

# Bus Service Improvement Plan, Stakeholder Update.

## Introduction

**This is the latest stakeholder newsletter designed to give you an update on the partnership's work in 2024 and 2025.**

The Southampton Enhanced Partnership (EP) comprises of local bus operators, Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council.

We work together to improve buses in Southampton and the wider area into Hampshire to meet the ambitions set out in the Southampton Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The vision of the BSIP is to improve bus travel in Southampton.

The collaboration between the bus operators and Council is well established and the Enhanced Partnership brings the partners together formally.

This update will demonstrate what has been delivered over the last 2 years using funding from the Department for Transport, bus operators and other funding that the Council's have available.

We will also look forward to plans for 2026.



## Progress Report 2024 to 2025



Bus patronage in 2025 was 22.2m, **up from 21.7m in 2023/2024.**

Bus journeys per population in 2024/2025 was **83.6, up 1.6 from 2019,** ranking Southampton fourth highest outside London and second highest post pandemic.

Bus punctuality in 2025 featured **81.17%** buses on time, up four percentage points.

The number of older and disabled persons using the bus also continues to grow and reached **3.2M trips** in 2024/25 (up from 3M trips in 2023/24).

The BSIP sets out a target of **24.3M trips** per year by 2030 with a more ambitious stretch target of 28.9M.



# What has been done in 2024 and 2025

## March 2024.

The new interchange opened at Southampton Central Station.

## April 2024

16 new double decker buses were rolled out on Bluestar 2 & 7 with new features, such as dementia-friendly lighting. Bluestar 1, 2, 4, and 13 benefitted from increased bus frequencies and longer operational days including the re-introduction of the Bluestar 1 24 hr buses (N1).

## June 2024

East Park Terrace became a bus, cycle, and taxi only street, and forms part of incremental steps to deliver bus priority in the City Centre and prepare for future Mass Rapid Transit (MRT).

## September 2024

New bus priority was introduced along Marchwood Bypass and through Rushington Roundabout to improve bus journey times between the Waterside and City Centre. This included increased frequencies for the Bluestar 9.





### **October 2024**

Bluestar launched new Bluestar 21 & 22 services (formerly X11 and X12). Ring Road junction works completed to help support buses

### **November 2024**

First Solent services X4 & X5 are mostly operated with new electric buses.

### **December 2024**

The official opening of the Albion Place Bus Hub and the new Arundel Gardens took place. Bluestar also invested in a new Travel Shop opposite the bus hub.

### **February 2025**

The New Hill Lane bus service was launched and serves parts of Upper Shirley that have not had a regular bus service since 2012.

### **April 2025**

Bluestar introduced 10 new double deck buses to support the improved daytime frequency on Bluestar 1 and new double and single deck buses for Bluestar 9 to support the improved timetable following the Marchwood and Rushington highway improvement works.

## August 2025

Introduction of 24 hour services N2, N17, N18 in addition to the existing N1 and U1N, together with additional journeys on Bluestar 1, 2, 7, 13, 15 & 19.

Brand new 'super stop' bus shelters were introduced to Portswood Broadway.

## September 2025

In partnership with the NHS, Southampton's first Park & Ride service launched connecting the Adanac Health Campus car park with Albion Place every 20 minutes at weekends. Additional buses run on home Saints matches at St Mary's Stadium - dropping off at Kingsway.

Unilink U1N was extended to Ocean Village and a new Bluestar 28 linking Southampton Central Station with Southampton Science Park.

## December 2025

A further 5 new double deck buses entered service on Bluestar 1, totalling 15 new buses in 2025.

Rail departure information added to on-bus next stop screens for Bluestar services that serve a railway station.



