

Swindon Borough Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan



June 2024

Destination: Swindon – Net Zero

A Vision for the Future

Foreword



This Bus Service Improvement Plan represents a crucial strategic and directional step change to support the next stages of Borough wide regeneration and growth.

We are anticipative that we will be entering a period of national and global economic stability and recovery in the medium term that is needed to fuel the Swindon Borough Council's aspirations in meeting net zero targets and decarbonisation.

Public transport will have a significant role to play as we seek to build a plan with our partners that encourages people to return to a network that remains reliable, clean, convenient and affordable.

With the expected rapid expansion of housing and employment opportunities on the peripheries of the town, coupled with bold transformational plans for the town centre, the importance of a cohesive and compelling public transport infrastructure that matches these aspirations is key.

The plan is guided by the three pillars of the Borough Council's Swindon Plan that has been brought forward by this administration to build a Borough that is Better, Fairer and Greener. A viable and cohesive public transport system will uniquely contribute, and be an essential component, across all three tenets.

We look forward to working with our partners, residents and stakeholders in building a network that is universally accessible to all people in all corners of the Borough, linking core routes with Demand Response Transport strategies with accessibility at its heart.

Councillor Chris Watts
Cabinet Member for The Environment and Transport



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1. Our Bus Vision

This Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024 (BSIP 2024) covers the administrative area of Swindon Borough Council as illustrated at Figure 1.1.

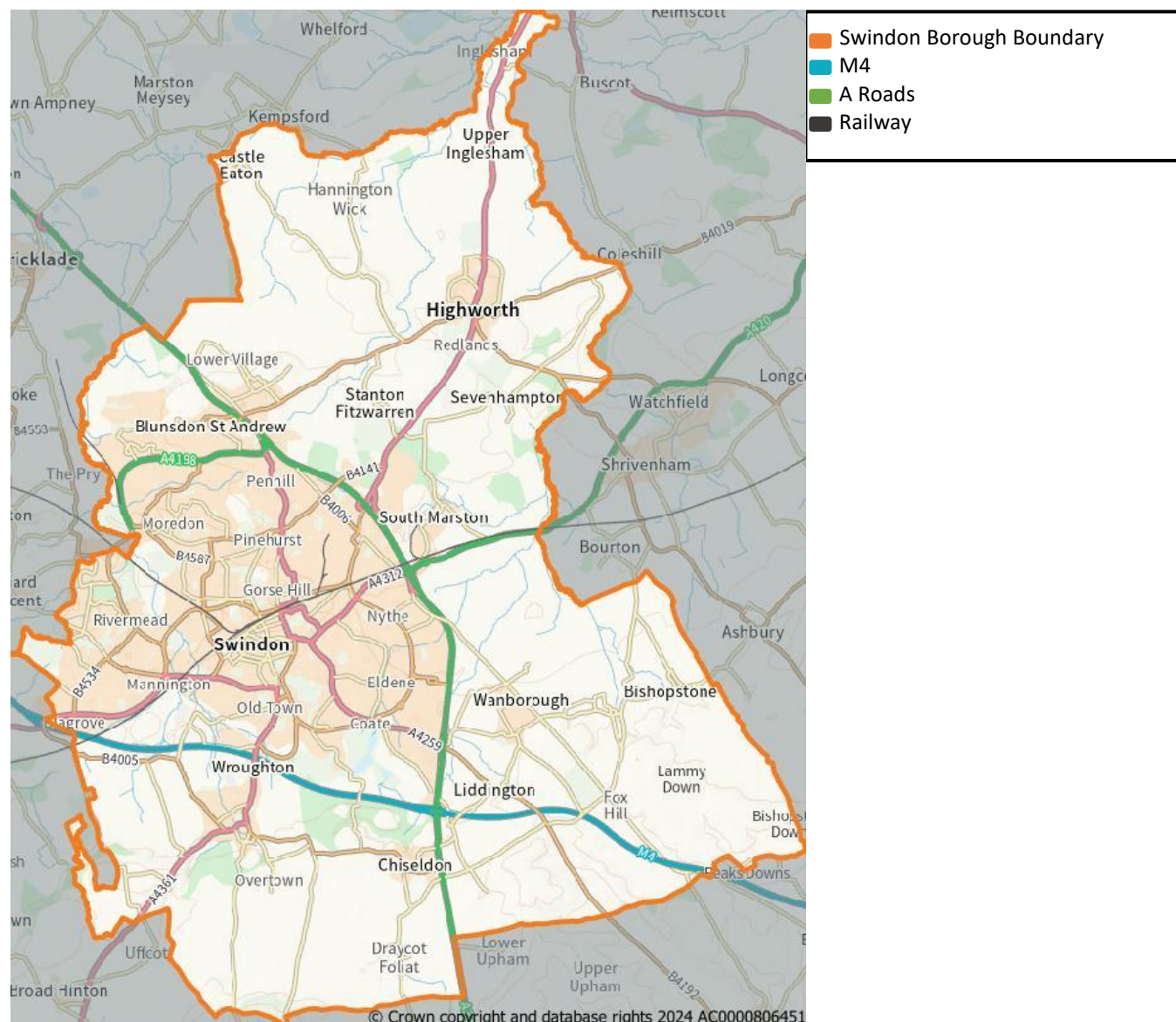


Figure 1.1: Swindon Borough Council administrative area

The BSIP 2024 covers our single Local Transport Authority (LTA). The Bus Service Improvement Plan was published in October 2021. Before publication, the intention to pursue an Enhanced Bus Partnership in Swindon was published on 30th June 2021 and an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme has been in place since it was agreed in September 2023.

The BSIP has been in place since October 2021 and will now be incorporated into BSIP 2024. This will be in place from June 2024 and will run until 2035. BSIP 2024 will be reviewed annually both for an annual progress update and to take account of performance indicators which will monitor its progress.

The Council and operators have a shared vision for improving bus services in Swindon Borough, it is time to connect travel by recognising the role played by the bus network that will achieve Destination – Net Zero:

“Our Destination is Net Zero. We aim to achieve this by creating bus services which are faster, reliable, timely, accessible, easy to use, comfortable, visible, available, more convenient and connected. Their journeys will be fast, frequent and seamless, culminating in achieving a bus strategy fit for purpose and accessible for everyone. This will enable people to make better, greener choices as to how they choose to travel around Swindon, all contributing to Destination: Net Zero.

A universal bus service for a universal bus passenger.

This will enable us to achieve the National Bus Strategy’s overarching vision –

Our goal is to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses’ mode share by being more ambitious and setting targets beyond the National Bus Strategy. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for more people.”

The Universal Passenger

To replace lost patronage due to the pandemic and increase passenger usage, it is our aim to make bus travel accessible for all. There must be no exclusion for disability as many families or friends live, work and travel together in their everyday life. Bus travel must be no different, hence why we believe in the Universal Passenger, an everyday traveller regardless of who they are.

In Swindon we have adopted the Universal Passenger as our Champion to help us reach –

Destination: Swindon to Net Zero



Figure 1.2: The Universal Passenger poster.

In the Universal Passenger, we have created a Champion to break down the barriers of accessibility, disability and inclusion.

Our next step is to prepare for the future.

Tomorrow's Passenger

While travelling on our Destination from Swindon to Net Zero we must consider how we change modal shift in the Borough and working across our County boundaries. There has been a lot of work undertaken in changing people's travel behaviours. However, at times this is akin to being pinned down by heavy fire in a war zone, where positive advances can be made and then the opposing army push you back. We therefore need to prepare a decisive blow to avoid a war of attrition and win the Net Zero Victory in our time. Changing behaviours can be challenging and cause conflict. With clear objectives that are evidence based, there is an appetite to deliver the plan for longer term net zero future.

The knockout blow will be delivered by Tomorrow's Passenger. Building on the Community representation within the first BSIP, BSIP 2024 has evolved to include a forum called 'Transport for the Twelves'. This will be part of Get Swindon Moving, but importantly, encourage early public transport awareness and co-design. It will start shaping attitudes and behaviours from a young age around making better, greener choices when getting around Swindon.

The Twelves are in their first year of Secondary School Education and in ten years will be twenty-two years of age, so they will have a big impact on how we change our travel habits. It is proposed that the Council and bus operators will work with each Secondary School in the Borough to help and encourage all twelve-year olds to use local bus services. This will be both for travelling to and from school and at weekends.

We will explore:

- How schools could include this in their curriculum.
- Visits to bus operators to understand bus operation and travel training on how to use buses.
- The twelve-year olds will be encouraged to provide their views on how local bus services would work better for them and what assistance they need to make using local bus services easier.
- A school league table of usage will be published to see who is the best performing school at the end of each school year.

SBC is already engaged with schools to encourage and support them in attaining Modeshift STARS accreditation, and so we would investigate how we can join with this existing programme.

Year by year we will build up a regular body of new local bus passengers to shift the balance on modal shift in favour of local bus services thus winning the war to be Net Zero. We have then created Tomorrow's Passenger.

Well-designed Public Transport is an enabler. Delivering transport measures and interventions which enable all residents to benefit from: better air quality, carbon reduction, access to journeys for health, work, business, and leisure. This will be achieved through a transport strategy which optimises connectivity for accessible public transport for journeys on local, intra-regional, and inter-regional networks.

Supporting design and policy which enables public transport and active travel to become better integrated. This supports our vision for a reliable, affordable, comfortable and visible network, where journeys are conceptually viable for passengers, and realistically achievable in a reasonable time.

A vision for buses in line with the Local Transport Plan

Swindon Borough Council's LTP3 was published in 2011 and had a refresh in 2022. The BSIP was published in 2021 and informed the content of the 2022 LTP, which is viewed as more streamlined and forward thinking to facilitate economic growth and regeneration. The gaps

in LTP3 had been identified in the work which went into the BSIP and the visions set out by the Swindon & Wiltshire Business and Growth Unit and England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance. Since that time, we have been engaged in a continuous program of wider network analysis with external partners including adjacent Local Authorities, and other stakeholders who can share best practice with which we can connect. This work is actively underway and the direction of progress can be summarised:

LTP3 was published at a time where Swindon's vision was defined by growth, since then growth is just part of a strategy which will deliver on the Borough's 3 missions: Build a Better Swindon; Reduce Inequality; and Achieve Net Zero. Transport is a great enabler, excellent public transport enables all groups, and a successful bus strategy is integral to all 3.

Just as the BSIP 2021 influenced the LTP4 Refresh, intense Planning and Transport Strategy team collaboration is building the new Local Plan in hand with the evolving BSIP. Importantly we are working to express fundamental principles which attain a long-term vision, recognising that political preferences will come and go, the human principals around connectivity change little despite advancing technical means for them to be achieved.

Housing target increases announced in July will be addressed collaboratively. Instead of adding to congestion and further challenging connectivity delivery, we are working with the Local Development Planning Teams, STB's and neighbouring Local Authorities to design this in a way which supports sustainable network development, enables our communities, and develops wellbeing from place.

Congestion is more closely identified than in previous versions of LTPs. Interventions which enable reliability, and give the bus advantage on the highway are integral to our approach to urban layouts, junction design, and traffic signalling. We support the provision of an excellent network and work collaboratively with the bus and coach industry:

"Buses are vital to connect local communities, support economic growth and deliver environmental targets such as net zero carbon by 2050. However, all too often buses are stuck in congestion, which means fewer people use the bus and, by turning to their car, add to the number of vehicles on our roads making congestion even worse." CPT June 2024

Our bus network is part of an Active Travel Network. Switching some of our journeys to walking and cycling is necessary if we are to reach Net Zero. There is a balance to be struck in achieving an attractive network, in addition to fostering health and wellbeing benefit, in a way which enables the public transport network to operate as well as possible for the Universal Passenger. Working on active travel and public transport together, deliver outcomes aligned with our missions. The collaboration designs a healthy sense of place, facilitating community behaviours which counteract isolation and foster independence and empowerment.

While switching to electric vehicles is a positive step reflecting worldwide concern with decarbonisation, it does not solve the other environmental challenges from the reliance and necessity for private car use. Road congestion will not be reduced if each internal combustion engine car is replaced by a private electric vehicle. Electric vehicles are still

sources of particulate matter with well documented public health impact, notably associated with braking systems and friction between road surfaces and tyres.

A double decker, whether fossil or sustainably fuelled, can take 75 cars off the road, delivering connectivity in unison with improved attractiveness to local area for residents and visitors, and safer and cleaner streets.

The reliance and necessity of private car use can only be tackled if we provide realistically useable alternative ways to connect. Public Transport and active travel work hand in hand, toward the better environment. Zero emission buses stimulate a green and sustainable option, allowing the air in our streets to remain clear; providing and inviting environment for active and independent travel.

Swindon's population densities, spatial pattern, and trip route distances are suited to a network of electric buses. Investment in Public Transport and active travel will reap positive community and economic benefit.

