

Notes and Actions of Bus Enhanced Partnership Forum Meeting (no.2), held at 1000 on Tuesday 8th October in the Members Room, Shire Hall, Gloucester.

Item 1

Welcome and introductions

Chris Hanson welcomed all attendees to the Meeting, which commenced at 1000.

In attendance:

EP Board: Chris Hanson (representing Stagecoach, also Chair for this meeting), Luke Marion (representing the smaller operators), Cllr Philip Robinson (representing Gloucestershire County Council).

Supporting staff: Tom Main, Matthew Parker, Jason Humm, Thea Rumer, Richard Adams, Max Matteis, Matthew Wells, Jonathan Roberts, Simon Excell, Luisa Senft-Hayward, Orlagh Phipps, Gareth Vine, Miguel Santos, Owen Parry, Afriqnun Lovejoy, Mark Bowen, Carys Gerard, Joel Price (Gloucestershire County Council)

Attendees:

- Cllr Adrian Oldman, Cllr for Farmhill & Paganhill ward, Stroud Town Council
- David Redgewell (Gloucestershire Catch the Bus campaign, the Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership, and the South West Transport Network Rail Future Severn side)
- Edward Hopkins (Transport Operations Manager, West of England CA)
- Gavin Bennett, Managing Director, Bennetts Coaches Ltd
- Natalie Amos (BSIP & Enhanced Partnership Manager, Herefordshire Council)
- Paul Riddick (CEO, Community Connexions)
- Simon Maher (Senior Neighbourhood Planning Officer, Stroud District Council)
- Wendy Jackson (Regeneration Manager, Forest of Dean District Council)
- Lyndon Biddle (Newent Dial a Ride)

Apologies were received from Colin Chick, Philip Williams, Amartya Deb (Gloucestershire County Council).

Item 2

Actions from previous forum

Tom ran through the completed actions since the previous Forum meeting. No comments were received.

Tom ran through outstanding, closed and ongoing actions. **Luke** then closed an outstanding action regarding wheelchair passengers.

Go Ahead now have a process/policy for Cheltenham and Gloucester routes regarding wheelchair users who are unable to board a bus due to the wheelchair space already being used. For these areas, **Go Ahead** have an agreement with taxi companies. For all other areas, there is hope for a similar agreement to be in place but finding the taxi companies with capacity to assist before the next bus arrives has been difficult.

Since there has been no clarification on the “Major Employees Forum”, that action has been closed.

Discussion followed about conversation, agreements and progress with cross boundary transport options, both in relation to wheelchair users and connections for travel across district/county boundaries. Meetings and ongoing progress have been made with South

Gloucestershire and with WECA, with thanks to **David, Cllr Robinson** and in parallel, to **Chris Hanson, Cllr Robinson** thanked David for his persistence regarding this issue.

Stagecoach have been in touch with Dan Norris (Mayor of West of England), South Gloucestershire and WECA. The Cllr has clearly put the next step with the responsibility of South Gloucestershire.

ACTION: **Chris** to update the board on progress with South Gloucestershire. Chris to consider when next to contact South Gloucestershire.

Item 3 **BSIP update**

Tom summarised the BSIP 2024 update, more accurately a complete re-write, which has produced a clear, comprehensive and well laid out document. **Chris** and **Luke** agreed that the BSIP is a quality document. **Tom** told the Forum that the informal feedback from DfT has been received, which noted that the BSIP is much improved, with a much clearer narrative. GCC await formal feedback from the DfT.

Tom explained that the ongoing work of the BSIP will occur via the EP Working Groups. The EP elements include the Board, the Forum and the Working Groups which all run in parallel. This is how the work within the BSIP will progress.

A discussion followed that commented that there is a lack of clarity from central government about the timeline of BSIP funding. The upcoming Budget from government will likely contain an update and more information. **Tom** commented that in the event that there is no further BSIP funding, the BSIP 2024 update puts GCC in a good position for other/wider funding opportunities. **David** commented that Western Gateway is doing a lot of work for funding and has funding available. It was mentioned later that central Government may be looking at regional funding. **David** called for a letter from MPs to go to central government on the importance of transport funding, whether BSIP or otherwise. These letters may also be sent to the Secretary of State from Transport, Louise Haigh.

