| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting Title:** | **Southampton Bus Service Improvement Plan**<br>**Southampton Enhanced Partnership Board –**<br>**Notes of Meeting agreed at the November 2026 EP Board** |
| **Date:** | **9 July 2026** |
| **Time:** | **10:00-12:00** |
| **Location:** | **SCC Executive Boardroom & MS Teams** |

**Attendees:** Cllr Jacqui Rayment (Chair), SCC Cabinet Member for Transport;
Pete Boustred, SCC Director of Transport & Planning;

Ed Wills, Go South Coast Managing Director;
David Lee-Kong, Go South Coast Commercial Director;
Richard Tyldsley, Go South Coast General Manager;
William Neal, First Bus Solent Planner;

Geoff Hobbs, HCC Passenger Transport Team Leader (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:** Wade Holmes, SCC, Service Manager, Integrated Transport;
Andrew Wilson, HCC Strategic Transport Manager.

| Ref | Agenda Items | Action |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Welcome & Introductions** | |
| | Cllr Rayment opened the meeting and introductions provided. | **CR** |
| 2 | **Minutes & Actions from the Previous Meeting** | |
| | Minutes from the EP Board meeting held on 23 April 2026 were agreed. | **EB** |
| 3 | **EP Working Group Highlights** | |
| | **a. Joint Marketing Campaign**<br><br>DG provided an overview of the current joint marketing campaign which SCC has contributed to the development.<br><br>**Action** – DG to provide an email to Cllr Rayment with a summary and campaign visuals.<br><br>**b. Fare Offers**<br><br>EB discussed plans for the forthcoming Kids Free scheme in August. A DfT toolkit to be provided mid-July including marketing assets. | **IS/EB/DG** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | EW advised that it is likely GSC will participate and bus drivers will be educated on the conditions of the Scheme, tickets will be issued and the campaign end date will be advertised.<br><br>DLK mentioned that antisocial behaviour will be monitored and results will be shared.<br><br>Cllr Rayment advised that the leader is really keen on this scheme.<br><br>**Action** – information to be provided to the Leader as soon as possible.<br>**Action** – SCC to update the November EP Board with details of take up.<br><br>PB advised the team will work with corporate communications to incorporate into the wider savings piece.<br><br>**c. Service Changes**<br><br>IS discussed the bus service changes planned for 30 August. A map was presented with the various options displayed.<br><br>IS advised that GSC has undertaken a risk assessment on the new section of the 21 (near Bedford Place) using a bus and this has been approved.<br><br>PB asked about monitoring and IS advised that SCC will receive patronage data from the operator.<br><br>**Action** - PB would like a monitoring and evaluation plan for the next EP board.<br><br>**d. Service 19a, one year on**<br><br>EB provided an overview and PB asked what is commercially viable and a graph would help with explaining this.<br><br>Cllr Rayment added that if this section of route becomes commercially viable sooner, SCC would be keen to see the money used on other routes.<br><br>**Action –** RT to provide an update on commerciality and where GSC currently view the status of this service.<br><br>RT added that 15 new buses are on order for service 17, which will cascade other vehicles onto the 19/19a.<br><br>PB would like focus on community involvement in the service, like service 13.<br><br>**e. Park & Ride update**<br><br>EB went through the Park & Ride slides.<br><br>**Action –** From the lessons learnt, how we promote it in a different way to make it easier for the customers to understand the services. Make it more seamless in 2027.<br><br>EW feels that a bus priority lane into the city centre and a permanent site on the M271 would help the service to grow but would also need to be supported by changes to car parking availability/capacity.<br><br>**f. Finance update**<br><br>IS provided an overview of the finance slides. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **g. Bus Decarbonisation**<br><br>IS advised that the council are working with SSEN to look at power for the city. There will be a pot of money towards the cost of infrastructure.<br><br>EW added that Empress Road is the perfect location but needs the power. There may be an option at Totton depot and at Barton Park where the company still have a small base, however, the company are keen to progress electrification at Empress Road, and we need to keep pushing for this, even for a small number of buses to start with.<br><br>Cllr Rayment suggested that the council write to the MP's and Ministers.<br><br>EW added that the company has done the work to ascertain what levels of charging is needed at Empress Road to enable electrification.<br><br>**Action –** SCC to prepare a draft letter addressed to ministers for SCC and HCC cabinet members to sign.<br><br>**h. Forward Look**<br><br>EW would like to look at how the Travel Shop can be improved, initially to provide an entrance onto Castle Way and longer term to enable expansion to provide travel training and for community groups to visit.<br><br>**Action –** GSC and SCC to discuss what can be achieved in the short and medium term. | |
| **4** | **Motions for Approval** | |
| | a. **Portswood Project Adjustment Request Form**<br><br>This was discussed with all in favour. Approved. | **IS** |
