

**Notes and Actions of Bus Enhanced Partnership Forum Meeting,
held at 1300 on Tuesday 13th in the Condicote Room, Shire Hall, Gloucester.**

Item1

Welcome and introductions

Cllr Whyborn welcomed all attendees to the Meeting, which commenced at 1300.

In attendance:

EP Board: Chris Hanson (representing Stagecoach), Luke Marion (representing Pulhams Coaches and the smaller operators), Cllr Roger Whyborn (representing Gloucestershire County Council, also Chair for this meeting).

Supporting staff: James Heaney Regalado (Stagecoach), Tom Main, Matthew Parker, Matthew Parker, Thea Rumer, Megan Toomer (Integrated Transport Unit, Gloucestershire County Council)

Attendees:

- Amartya Deb (GCC Senior Planning Officer (Infrastructure))
- Orlagh Phipps (GCC Principal Transport Planner)
- Marta Cowling, Green Space & Public Realm Team, Cheltenham Borough Council
- Louise Currie, Chief Executive Officer, Lydney Dial a Ride
- Lyndon Bibble, Chief Executive, Newent Association for the Disabled
- Paul Riddick, CEO, Community Connexions
- Ewan Greenhill, Route Manager, South West Operations, National Highways

Introductions included clarity that Marta is in attendance on behalf of her wider team, and that Ewan is the new route manager, and hopes to re-establish a thorough working connection with ITU and GCC.

BSIP update

- First EP Forum since new BSIP allocation for coming years. This includes a 3 year spend for revenue and a 4 year spend for capital.
- This 2026 onwards funding is called the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG), with the BSIP still remaining as the strategy. The LABG reporting will include 24/25 BSIP spend, so there is a funding name change.
- More clarity on funding restrictions from the DfT are due to GCC.
- The Robin is now written into the BSIP long term plan.
- More BSIP and spend detail from GCC will be public with a March cabinet report.

It was commented by operators that the progress from GCC has been good and that work from ITU, Travel Planning and by the Cllr is appreciated.

Multi-operator Ticket

Cllr Whyborn started this agenda item with a summary of requirements of the ticket, explaining that all elements of the ticket had been agreed in principle and ITU has started to get external legal advice. The ticket should be launched in spring, e.g. April or May.

Luke commented that the work with GCC before the solicitors get involved is a good approach, and that he is happy to represent the smaller operators, including technical (Ticketer) support. **CT operators** in attendance agreed this is a good way forward.

It is clear that all parties involved with the ticket need GCC to be the administrator and controller of the agreement. The brand/ticket logo can appear everywhere online, and the ticket name can be printed on the ETM paper print off.

ACTION: ITU to ensure that GCC Comms are met at a good time for spring launch of new brand.

ACTION: Comms and legal to facilitate publicity.

The progress in this sector was discussed, as this ticket is step one, followed by tap-on-tap-off, and Project Coral in due course.

Local reviews - Cheltenham

The Cllr and operators were able to discuss improvements in Cheltenham and patronage increase.

Cllr Whyborn hopes similar situations can be seen/replicated in other areas.

Operator updates

Chris and Luke discussed

- recent patronage increases, assisted by the end of some roadworks in key locations.
- Compliments in their work in partnership with GCC, including a new highways engineering team, and the ZEBRA2 project.
- A good state of network allows challenges to be resolved in less time and grows confidence in passengers.
- Gloucestershire driver shortage is the lowest it's ever been.

Amartya asked about when subsidy may be reduced or removed, or if rural areas are slower to be focused on to reduce subsidy. **Chris and Luke and Tom** responded that subsidy will always be needed, but that it should be moved from embedded/grown services to new services for network growth, improvement and modernisation, allowing pump-priming to test the market. Growth should allow movement of funding for more growth.

Network Map

Tom summarised the progress with a county wide bus map and key-town maps, which ITU have procured an external company to facilitate, which should be available online February'26. ITU and the Cllr are pleased with the work so far, and the maps will get reviewed by operators for comment.

AOB

- **Louise** commented that it's good to have these meetings in place and that their recent work has included their involvement as a ZEBRA2 operator (the only CT operator within the ZEBRA2 project in the country).
- **Matt Parker** commented on diligent work of ITU regarding delayed and now improving installation of bus shelters. Infrastructure improvements continue across the county.
- **Tom** highlighted that the Passenger Survey is being released from GCC in spring. Another Passenger Survey will follow later in the year from an external company working with all LTAs as part of the BSIP. <https://forms.gloucestershire.gov.uk/BusPassengerSurveyEmail>

Date of next meeting

These meetings are annual, in rotation every six months with the Bus Passenger Group.

Meeting End 2.50pm