

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA633225081

Submitted: 19 August 2024 12:24 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Review of the Essex Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 to 2030 FP/107/04/24

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: In March 2024 the DfT issued new guidance requiring each LTA to submit a revised Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), following a different template from that required for 2021 and setting out both their immediate progress with their strategy to date, their near future programme showing how funding delivered through the BSIP and BSIP+ grants and their aspirational approach to developing the bus network to 2030.

The BSIP Review 2024 -2030 is the result of ECC's review of the existing BSIP, using the new template set out by the DfT.

It covers:

The current position of the commercial network, including patronage, congestion and traffic levels and changes to service levels.

Changes to ECC's contracted bus network.

A summary of the progress made in delivering ECC's BSIP commitments, including the delivery of 12 comprehensive Area Reviews, the successful Zero Emission Bus Regional Area 2 (ZEBRA 2) bid to introduce zero emission electric buses in Basildon, the establishment of a county wide Enhanced Partnership with bus operators, and progress toward developing district based partnerships, progress on our six transformational projects and an update on progress toward reviewing ECC policy supporting the bus network.

This is an update to our 2021 BSIP and the 2022 update and does not fundamentally alter either the policy approach or level of commitments made in 2022

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The review does not alter the existing goals or aims of the BSIP and nor does it add any additional policy or financial commitments beyond those already agreed for the Essex Bus Service Improvement Plan 2022 to 2026 in November 2021 or subsequently through specifically funded grant programmes such as ZEBRA 2.

The underlying objectives of the policy are:

- Target One: For reliability to meet the target of 95% of services operating within the Traffic Commissioners statutory 6 minute window of operations.
- Target Two: For passenger numbers to see a return to pre-COVID-19 levels of patronage of 40.7 million journeys.
- Target Three: For customer satisfaction to maintain an 86% (2019) overall journey satisfaction rating over what we expect to be a volatile time for the network.

It also fine-tunes some of our policy approaches in light of our experience to date. These include:

A revised approach to stakeholder consultation for future BSIP emendations, giving the public a better

opportunity to have their say.

Some changes to the structure of the district based Enhanced Partnerships, designed to lower the administrative burden of creating and a managing them

As requested by DfT some aspirational longer term goal for improving the bus network, including approaches which are not currently funded and would depend on future external funding coming forward to be achievable.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Mark Ash (Climate, Environment and Customer Services)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Tom Cunningham (Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: Change to an existing policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: There is currently a requirement set by the Department for Transport that BSIPs to be reported on annually in regard to both the proposed targets and performance indicators and wider bus network development.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Good jobs, Infrastructure, Future growth and investment, Green growth, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Environment: Net zero, Transport and built environment, Green communities

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Promoting independence

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Levelling up outcomes for families

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

Is the new or revised policy / decision likely to negatively impact residents who are digitally excluded?:
No

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: None

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: None

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: None

Race

Nature of impact: None

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: None

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Publishing this review will meet our obligation set out by the DfT to issue a revised BSIP to cover the period 2024 to 2030. This policy updates but does not alter the commitments made though the 20221 and 2022 Essex BSIP documents. It does not involve additional expenditure beyond that already committed or alter the strategic approach. The policy will have beneficial impacts on groups who are disproportionate users of bus services, such as older people and people

with many types of disability. However the revised policy is incremental and evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach so the additional benefits realised will be relatively small.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts on any group from the adoption of this report

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: The paper is itself designed to maximise the positive impacts from our existing policy given the funding and resource constraints involved

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: None

Working families

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Medium

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The policy sets out the County Council's approach to improving the bus network in Essex between 2024 and 2030. As such it will have beneficial impact on bus users in general, however it is an incremental and evolutionary approach so the benefits derived in general will be relatively minor. Of the groups above, many come from sections of the community - less well off people, women, people with disabilities whom are disproportionate users of the bus network and will therefore benefit in general from many of the proposals it includes such as the creation of bus Enhanced Partnerships. In specific cases (such as Basildon and Tendring/Harwich) there are specific measures (such as the introduction of zero emission buses through our successful ZEBRA 2 bid to the DfT or for Harwich the focus in the paper on developing the Tendring District wide Enhanced Bus Partnership, using DfT supplied BSIP+ funding) which will have a measurable and clearly beneficial, but not life changing impact upon them, hence the positive/medium assessment for these groups.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts to adopting this policy document

