

## Mayoral Combined Authority Board

Tuesday, 04 June 2024

### Bus Service Improvement Plan refresh

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Is the paper exempt from the press and public? No

Reason why exempt: Not applicable

Purpose of this report: Governance

Is this a Key Decision? Yes

Has it been included on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions? Yes

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#### Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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#### Executive Summary

This paper seeks delegated authority for the approval and submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) of the 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) refresh. The DfT have stated that the release of 2024/25 BSIP revenue funding to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) is contingent on submission of an updated BSIP document, containing a 'minimum viable product' level of information, by 12<sup>th</sup> June. Should DfT requirements change in light of the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024, Board members will be advised.

#### What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The submission of the 2024 BSIP refresh will trigger the release of £7.82m revenue funding for 2024/25 which will mainly be used to fund tendered bus services across South Yorkshire. Without this funding tendered services may have to be withdrawn, depriving communities of

public transport options mostly on evenings and weekends, increasing transport-related social exclusion.

The BSIP refresh will set out proposals for improving the bus service that are aligned to driving transformational growth, improving health and reducing transport-related social exclusion across South Yorkshire, within a wider integrated public transport offer.

## Recommendations

That MCA Board:

1. Note the progress made on the 2024 BSIP refresh submission.
2. Delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service, Section 73 Officer and Executive Director for Transport, in consultation with the Mayor as the Portfolio Lead for Transport, to agree the final 2024 BSIP refresh submission once clarification of requirements from DfT are received in light of the general election on 4 July.

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**Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel**  
Enhanced Partnership Board 03 June 2024

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In January 2024 the DfT published the 'National Bus Strategy: 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plans Guidance to local authorities and bus operators' document. [bus-service-improvement-plans-guidance-to-local-authorities-and-bus-operators-2024.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/131422/bus-service-improvement-plans-guidance-to-local-authorities-and-bus-operators-2024.pdf)
- 1.2 This set out a requirement for Local Transport Authorities to refresh their BSIPs and submit them to the DfT by 12<sup>th</sup> June to release their 2024/25 funding allocation. The guidance also stated release of funding was contingent on submitting a Bus Connectivity Assessment, the instructions for which would be issued separately.
- 1.3 The most recent BSIP for South Yorkshire, which was a formal bidding document for funding, was produced in late 2021. This was submitted to the DfT, however when BSIP allocations were announced in April 2022 South Yorkshire was unsuccessful in attracting funding.
- 1.4 In March 2024, in response to feedback from Local Transport Authorities about practical challenges in producing a BSIP refresh aligned to the published guidance in the time available, the DfT's Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE) provided LTAs with a 'minimum viable product' of content for BSIP submissions.
- 1.5 The 2024 BSIP refresh 'minimum viable product' states the following requirements:
  - Clarification of the geographical area covered by the BSIP
  - An account of progress in delivery achievements to the end of 2023/24
  - Monitoring evidence of performance against targets set in the 2021 BSIP

- The 2024/25 delivery programme, alongside other information on spending on buses in 2022/23 and 2023/24
- Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond, aligned to the National Bus Strategy objectives with estimated costs and descriptions within 60 words.

1.6 In April 2024, the DfT published guidance on how to complete the mandatory Bus Connectivity Assessment, which is mainly data capture and requires considerable input.

1.7 There is a requirement for BSIP targets and delivery programme to be monitored, and for the BSIP to be refreshed and submitted to the DfT annually.

1.8 The DfT guidance is clear that no assumptions in the BSIP refresh should be made in terms of a delivery method, and therefore the content and proposals should be agnostic of any future Enhanced Partnership (EP), EP+ or franchising models.

## 2. **Key Issues**

2.1 The 2024 BSIP refresh provides the opportunity to align bus service improvements to economic growth plans, improving health and reducing transport-related social exclusion across South Yorkshire, within a wider integrated public transport network.

## 3. **Recommended Proposal**

3.1 We will submit a BSIP refresh based on the DfT requirements for a 'minimum viable product' and set out SYMCA's vision for buses. This will be an 'MVP+' submission and will include information on the current bus service offer for South Yorkshire residents, case studies of delivered bus improvements, and future measures with targets.

## 4. **Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 The content of the 2024 BSIP refresh has been the subject of consultation and engagement across the Local Authorities' Transport and Place teams, bus operators, bus user groups, DfT and the Bus Centre of Excellence. This has been achieved through specific meetings and the suite of Enhanced Partnership groups.

4.2 The content of the 2024 BSIP refresh would not be possible to generate without the collaborative support and input of data, ambition and proposals from the bus operators and Local Authorities. In addition feedback from the recent Bus Campaign and roundtables have been used to inform the content from a bus user and travelling public point of view.

**5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Subject to approval of the recommendation in this paper, the Chief Executive, Executive Director for Resources & Investment and Executive Director for Transport, in consultation with the Mayor (as the Portfolio Lead for Transport) will sign-off the final 2024 BSIP refresh submission in early June.

**6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 There are no financial and procurement implications at this stage

**7. Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 There are no legal implications at this stage

**8. Human Resources Implications and Advice**

8.1 There are no human resources implications at this stage

**9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice**

9.1 There are no equality and diversity implications at this stage

**10. Climate Change Implications and Advice**

10.1 There are no climate change implications at this stage

**11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice**

11.1 There are no information and communication technology implications at this stage

**12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice**

12.1 Communications' plans to support the BSIP Refresh document will be developed following agreement on its content and the further development of the document itself.

**List of Appendices Included:**

N/A

**Background Papers:** N/A