Meeting Title:	**Southampton Bus Service Improvement Plan** **Southampton Enhanced Partnership Board –** **Notes of Meeting agreed at the July 2026 EP Board**
Date:	**23 April 2026**
Time:	**10:00-12:00**
Location:	**Boardroom, Bluestar, Empress Road & MS Teams**

Attendees: Cllr Jacqui Rayment, SCC Bevois Ward Councillor (deputising for Cllr Winning)
Pete Boustred, SCC Director of Transport & Planning;
Wade Holmes, SCC, Service Manager, Integrated Transport;

David Lee-Kong, Go South Coast Commercial Director;
Richard Tyldsley, Go South Coast General Manager;

Andrew Wilson, HCC Strategic Transport Manager (Public Transport) (observer);
Iain Steane, SCC Transport Policy & Sustainable Travel Manager (non-voting);
Emma Baker, SCC Strategic Transport Planner (non-voting);
David Garney, SCC Senior Transport Planner (non-voting).

Apologies:
Cllr Alex Winning, SCC Leader & Cabinet Member for Transport;
Matt Griffith, First South, Operations Manager.

Ref	Agenda Items	Action
1	**Welcome & Introductions**	
	WH opened the meeting and introductions provided.	
2	**Minutes & Actions from the Previous Meeting**	
	Minutes from the EP Board meeting held on 20 January 2026 were agreed. EB went through the open actions. PB asked if open actions could be completed by next EP Board. **Action**: SCC to complete open actions by July EP Board CR suggested an open day event for people to see a bus which could be of benefit to new bus users, including people with disabilities. RT advised that Bluestar are happy to work with HCC and SCC to organise an event and to invite local community groups. **Action:** Bluestar to arrange an open day type event at Empress Road for people to come in and have a look at buses.	**EB/DG** **RT**
3	**EP Working Group Highlights**	
	EB ran through the EP Working Group slides with the following discussion points noted.	

DfT Updated Policy Guidance

- DLK advised that GSC are updating their driver training materials to reflect accessibility.
- The new guidance includes greater protection for socially necessary services, and SCC will seek to work with HCC to look at the wider travel to work area. Consultancy support will be sourced to identify gaps in the bus network.
- WH highlighted that SCC already aligns closely with the new DfT guidance and that we need to improve engagement with disability groups. Noting that franchising is not currently on the local agenda, but this could change when the combined authority is established.

Park & Ride six-month review

- Review and Lessons Learnt from the first 6 months of the Park & Ride.
    - It was noted that it has been set up successfully using BSIP and TCF funding and without massive capital outlay. It now needs time to grow organically and will require ongoing promotion.
    - CR asked if patronage was forecast before the Park & Ride commenced, and it was agreed that this is difficult to quantify for a new weekend only service. However, SCC researched other Park & Ride schemes in the south east.
    - DLK advised that West Quay have changed their ways of parking, and PB also advised about NCPs challenges. However, there remains a plentiful supply of parking in the city centre which is a challenge.
    - CR does not feel that the price point is an attractor, but the convenience
    - DG highlighted that a customer survey is planned for later this year to understand the user experience and how the Park & Ride could be improved.
    - It was noted that signage in the waiting area could be improved and that other signing improvements have been delivered.

Action: SCC to organise a Park & Ride customer survey and consider further improvements. **EB/DG**

26/27 Delivery Plan

- IS went through the 26/27 delivery plan, including new and improved bus services, which was sent to the DfT at the end of March and will be circulated to EPB attendees by email for review and approval.
- WH advised that the Harefield bus campaign has been prolific in campaigning for Bluestar 13 which has seen 48% growth.
- PB advised that additional buses along the Bitterne corridor is working towards the success as seen on the Bluestar 1 corridor and future MRT.
- A discussion took place on bus stop improvements to improve safety, including lighting, walking routes and whether bus operators can integrate the night-time economy campaign ‘Ask Angela’ into driver training. DLK advised that they will consider how company driver training materials can be updated to reflect the scheme.
- It was noted that the ‘winners and losers’ should clearly be articulated via an assessment in regard to service changes to the east of the city and the importance of briefing ward councillors.

