

Meeting Title:	 <p>Southampton Bus Service Improvement Plan</p> <p>Southampton Enhanced Partnership Board – Notes of meeting agreed at the January 2026 EP Board</p>
Date:	21 October 2025
Time:	10:00am-12:00pm
Location:	Bluestar Boardroom, Empress Road, Southampton & MS Teams
Attendees:	<p>Cllr Christie Lambert, SCC Cabinet Member for Transport; Pete Boustred, SCC Director of Transport & Planning; Wade Holmes, SCC, Service Manager, Integrated Transport;</p> <p>Ben Murray, Go South Coast Managing Director; Richard Tyldsley, Go South Coast General Manager;</p> <p>Andrew Wilson, HCC Strategic Transport Manager (Public Transport) (observer); Emma Baker, SCC Strategic Transport Planner (non-voting); David Garney, SCC Senior Transport Planner (non-voting).</p>
Apologies:	<p>Iain Steane, SCC Transport Policy & Sustainable Travel Manager (non-voting); Matt Griffith, First South, Operations Manager.</p>

Ref	Agenda Items	Presenting
1	Welcome & Introductions	WH
	WH opened the meeting and introductions provided.	
2	Minutes & Actions from the Previous Meeting	EB
	Minutes from the EP Board meeting held on 22 July 2025 were accepted and agreed at the meeting.	
3	EP Working Group Highlights	EB
	<p>EB ran through the EP Working Group slides with the following discussion points noted.</p> <p>General comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EB flagged the potential risks with Portswood and New Road capital projects with monies waiting to be allocated. WH added that spend is low six months into the year. A meeting is arranged with the Cabinet Member to discuss the proposals for the city centre bus priority. <p>Action – a revised spending profile will be presented at the next EP Board meeting, containing the forecasted spend and expectations.</p> <p>City Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WH updated on New Road. BBLP are undertaking investigative works over the next two weeks. The replacement of traffic lights at Above 	

Bar Street and New Road are a priority and the bus lane repainting. Above Bar South will be 24-hour bus priority together with adjustments to Above Bar North. Extensions to the bus lanes on New Road are also being investigated.

- RT added that he is disappointed that the main New Road bus priority project is not included in this year's scheme. PB explained the current works do not preclude further works in the future

Action – organise a separate meeting with the EP Working Group to discuss bus priority plans.

Bus Grant Funding

- EB discussed that future Bus Grant Funding will be sent to the Combined Authority Mayor's office and then sent back to the Local Transport Authorities to spend. Further details will be available shortly.
- BM added that it is worth engaging with Go South Coast as soon as possible to look strategically at the 3-year plan.
- RT asked what else Go South Coast can do to support future bus priority schemes. What are the selling points? WH added that new bus services to support the capital investment would demonstrate a joint approach and may be viewed favourably with residents.
- WH updated that a consultation will be arranged with the Portswood community to ask what people would like to see. Cllr Lambert added that the monies will need to be allocated along the corridor in the safest conceivable way.
- PB added that the EP process is here to discuss the phased approach for projects and provide the appropriate governance.

Action – EP Working Group will be briefed on plans for future Mass Rapid Transit and an update provided at the next EP Board.

Park & Ride

- EB provided an update on the new Park & Ride service and the phased approach to promotion. The communications team are working with the Events team and other partners, including St Mary's Stadium and neighbouring local authorities to spread the message.
- WH added that the £3 fare will be a promising idea in the run up to Christmas and RT confirmed that this can be implemented.
- A discussion took place on influencing driving behaviour and key messages, including convenience, cost and avoiding congestion at Christmas. 'It's the relaxed way to travel.'
- PB added that West Quay has increased parking charges which will help to drive patronage.
- WH thanked Go South Coast for operating the Park and Ride service.

Summer 5 for £5 offer

- EB ran through the Summer 5 for £5 ticket offer and confirmed that that was the final tranche of the scheme. The Park and Ride and £1 evening fare will be the promotional focus going forward.
- RT will discuss whether to fund a further offer at the next Go South Coast commercial meeting. However, it may be pertinent to retain at £9 with focussed promotion.

Cross Boundary Updates in Hampshire

- AW gave an update on the HCC BGF programme and the benefits of the partnership in delivering good patronage growth across the Southampton area.
- RT asked if the £1 Andover fare has provided any insight.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RT raised that there is a difference between how the SCC and HCC bus priority works at traffic lights. <p>Action – organise a meeting to discuss if and how SCC and HCC bus priority can work together for a consist corridor approach.</p> <p>Action - AW to provide and circulate figures on the Andover £1 fare.</p> <p>Action - Illustrate SCC and HCC corridor improvements visually to demonstrate a phased approach to delivery and future aspiration.</p>	
4	Motions for Approval	EB
	None.	
5	Round Table Update	All
	<p>Go South Coast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial patronage is decreasing 3-4% following the introduction of the £3 capped fare and the company are forecasting reduced growth compared to 24/25. GSC keen to explore a new joint marketing campaign focussed on promotion, cost, convenience, and reliability. BM discussed that Go South Coast are happy to help fund the Transport Focus survey which provides a granular level of data and what our passengers are saying. SCC will take part next year. WH added that less people are visiting the city centre in general. Concessions are experiencing 7% year on year growth. It has been good this year and almost back to pre-pandemic levels. The company are waiting for the final high-capacity college buses to arrive with three of the new buses now in service. The five new buses for Bluestar 1 are due in November. When these arrive, the average age profile will be 7.5 years. Punctuality is currently stable at 84%. <p>Hampshire County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates provided during the meeting and included in the slide pack that accompanies these notes. <p>Southampton City Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WH discussed that The Breeze trial has ended and will switched off at the end of October. Customers will be referred towards the Bluestar app for bus tickets. AW referred to the Project Coral multi-operator ticket. HCC will be buying into this DfT product. PB gave an update on the business case for the lane rental scheme which will help coordinate highway works across 10% of the network if approved. This could go live in the next financial year. BM added that the data from this should be powerful. WH added that the Northam Rail Bridge consultation will be progressing throughout November. <p>Action - RT to provide a letter of support for the Northam Rail Bridge project.</p>	
6	Date of EP Board Meetings	DG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 20 January 2026, 12-2pm, Civic Centre Executive Boardroom. • Tuesday 21 April 2026, 10-12pm, Bluestar Boardroom. • Tuesday 14 July 2026, 12-2pm, Civic Centre Executive Boardroom. 	
7	AOB	All
	None	

NEW ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING

MEETING DATE	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	ACTION	STATUS
21/10/2025	3	SCC	A revised spending profile will be presented at the next EP Board meeting, containing the forecasted spend and expectations.	To be presented at the January EP Board.
21/10/2025	3	SCC	EP Working Group will be briefed on plans for future Mass Rapid Transit and an update provided at the next EP Board.	In progress. Findings to be presented at the April Board.
21/10/2025	3	SCC	Organise a meeting to discuss if and how SCC and HCC bus priority can work together for a consist corridor approach.	In progress.
21/10/2025	3	HCC	AW to provide and circulate figures on the Andover £1 fare.	As presented at the January EP Board.
21/10/2025	3	SCC/HCC	Illustrate SCC and HCC corridor improvements visually to demonstrate a phased approach to delivery and future aspiration.	Completed.