

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership

HELD ON TUESDAY 7 JULY 2026 AT 2.00 PM

Members: Hannah Battye (**Chair**), (Oxfordshire County Council), Luke Marion (Go Ahead Group), Tom Bridgman, (Oxford City Council), Ian Boll, (Cherwell District Council), Louise Dell, (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Martin Gibbon, (Stagecoach West), Glenn De Sousa, (Go Ahead Group), George Sloan, (Stagecoach West), Phil Whitfield, (Oxfordshire County Council) and Robert Williams, (Reading Buses)

In attendance: Councillor Gareth Epps, (Oxfordshire County Council), Katherine Broomfield, (Oxfordshire County Council), Craig Rossington, (Oxfordshire County Council), Melissa Goodacre, (Oxfordshire County Council), Babatunde Ogundele, (Oxfordshire Partnerships) and Alyn Jones, (Oxfordshire County Council)

167 Welcome and apologies

Hannah Battye, Oxfordshire County Council Chaired the meeting.

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, following which a round of introductions took place.

Apologies for absence were received from Tom Bridgman (Oxford City Council), Louise Dell (South and Vale District Councils), Phil Whitfield (Oxfordshire County Council) and Stuart Kocan-Payne (Oxfordshire County Council).

168 Notes of the previous meeting and actions

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed, and officers reviewed the outstanding actions.

The Board noted that progress on the Botley Road reopening remained on track, with regular meetings continuing between the relevant parties. Outstanding matters included confirmation of the reopening date and associated timetable changes.

It was noted that the action relating to District Council representation on Enhanced Partnership groups had been completed.

An update was received on the Bus Accessibility Study, which remained ongoing pending the publication of national guidance. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Board noted that implementation of the Lane Rental Scheme remained in progress. It was agreed that a further update would be provided once governance arrangements had been finalised.

An update was received on the Cowley Branch Line, with ongoing engagement between partners continuing.

The Board discussed communications relating to bus service improvements and agreed that officers should continue exploring opportunities to promote improvements through appropriate communications channels.

It was noted that works at Gloucester Green had commenced and that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Board also noted that the Enhanced Partnership Risk Register would be circulated to officers ahead of the next meeting for review.

Actions

- Melissa Goodacre to provide an update on the Bus Accessibility Study at the next meeting.
- Phil Whitfield (or appropriate officer) to provide an update on the Lane Rental Scheme at the next meeting.
- Hannah Battye to liaise with the relevant officers regarding ongoing engagement with bus operators on the Cowley Branch Line.
- Officers to continue developing communications to promote bus service improvements across the county.
- Babatunde Ogundele, in liaison with Alyn Jones and Katharine Broomfield, to circulate the Enhanced Partnership Risk Register to officers before the next meeting.

169 General BSIP and funding updates

Alyn Jones, Capital Schemes Lead – Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and associated funding programme.

The Board noted that work had commenced on Quarter 2 of the Consolidated Local Delivery Plan following the transition to a multi-year funding settlement. Quarter 1 monitoring returns for legacy schemes were expected to be submitted by 31 July, subject to receipt of the required reporting templates.

Officers were advised that development of the Oxfordshire Bus Plan 2040 and Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus remained ongoing, with a special EP Forum meeting scheduled for 17 July on this subject.

The Board noted proposed changes to MyBus ticket prices, which would be considered by the Cabinet Member later in the month. It was also noted that the MyBus platform would be used to develop the monthly ticket required under the Government's Enhanced Partnership guidance.

During discussion, officers highlighted the importance of clear communications to explain the proposed changes to MyBus fares, the range of alternative ticketing options available and the reasons for the proposed price increases. It was acknowledged that effective and targeted communications would be essential to support public understanding.

The Board noted that the Your Bus Journey 2026 survey was underway in Oxfordshire. Updates were also provided on the Bus Grant Scheme and the Vehicle Improvement Fund, with applications due to close later that week.

Actions

- Officers to develop a targeted communications approach to support the proposed changes to MyBus ticket prices, ensuring that alternative ticketing options and the rationale for the changes are clearly communicated.
- Councillor Gareth Epps to write to the Department for Transport setting out the impact of national funding and fare policy on the proposed changes to MyBus ticket prices

170 Bus Plan 2040 and EP+ update

Katharine Broomfield, Integrated Transport Programme Lead, Oxfordshire County Council, provided a progress update on the development of the Oxfordshire Bus Plan 2040 and the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus.

The Board noted that extensive engagement had taken place with bus operators and key stakeholders to inform the development of the Bus Plan. Initial draft content had been prepared, alongside an engagement and communications plan and scenario modelling to support future network planning.

