

# Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**19  
October  
2022**

## **Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan and National Bus Strategy Funding Update**

<b>Decision Making Authority</b>	N / A
<b>Lead Director</b>	Haroona Chughtai Director of Highways and Transport
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Phil Lightowler, Head of Public Transport
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Steve Pay, Public Transport Planning and Operations Manager
<b>Wards and County Divisions affected</b>	Various
<b>Which Member(s) requested this report?</b>	Committee

### **This report makes the following recommendations:**

That the update report be noted.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	19 October 2022

# Kent Bus Service Improvement Plan and National Bus Strategy Funding Update

## 1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 A Committee request for an update on Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan and the allocation of National Bus Strategy Funding from Government.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the National Bus Strategy and KCC's response. It advises on progress to date, Kent's indicative funding allocation received in response to its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the status of Kent's Enhanced Partnership and next steps.
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## 3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In March 2021 Government published a new National Bus Strategy (NBS) which set out a blueprint for the improvement of all aspects of bus service provision inclusive of both service levels themselves but also extending to infrastructure, ticketing, innovation, information, vehicle, accessibility and environmental considerations.
- 3.2 At the time of publication, Government stated that £3bn would be made available to support the strategy, although this figure was subsequently adjusted to £1.2bn, reflecting its use for existing commitments and expenditure linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.3 In order to be able to access this funding and to protect existing funding streams, the NBS placed a number of requirements on LTAs and operators. By the end of October 2021, LTAs had to publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and by April 2022, LTAs and bus operators were required to form Enhanced Partnership Agreements (EPs) governing all bus services in the LTA area.
- 3.4 A BSIP is essentially a local bus strategy document but in this context, they are also part bidding documents designed to support accompanying funding requests to the Department for Transport. In response to the strategy and to align with its ambitions KCC, in conjunction with operators, submitted its BSIP at the end of October 2021, with a total funding ask of £213m over a three-year period.
- 3.5 KCC subsequently worked with operators to introduce EPs covering the County which came into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. The EPs as they stand today contain only initiatives from the BSIP which are deliverable with no or little funding, but with a bespoke variation method included to allow changes to be made taking into account future funding availability (such as BSIP funding) or other local changes.
- 3.6 On 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022, KCC learnt that it had received an indicative allocation of £35.1m in response to its BSIP. KCC was subsequently required to provide information on its planned use for the funding by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

3.7 Whilst the allocation is significantly less than the £213m requested and will not deliver the level of ambition contained within Kent’s BSIP, wider context is important which shows that:

- Of 79 LTAs which submitted a BSIP, only 31 received any funding from the allocations announced by Government on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- Of those receiving funding, KCC’s indicative allocation is the 9<sup>th</sup> highest in England with many of the areas receiving a higher level of funding being city areas or locations proposing to be or who already are mayoral authorities.

3.8 At the time of submitting this report, KCC still await confirmation of funding with the allocation remaining indicative in status.

**4. Use of indicative Funding Allocation**

4.1 On 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Kent learnt formally of its funding allocation through the BSIP process. Kent received an indicative allocation of £35,070,139 (of which £24,159,744 is capital and £10,910,395 is revenue). This is total funding from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

4.2 The indicative funding allocation came pre-determined as mixture of capital and revenue and was apportioned by the 3 years covered by the BSIP period and identified below.

	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2023/24</u>	<u>2024/25</u>
<i>Capital</i>	25%	37.5%	37.5%
<i>Revenue</i>	33%	33%	33%

4.3 In addition, associated guidance from the DfT highlighted a clear expectation that funding proposals delivered schemes aligning with their own priorities which were stated as:

Revenue: Ambitious initiatives that reduce or simplify fares at pace / increased service frequencies and new / expanded routes (funding cannot be used to sustain existing services).

Capital: Bus priority measures, which enable operating cost savings and as such reciprocal investment.

4.4 In order to secure this funding, all successful LTAs were required to submit a further pro-forma identifying how they intended to use the indicative allocation taking account of the nature of the funding available and the associated guidance.

4.5 Although no final decisions have been made about the precise nature and locations of any schemes, it is proposed to use the funding to support the following initiatives.

Fares Initiatives, Ticketing and Promotions - £3.6m

Bus Priority Schemes (three corridors) - £18.5m

Bus Focused Highways Interventions - £1.5m

New / Enhanced Bus Services - £7.5m

Back Office Systems for MaaS and DRT - £1.5m

Other Bus Support (see appendix)- £2.4m

## **5. Summary**

### **5.1 In Summary**

5.1.1 Kent is hopeful of receiving £35.1m to support enhancements to the Bus Network in the next three years.

5.1.2 This is considered to be a very positive outcome reflecting the quality of the BSIP submitted to Government.

5.1.3 The funding is not yet confirmed but we have identified a range of initiatives taking account of the level and nature of funding available and guidance provided by the DfT.

5.1.4 This funding cannot be used to sustain existing services.

## **6 REPORT APPENDICES**

A. Summary of Maidstone Service Changes

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## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

## Appendix A. Summary of Maidstone Service Changes

001	Farleigh	Peter's Village to Malling School	Service withdrawn	Jul-22	The Nu-Venture service 549 will replace the 001 service
4	Arriva	Downswood to Maidstone	The last weekday late afternoon return journey is withdrawn	April 2022	-
5	Arriva	Maidstone to Sandhurst	Withdrawal of the 6:44pm Maidstone to Sandhurst journey and later Monday to Saturday. Day time services are not covered by this contract.	Autumn 2022	-
5A	Hams Travel	Staplehurst to Cranbrook	Service withdrawn	July 2022	Arriva service 5 will provide an alternative solution for residents
13	Nu-Venture	Hollingbourne to Maidstone	Withdrawal of the current Saturday service operating between Hollingbourne and Parkwood (for connections to Maidstone) via Leeds and Langley.	Autumn 22	
58	Nu-Venture	Addington, Ryarsh, Trottiscliffe, Birling to Maidstone	Withdrawal of the whole Monday to Saturday service.	Autumn 22	

59	Nu-Venture	Grafty Green, Ulcombe, Kingswood, Chart Sutton to Maidstone	Withdrawal of the whole service which operates Monday to Saturday between Grafty Green and Parkwood (for connections to Maidstone). Service 89 school journeys from the same area are not covered by this contract.	Autumn 22	
71A	Arriva	New Hythe to Maidstone	Service withdrawn	April 2022	
155	Arriva	Maidstone to Chatham	Kent section of the route leaving Monday to Saturday daytime service for Wouldham, Burham, Eccles and Aylesford withdrawn.	April 2022	A new Nu-Venture 29 service will provide a 2 day a week shopper service  Pupils attending Maidstone schools can take a new 529 service.  Pupils attending Rochester schools can take the new 638 service, which runs from Wouldham to Peter's Village.
332	Chalkwell	Stockbury, Yelsted to Sittingbourne Schools	Withdrawal of school day only service to Sittingbourne Schools	Autumn 2022	-
558	Nu-Venture	Addington to Maidstone Schools	Service Withdrawn (expected commercial bus changes)	Autumn 2022	-

Detling Shopper	Compaid	Detling to Maidstone	Withdrawal of Monday to Friday shopper bus from Detling Village to Maidstone	August 2022	-
L1	Starline	Kingswood to Lenham	Service withdrawn	July 2022	Changes to L2 and L3 services will provide an alternative
X1 / X2	Arriva	Kings Hill to Maidstone	Withdrawal of the Monday to Friday service linking Kings Hill with Maidstone and West Malling Station, including the link to Maidstone schools	Autumn 2022	-