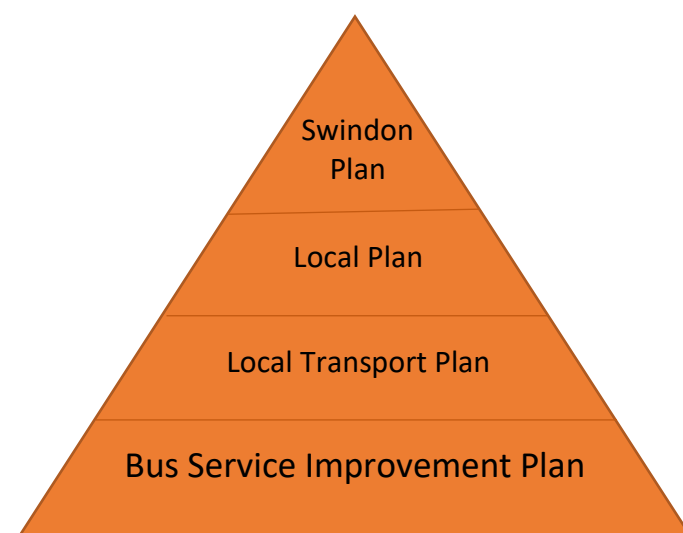


Figure 1.3: The relationship between the BSIP and Local Plans.

The policy area recommendations for LTP4 are:

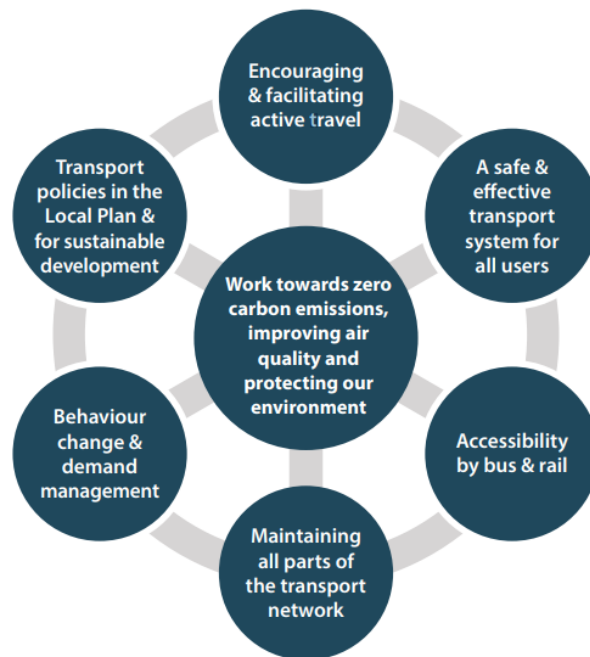


Figure 1.4: LTP policy areas.

A vision for buses in line with the National Bus Strategy

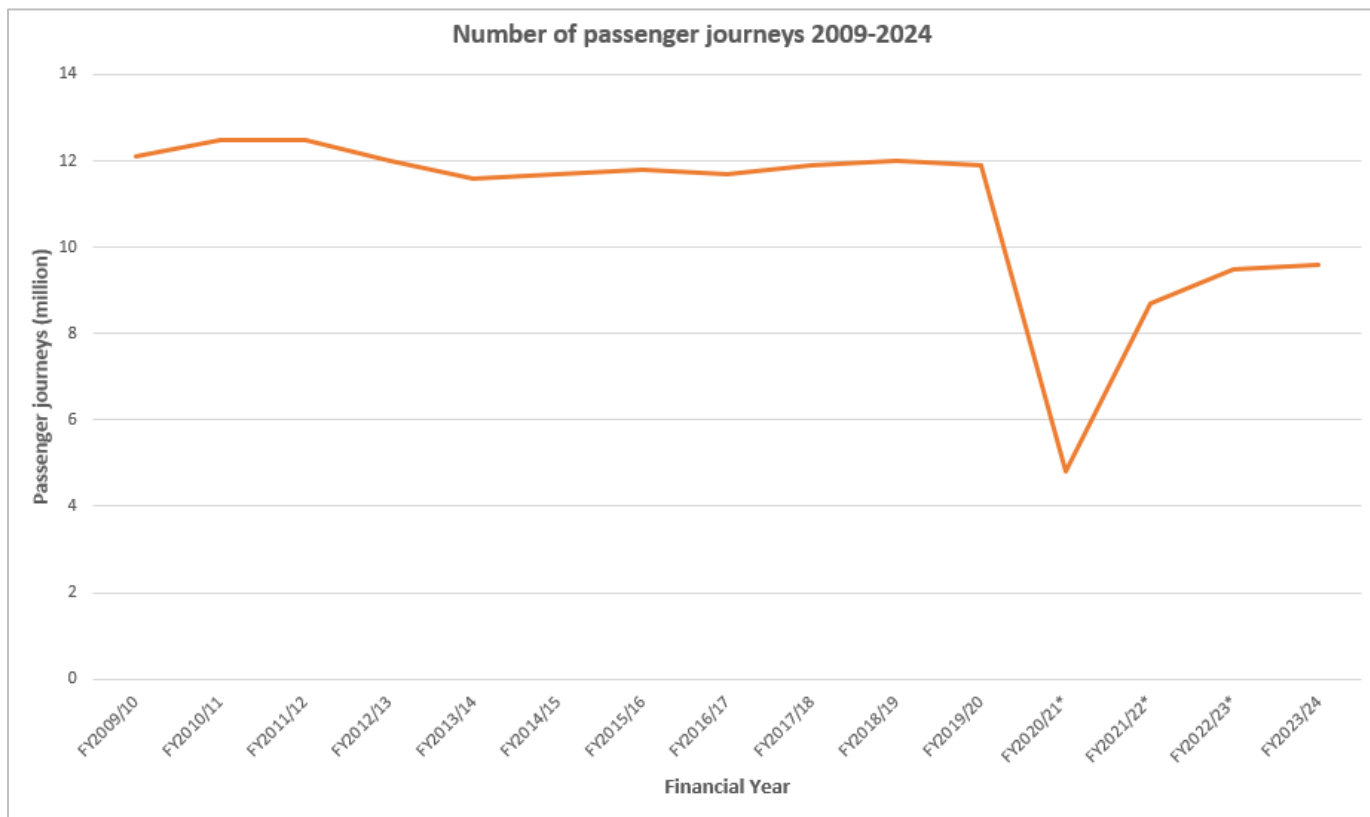


Figure 1.5: Passenger journeys for open local bus services in Swindon Borough from FY2009/10 to FY2023/24. FY20/21 – 22/23 are estimates.

Our goal like all BSIPs is to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic and then grow and develop demand and passenger usage further. The town centre is undergoing regeneration with the new Fleming Way development which will replace the existing bus station and former bus interchange facilities on Fleming Way. In our area patronage is at 80% of pre-COVID levels, as shown in Figure 1.5. Although this has improved since the BSIP 2021, our aim is to replace this loss with a new 20%. At some point there is a realisation that we must look to the future and new passengers must be found and encouraged who may not have used bus before. Many people have adapted their lifestyle following the pandemic and they cannot be expected to return to previous activities. We must seek ways to increase patronage and raise buses' mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people.

The £2.00 and £3.00 bus fare initiatives are contributing to increased growth and encouraging new passengers to try buses, and it is hoped this can be sustained should this fare not remain in place as an initiative long term.

We need to work with our communities to embed young people with a skill set supporting bus use, which enables early independence, access to opportunities, freeing up the street, and time for carers. This will be a significant benefit for future generations health, social and economic wellbeing and is brought about by an investment in easy, safe, reliable, and frequent services, which emphasise good customer service, accessibility and inclusivity for all. We must plan in the infrastructure capability which will accommodate this shift.

The 12 key goals flowing from that vision of the National Bus Strategy will remain and continue to be part of BSIP 2024.

Making buses an attractive option for far more people means making them:

- **More frequent, with turn-up-and-go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places.**
A core bus network is the objective with Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) being used to feed main bus routes instead of less frequent feeder routes.
- **Faster and more reliable, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.**
Bus priority where needed to be installed on key core bus corridors.
- **Cheaper, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.**
£2.00 national fare currently in place, no plans to change fares currently.
- **More comprehensive, with overprovision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.**

A core bus network is the objective which will include improved evening and weekend services. Less used bus routes will be replaced by DRT which will act as a feeder service.

- **Easier to understand, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates where feasible, good publicity, and comprehensive, accurate information online.**
 - Joint timetable and bus map booklet being developed which has the support of all bus operators.
 - Common numbering already in place, where possible timetable change dates will be co-ordinated.
 - Information available online.
 - New bus shelter contract with updated specification being tendered in 2024.
 - New bus interchange Fleming Way currently being built with completion during this BSIP.
- **Easier to use, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.**

The majority of bus operators have had an agreed acceptance of tickets in place for many years before the National Bus Strategy was published in 2021. The very successful joint ticketing 'TravelPass' scheme which has been in place since the 1980s in Swindon Borough continues to support this policy and most recently includes a transition to a digital future.
- **Better integrated with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.**

We are continuing to work with GWR to see how we could make integration between bus and rail passengers more accessible. Work will begin on transport hubs to see how interchange between local bus services and DRT can take place.
- **Better to ride in, with comfortable, high-specification, modern buses.**

Bus fleets will continue to be updated as and when financial funding or future route profit potential can be realised. This will continue where a successful business case can be demonstrated, improving both comfort and air quality.
- **Greener, zero emission buses (zero emissions of carbon at the tailpipe).**

The intention is to continue improving vehicle fleets when it can be justified, even if we have not yet embarked on having an electric bus vehicle fleet. There has been concern about if a total electric bus fleet in town could be achieved. This is because of the physical challenge presented to operators attempting to traverse the Great Western Mainline where a low bridge height prohibits double deckers or current standard electric bus designs from passing under. However, the option maybe to

reroute buses to avoid the bridge issue and remove any potential block to going electric. There is also a need to explore and confirm that available grid capacity is sufficient to enable complete fleet decarbonisation.

A plan of action is needed if passengers are to benefit from the new vehicles which are necessary for an attractive urban journey.

SBC needs to determine how it can deliver a clean and an environmentally sustainable future bus fleet.

- **Accessible and inclusive network, by design, not only bus vehicles but bus stations, bus stops, and access routes to bus stops.**
 - We are working to have a future core bus network to replace the existing one, that will develop and increase passenger use. This will be fed by DRT so that all forms of bus transport are accessible for the individual passenger regardless of mobility so there is no inequality, just a 'universal passenger'. There is no room for stereotypes in our bus network but freedom to travel for all.
 - We will review and improve where needed all bus stops and any shelters to ensure they are accessible for all passengers. A new bus interchange is being created which will become the Gateway into Swindon and replace the existing bus station and the former on-street arrangements on Fleming Way for bus services.
- **Innovative, harnessing entrepreneurship to constantly strive for a better product.**

The Enhanced Partnership Board and its Forum Groups will continually work together to improve and develop bus services in Swindon. At the same time, we will embrace technology such as the transition of 'Travelpass' to a digital format and adding ReciteMe to websites to lessen the barriers to entry.
- **A safe mode of transport which is seen as safe, addressing issues of personal safety and security on board and at stops as well as driver and vehicle safety standards.**
 - The Enhanced Partnership Board will work together to ensure this is in place and continue to explore new opportunities for public and staff safety and security. The new bus interchange on Fleming Way will provide a more open and friendlier passenger environment, which will be very beneficial and remove the negative perception of the existing waiting arrangement.
 - Our experience of building the new Fleming Way bus interchange has shown the importance of managing change and disruption well and giving the customer confidence. Community engagement and support for transition periods are part of best practice. Working with the community stakeholder forum enables continual dialogue and development of best practice.

Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review

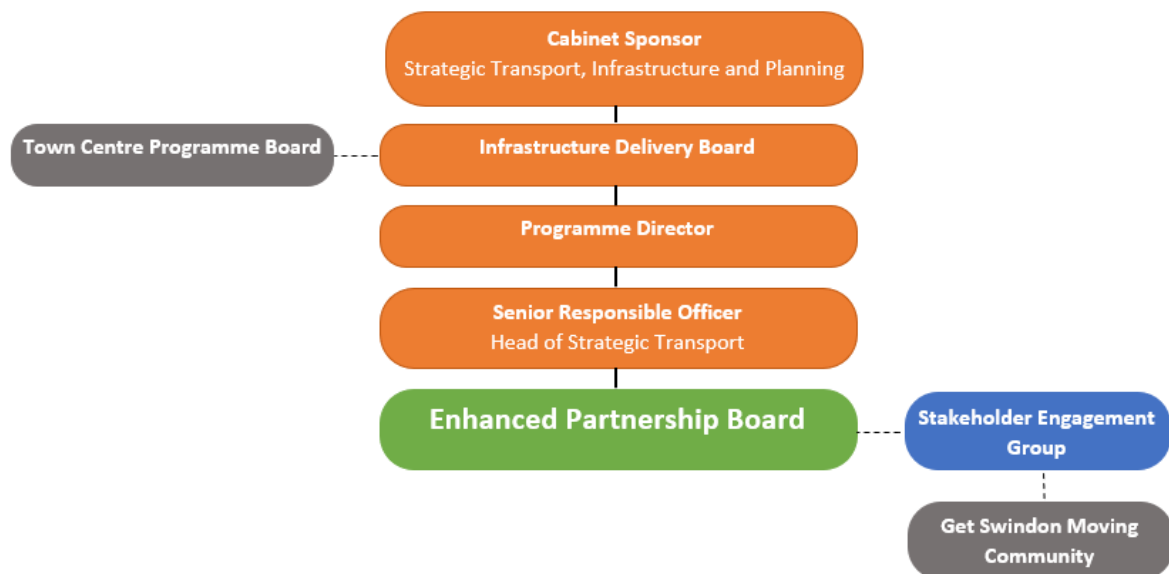


Figure 1.6: Structure and governance of the EP Board.

