levels to increase bus use across the county.

Although it is in the initial phases of implementation, the foundation for a progressive Enhanced Partnership and Scheme arrangement is in place to deliver measures and longer-term goals to improve service reliability, introduce greater connectivity, and enhance passenger experiences. Early feedback and initial developments are being closely monitored to ensure that the partnership evolves quickly and effectively to meet the future needs of Worcestershire's residents, local bus operators and other key stakeholder groups as well as providing the mechanisms for delivering schemes.

### Schemes within the Improvements Programme to 2025

The focus on BSIP schemes for 2024-2025 centre a small selection of key strategic objectives which are:

- expanding service coverage to underserved rural areas using DRT,
- providing more frequent services across the core strategic network,
- consideration of Smart and advanced ticketing options, such as contactless payments and MaaS (Mobility as a Service), to facilitate easier and quicker boarding.

These measures aim to boost ridership, reduce traffic congestion, and contribute to Worcestershire's broader environmental sustainability goals. The Council is committed to working closely with local communities and transport providers to ensure that these improvements meet the needs of all residents and specifically to bus users.

These overarching objectives have also been mapped to our 2024 BSIP Core Principles. The information contained within Table 11 summarises the measures and schemes proposed which focus on improvements to:

- Bus priority infrastructure,
- Bus stop infrastructure,
- Supporting bus services,
- Fares & ticketing,
- Demand Responsive Transport, and
- Public transport information

Table 11: Schemes and measures for Improvements Programme to 2025

WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle	Category	Proposals
Network Prioritisation	Bus priority infrastructure	<b>Intelligent Traffic Signals – Bromsgrove (BREP)</b> As part of the funding that has been received for BREP within Worcestershire we will be setting up Intelligent Priority at Junctions. This will enable us to understand how this will benefit operators and will form part of wider feasibility of introducing Intelligent Traffic Signal Priority at key junctions within the County.
Network Prioritisation	Bus priority infrastructure	<b>Feasibility study on Bus Priority measures</b> Move forward on feasibility study to deliver bus priority in Worcestershire. This will be linked to BREP funding in Bromsgrove where intelligent bus priority will be delivered. This will then form part of scheme within the EP
Bus infrastructure and improving the image of bus travel	Bus stop infrastructure	<b>Bromsgrove Shelter improvements &amp; Real Time</b> A number of new shelters will be installed within Bromsgrove (which will aid both DRT and Fixed Services). All new Shelters will have Real Time Information displays
Bus infrastructure and improving the image of bus travel	Bus stop infrastructure	<b>Bus Stop Maintenance and Repair + Feasibility Study (advertising)</b> Worcestershire has mixed ownership of shelters in the County which has resulted in an inconsistent level of quality, with varying standards of maintenance and cleanliness and no formal maintenance/repair contracts. A full review of Worcestershire estate will take place, including replacement of shelters that require significant repair
Network enhancements	Bus service support	<b>Core Strategic network Support</b> WCC will continue to support the main commercial network to ensure key services are not reduced. Previously this was funded via the Bus Recovery Grant (BRG).
Network enhancements	Bus service support	<b>Subsidised Network Support</b> WCC continues to support subsidised services whilst considering the best methods of provision (linked to WCC roll out of DRT - Alternative Provision). Previously BRG Funding
Network enhancements	Bus service support	<b>Network Enhancements</b> A number of proposals are being explored in terms of service enhancements. A new methodology will be created to rank proposals to ensure best value.
Fares & ticketing	Fares support	<b>Weekend Ticket Promotions</b> We will consider the feasibility of providing £1 or £0 tickets for residents to travel on the Worcestershire bus network at the weekend. A pilot will be delivered during 2024-25 to show impact on patronage.



WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle	Category	Proposals
<b>Fares &amp; ticketing</b>	Ticketing reform	<b>Multi-Operator Ticketing (Severn Card + Connecta)</b> We will continue to support Worcestershire Severn Card (Multi-Operator Student) as well as Connecta (multi-operator ticket). Feasibility study will take place to consider options of moving this into commercial market, as per WCC BSIP. We recognise the benefits of intelligent and innovative ticketing and payment solutions, such as Smart ticketing and contactless payments, and support wider introduction of these into the County.
<b>Network enhancements and modal integration</b>	Demand Responsive Transport	<b>North Worcestershire DRT Zone expansion</b> As a result of the successful DRT service operating in Bromsgrove, we are expanding this service across North Worcestershire (See diagram). This will add an additional two vehicles initially to the Bromsgrove DRT zone. This will be supported by enhancements to software to integrate the DRT services into fixed route services as well as rail.
<b>Network enhancements and modal integration</b>	Demand Responsive Transport	<b>Wychavon DRT Zone Expansion</b> This will be the first expansion, focusing on lessons learnt from Bromsgrove and Malvern to deliver what we feel will be a sustainable solution to the district. We will consider smaller vehicles as well as further integration of transport services such as home to school transport.
<b>Network enhancements and modal integration</b>	Demand Responsive Transport	<b>Wyre Forest DRT Zone Expansion (Design only)</b> As a result of the successful running of Urban and Rural DRT we are looking to expand into Wyre Forest. This is more complex as the Authority supports a number of fixed route services and we are looking at how these can be incorporated into the overall design of the service. 2024/25 will predominantly be design and tendering of the service.
<b>Network enhancements and modal integration</b>	Demand Responsive Transport	<b>DRT – Feasibility Study &amp; Review</b> A review and feasibility study will be delivered on Worcestershire on Demand and will showcase lessons learnt to date.
<b>Technology &amp; innovation and Improving the image of bus travel</b>	Public Transport Information	<b>Citymapper (MaaS Journey Planner)</b> We will be launching Citymapper as an integrated journey planner to support marketing and publicity of the wider network. This will also include the ability to deliver ticketing for DRT
<b>Technology &amp; innovation and Improving the image of bus travel</b>	Public Transport Information	<b>Innovation – Integrated Software</b> We will explore how software can be integrated to provide a seamless link between planning/ operations and usage. This will look at a full end to end solution with DRT software/ Journey Planner data integrated into the back office planning software, allowing for better understanding of passenger movements, and enabling us to better design future networks.

A high-level summary of proposed budget (both capital and revenue expenditure) has been outlined for each of the categories and is presented in Table 12.

*Table 12: Improvements Programme to 2025 – proposed budget*

<b>WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle</b>	<b>Proposed budget (£)</b>
<b>Network Prioritisation</b>	<b>£210,000</b>
<b>Bus infrastructure and improving the image of bus travel</b>	<b>£1,250,000</b>
<b>Network enhancements</b>	<b>£3,430,000</b>
<b>Fares &amp; ticketing</b>	<b>£575,000</b>
<b>Network enhancements and modal integration</b>	<b>£1,075,000</b>
<b>Technology &amp; innovation and Improving the image of bus travel</b>	<b>£295,000</b>

## 4. Ambitions and Proposals for 2025 and beyond

This section provides an overview of Worcestershire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme post-2025.

This programme of strategic initiatives is designed to enhance the overall quality, efficiency, and accessibility of bus services across the county.

Our ambitious goals set in the 2021 BSIP remain consistent and relevant as we look beyond 2025. This refreshed plan continues to focus on enhancing public transportation across the county, improving service reliability, expanding coverage, and integrating new technologies and sustainable practices. Our commitment to creating a more efficient and environmentally friendly transportation network remains unwavering.

### Ambitions and Schemes post-2025

Looking beyond 2025, Worcestershire County Council maintains significant ambitions for delivering a transformational bus network for its existing and prospective bus users (and residents).

These future-oriented goals are comprehensively outlined in the various sections of the full 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The aims and objectives of the BSIP and the corresponding measures which will be taken through the Enhanced Partnership programme is for a public transport system that meets current demands and anticipates and adapts to future needs, ensuring sustainability, accessibility, and network efficiency across the county.

The additional Phase 3 BSIP funding which was announced in June 2024 will significantly bolster our efforts to deliver against these ambitious targets, with ongoing financial support that will enable us to accelerate the implementation of key initiatives outlined below.

With this funding, we can invest more robustly in enhancing bus service frequencies, contribute to reducing journey times, and improving accessibility across the network.