Luke commented that data had now been requested by the DfT from bus operators for a potential extension of the £2 fare scheme beyond 31st December 2024, with the data request due for submission to the DfT by 29th October 2024 and initial funding allocations due to be provided to operators for any extension period by 29th November 2025. There appeared to be a potential that the fare cap level may be raised to either £2.50 or £3.00, however it was expected that the Budget on 30th October 2024 will hopefully clarify.

Cllr Robinson commented that a letter from the EP board to government might have more significant swing. **Chris** agreed that the EP Board and Forum are in a good place.

ACTION: **Chris** and **Luke** agreed to write letter from the Board to MPs on both BSIP and on £2 fare cap, and that both deserve further funding and that there is a need for clarity.

David commented that West Midlands and Northern groups have big voices, that are heard by the DfT. **Chris** agreed that the “west country” voice needs to be heard. Chris commented that there has been a general lack of discussion about South West, for example at conferences, with lots of good discussions around North and Midlands.

In terms of BSIP money on infrastructure, the long-term goals and wider objectives sit within the Working Groups. In contrast, the Merrywalks development is happening now, and this will

include stopping the illegal parking at the site, and that this work/installation has already been contracted.

ACTION: **David** to be in touch with **ITU** on all operational / infrastructure comments/progress on reporting and replacement. **David** to comment as needed on hardware for disability access.

ACTION: **ITU** and **National Express** to explore the 401 stopping at Merrywalks. **ITU** to get in touch with **David** and **Gavin** regarding this.

Item 4 **Working Groups**

Richard updated the Forum on the four EP Working Groups, all groups have had their first meeting in September 2024. Meetings will continue on a quarterly basis. The meetings are attended by GCC officers and Stagecoach and Go Ahead representatives. Go Ahead represents all smaller operators, including Luke Marion's position on the Board. Richard and Thea are organising/managing the four Groups. These groups will deliver the BSIP targets, focusing at the moment on the pre-2025 items.

The next meetings are from November. The Passenger Charter and comment from public groups will sit under the Marketing and Information working group. Tom clarified that some BSIP outputs and decisions will need passenger input, and that input will be circulated across the Board/Forum/Working Groups as is decided on each topic. Direct consultations with councils and public groups will also occur regarding specific items.

The Working Groups will work on development and delivery and will consult when needed. This includes longer term work on bus stops, shelter standards and road work locations and communication – a good way to have a long-term view. The Working Groups will be a standing item on Board and Forum agendas.

ACTION: Outside of the Working Groups is the more immediate actions of bus shelters for winter, for example on the 94/94X. **ITU** to contact shelter supplier on this and other locations as needed.

ACTION: **Matthew** to send Real Time Information for Forest of Dean to **Wendy** and colleagues.

Item 5 **Safety on transport – Anti social behaviour**

Cllr Robinson summarised that since this is a re-occurring topic (including repetitive vandalism), a meeting occurred with the Police and Crime Commissioner. The meeting was very productive, producing a more active approach of marketing regarding police presence on transport, and police officers (and PCSOs) to be able to travel at will. **Cllr Robinson** commented that the problem will never be completely solved, and is a symptom of wider society, which the EP can tackle "at our level" where possible. It was commented that government guidance or "tool kit" would assist, considering this conversation is happening across EPs / different counties.

The meeting included the options of using posters and information on the tickets about police presence and ASB awareness/reporting (including graffiti). The goals of this work include to (i) increase internal attention on this topic, within the Working Group(s) and within Operators.

To (ii) get officers onto buses, and (iii) to potentially use SkillZone to in addressing the problem at source (education).