Consultation with partners, businesses, special interest groups, elected representatives, and passenger representatives, will continue throughout the life of the EP and is integrated into the EP Governance structure. This will be through regular meetings, public consultation, and through passenger research.

Consultation will occur at the same time as the review of the BSIP and EP Plan, and, where appropriate, when specific schemes are being developed, monitored, and evaluated. Performance data used in the monitoring of performance against targets will be made available to consultees.

Feedback gathered during consultation will be analysed and reviewed to understand the impact on the network, passengers and the success of the EP/BSIP work and scheme delivery. This review of feedback will be used to inform and update the BSIP on an annual basis and in the establishment of future EP Schemes.

The EP Board meet once every quarter, and in between this there are monthly meetings with the two main operators.

The Get Swindon Moving Community Group currently meet once every two months, with future plans to include monthly meets, alternating between in-person daytime meetings and online evening meetings to suit every need. The first task presented to the wide variety of individual community groups that make up the Get Swindon Moving group was to create the Bus Passenger Charter, with further information provided in Section 4 on its progress. An ongoing spreadsheet collates the positive and negative feedback raised on particular bus services, which is shared with operators to address.

The EP Board also hold ad hoc workshops when appropriate. Most recently, on 21st May

2024, the Council in partnership with Swindon's Bus Company and Stagecoach West provided a Bus Boarding Event along with the Learning Disability Partnership. This provided the opportunity for those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and autism to practice boarding buses and have a two-way conversation about the challenges they may face with public transport. The event was very successful and published in a range of local media outlets and Get Swindon Moving Community Group with the Learning Disability Partnership have agreed that future events will be available to a range of potential bus users.

Better passenger experience is embedded within our strategy to achieve modal shift. Appropriate intervention requires insight from national data sets combined with grassroots intelligence and an understanding of local aspirations and barriers around public transport mobility.

SBC engages regularly with Transport Focus, extracting value from National Bus Passenger Surveys enabling themes around passenger experience to be followed up through two "in-house" stakeholder engagement processes which have principally qualitative value. First, the Transport Conversation Survey published in several media outlets, to which, a proportion of residents responded. Some of those volunteered for an ongoing conversation around transport issues. This delivers a pool of residents willing to provide comment on Transport related issues - the Transport Conversation.

Second, the Get Swindon Moving Community is a proactive umbrella group designed by SBC to provide a forum enabling representation for all user groups served and potentially served by public transport. It provides a forum to make a better public transport experience for everyone. Easy, reliable, accessible, inclusive transport is co-designed as far as possible by enabling discussion of passenger priorities, possible interventions, arising and foreseeable issues. Get Swindon Moving groups may identify across the diverse grouping within which our residents see themselves. For example: geographies; parishes; hobby clubs; societies; disability groups; sports groups; students; careers; ethnic; or age specific.

The EP is seeking means for local data set collection beyond that providing data of qualitative value generated by SBC's Transport Conversation and Get Swindon Moving. Transport networks require modelling, which in turn requires data. COVID had a lasting impact on our ability to use census data to plan networks because the country was static and subsequently has altered travel patterns.

As shown in Figure 1.7, Swindon Borough Council's neighbouring LTAs are Wiltshire, West Berkshire, Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire. The Council has been invited and will invite neighbouring authorities to contribute to BSIPs where logical to do so. Officers from West Berkshire are on the EP Board and are representatives of all small operators in the Borough.

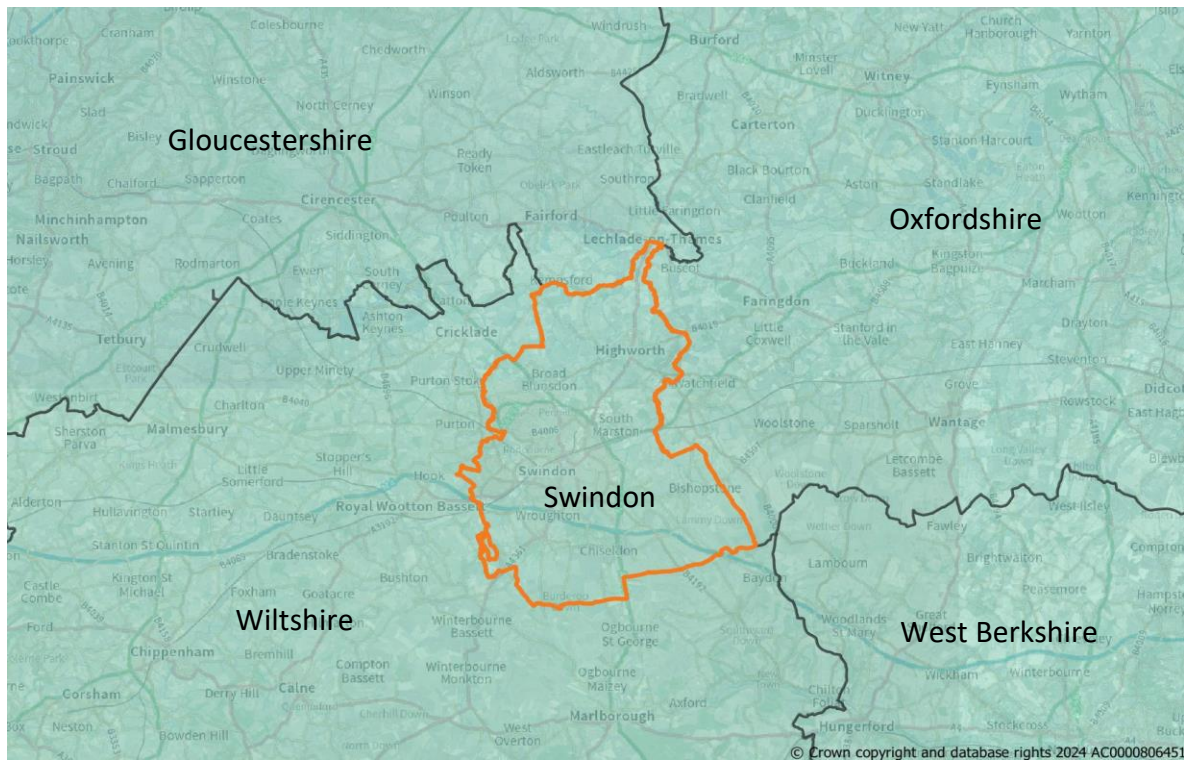


Figure 1.7: Swindon Borough Council and it's neighbouring LTAs.

2. Current Offer to Bus Passengers

Current local bus network – who operates the bus network

The current bus network is operated in Swindon Borough by two main bus operators, Stagecoach West and Swindon's Bus Company. A small number of rural bus services are operated by West Berkshire Council's transport services, Pulhams Coaches, and Coachstyle who operate a Wiltshire Council supported service.

Concessionary Travel taxi vouchers were withdrawn after the 31st March 2024 from the Concessionary Travel Bus Pass Scheme. Voucher holders have been issued from 1st April with a Concessionary bus pass as two accessible community transport operators, Swindon Community Action and Swindon Dial a Ride, were invited and have joined the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

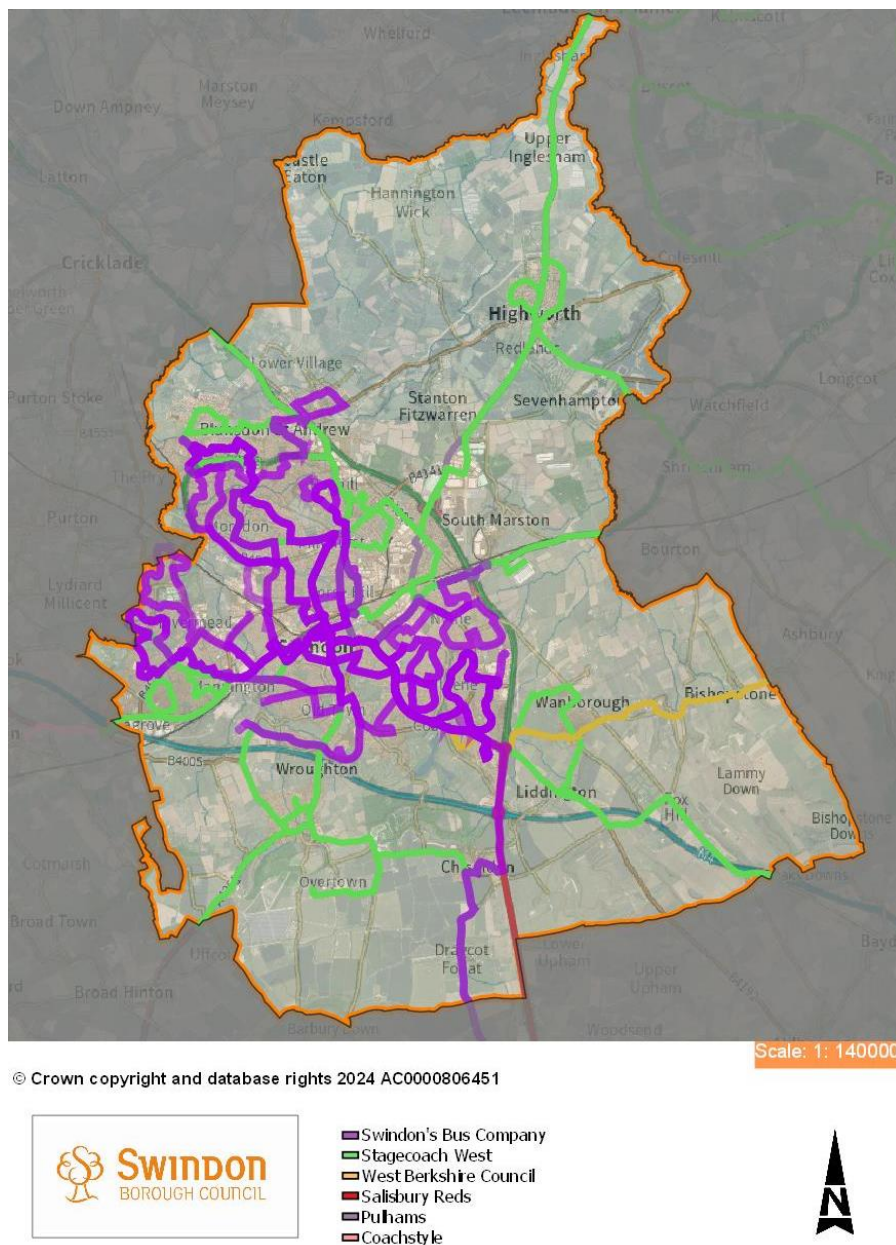


Figure 2.1: Swindon Borough's bus network by operator.

Swindon's Bus Company, owned by Go South Coast, operates an 88 bus fleet from its depot based in central Swindon and this represents the bulk of the urban network. Some of the network is run at high frequencies, typically every 10 minutes and 44% of routes operated are every 15 minutes or better. Notably, a direct, high frequency link between West Swindon, the Town Centre and Great Western Hospital. Since 2017, Go South Coast has made significant investments in both new vehicles, e.g. 39% of the fleet is Euro VI or better, and in roadside infrastructure and general network presentation.

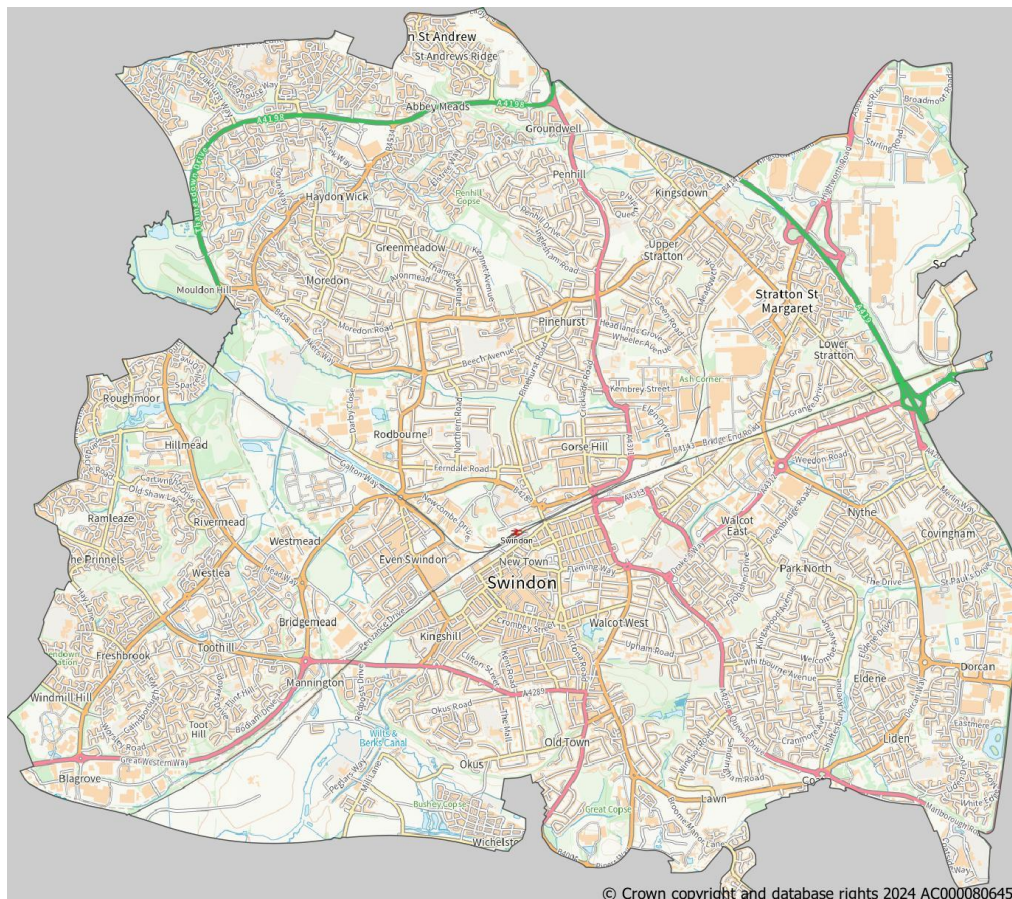


Figure 2.2: Swindon Borough's urban area.