	• Bus service changes and Concessionary Fare enhancements to be agreed with Leader at next CMB (27/4) and communicated to operators **Hampshire CC** • AW took the group through the HCC slides. • PB asked about the difficult decisions regarding cutting services and the 'Your Bus Journey' survey. AW highlighted that this was done due to pressure on budgets and that the survey was undertaken before the changes. • CR asked whether we could do a comparison between SCC and HCC regarding customer perceptions. It was agreed that the 'Your Bus Journey' survey that SCC are now participating in will provide this level of insight going forward. • AW noted decent growth in many areas of the county and services have grown where they have invested in improved services. • CR added that it would be useful to see Eastleigh and the Waterside statistics as we go forward with LGR planning. AW added that HCC have been backing the winners in this process. • WH advised that SCC will be working closer with Hampshire going forward as we know that the new South West Hampshire authority is coming. • CR making sure that we are thinking wider than just Southampton. RT added that Bluestar have launched 4 routes that both authorities are involved with. • RT asked 'what is the next evolution of bus stop' so in comparison to bus stop improvements that are currently being delivered along the Eclipse corridor. WH added that this is SuperStops installed as part of TCF programme and will be further progressed as part of MRT preparation. • AW added that HCC have received a big response to the bus shelter fund, oversubscribed, and are funding lots of new shelters.	
4	**Motions for Approval**	
	None.	
5	**Round Table Update**	
	Go South Coast • Demand was suppressed, however from February onwards has seen some growth. However, Bluestar 7 is showing year on year decline. • Fleet is now stable following new buses, with three 'pre-loved' Southern Vectis buses coming across to Bluestar. • Update to PSVAIR next stop announcements from October to meet new regulations. • Announcements for route diversions now need to be communicated on buses which should be completed by the end of May. • There are some concerns about the potential impact of schools planning to ban mobile phones, which will see GSC reintroduce the key card for child season tickets. • Staffing is stable and the company are planning for the September service changes. • Young lives versus Cancer is the Bluestar charity of the year. • Increase in vandalism – meeting booked for next week. CR advised that 'Pride and Place' could potentially be looked at to fund safety improvements in Lordshill and Millbrook if it is identified as a priority by residents. It was noted that the police previously drove around the	

	area which was a deterrent. This will all be discussed at the meeting next week. • DLK took the group through the Oxford Economic Report to understand the value Go South Coast make to the economy which will be shared around. • DLK expressed that GSC are itching to put electric buses into Southampton and PB would like a standing item on EVs and how we are going to get there. If it was not for the connectivity issue, then GSC would be buying electric buses. **Action:** SCC to include EV progress as a standing agenda item. **Hampshire County Council** • Updates provided during the meeting and included in the slide pack that accompanies these notes. **Southampton City Council** • Updates provided during the meeting and included in the slide pack that accompanies these notes.	
6	**Date of EP Board Meetings**	
	• Tuesday 14 July 2026, 12-2pm, Civic Centre Executive Boardroom.	
7	**AOB**	
	None	

NEW & OPEN ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING

MEETING DATE	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE	ACTION	STATUS
20/1/2026	3	SCC/GSC	SCC to progress award submissions and proactive PR to communicate the network growth with support from Go South Coast.	Completed.
20/1/2026	3	SCC	SCC to arrange the survey at West Quay Car Park asking people why they have not considered the Park & Ride service and analyse the findings.	Completed.
20/1/2026	3	HCC/SCC	HCC and SCC to arrange a meeting to discuss working together on Independent Travel Trainers initiatives to encourage bus usage.	Completed. Discussion held with HCC who provide funding for ITT but do not have travel trainers. SCC already have travel trainers but could look at a grant funded scheme similar to HCC for 27/28.
23/4/2026	2	Go South Coast	Bluestar to arrange an open day type event at Empress Road for people to come in and have a look at buses. Perhaps contact a few local groups in advance.	In progress. Potentially during Kids Free August to inspire the future of bus travel.
23/4/2026	3	SCC	SCC to organise the Park & Ride customer survey and consider further improvements.	Completed.
23/4/2026	5	SCC	SCC to include EV progress as a standing agenda item.	Completed.