As we refresh the BSIP, we are reinforcing the importance of strong partnership working with bus operators and other key stakeholders through the Worcestershire Enhanced Partnership as well as with neighbouring local authority partners, and community stakeholders. This collaborative approach is essential for the successful implementation of our initiatives. By working together, we can ensure that improvements are aligned with the needs of the community and are sustainable into the long term.

Table 13 summarises the measures and schemes proposed which focus on improvements to:

- Bus priority infrastructure,
- Bus stop infrastructure,
- Bus services enhancements,
- Fares & ticketing,

- Demand Responsive Transport, and
- Public transport information.

These have also been mapped to our 2024 BSIP Core Principles.

*Table 13: Ambitions and schemes for Improvements Programme post-2025*

<b>WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Ambitions and schemes</b>
<b>Network enhancements</b>	Bus service enhancements	Increase frequency of services on Worcestershire Strategic Network. Increase service level patterns to meet the needs of residents.
<b>Network enhancements</b>	Demand Responsive Transport	Provide alternative forms of transport where normal modes are not cost effective. Improve integration of alternative Service provision into the Worcestershire Network
<b>Network prioritisation</b>	Bus priority infrastructure	Address operator congestion and pinch points that are impacting services. Accelerate the delivery of Measures in Worcestershire.
<b>Network prioritisation</b>	Bus priority infrastructure	Introduction of additional bus clearways and look to make these enforceable
<b>Fares &amp; ticketing</b>	Fares & ticketing	Review current Worcestershire Fare structures and consider simpler and lower fare structures
<b>Public transport information, modal integration, technology &amp; innovation, improving the image of bus travel</b>	Public transport information & marketing	To develop a clearly defined and understood “brand” for the Worcestershire passenger transport network, used consistently across the network
<b>Public transport information, modal integration, technology &amp; innovation, improving the image of bus travel</b>	Public transport infrastructure	Deliver next generation mobility hubs to integrate Alternative Service provision and Active Travel with Local Bus Services
<b>Public transport information, modal integration, technology &amp; innovation, improving the</b>	Public transport information	Expand Worcestershire Real Time Information System

WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle	Category	Ambitions and schemes
image of bus travel		
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public transport information	Improve and develop mechanisms for improving data that can be presented in relation to the network
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public transport information	Continue to enhance the way information is provided on Worcestershire’s digital estate. Ensure that information on the Worcestershire Transport network is accessible for all users Co-ordinate and limit to a minimum the number of timetable changes for passenger bus services
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public transport information	Develop a passenger charter allowing users and non-users to engage with the authority including how Information will be presented and accessed
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public transport information	Provide a safe and secure environment to travel
Public transport information, modal integration, technology &	Public transport information	Deliver next generation accessible information on and off-bus



WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle	Category	Ambitions and schemes
innovation, improving the image of bus travel		
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public transport infrastructure	Progress to a consistent, uniform, accessible and quality provision of infrastructure that facilitates passenger transport use both on and off bus. Consider Net Zero objectives when considering infrastructure.
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	Public Transport Infrastructure	Consider income generation opportunities (ring-fenced back to Local Bus Network)

A high-level costed summary of the ambitions set out in Table 13 (both capital and revenue expenditure) has been outlined for each of the categories in Table 14.

*Table 14: Improvements Programme post-2025 – estimated costs (currently unfunded)*

WCC 2024 BSIP Core Principle	Proposed budget (estimated £ per annum)
Network enhancements	£19,400,000
Network prioritisation	£190,000
Fares & ticketing	£1,750,000
Public transport information, modal integration, technology & innovation, improving the image of bus travel	£860,000

## 5. Targets, Performance monitoring and Reporting

This section sets out the arrangements for target setting and performance monitoring the subsequent reporting on measures which have been developed against BSIP targets which were included as part of the 2021 BSIP document.

### Summary of progress against 2021 BSIP targets

We are in a transitional stage and are currently working on sourcing adequate resources to support in delivering the schemes against the targets in the BSIP.