Salisbury Reds, also part of the Go South Coast Group, has run a service between Salisbury, Pewsey, Marlborough and Swindon as the X5 for many years, with modest support from Wiltshire Council. This is currently every 90 minutes but is returning to hourly in late 2024.

Stagecoach West operates a fleet of 73 buses across urban and interurban services linking Swindon with Oxford, Calne, Chippenham, Marlborough, Royal Wootton Bassett, Devizes, Trowbridge and Cirencester. Highworth and Wroughton are served by frequent services connecting with the urban area of Swindon. Service S6 to Oxford via Faringdon, and Service 55 to Royal Wootton Bassett and Chippenham, are of particular note, being run up to every 15 minutes prior to the Pandemic, with high-specification premium EURO VI buses.



Figure 2.3: The settlements of Highworth and Wroughton.

The Council supports some bus services based on social need, and evening and Sunday services, to supplement daytime commercial services. These are funded through Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), Bus Service Improvement Plan Phase 2 and Developer Contributions (£106). The Steps for You community transport bus service, provided by Swindon Community Action, is the only revenue funded service.

In addition, the following cross boundary services operate with third party revenue support:

- Coachstyle operates a regular service between Swindon and Malmesbury contracted to Wiltshire Council.
- West Berkshire Council self-operate a cross boundary contracted service using their own minibuss vehicle fleet from Lambourn which is funded by Swindon Borough Council as well.
- Stagecoach run a series of services into both north and east Wiltshire on a fully contracted or part commercial basis. The most regular are the Service 80 to Marlborough and Tidworth, and the Service 53 to Purton and Cricklade.
- Pulhams Coaches operates a regular service between Carterton and Swindon, this is funded by Oxfordshire County Council's BSIP Phase 1 awarded in 2022.

Swindon is a regular stop on scheduled express coach networks. National Express operate a number of long-distance coach services that serve Swindon, and the Scottish Citylink Megabus Service calls at Swindon although not at the two main bus terminal points in Swindon, but at Stratton Park, on the A420 Oxford Road.

Swindon Borough's Bus Network

The Swindon Borough bus service network, commercially-operated up to March 2020, serves the main urban area quite comprehensively. There are very few neighbourhoods entirely unserved.

However, some gaps do exist, of which the most notable are the village of South Marston, and a major development in the far south east of the town at Badbury Park, approaching completion. A temporary bus service for Badbury Park has been introduced and a new service is planned to be introduced in September 2024 following Section 106 Funding.

Swindon town services each have a daytime frequency that ranges from 2 to 6 buses per hour (bph), depending upon demand arising within the corridor concerned. By virtue of size and proximity, Wroughton and Highworth within the Borough, and Royal Wootton Bassett in Wiltshire, benefit from at least 2 to 4 bph into Swindon. Frequency is linked to demand and where demand increases, this has been reflected by timetable improvements. This has been particularly evident on inter-urban service 55 (Royal Wootton Bassett-Calne-Chippenham) and S6 (Faringdon-Oxford) which has seen strong growth for some years.

However, extensive areas of the town, while served commercially, suffer from relatively low frequencies (generally every 30 minutes), poorly served in the evening and Sundays, and extended journey times. Much of which arises from the fact that most are large mono-tenure owner-occupied suburban expansions built after 1985. These include areas such as Tadpole Garden Village, Wichelstowe, and Badbury Park.

A map of the core network divided by frequency is shown in Figure 2.4 on the following page, the frequency is for peak times Monday to Saturday.

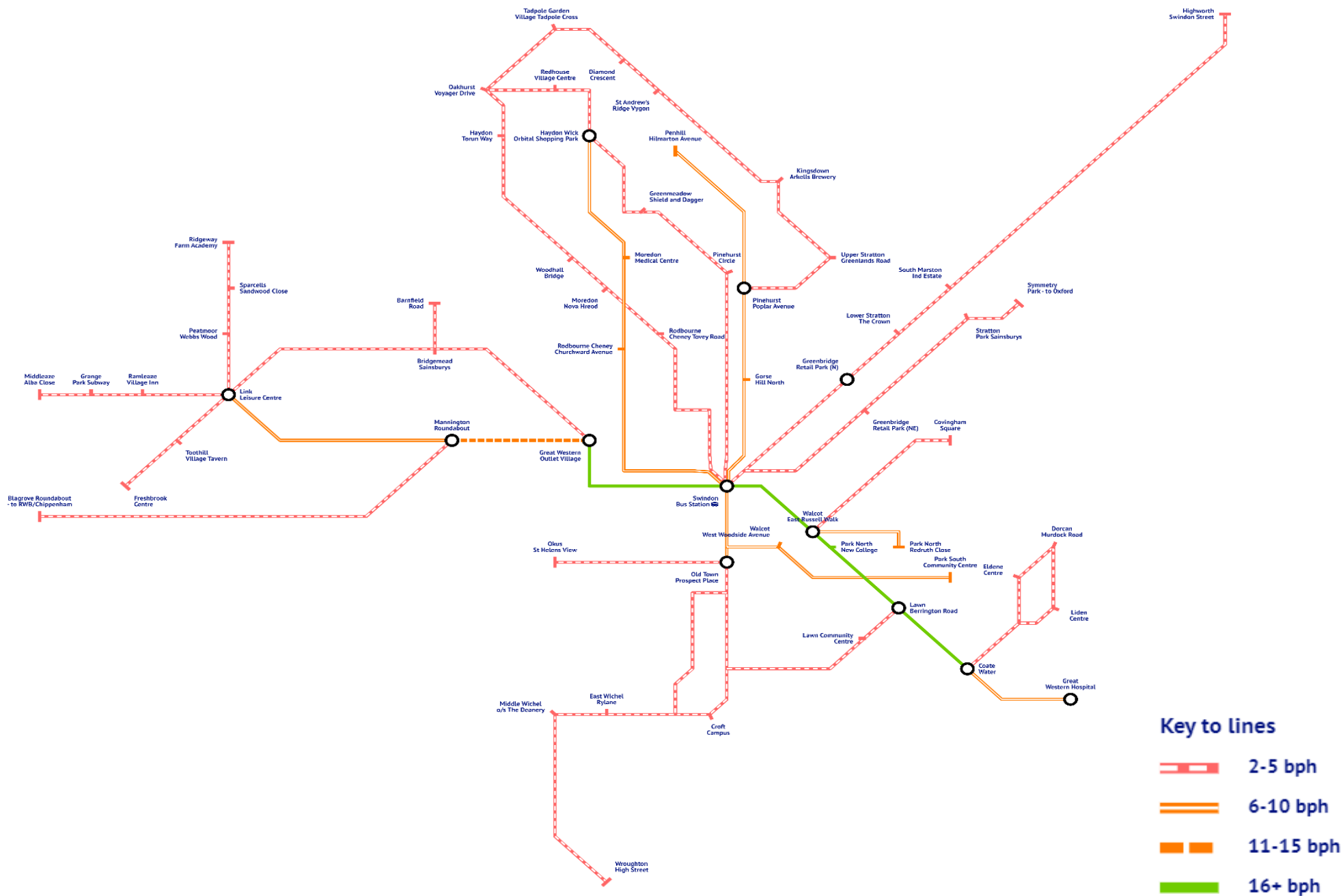
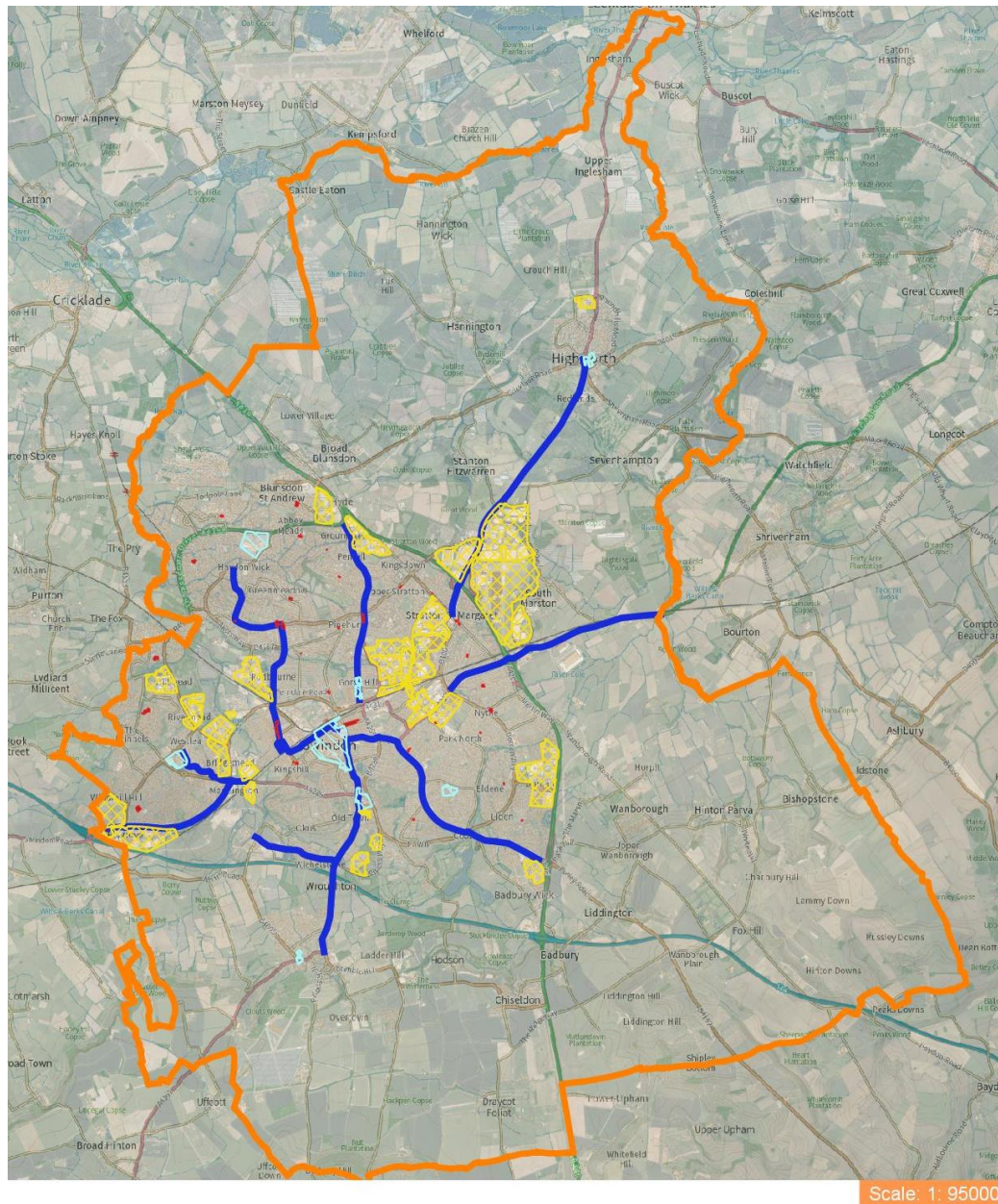


Figure 2.4: metro-style map of Swindon Borough's core bus network by frequency.

The Census 2021 shows a bus mode share for travelling to work at 5.6% on average for Swindon Borough, this was 4.2% on average across England and Wales. However, this ranges greatly, from 23.1% in the Central North MSOA to as low as 1.1% in Broad Blunsdon, South Marston & Wanborough MSOA. We acknowledge that the information from the 2021 data will have been affected by COVID-19.

To be in line with the LTP4 policy recommendations, key urban centres and employment areas have been mapped, showing the bus corridors between them, as show in Figure 2.5.



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- Key Bus corridors
- Key Employment Areas
- Key District Centres
- Key Local Centres



Figure 2.5: Swindon Borough's key bus corridors, employment areas and key urban centres.

Challenges of the bus network

Whilst government support between March 2020 and April 2023 has mostly protected the pre-existing local bus network and further benefits drawn from extending the £2 bus fare cap until December 2024, and replacing it with a £3 bus cap until December 2025. Prior to this, bus services were already facing serious challenges from behavioural change prior to the onset of COVID.