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: The BSIP is a strategic policy paper that sets out how the County Council will improve bus services across the county. Identifying additional funding resources would allow more of the aims to be met

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: None

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: None

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: None

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: None

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: None

Carers

Nature of impact: None

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: None

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: None

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People on low income

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Sex workers

Nature of impact: None

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: None

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The policy sets out the County Council's approach to improving the bus network in Essex between 2024 and 2030. As such it will have beneficial impact on bus users in general. Of the groups above, where a positive outcome is listed many come from sections of the community - for example, the less well off, minority groups and people with disabilities, are disproportionate users of the bus network and will therefore benefit in general from many of the proposals it includes such as the creation of bus Enhanced Partnerships, without a specific measurable outcome being attached to them. Hence the positive but low impact upon them.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts from the BSIP

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Adopting the BSIP will strengthen the positive outcomes it proposes and identifying new external funding will help to implement them

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in urban or over-populated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The policy sets out the County Councils approach to improving the bus network in Essex between 2024 and 2030. As such it will have beneficial impact on bus users in general. Of the groups above, including areas with high deprivation, rural, coastal and urban areas will benefit from these changes, with some areas such as Basildon and Tendring benefitting more immediately than others. Overall the impact will therefore be low, although with some areas edging into the medium beneficial impact.

As the policy works through the creation of bus Enhanced Partnerships across Essex, the benefits may increase. In specific urban cases (such as Basildon) there are measures (such as the introduction of zero emission buses through our successful ZEBRA 2 bid to the DfT or for coastal areas such as much of Tendring, the focus in the paper on developing the Tendring District wide Enhanced Bus Partnership, using DfT supplied BSIP+ funding) which will have a measurable and clearly beneficial, but not life changing impact upon them, hence the positive/medium assessment.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts from adopting the BSIP update

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Adopting the BSIP will strengthen the positive outcomes it proposes and identifying new external funding will help to implement them

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: None

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: None

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting

and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: None

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: None

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: This is a high level policy document dealing with public transport which may prove positive for many of these groups however it is difficult to disaggregate specific impacts on these groups from the general approach.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts from adopting the BSIP strategy

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: None

Re-offending

Nature of impact: None

Serious violence

Nature of impact: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

With the exception of crime and fear of crime, there is no data on bus use by any of these groups disaggregated from groups using bus services so it is not possible to identify impacts upon them from the BSIP revision . For Crime and fear of crime we do have the results of our 2023/24 bus passenger survey. This asked respondents whether they were satisfied, dissatisfied or neutral about personal safety at bus stops. In summary the number of respondents who felt safe at a bus stop has risen from 59% in 2023 to 63% in 2024 and the number of people who felt unsafe fell from 10% in 2023 to 8% in 2024. This suggest that 92% of respondents did not feel unsafe at a bus stop. 58 % of respondents were female.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

There are not negative impacts on any of these groups from the BSIP

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: The BSIP is a general bus network development policy that aims to encourage and enable people of all backgrounds to make more use of bus services and enable them to do so. The service users will therefore come from across the whole Essex population.

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: Yes

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: No

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Positive

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Positive

Waste: None

Extent of impact

Built Environment / Energy: Low

Sustainable Transport / Travel: Medium

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The BSIP is itself a public transport policy that sets out the public transport objectives from ECC and by promoting it looks to improve both sustainable transport and the built environment through its policies to improve bus stop infrastructure. The overall impact of the BSIP on public transport is considered to be medium as it promotes a broad range of schemes, many with a lower positive impact (such as our small scale infrastructure or bus stop improvement projects) across the county while also setting out area specific schemes that will have a higher local impact (such as in Basildon and Tendring).

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: There are no negative impacts to the BSIP

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 24/07/2024

Name of person completing the ECIA: Richard Gravatt

Email address of person completing the ECIA: richard.gravatt@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Climate, Environment and Customer Services

Your service area: Highways and Transportation

Your team: IPTU

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: helen.morris@essex.gov.uk