Officers noted that the emerging Bus Plan had received positive feedback from the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that stakeholder engagement would continue over the coming months. It was anticipated that a draft Bus Plan would be prepared during August, with public consultation expected to commence in autumn, subject to alignment with other planned consultations. The final Bus Plan was expected to be presented to Cabinet for adoption in December, with the EP Plus proposal to follow.

The Board also noted the emerging vision, priorities and supporting evidence for the Bus Plan, including proposals to engage the Citizens' Assembly prior to the commencement of public consultation.

During discussion, officers welcomed the use of the “Buses in Numbers” infographic as a useful communications tool to promote the accessibility and benefits of bus travel. It was agreed that the final version should be used for future engagement and communications activities.

Actions

- Katharine Broomfield to circulate the finalised “Buses in Numbers” infographic for future engagement and communications activities once available.

171 Traffic Filters / Congestion Charge update

Craig Rossington, Transport Planning Technical Lead, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the implementation of the Traffic Filters Scheme.

The Board noted that the Traffic Filters Scheme would replace the temporary congestion charge scheme from 14 September, following the planned reopening of Botley Road. Officers outlined the communications and stakeholder engagement programme, confirming that existing permit holders would automatically transition to the new scheme where applicable. It was also noted that extensive communications and engagement activities were underway to raise public awareness ahead of implementation.

Officers advised that the scheme would operate under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for a maximum of 18 months, during which comprehensive monitoring and a six-month public consultation would be undertaken. The monitoring programme would assess traffic flows, bus journey times, wider network performance and the overall impact of the scheme to inform a future decision on whether the Traffic Filters Scheme should be made permanent.

During discussion, operators highlighted the importance of receiving available modelling and monitoring data to support timetable planning ahead of the introduction of the scheme. Officers acknowledged the request and agreed to discuss the availability of this information with the project team. The Board also emphasised the importance of monitoring bus patronage alongside journey times to understand whether the scheme encouraged greater use of public transport.

Councillor Gareth Epps further highlighted the need for positive and consistent communications to reinforce that Oxford remained open for business, while promoting the anticipated benefits of the Traffic Filters Scheme in improving bus reliability, reducing congestion and encouraging sustainable travel.

Actions

- Craig Rossington to discuss with the project team the provision of available modelling and monitoring data to support operators with timetable planning ahead of the implementation of the Traffic Filters Scheme.
- Craig Rossington to continue monitoring the impact of the Traffic Filters Scheme, including bus journey times, patronage, traffic flows and wider network performance, and provide updates to the Board.
- Councillor Gareth Epps to support ongoing communications promoting the benefits of the Traffic Filters Scheme and reinforcing that Oxford remains open for business.

172 Oxfordshire County Council and operator updates

Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution. Officers noted that a Government decision on LGR was still anticipated before the Parliamentary summer recess, although this remained subject to Government timescales. Preparatory planning and scenario work continued ahead of the anticipated implementation timetable. It was also noted that work on the Spatial Development Strategy would continue, with a more detailed update to be provided at a future meeting.

Robert Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Reading Buses, updated the Board on forthcoming timetable changes from 20 July, including improvements to the Aqua 28 and Pink 25 services. It was noted that a communications programme was in place to support the changes.

Luke Marion, Managing Director, Oxford Bus Company, provided an update on recent service improvements, including enhancements to the Pulhams' 801 service, the introduction of through-ticketing with Great Western Railway, the commencement of Service 600, and the deployment of additional electric vehicles funded through the Vehicle Improvement Fund. The Board noted the value of capturing successful integrated transport initiatives to support future strategy development.

Martin Gibbon, Managing Director, Stagecoach West, outlined forthcoming service changes across the West Oxfordshire network, including amendments to the S1, S1A, S2, S3, S6, S7 and S9 services to improve reliability, connectivity and better reflect passenger demand.

The Board emphasised the importance of monitoring the impact of service changes and ensuring that passenger feedback informed future service planning.

Actions

- Hannah Battye to provide a future update on the Spatial Development Strategy.
- Operators to continue monitoring the impact of service changes and share passenger feedback with Oxfordshire County Council to inform future service planning.
- Hannah Battye and Katharine Broomfield to capture examples of successful integrated transport initiatives to support future strategy and communications work.

173 LGR update

Discussed above.

174 BSIP Scheme Progress - questions and comments only

Alyn Jones, Capital Schemes Lead – Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the progress of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme.

The Board noted that delivery of the Cherwell Street scheme was nearing completion, while three of the four countywide traffic signal refurbishment schemes had been completed, with the remaining junction scheduled for delivery during Quarter 3. Officers also confirmed that the X40 bus route enhancements had commenced, Real Time Information (RTI) installations continued where third-party infrastructure allowed, and traffic signal priority improvements were progressing across a number of locations.