The strength of the town centre as a retail and employment base has been seriously challenged, for several years losing some notable high-street chain department and stores, Marks and Spencer being the latest. While the Council continues to progress ambitious investment plans to leverage in further private sector investment and capitalise on the considerable locational, connectivity and heritage assets in the central area, these have yet to fully bear fruit.

We need to have a thriving town centre, with attractive leisure and shopping, to bring people in. The major Fleming Way transformative works aims to stimulate further investment in the town centre by increasing land values and making the area more attractive for investors to bring forward new homes, offices, leisure and retail facilities. Bus offers versatility in meeting the revised needs of a reinvented town centre and crucially will work in tandem with plans for residential space and public space and activity.

Bus Priority Measures

Swindon Borough Council currently has no strategic signalised central bus priority and only a few sites that have local signalised bus priority. Buses are detected using inductive profiling so there is no means of giving individual buses priority based on timetable. The sites with signalised bus priority in place are:

- Pipers Way / Applebee Road – Bus priority at traffic signals to allow bus in bus lane to merge back onto Pipers Way.
- Pipers Way / Croft Road – Bus priority turning right into and coming out of East Wichel Way
- Victoria Road / Regent Circus – Bus priority N/B Victoria Road
- Wootton Bassett Road / Penzance Drive – Turning right into Penzance Drive and existing Penzance Drive.

In addition to the above, Swindon has various bus lanes and bus gates in the urban area, which can be seen in Figure 2.6 and a full list is provided in Appendix 1.

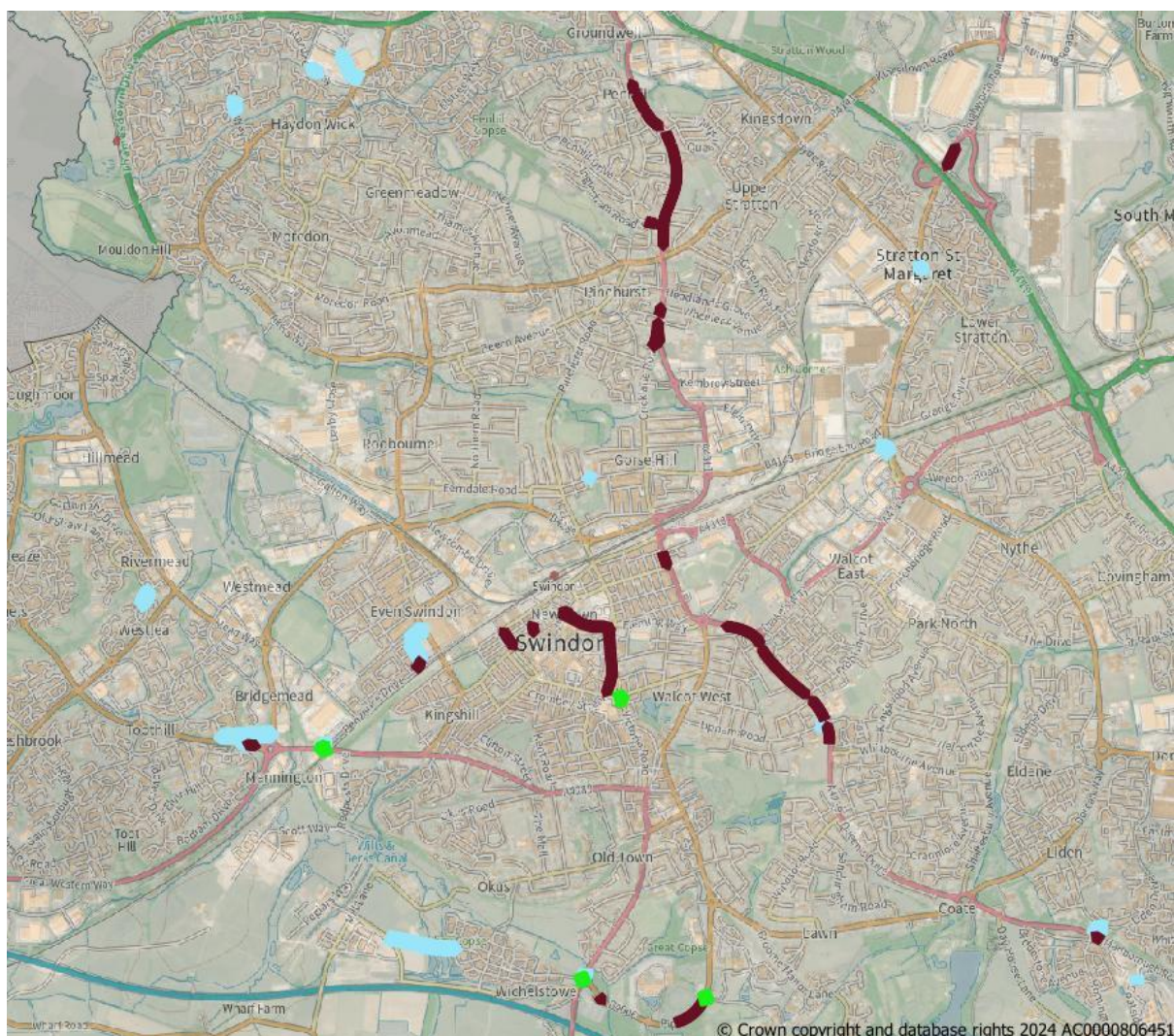


Figure 2.6: Existing bus priority in Swindon Borough. Brown indicates bus lanes; sky blue indicates bus gates and neon green indicates traffic light signalling priority using inductive-loop traffic detectors.

Spending on Buses in 2022/23 and 2023/24

Key Category	Funding Source	2022/23 Actual spending (£)	2023/24 Actual spending (£)
Supported Services			
Revenue Cost	LTA resources*	287,133.67	260,763.63
	BSOG	176,205.00	176,205.00
	Local Transport Fund	4,400.00	176,657.44
	Better Bus Fund	17,500.00	25,500.00
	BSIP Phase 2	-	20,416.69
	Total	485,238.67	659,542.76
Concessionary Fares Reimbursements			
Revenue Cost	LTA resources*	2,545,853.94	2,486,425.90
Bus Priority Measures			
Capital Cost	LTA resources*	5,705.77	
Infrastructure - bus stops, RTI etc			
Revenue Cost			

	LTA resources*	45,141.94	71,715.54
Marketing Revenue Cost	LTA resources*		21,695.22

*this may include Section 106 and revenue support budget.

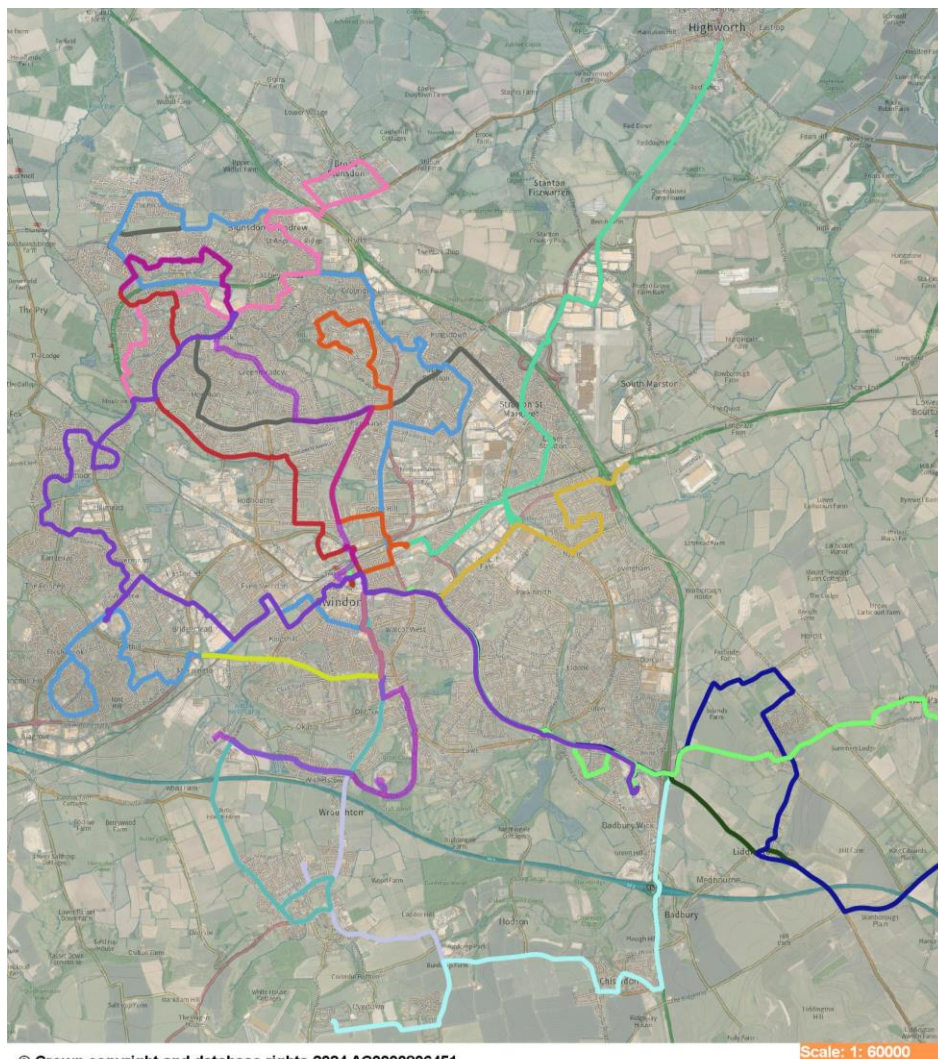
Supported Services

Swindon Borough Council had its own current Local Bus Strategy introduced in 2013 and updated in 2016. This funded bus services based on social need, evening services and Sunday services in that order of priority.

Table 1: The bus services that are currently funded or part-funded through the Council.

Bus Operator	Service	Element of Service Financially Supported	Funding Source	Tendered/De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 7 Swindon - Highworth	Monday to Saturday Evening Service	BSOG	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 9 Wroughton - Swindon	Monday to Saturday Wroughton – Swindon Evening Service	BSOG	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 9 Wroughton - Swindon Borough Council Service 81/82 Thorney Park - Swindon	Diversion of Service 9 through Wichelstowe Monday to Saturday and Service 81/82 Monday to Saturday whole service	BSOG	Tendered
Stagecoach West	Service 9 Wroughton – Swindon	Monday – Saturday 2 additional evening journeys	BSIP Phase 2 (Planned introduction Sep 2024)	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 9 Wroughton – Swindon	Sunday Whole service	BSIP Phase 2 (Planned introduction Sep 2024)	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 10 Freshbrook – Swindon Town Centre – Orbital	Monday to Saturday Evening Service	BSOG	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 10 Freshbrook – Swindon Town Centre – Orbital	Monday to Saturday 4 additional evening journeys	BSIP Phase 2 (Planned introduction Sep 2024)	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 11 Taw Hill – Swindon Town Centre – Middle Wichel	Extension to East Wichel Monday to Saturday	BSOG	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 11 Taw Hill – Swindon Town Centre – Middle Wichel	Extension to Middle Wichel Evenings and Sundays	BSOG	De minimis

Swindon's Bus Company	Service 15 Swindon – Wood Hall – Taw Hill	Sunday Whole service	BSIP Phase 2 (Planned introduction Feb 2025)	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 16 Swindon – Haydon Wick - Blunsdon	Monday to Saturday morning and evening peak extensions to and from Blunsdon	BSOG	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 1B Sparcells – Swindon Town Centre – Great Western Hospital	Monday to Saturday Evening Service	BSOG	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 1B Sparcells – Swindon Town Centre – Great Western Hospital	Extension to Orbital Centre Monday to Sunday	BSIP Phase 2 (Planned introduction Feb 2025)	De minimis
Swindon's Bus Company	Service 21 Swindon Town Centre – Penhill Valley Service 23 Swindon Town Centre – Coleview – Stratton Park Service 25 Swindon Town Centre – Kinghill - Mannington	Monday to Saturday whole service Monday to Saturday whole service Monday to Saturday whole service	BSOG	De minimis
Stagecoach West	Service 46A/X46 Swindon – Hungerford Service 48/48A Swindon - Marlborough	Cross boundary service with Wiltshire Council, Monday to Saturday whole service for Swindon Borough area	BSOG	
West Berkshire Council	Service 47 Lambourn – Wanborough - Swindon	Cross boundary service with West Berkshire Council, Monday to Saturday whole service for Swindon Borough area	BSOG	
Stagecoach West	Service 57 Tadpole Garden Village – South Marston Park	Monday to Friday whole service	BSIP Phase 2	
Swindon Community Action (Akcess)	Steps for You	Community Transport	Revenue Support Budget	Tendered (Likely to be replaced by new proposed DRT service)



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- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Service 1B | Service 48/48A |
| Service 11 | Service 47 |
| Service 15 | Service 10 |
| Service 16 | Service 7 |
| Service 21 | Service 9 |
| Service 23 | Service 81 |
| Service 25 | Service 82 |
| Service 46A/X46 | Service 57 |



Figure 2.7: Swindon Borough's supported services network

3. Improvements Programme to 2024/25

The table below sets out the bus improvement delivery programme from when the first BSIP was published in October 2021 to the financial year end of 2023/24 (blue symbol), and for the current financial year 2024/25 (green symbol). Each intervention sets out the description, funding source and rationale, as well as which of the 12 key goals are addressed.