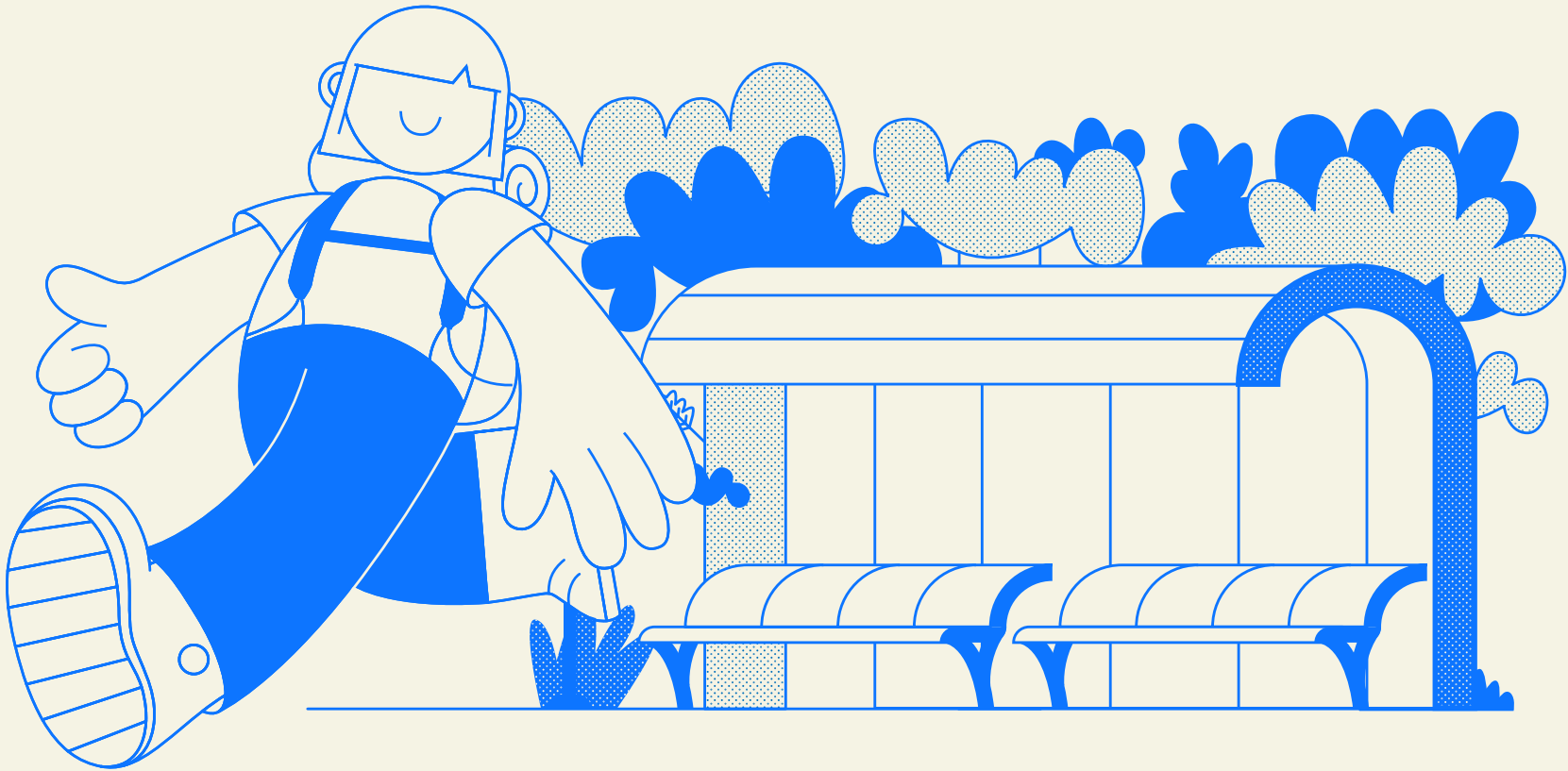
## Throughout 2024 and 2025

The following was also delivered:

- Additional bus priority at traffic signals.
- Bus stop upgrades and the installation of new Real Time Information displays.
- The £1 evening bus fare and targeted 5 for £5 group travel offers – making bus travel more affordable alongside the national fare cap.

## The way ahead...

- Design and implementation of bus priority measures in the City Centre that form the foundation for the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT).
- Business Case for the replacement and enhancement of Northam Rail Bridge on a busy bus corridor.
- Studies to develop further proposals for the Mass Rapid Transit concept.
- Installing bus RTI screens at rail stations where they are served by buses to help integration between rail and bus, and new RTI totems at the City Centre bus hubs.



2026 and beyond

For the 2026/2027 financial year, **Southampton City Council will receive £1.4M to be spent on revenue activities (typically bus routes and fares) and £2.6M to be spent on capital activities (infrastructure and highway).**

The council is in discussion with local stakeholders and bus operators regarding plans for the spend and a delivery plan will be published in Spring 2026.

Further information and latest news can be found on our BSIP webpage.

*Bus Service Improvement Plan*

bluestar

Solent  
from First bus

 Hampshire  
County Council

 SOUTHAMPTON  
CITY COUNCIL

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