| **5** | **Round Table Update** | |
| | **Go South Coast**<br><br>• Patronage is a little flat. BSIP funded routes are strong. Shirley High Street has reduced patronage by around 5% which has impacted some of the city's busiest bus routes.<br>• As mentioned, 15 new buses and 3 pre-loved buses coming into the fleet.<br>• PSVAIR next stop announcements coming into force in October. Work has been progressed on the fleet.<br>• Recruitment is going well for September.<br>• Lots going on with marketing and promotion<br>• A new driver uniform has been rolled out which are more modern with new polo shirts and a female-specific uniform.<br>• Bluestar buses have cab-air conditioning, however electric buses have better passenger air-conditioning.<br>• Above Bar Street works have had less of an impact on bus operations than previously expected.<br>• Travel Shop. As mentioned, the company is keen to modify the entrance to access from Castle Way to provide a better customer experience. Perhaps look at somewhere else where a community hub can be established. Bring schools in to see how the bus works. Perhaps link in with the Sea City Museum. | **All** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Cameras attached to buses to help with bus lane enforcement. SCC already have a meeting in place with Marstons.<br>• EW would like to go from fourth to third in the bus usage per head statistics.<br><br>**First Bus Solent**<br><br>• X4/X5 will see minor changes in July to improve reliability.<br><br>**Hampshire County Council**<br><br>• Following the May Local Elections, HCC have a new Executive Member for Highways and Public Transport - Cllr Steve Forster who chaired his first EP Board in June. HCC are doing 3 focus groups of 20 Hampshire bus users/non-bus users in late July to help understand whether they are aware of pump priming initiatives, operator investment in new buses and the £3 fare cap.<br>• In September to tie in with "Catch the Bus Month", HCC are working with Bus Users UK to run drop in events aimed at non bus users and will park a bus in a High Street setting.<br>• Funding tapers agreed with Go South Coast. HCC are continuing to support the Bluestar 1 every 10mins until August 2028, the Bluestar 9 every 20min and the Bluestar 14 and 15 evening enhancements. Bluestar are well advanced with planning for the 2 new service enhancements for 30 August, the N9 and hourly Bluestar 26 to Whiteley. There has been quite a bit of positive coverage on this investment in local media.<br>• HCC are continuing to develop designs for a bus gate across Hamble Lane to help improve punctuality/reliability on the X4/X5 route.<br>• HCC are finalising a programme of traffic signal bus priority work covering around 30 sites which will be implemented by late 2027 on signals at junctions in Chandlers Ford and around the Winchester one way system that will help benefit reliability on Bluestar 1.<br>• HCC have re-opened 3 "bottom up" grant streams for community groups to bid for funding - covering travel training, a parish bus shelter grant and transport innovation.<br><br>**Southampton City Council**<br><br>• Updates provided during the meeting and included in the slide pack that accompanies these notes.<br><br>**Devolution and Local Government Review Update**<br><br>• 13 July is the first formal meeting of the Hampshire & the Solent County Combined Authority. This will be used to approve the various boards. | |
| **6** | **Date of EP Board Meetings** | |
| | • Tuesday 3 November, 10-12pm, Bluestar Boardroom<br>• Tuesday 12 January, 10-12pm, Civic Centre Committee Room 1 & 2<br>• Wednesday 21 April, 10-12pm, Bluestar Boardroom<br>• Tuesday 13 July, 10-12pm, Civic Centre Executive Boardroom | |
| **7** | **AOB** | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | None | |

**NEW & OPEN ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING**

| MEETING DATE | ITEM | RESPONSIBLE | ACTION | STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9/7/26 | 3 | SCC | **Marketing Campaign** – DG to provide an email to Cllr Rayment with a summary and campaign visuals. | Complete. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | SCC | **Kids Go Free August** – information to be provided to the Leader as soon as possible. SCC to update the November EP Board with details of take up. | Complete. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | SCC | **Service Changes** - PB would like a monitoring and evaluation plan for the next EP board. | In progress. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | GSC | **Service 19a** - RT to provide an update on commerciality and where they currently view the status of this service. | GSC to provide. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | SCC | **Park & Ride** - From the lessons learnt, how we promote it in a different way to make it easier for the customers to understand the services. Make it more seamless in 2027. | Complete. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | SCC | **Electrification** - SCC to prepare a draft letter addressed to ministers for SCC and HCC cabinet members to sign. | In progress. |
| 9/7/26 | 3 | GSC/SCC | **Improving the Bluestar Travel Shop** - GSC and SCC to discuss what can be achieved in the short and medium term. | To discuss for 27/28 bus grant funding. |