An update was provided on improvements at the John Radcliffe Hospital, where further work was underway to identify measures to improve bus interchange, passenger wayfinding and terminal capacity. The Board welcomed the work undertaken to improve passenger information and highlighted the importance of providing clearer guidance for passengers travelling between the County's hospital sites.

Officers advised that previously agreed funding reallocations had been implemented, including the transfer of the remaining Great Bourton bus lay-by budget to the wider bus stop improvement programme.

The Board noted that work continued on this year's BSIP programme, including supported bus services, Real Time Passenger Information upgrades, bus stop improvements and network pinch point analysis, with the initial findings of the pinch point analysis expected in early autumn.

During discussion, operators welcomed progress on the programme but requested greater visibility of the bus stop improvement programme, including the prioritisation of schemes and delivery timescales. Officers confirmed that improvement works had been committed across a number of priority corridors and agreed to circulate details of the bus stops included within the current programme.

It was also noted that David Taylor had been appointed on a temporary basis to accelerate the delivery of bus stop improvements funded through Section 106 contributions, complementing the existing BSIP-funded programme.

Actions

- Alyn Jones to circulate a list of bus stops included within the current bus stop improvement programme.
- Alyn Jones to continue progressing the BSIP scheme programme and provide a further update on the outcomes of the network pinch point analysis at a future meeting.
- Officers to continue developing passenger wayfinding improvements across the Oxford hospital sites in partnership with Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and local bus operators.

175 Working Group updates

Discussed below.

176 Delivering Our Future Bus Vision

Katharine Broomfield, Integrated Transport Programme Lead, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the work of the Delivering Our Future Bus Vision Working Group.

The Board noted that the Working Group continued to support the development of the OxBus 2040 Plan and the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus proposal. Progress had also been made on developing future bus network classifications, supporting scenario modelling using the TRACC software and identifying alternative funding opportunities for previously unfunded BSIP initiatives, including the Bus Champions and School Travel Training schemes.

Officers also updated the Board on work to improve integrated bus and rail ticketing. Following discussions with PlusBus, it was noted that there were opportunities to explore the introduction of new PlusBus schemes in areas including Banbury and Bicester.

During discussion, the Board considered how the Movement and Place work being undertaken in South and Vale and along the A40 corridor could be better aligned with the OxBus 2040 programme. It was recognised that these workstreams should form part of a single strategic approach to future network planning and could help inform future investment through the Enhanced Partnership Plus programme and wider consolidated transport funding.

The Board noted that there were no issues requiring escalation at this stage.

Actions

- Katharine Broomfield to ensure that the Movement and Place workstreams are considered through the Delivering Our Future Bus Vision Working Group and aligned with the development of the OxBus 2040 Plan.
- Katharine Broomfield and Alyn Jones to consider how the outputs of the Movement and Place work can inform future bus network development and investment priorities through the Enhanced Partnership Plus programme.

177 Making Buses More Attractive

Alyn Jones, Capital Schemes Lead – Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the work of the Making Buses More Attractive (MBMA) Working Group.

The Board noted that the Working Group continued to support the delivery of a range of BSIP initiatives, including the ongoing My Bus scheme review, development of the Where to Catch Your Bus guide for the John Radcliffe Hospital, updates to the SmartZone map and promotion of the Vehicle Improvement Fund (VIF). Officers also highlighted the forthcoming deadline for VIF applications.

It was noted that the Working Group had supported the establishment of bus operator coordination meetings to strengthen collaborative communications and marketing activity. The Board also noted that the Working Group continued to contribute to the development

of the OxBus 2040 Plan, Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus and bus fare simplification proposals.

During discussion, officers confirmed that the findings of the Your Bus Journey Survey, undertaken by Transport Focus, would be reported through the Working Group before being presented to the Board. It was noted that interim findings were expected before the final survey results became available.

The Board noted that there were no issues requiring escalation at this stage.

Actions

- Alyn Jones to present the findings of the Your Bus Journey Survey to the Making Buses More Attractive Working Group and subsequently report the outcomes to the Board when available.
- Alyn Jones to continue progressing the MyBus review, Vehicle Improvement Fund programme and wider communications initiatives through the Working Group.

178 Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure

Alyn Jones, Capital Schemes Lead – Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the work of the Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure (IBSRI) Working Group.

The Board noted that the Working Group continued to oversee the delivery of corridor improvement schemes, bus stop upgrades and wider infrastructure improvements funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Officers advised that orders had been placed to improve more than 340 bus stops, while new React-enabled Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) totems had been installed at Gloucester Green Bus Station to improve accessibility for visually impaired passengers.

An update was also provided on the John Radcliffe Hospital improvement programme. The Board noted that an interim report had identified opportunities to improve bus interchange, passenger wayfinding and terminal capacity, and that further work would be undertaken to identify deliverable improvements using the remaining BSIP funding allocation.