Table 2: October 2021 – March 2025 delivery programme.

Intervention Funding source Rationale	More frequent	Faster and more reliable	Cheaper	More comprehensive	Easier to understand	Easier to use	Better integrated	Better to ride in	Greener	Accessible and Inclusive	Innovative	Safety
Continuation of Stagecoach Service 57. Tadpole Garden Village – South Marston Industrial Estate. <i>Funded by BSIP Phase 2.</i> The importance of this intervention is for shift workers at the former Honda site, now owned by Panattoni, to have an evening shift service and access to work.				<div>21-24</div> <div>24-25</div>								
New bus shelters on Manchester Road and Corporation Street. <i>Funded by the Fleming Way project.</i> To provide shelters for services that were diverted due to the Fleming Way works.												<div>21-24</div>

<p>Pathway finding temporary signage while Fleming Way Bus facilities work continues, a collaboration with GWR.</p> <p><i>Funded by GWR.</i></p> <p>To provide clear and easier to read signage to guide residents and visitors through the pedestrian diversion.</p>					21-24					21-24		21-24
<p>Stagecoach and Swindon's Bus Company long-standing joint ticketing arrangement now includes Pulhams Coaches.</p> <p>To extend the existing joint ticketing scheme to other operators in the Borough for a more seamless passenger experience.</p>						21-24	21-24					
<p>Carterton – Swindon bus service operated by Pulhams Coaches introduced following contract award.</p> <p><i>Funded by Oxfordshire County Council.</i></p> <p>To provide a link to towns outside of the Borough.</p>				21-24						21-24		
<p>Joint timetable and map booklet that has been designed by the Enhanced Bus Partnership and in the process of being finalised and distributed.</p> <p><i>Funded by SBC and bus operators.</i></p>					21-24 24-25	21-24 24-25	21-24 24-25				21-24 24-25	

To provide a comprehensive booklet with all operators' timetables, easy to use maps of the area and information on rail.												
Stagecoach Service 9 Improvements. Swindon – Wroughton. Introduce 2 additional evening journeys Monday to Saturday. <i>Funded by BSIP Phase 2.</i> To provide those in Wroughton with better frequency in the evenings to access leisure/retail/work later.	24-25			24-25								
Stagecoach Service 9 Improvements. Swindon – Wroughton. Introduce hourly Sunday service. <i>Funded by BSIP Phase 2.</i> To provide those in Wroughton with a Sunday service to allow access to leisure and retail facilities.				24-25								
Stagecoach Service 10 – Swindon Freshbrook – Kingsdown - Tadpole Garden Village. 4 additional evening journeys Monday to Saturday. <i>Funded by BSIP Phase 2.</i> To provide these areas with better frequency in the	24-25			24-25								

<p>evenings to access leisure/retail/work later.</p>												
<p>Swindon's Bus Company – Improvements to Service 1, 1A, 1B West Swindon – Orbital Shopping Centre. <i>Funded by BSIP 2.</i> To provide direct access between West Swindon and North Swindon. This will also form a section of the Orbital bus route proposed.</p>				24-25			24-25				24-25	
<p>Swindon's Bus Company Service 15 Swindon – Orbital Shopping Centre Sunday Service. <i>Funded by BSIP 2.</i> To provide these areas with a Sunday service to allow access to leisure and retail facilities.</p>				24-25								
<p>Introduce a new Demand Responsive Transport service to provide support to the core bus network and incorporate current community transport contract service - the Steps for You service. <i>Funded by Revenue Budget and BSOG.</i> To provide accessible and inclusive access to the core bus network for those currently poorly, or not at all, served. As well as a safe door-to-door</p>	24-25			24-25						24-25	24-25	24-25

service from pubs and clubs in the evenings.												
Introduce Stagecoach Service 10 to serve the new Abbey Farm Development. <i>Funded by Section 106.</i> To provide a frequent bus service to a new housing development with access to nearby major district centres and Swindon Town Centre.				24-25			24-25					
Introduce Swindon's Bus Company Service 1/1A/1B to serve the Badbury Park Development. <i>Funded by Section 106.</i> To provide a frequent bus service to a new housing development with access to Great Western Hospital, Swindon Town Centre and West Swindon.				24-25			24-25					
Introduce replacement Bus Shelter Contract. The importance of introducing this new contract is to provide updated and accessible bus shelters, that provide a safe and well-maintained environment for passengers.										24-25		24-25

Completion of Fleming Way Bus Facility which will replace the existing Swindon Bus Station and former Fleming Way bus facility. <i>Funded by the Fleming Way project.</i> To provide a much-needed gateway to the Town Centre, with improved public open spaces, cycle lanes and making the area more attractive and well organised.					24-25					24-25	24-25	24-25
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Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention

Swindon Borough Council will work with all local bus operators to agree a plan to address bus driver and other key staff shortages.

Stagecoach: We have been developing our training and recruitment processes over the last 12 months, with a focus on industry leading training for new staff. We have also been reviewing the way that we offer remedial training to offer positive support to our frontline staff. Both of these efforts have had a significant impact on turnover of staff, and we are pleased to have reached a point where our local depot team are now fully staffed.

Swindon’s Bus Company: Attracting people to the profession of a bus driver continues to be challenging. As a result, bus companies in the region have had to adjust to ensure that the job of a bus driver remains comparative to the local market. This has meant significant increase in pay rates to retain and attract which in turn has a knock-on effect on operating costs. Having said that, recruitment & retention is reasonably buoyant in Swindon and with bus patronage growing on Swindon support by BSIP initiatives, the need for more driver team members increases.

Service reliability, investment in vehicles, simple fares and ticketing which are the aims of this plan, all contribute to increased recruitment and retention

4. Ambitions and Proposals for 2025-2035

The following ambitions and proposals are set to be implemented over the 4-year period of 2025/26 to 2028/29.

Ambitions and proposals for enhanced network coverage

- A core bus network will be agreed with local bus operators. Buses on the core network, as shown in Figure 2.4, will operate at least half hourly with an expectation for frequency to be, or rise to, four-six buses per hour. Infrastructure will be concentrated on then improving the core bus network in order to establish real quality bus corridors.
- Bus services that do not meet the criteria of operating at least two buses per hour will be withdrawn and replaced by Demand Responsive Transport (DRT). See Figure 4.1 for proposed DRT zones. The DRT service will concentrate on how quickly bookings can be fulfilled within a suitable timeframe, which reflects bookings outside peak periods within the town or in rural areas.

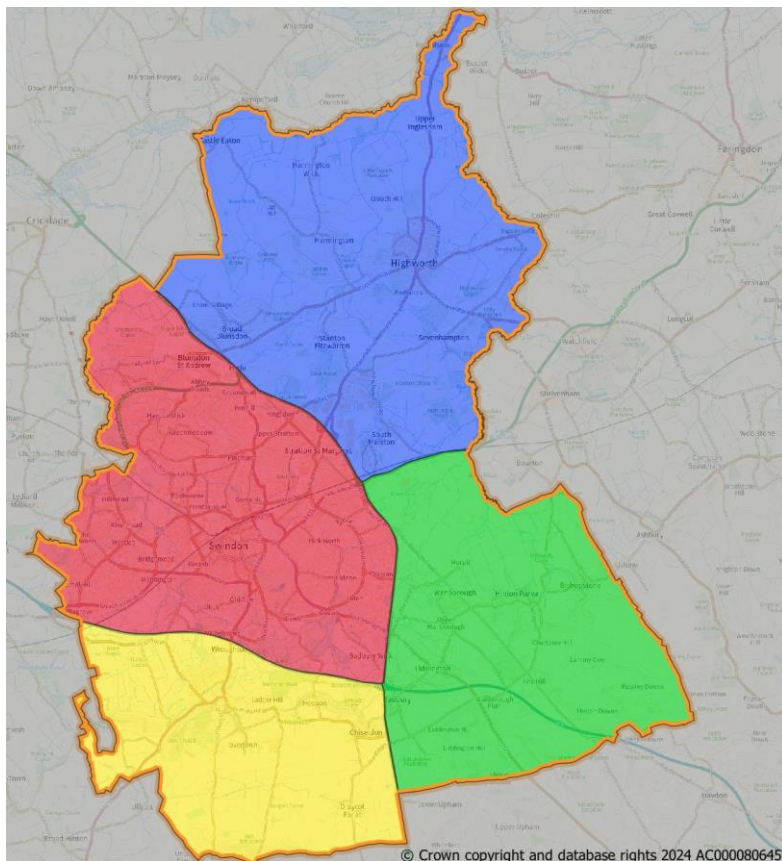


Figure 4.1: Proposed zones for DRT operation.

- Those areas of the Borough not served by bus will be served by DRT, which will connect to bus services where possible, and transport hubs will be created in key parts of the borough to enable interchange between DRT, cycle, car and walking. This will increase the connectivity of these areas and improve accessibility of the

network.

- An orbital bus route incorporating existing bus services or revisions of them will continue to be created, either as one main orbital route connecting into different parts of the Borough or as East and West Arcs. This will include Mobility Transport Hubs as shown in Figure 4.2. SBC and the EP Board have already discussed this proposal and shared ideas of how this could best be achieved.

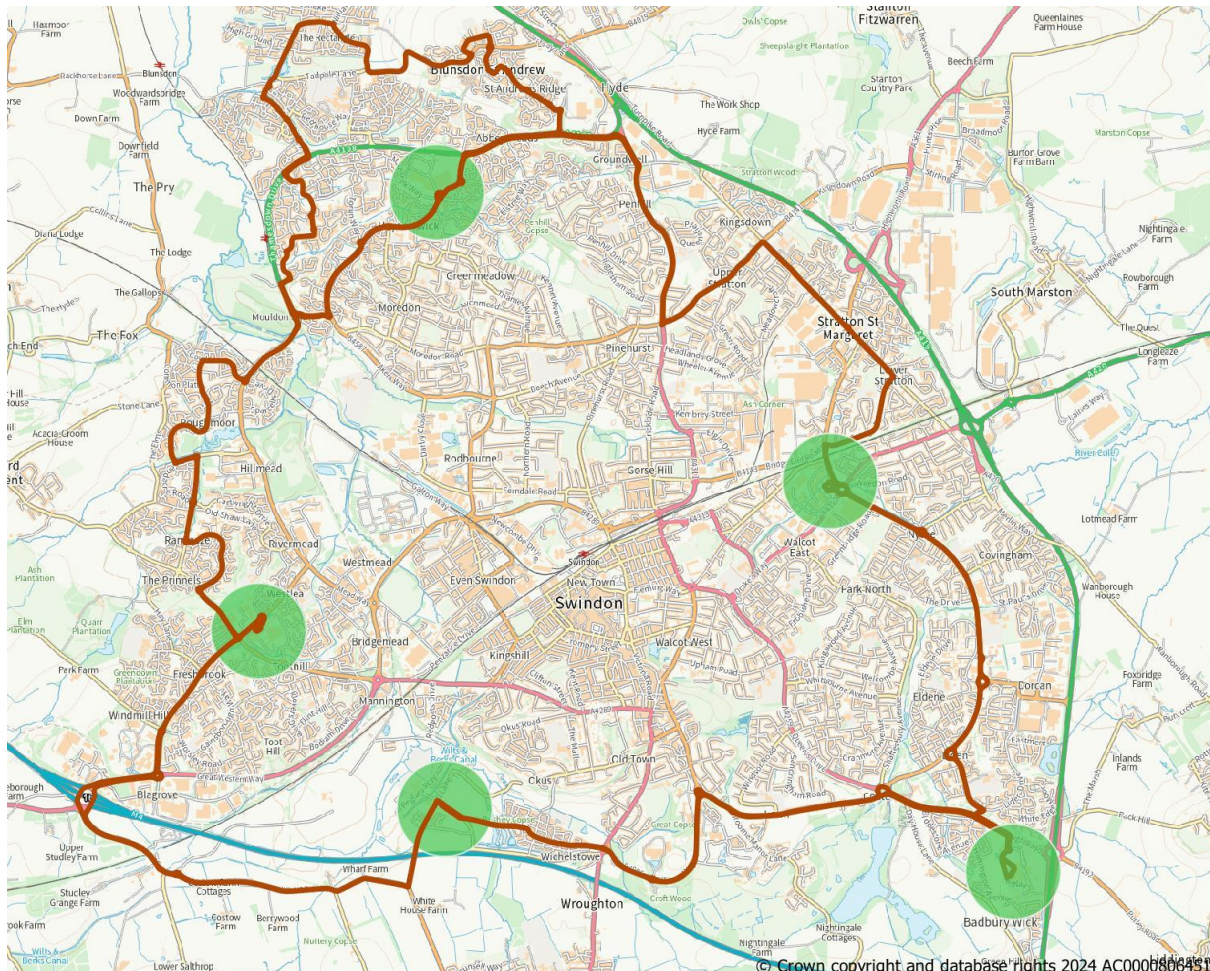


Figure 4.2: Proposed orbital circular route, with Mobility Hubs shown in green.