The following points were discussed or pointed towards as potential good options;

- Link ASB marketing/campaign to drink driving campaign
- Communication to improve atmosphere around holiday periods, not to put people off about frequency of issues.
- Information about officers in uniform/not in uniform
- For all information to appear on buses and on hubs/interchange locations, firstly the Transport Hub.
- The perception of police presence is needed in press releases.

ACTION: For **Luke** to investigate and summarise how BSIP funding worked for More Bus regarding police travel.

ACTION: Data from **Stagecoach** to explore how many police members travel on buses, or if data is available at all (for example over Winter and into Spring). If figures are available, they could go into marketing, to deter criminals.

ACTION: **Chris** to initiate on “Christmas is safe on buses” campaign and/or event, or similar title. This may include photos of officers in uniform and not in uniform. Potentially Go Ahead and National Express to attend. Potentially three locations for “launch”/events – Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud.

Safety on transport – White Ribbon

Thea summarised that **Tom** and **Thea**, representing ITU, met with Clare Joynes from [Green Square Accord](#). The meeting included the wide-ranging situations and behaviour which categorise as domestic abuse, many of which rarely recognised. People who live in more rural locations tend to report abuse less often and wait longer to report abuse.

The two ideas that came out of the meeting are

1. Posters on the buses for public awareness of Green Square Accord.
2. Driver training, for signposting and identifying and reporting abuse.

ACTION: **Luke** to integrate training into the Training-personnel programme, and for **Chris** to integrate into the refresh of CPC Core training. There was a very positive response to these opportunities.

ACTION: **ITU** to put **Stagecoach** and **Go Ahead** in touch with Clare. **ITU** to assist in request for digital material to appear on digital displays in buses. **ITU** to put same posters on The Robin buses.

Further discussion followed about addition training or awareness required, including any individuals with protected characteristics, the BAME community, young people, etc. Knife arches are used in some locations. Education plays a role, but addressing these wide-ranging issues is not easy. **Chris** commented that a commitment to act on the White Ribbon campaign is a commitment to safety and links back to working with Police.

It was noted, regarding transport for the disabled, that Stagecoach’s new double-decker buses have two wheelchair spaces, bettering on the national standard. Whilst shelter improvements are to be addressed by the Infrastructure Working Group, which will include working on a new GCC guide for streets, specific comments or changes can be addressed in above action (on all operational / infrastructure comments/progress).

Item 6

Any other business

Wendy commented that the Forest of Dean have held a climate change week recently, including a transport Climb-athon. Some of the meetings and learnings are related to the BSIP, with strong presence from young people. This work is included in Forest of Dean's district council's Active Travel Strategy.

ACTION: **Wendy** to share Climb-athon and relevant notes/contacts with **ITU** (via **Thea**).

A comment was made on maintenance of the Transport Hub. This topic is complex as operators use the site, and Gloucester City Council own the building. Safety and organisation at the Hub is with the landowner. Issues include doors, flooding, way pointing, manoeuvring protocol for ramps for wheelchair use, and information display(s).

ACTION: **Chris** to share Transport Hub contacts with **ITU** and with **David**.

ACTION: For **Chris** to initiate/organise a Transport Hub Stakeholder meeting. **Chris, Luke, David** and **Matt** to attend.

ACTION: **ITU** to work as needed, including with **David**, on Arle Court, interchange, Cheltenham Rail station, Cheltenham stopping infrastructure, over busing, the need to collect at the Bus Station on the 99 route.

It was noted that work toward Cinderford shelters would be difficult, including that the landowner is Tesco. It was noted that marketing before Christmas is good, and that the Gloucestershire National Rail Partnership is working on that now and have resource(s).

ACTION: **GCC** to add multi-modal map (task and finish group) as a discussion point to the Marketing and Information Working Group agenda.

Zebra discussion clarified that buses will be branded as per the operator, and that we can expect buses on the ground (services operational) by early winter 2025.

Item 7

Future meetings

EP Forum meetings happen once every six months, offset from the EP Board meetings by roughly 3 months. The next EP Forum will take place in April 2025.

Meeting ended at 1157.