Officers advised that work would continue on publishing the County's bus stop audit data, progressing network integration and bus and rail connectivity initiatives, and supporting the development of the OxBus 2040 Plan and Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus.

During discussion, the Board agreed that the outcomes of the network Pinch Point Analysis should be considered through the Working Group to help assess the effectiveness of traffic signal priority measures and inform future investment decisions. Members also highlighted the importance of maintaining effective communications during infrastructure works, particularly at Gloucester Green Bus Station, to minimise disruption to passengers and keep operators informed of temporary changes.

The Board further recognised the need to consider climate resilience across all working groups, including the provision of suitable bus stop infrastructure, passenger comfort during periods of extreme weather and the resilience of the bus network as part of the development of the OxBus 2040 Plan.

Actions

- Alyn Jones to present the findings of the Pinch Point Analysis to the Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure Working Group for consideration.
- Alyn Jones to liaise with the Gloucester Green project team to ensure passenger information is maintained during infrastructure works and temporary changes are communicated to operators.
- Alyn Jones to circulate the published bus stop audit data once available.
- Working Group Leads to include consideration of climate resilience, including passenger infrastructure and network resilience, within future working group discussions and the development of the OxBus 2040 Plan.
- Alyn Jones to work with Mark Gregory and the Travel Behaviour Change Team to improve communications and promote the benefits of completed bus infrastructure and service improvement schemes.

179 EP Board substantive discussion items

Discussed below.

180 EP Risk Register

Alyn Jones, Capital Schemes Lead – Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, presented the current Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Risk Register for review.

The Board noted that the Risk Register had been circulated following the previous meeting and reviewed the current risks, associated mitigations and ownership arrangements. Officers advised that a number of risks would require updating to reflect recent progress, including the implementation of mitigation measures and the completion of key programme milestones.

During discussion, the Board noted progress in relation to the Major Interchange Programme, following a recent stakeholder workshop, and agreed that risks relating to the COMPF scheme and Botley Road reopening delays should be reviewed for removal or reduction at the next update, subject to continued progress.

The Board agreed that the Risk Register should be refreshed to reflect current programme priorities, including the addition of risks relating to climate resilience, potential changes in Government policy and strategic direction, and internal staffing capacity associated with the implementation of the new organisational structure from October 2026.

It was further agreed that responsibility for monitoring and mitigating relevant risks should, where appropriate, be assigned to the relevant Working Groups, enabling more detailed oversight of mitigation actions and regular reporting back to the Board.

Actions

- Alyn Jones and Katharine Broomfield to review and update the BSIP Risk Register, highlighting all amendments before recirculating the revised version to Board members.
- Alyn Jones to include new risks relating to climate resilience, changes in Government policy, and internal staffing capacity within the updated Risk Register.
- Alyn Jones and Katharine Broomfield to review existing risk scores, mitigations and ownership arrangements to reflect current programme progress.
- Alyn Jones to assign appropriate risks to the relevant Working Groups for ongoing monitoring and mitigation, with updates reported back to the Board.

181 AOB

Susan Harbour, Oxfordshire Partnerships provided an update on the proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO). She advised that work was intensifying ahead of the anticipated submission of the Development Consent Order in November and highlighted the importance of securing appropriate public transport and highway provisions within the proposals.

Bus operators were invited to engage with Thames Water representatives regarding the construction phase, associated road changes and potential impacts on existing bus services. Luke Marion expressed an interest in participating in these discussions. Officers and operators were also invited to attend a site visit to better understand the scale and implications of the proposed development.

The Board also discussed the need to ensure that bus operators were kept informed of major public realm and infrastructure schemes that could affect services. Particular reference was made to the proposed Wantage Market Place scheme and other developments in Banbury, Bicester, Witney and around Oxford Station.

It was agreed that the remit of the Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure Working Group should extend beyond BSIP-funded projects to include wider infrastructure and public realm schemes with potential implications for bus operations.

Actions

- Babatunde Ogundele and Susan Harbour to arrange a meeting between interested bus operators and the relevant Thames Water representatives regarding the reservoir proposals.
- Babatunde Ogundele to coordinate expressions of interest from Board attendees wishing to attend a reservoir site visit.
- Luke Marion to participate in the proposed discussion with Thames Water on behalf of the bus operators.

- Alyn Jones to ensure that significant non-BSIP infrastructure and public realm schemes affecting bus operations are included within future updates to the Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure Working Group.
- Officers to continue informing operators of relevant developments relating to the Wantage Market Place scheme and other major infrastructure proposals.

182 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was noted as 12 October 2026.

The meeting closed at 3.59 pm