- Travelling by bus from new developments to the Town Centre or Rail Station must be fast and frequent and journey times need to be improved upon to attract new passengers.
- All new developments business or residential, must have a clear plan of how they can be integrated into the core bus network and ideally built along existing bus routes.
- Improvements to existing bus network including evening services to increase access to local leisure and retail facilities.
- Improvements to supported bus services as set out in Section 2.

- Improve bus service access to Outlet Village, STEAM Museum and National Trust.
- New Sunday service to link Swindon with out of borough Cotswolds towns to encourage a leisure network which internally will include a service to Barbury in the south.
- New bus services to serve employment areas taking account of worker shift patterns.
- New bus services to transport non-entitled school children where demand from local schools warrants this.
- Late evening 'home hoppa' hub type evening bus service which would penetrate town centre to collect passengers using evening bus stop at Fleet Street or other leisure establishments and then call at bus station and take passengers home instead of the conventional bus journey or act as a shuttle between town centre, the Old Town area and the bus station.
- Ensure a pub or restaurant on a bus route has a bus stop to help make evening travel safe and sustainable.
- On street town centre support officers will be employed to provide information and supervision support for the evening economy.

Ambitions and proposals for bus priority

Installation of up to 10 bus lanes through junctions in 24-hour operation, including-

- *Mannington Roundabout, Wootton Bassett Road.* Consideration will be given to the reintroduction of the bus lane along Wootton Bassett Road, inbound from Swindon. Similarly, outbound traffic could benefit from the introduction of a bus lane from Penzance Drive to Mannington Roundabout along Wootton Bassett Road.
- *A420 in and out of Swindon.* It would be beneficial to explore the possibility of widening the road to incorporate a dedicated bus lane in both directions leading to and from A419 junction. By doing so, it is expected to mitigate the congestion issue, particularly during peak hours. This would greatly increase bus journey times. This will support the New Eastern Villages Housing Development.
- *Tadpole Lane.* To widen the road, especially on the S bend as it is causing delays and accidents. Consider allocating some bus stops along this road as currently there are none and passengers have to walk miles to get to a bus stop.

10 bus gates and a minimum of 7 traffic signal prioritisation for buses to be installed on key corridors (specific locations subject to LPR/LTP modelling outcomes). This will increase the reliability and journey times of the core network.

- *Ocotal Way / Shrivenham Road.* Traffic signal improvements could be provided here as it would aid buses either turning right out of Ocotal Way or turning left into

Ocotal Way. This is used regularly by Stagecoach Service 7 which would help maintain timings on route given its route through from Highworth via South Marston Industrial Estate to Swindon.

- *Princes Street / Gordon Street.* Traffic signal improvements here could aid buses heading north bound along Princes Street.
- *Station Road / Whitehouse Road.* Traffic signal improvements here could aid buses coming under the railway bridge heading into town. There are queues here so there are some potential benefits if this is put in place and would also assist a cross-town bus service.
- *Greenbridge roundabout.* Traffic signal improvements here would aid buses heading from Swindon Road around Greenbridge roundabout into Greenbridge retail park. This is quite stop/start at the moment as the traffic signal linking strategy for the roundabout doesn't cater for this movement as it's a low traffic movement. The exit into Greenbridge retail park is normally clear so there are no issues with exit blocking.
- *Drove Road / Groundwell Road.* Improvements to bus priority could be placed here as buses are coming to and from Groundwell Rd into Drove Rd.
- *Queens Drive / New College.* Priority here for the Upham road approach for buses exiting onto Queens Drive would be ideal here.
- *Traffic light junction at Wootton Bassett Road and Redpost Drive.* There has been a recent increase in right turns from Mannington arising from the southern development. This increase has resulted in traffic backing up to Mannington Junction during peak periods. So there is a need to reduce this traffic pressure as it impacts on the bus network.
- *Badbury Park and Great Western Hospital Link.* The new housing development of Badbury Park is located next to GWH but without direct access. A bus gate that links the two will provide faster access for residence to health services.

Additional areas to be explored:

- Coate Roundabout
- Queens Drive/Frobisher Drive
- Swindon Rd/Pipers Way
- Penzance Drive
- Great Western Way/Paddington Drive
- Cricklade Road corridor

Ambitions and proposals for simpler and more affordable fares

- Stagecoach West have mobilised an internal team to look at the Customer Value Proposition. One of the key pillars for this is for “Customers to never pay more than they need to”. We have also started work with customer groups across their operating area to learn more about what a simpler product range means to them.
- A feasibility review of whether the £3.00 fare should continue when Central Government support for the Scheme ends.

Ambitions and proposals for ticketing

- Bus ticket interchangeability between bus operators, which has worked so well for many years in Swindon Borough, between the two main bus operators Stagecoach and Swindon’s Bus Company will be offered as an invitation to join to any bus operator operating services in the Borough. The current arrangement between the two main bus operators has been ahead of most of the country and in place before the National Bus Strategy was announced in 2021.
- The feasibility of increasing Concessionary Travel to all day during the week from the statutory 0930 to 2300 during Monday to Friday will be explored. This is in order to encourage increased bus use from the over 65s which reduced significantly after COVID and has not recovered back to pre-COVID usage levels. It will also offer greater freedom to travel for those who have disabilities.
- The feasibility of increasing free Concessionary Travel to schoolchildren and students aged 12 to 18 years old will be explored. This is to change travel habits for the youth of the future and encourage bus use before first car purchase. This will improve air quality by reducing car use around schools and colleges and reduce pressure on the roads and the need for endless pothole filling. This will ease the strain on the road network and reduce pressure and increased expenditure on the Highways Maintenance Budget. Free travel will include the evenings and weekends as it seeks to influence a generation and encourage the use of Swindon Borough leisure facilities and shopping experiences. We want people to stay local so their needs and desires are local and accessible and spending goes back into the local economy.
- The feasibility of increasing free Concessionary Travel to include those traveling to seek work such as attending job interviews will be explored.
- The feasibility of increasing free Concessionary Travel to include armed services veterans will be explored, although some maybe already members of the existing Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Ambitions and proposals for improved waiting and interchange facilities

- Fleming Way new bus interchange will be completed with new bus shelters and real time information installed.

- A review, and where needed, installation or replacement of up to 1100 bus stops, which involves new bus stop flag, ground preparation and timetable case where replacement is required.
- The new bus shelter contract will be in place and a programme of improving bus shelters, replacing them and ensuring they are clean and well maintained will be in place ongoing each year.

Ambitions and proposals for improved bus information and network identity

- Real time information which will be in place at the new Fleming Way bus interchange will be extended out along all bus corridors.
- Bus stops without shelters will have the capability of linking with travel apps so that the passenger can see real time information by using their mobile phone.
- A brand for Swindon bus services will be established with local bus operators which will be illustrated by the joint timetable booklet and map which will be produced together as part of the Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan and Scheme.
- Bus Information Kiosk to be installed at Swindon Railway Station and employment of one member of staff.
- Pathway wayfinding static signage linking the railway station to Fleming Way.

Ambitions and proposals for accessibility and inclusion

- Bus travel for a universal passenger so everyone of any ability can use the bus network or DRT so there is no special need of travel. All travel looks and feels the same experience and there is no stigma to what you are being transported in.
- Buses should offer end to end accessibility and provide ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space, so that everybody can travel with confidence. They should also offer audible and visible information, in addition to USB charging as standard – allowing people to work and interact online whilst they travel and make better use of their time. More buses, particularly in rural areas, should also carry cycles providing there is sufficient space e.g. for fold-up bicycles inside or cycle racks on the rear.
- People with disabilities and those with protected characteristics must be able to use bus services as easily as other passengers. Making buses more accessible (not just the vehicles themselves, but also bus stops, bus stations, and by providing excellent customer service) also benefits other passengers. Swindon Borough Council will take steps pro-actively to understand the accessibility and wheelchair accessibility of bus stop infrastructure in their area (including the accessibility of stops in rural areas) and to develop upgrade or replacement schemes where existing provision is

inadequate.

- Hard standing and dropped kerb provision to meet Equalities Act 2010 requirements. 100 in total. Removal and disposal of existing kerb; double yellow lining, white lining, and reinforced concrete bus layby.

Ambitions and proposals for buses which are safe and seen as safe

- Improving evening travel for everyone but particularly women to ensure everyone can travel safely and securely in the evening, there must be no boundaries to travel. The opening of the new bus interchange on Fleming Way and the closure of the existing bus station will bring an improvement to the passenger experience during the day and evenings for all passengers concerned.
- Evening DRT service, the evening ‘home hoppa’ as mentioned above, to penetrate leisure areas in the evening to provide a door to destination service as mentioned previously.
- Swindon Borough Council have joined the Safe Places membership since September 2023 and would like to launch new schemes and recruit further safe places within the Borough over the next 4 years.

Improving the bus passenger experience – Bus Passenger Charter

As discussed in Section 1 under Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review, a co-design dialogue is running with the Get Swindon Moving Community Group. The Council has referred to the DfT and Transport Focus’ written guidance and engaged in supplementary dialogue relating to the Bus Passenger Charter. Operator needs are a part of this process and the Partnership is fully engaged. We need to navigate the cross-boundary services when deciding how to display the Charter.

As of the latest Get Swindon Moving Community Group meeting on 29th May 2024, the user groups are in the process of writing the first draft of the Bus Passenger Charter. Once finalised, this will be shared with the operators and all in the EP Board for input. The aim is to release the Bus Passenger Charter by the end of Summer 2024 and it will be reviewed every 12 months.

Ambitions and proposals for improving the bus fleet

- Buses will continue to be upgraded and the age of the fleets reduced.
- Alternative forms of energy for buses will continue to be explored.
- Existing greener engines, e.g. Euro VI, will be encouraged.
- Electric buses will remain an objective to achieve an electric bus town.

- Electric power initially to be explored for DRT operation.
- On-bus next stop visual and audio announcements.

The following ambitions and proposals are set to be implemented over a longer-term period of 2025 to 2035.

Ambitions and proposals for longer term transformation of the network

- Aim to be an electric bus town on town services. Outer town electric buses to also be explored.
- There is a need to explore and confirm that available grid capacity is sufficient to enable complete fleet decarbonisation. At the same time, low bridges and how to work around the issue of the railway line and its path through Swindon will be explored by seeing which services can be diverted away from the low bridges.
- Better bus integration with the Swindon Rail Station or any new rail stations which are built. To maximise public transport integration using the public realm where railway ticket selling plans alter, e.g. having a travel shop and information assistance.
- Installation of park and ride, or suitable alternative mobility hub, Junction 16 of M4, Wichelstowe (Decked excl. land acquisition) - 1,000 spaces.
- Installation of new park and ride, or suitable alternative mobility hub, near A420/A419 Junction as part of the New Eastern Villages Development.
- New control centre to support bus operators with traffic monitoring. Greater liaison between the Council's highways teams and bus operators to monitor and manage congestion.
- Look at feasibility of a bus tram or tram scheme on key corridors to create a rapid transit service.
- Creation of transport hubs at key locations for DRT to connect with and into the core bus network.
- Creation of a coach network for commuters initially or an airport link service, please see outline map of proposed route below. This will require working with and the support of other local authorities on route and will be a perfect example of cross local authority working to benefit the wider area.

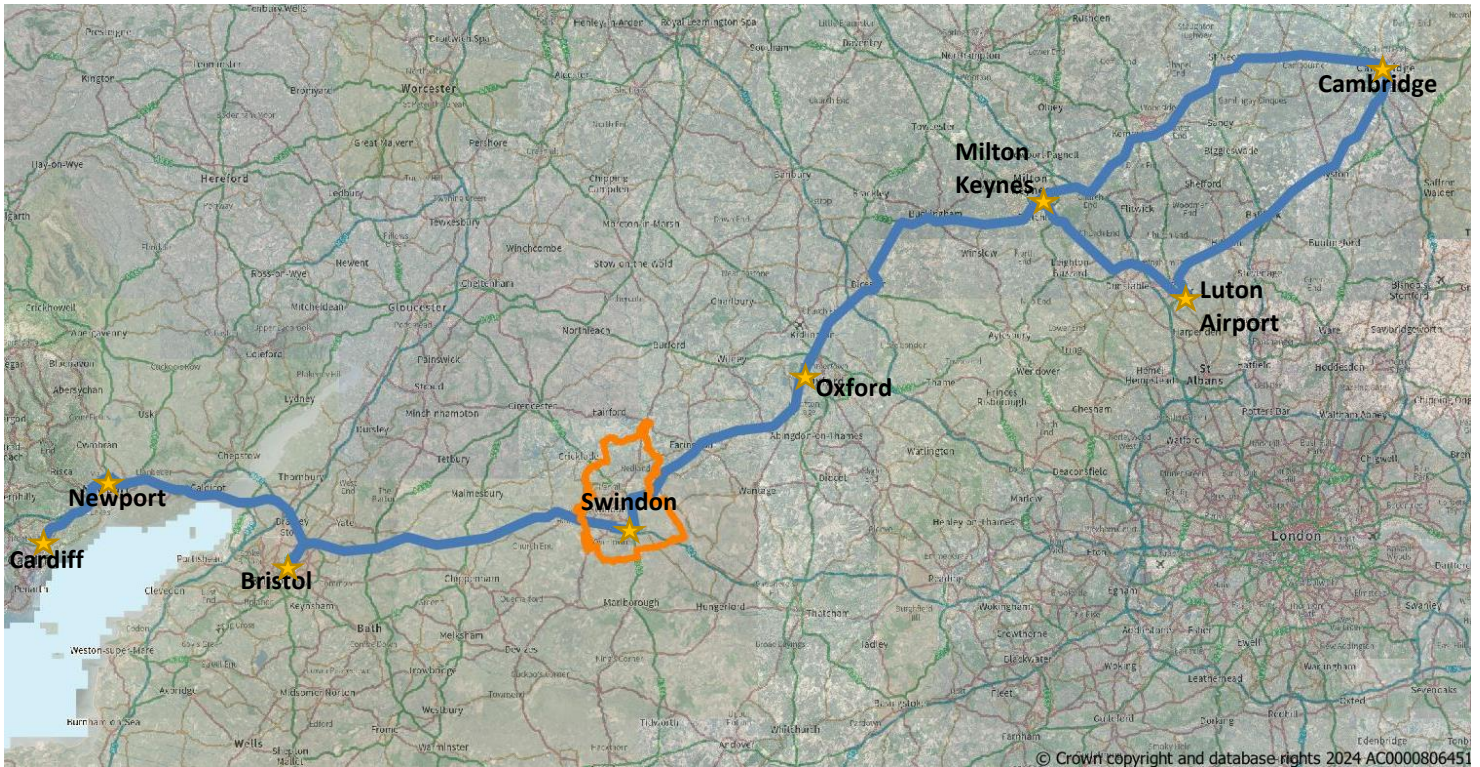


Figure 4.3: Proposed coach route.