### 2024 BSIP targets

A live barometer of key target measures will be introduced that will enable officers to be reactive to current operational and network delivery issues on the local bus network. This will be critical in delivering targets and will significantly aid in the public perception of the delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

### Setting targets

Worcestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 continues to include specific measures to improve frequency, service provision and priority measures where future feasibility studies will inform our objectives and recommendations for improvements which will be taken forward for inclusion as part of the Enhanced Partnership process during 2024/25.

The targets provided in this version of the Plan are still indicative at this stage, however we are confident that they are realistic and will enable us to start additional delivery phase. These targets will be agreed with operators and will be reviewed early as part of Enhanced Partnership process.

### Headline targets

Worcestershire's Bus Services Improvement Plan contains ambitious targets that will facilitate the development of a network that reflects the dynamic growth within the County.

These focus on key headline targets of journey time, reliability, passenger growth and customer satisfaction.

While dependent on confirming our targets, we are focussed on establishing a public transport network offering reliable, frequent bus services with clear branding and comprehensive passenger information.

By maximising bus priority measures where appropriate, we will seek to introduce measures which aim to reduce journey times for passengers and lower operating costs for our transport providers.

Table 15: Headline Targets for 2024 BSIP

Core Principle	Principle Ref	Area	Overarching Target Area	Ref	BSIP Target Description
Headline Targets	HT	Journey Time	JT	JT1	Improve journey times on Strategic, Subsidiary and DRT services.
				JT2	Improve journey times when compared to Car Travel.
				JT3	Introduce a live "barometer" of Journey times to monitor network performance.
				JT4	Monitor public perception of Local Bus provision when compared to current methods of travel
		Reliability	RT	RT1	% of services on time on Strategic Corridors Timing Points
				RT2	% of services on time on Strategic Corridors Timing Points
				RT3	DRT – consider which measures we could use.
				RT4	Monitor public perception of reliability of services
		Passenger Growth	PG	PG1	Build patronage levels to pre-covid levels by the end of 2022-23
				PG2	Increase patronage by 10% on 2018-19 baseline figures by 2023-2024
				PG3	Increase patronage by 25% on 2018-19 baseline figures by 2030
		Customer Satisfaction	CS	CS1	Overall customer satisfaction levels to be above the average of all authorities by 2023-2024
				CS2	Live monitoring of satisfaction across all strategic services by 2022-2023
CS3	Creation of a passenger charter by the end of 2022				

## BSIP and Enhanced Partnership- Monitoring and Reporting

The 2024 BSIP is a live document, with a strategy to 2030. It is subject to an annual review, in conjunction with the Department for Transport's Bus Connectivity Assessment. An updated 'progress report' setting our performance against targets will be created every twelve months.

The Enhanced Partnership programme, of which each of these measures for improvements to local bus services will be formed, will be incorporated at key stages within the EP Board and Scheme process where updates on delivery and monitoring will be developed.

## Performance Management Framework Model

Worcestershire County Council has an agreed Performance Management Framework Model that is used to analyse where local bus subsidies should be targeted within limited financial resources.

The Performance Management Framework Model provides a basis for equitable comparisons to be made between services. This also provides the Council with a robust methodology to appraise each service and determine which provide the best value for money whilst endeavouring to deliver the service levels.

This methodology will be adopted and enhanced to provide "best" value monitoring on the developed and delivery of proposed network of future bus services. This

methodology will reflect on the journeys and services which currently attract financial subsidies, but consider, wider policy objectives pertaining to the current commercial network for completeness of the whole Worcestershire local bus network.

Worcestershire County Council will use data from the Performance Management Framework Model to inform a mandatory Bus Connectivity Assessment (BCA) updates every twelve months.

The BCA has been set up to help Local Transport Authorities (LTA) and the Department for Transport (DfT) establish how successful BSIP expenditure has been as well as inform on general trends in bus connectivity across the county.

As part of ongoing monitoring and reporting, both generally and specifically in relation to the Enhanced Partnership Board processes, Worcestershire County Council will provide information across eight categories covering:

- bus funding,
- existing bus networks,
- supported service provision, and
- bus connectivity.

Worcestershire County Council has been requested by DfT to provide the requested information utilising existing data sources where applicable, as well as additional specific requests from commercial bus operators within the LTA area, and this will be retained and used as part of the ongoing BSIP and Enhanced Partnership process.