Maintaining and creating a Public Transport Strategy Team

In order to co-ordinate and create a secure and sustainable bus network in Swindon, the Public Transport Strategy Team will need to be continually developed to ensure the team is of the correct size. This is in order to be able to undertake and deliver all necessary work and projects required of it.

BSIP investment in staff resources has enabled the plan to be delivered. It is vital to build upon the funding investment so far and maintain the staffing level we have developed, set career paths to enable succession, and attract new entrants. Consultancy is an expensive and generic route to solutions which require ongoing relationships and team stability to be performed effectively, collaboratively, and economically.

At present there is one permanent member of staff and two employed on two-year contracts. The expectation would be to have a Public Transport Strategy Team of seven staff to ensure work concerning local bus services, rail and electric vehicles can be delivered. The aim would be to have all sustainable transport under the umbrella of one team.

5. Targets, Performance Monitoring and Reporting

Table 3: Targets set out in the 2021 BSIP and monitoring evidence to date.

Monitoring Evidence	BSIP 2021 Target	2024 Performance
Patronage uplift	<p>Achieve a 44% increase in bus passenger boardings throughout the Borough from 11.9m in 2019 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 13.5m by the end of 2024 which is a 29.4% increase. at least 17.1m by the end of 2032 which is a 43.7% increase. At least 18.5m by the end of 2035 which is a 55.5% increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus passenger boardings were 9.6 million for FY 2023/24. To achieve the targets, the ambitions set out in this BSIP will need to be fulfilled.
Mode shift uplift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12.8% in peak bus mode share across the town centre and corridors serving the main urban area built prior to 1985. A much more significant transformation in bus use from West Swindon and the Northern Development area, to achieve an 9% peak bus mode share. To secure, from all committed new developments, at least a 10% bus mode share. Beyond the town we aim to secure mode share from Wroughton and Highworth of at least 9%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest data on this is from the 2021 Census, which shows an overall average bus mode share for Swindon Borough at 5.6%. The 2021 Census shows an average bus mode share of 3.8% in West Swindon. This Census also gives a bus mode share of 2.8% for Highworth and 2% for the Wroughton, Wichelstowe and Chiseldon MSOA. A more up-to-date assessment of mode share is required to give us an accurate look at these areas post-COVID.
Improved vehicle quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2024 the bus fleet age profile in Swindon Borough would be operated by 85% of the buses being ten years or less old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of June 2024, only 49% of the bus fleet are ten years or less old, with 36% being Euro VI. Highlighting on our need to provide zero emission buses.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bus fleet in 2030 will average no more than 10 years old and will all meet EURO VI standards. 	
Journey time improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the Swindon urban area, peak journey times on the main bus corridors will be no longer than 5% more, end to end, than off-peak journey times Within the Swindon urban area, bus journeys from the outer ends of the urban network to Fleming Way will take no longer than 24 minutes. Today this is typically 28-32 minutes. Journey times – 10% reduction on all journey times across the Borough; Increased journey time consistency throughout the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is substantial redevelopment to replace the Bus Station with a new bus interchange at Fleming Way. This means that we cannot obtain an accurate picture until the redevelopment has been completely in Spring 2025.
Reliability improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliability – 5% improvement in reliability By 2025 95% of journeys will operate within the Traffic Commissioners Window. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across the two main operators, punctuality was an average of 84% for 2022/23.
Customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase bus passenger satisfaction by 5% from a base of 92% in 2019/20 to 97% by March 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In future, we would like to review not only the overall passenger satisfaction, but different aspects such as punctuality, value for money, journey time etc.
Bus stop infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By April 2022 agree a specification for a minimum level of bus stop infrastructure and a protocol for maintenance for all bus stops commensurate with their Network categorisation. By April 2023 all stops within the urban area and in Wroughton and Highworth will fully meet Equalities Act 2010 compliance with a 4m long paved boarder, ambient lighting and a free-standing network branded flag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The bus stop infrastructure targets will be achieved once the new bus shelter contract has been awarded and in place. This is expected to be in September 2024. There is a move to establish Mobility Hubs that will primarily be an interchange between core network services and the DRT services. There is potential for two new Park and Ride sites, but these will be reliant upon how we use them in the future and a

	<p>and timetable case at a standard height above the footway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2024 there will be an agreed strategy for Park and Ride, and Local Mobility hubs across the Urban areas and in Wroughton and Highworth. 	<p>possible move away from the traditional Park and Ride role.</p>
Improved passenger information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2025 we aim to have all bus corridors with real time information at each bus stop. By March 2023 all publicity material whether produced by the local authority or bus operators will clearly indicate other operators' services within the relevant area. We would aim to have co-ordinated bus timetable information, a bus map showing all services and operators App showing all bus information in place by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Spring 2024, we have investigated some options of RTPi in the Borough and will be planning to implement this in FY 2025/26. A joint network book (and digital version) is in progress and will be released by the end of Summer 2024.
Increase in bus service provision	<p>By 2025, the frequency of the network will have increased in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QBC – every 7-8 min Mon-Sat & every 15 min Sun/Eves Flagship – every 10 min Mon-Sat & every 15 min Sun/Eves Core – every 15 min Mon-Sat & every 30 min Sun/Eves Non-Core – every 30 min Mon-Sat & every 60 min Sun/Eves <p>By 2030, this will increase to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QBC – every 5 min Mon-Sat & every 10 min Sun/Eves Flagship – every 7-8 min Mon-Sat & every 15 min Sun/Eves Core – every 10 min Mon-Sat & every 20 min Sun/Eves Non-Core – every 20 min Mon-Sat & every 30 min Sun/Eves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus has primarily been on supporting the existing network and making sure that we have a bus network that we can develop and grow in the future. We can now move towards improving the frequency of the network, as part of our ambitions for the next 10 years.
Bus priority	<p>By 2025 the QBCs will have been implemented on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QBC1 Cricklade Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working with the operators to address how we will move forward with the Quality Bus Corridors. We will need to do this in relation to establishing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QBC2 Wichelstowe (including the Red Post Drive bus filter) • QBC3 New Eastern Villages - Lotmead (via Queens Drive) <p>By 2028 the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remainder of QBC3 NEV will have been implemented including the Great Stall Bridge over the A419 and the PT Spine through Great Stall to the Great Stall Park and Ride. • the entire QBC1 will have been extended to and through Kingsdown (East of A419) and to the B4018 at Broad Blunsdon; and also via Coldharbour/Turnpike to Tadpole Garden Village via Ermin Street. • a Full Business Case will have been submitted to implement QBC4 West Swindon Express bus. 	the core network and the DRT service that will support it.
Fares and ticketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2025 the existing urban multi-operator range will be available on each operators App for off-bus purchase and delivered as an inter-available optically read product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of 2024, the two main operators now have a multi-operator digital ticket, with an offer to the Borough's smaller operators to join the range.
Net zero emission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the large local bus operators deliver on their decarbonisation commitments by 2035. • By April 2022 develop a programme to support other local bus operators to submit bids for funding to enable them to commit to decarbonising their own fleets. • If ZEBRA funding bid is successful, this will enable 52% of the town's bus fleet to be electric by the end of 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC does not currently have funding available to invest in an electric bus network. • The DNO supply provides a significant challenge to delivery of an upgrading project, which would give us the capability to run an electric network. • There are current infrastructure constraints preventing the operation of electric buses on all town centre routes.

Qualitative evidence

We are taking continual qualitative evidence through in-depth stakeholder engagement and surveys, which at times evolves into co-design. This enables us to penetrate the needs of the harder to reach groups; the vulnerable, ethnic minorities, those with accessibility issues, and

new consumers. This best captures the consumer experience for us to find the most appropriate intervention. Digging deeper is required to fully understand what current and potential passengers would like to achieve, before trying to solve a perceived problem inappropriately.

BSIP Monitoring Report and Bus Connectivity Assessment

At this time, a new BSIP monitoring report is currently in the design process and so new performance metrics and targets are not to be defined until this work has been completed.

On 12th June 2024, Swindon Borough's first Bus Connectivity Assessment (BCA) has been submitted. BCAs will be completed annually and this identifies the impacts interventions have on connectivity.

Most useful evidence base

SBC and Swindon's EP Board have found that the following have been the most useful elements of the 2021 evidence base for developing and implementing the ambitions of the BSIP. The 2021 targets were ambitious as the Plan was used to secure funding and now following review these targets will need to be made more realistic. These being –

- Relationship with other Council policies and strategies
- Potential to form symbiotic relationships
- Age of vehicle fleets
- Strength of the bus network
- Patronage on bus services
- Reliability of bus services
- Relationship with bus operators.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Existing Bus Lane and Gates

Table 4: Bus gates maintained and their locations

Name of Road	Direction of Travel	Length of Bus Gate	Hours of operation	Permitted Vehicles
Torun Way	Both Directions	From the junction with Casterbridge Road to the junction of White Eagle Road, a distance of approx. 97 metres	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	
Mazurek Way	Both Directions	From a point 20 metres west of the service yard access for a distance of approx. 36 metres in a westerly direction.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Ermin Street	Both Directions	From its junction with Hobley Drive to a point 10 metres south east of that junction.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Ferndale Road	Both Directions	From a point 45 metres east of its junction with Kitchener Street to a point 60 metres east of that junction.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Upham Road	Both Directions	From a point 13 metres west of the junction to Queens Drive Service Road to a point 9 metres west of that junction.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Polaris Way	Both Directions	From a point 70 metres south west of its junction with Cockleberry Roundabout in a south westerly direction to a point 127 metres east of its junction with North Star Avenue.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Bristol Street	East	From its junction with Emlyn Square (west) to its junction with Emlyn Square (east)	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Pedal Cycles Taxis
Church Place (East and West Section)	East	Between its junction with Church Place (North and South Section) and a point 28 metres west of that junction.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Pedal Cycles Taxis

New College Drive	Both Directions	From its junction with Bilborough Drive to its junction with the exit road from New College.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Un-named Service Road to and from Asda Walmart	Both Directions	From a point 2 metres north of its roundabout junction with Lady Lane called 'Manor Farm' to a point 18 metres north of that point.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Un-named link road between Marlborough Road & Liden Drive	Both Directions	From its junction with Liden Drive to its junction with Marlborough Road (A4259)	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Marlborough Road (Hospital access road)	West	From its roundabout junction with Waterside Way to its junction with the Marlborough Road (Hospital access road)	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Un-named link road from Great Western Way to Mannington Lane	West	From Great Western Way at a point approximately 50 metres north of the Mannington Roundabout for a distance of 253 metres in a westerly direction	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Un-named link road between Chelmsford Road and Eastleaze Road	Both Directions	From its junction with Eastleaze Road to its junction with Chelmsford Road	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Un-named link road from the junction with Mannington Lane to Tewkesbury Way	South East	From its junction with Mannington Lane in a south easterly direction to its junction with Tewkesbury Way.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	

PenzanceDrive	Both Directions	From the Penzance Bus Lane to the junction with Rodbourne Road.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Pedal Cycles Taxis
East WichelWay (01)	Both Directions	Between its junction with Croft Road(A4361) and Cornwood Road	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
East Wichel Way (02)	Both Directions	Between its junction with Foxham Way and Arnhill Road / Barbrook Road	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
Stratton Road	Both Directions	From its junction with Stratton Slip Road (to Swindon Road) to its junction with Greenbridge Retail Park Road.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Pedal Cycles
PenzanceDrive	South	The eastern link road for a length of 16.5 metres to the junction with Wootton Bassett Road.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	Taxis
PenzanceDrive	North	The centre link road for a length of 20.5metres from the junction with Wootton Bassett Road.	7 days a week 24 Hours a day	

Table 5: The existing lengths of road that are reserved for bus.

Name of Road	Direction of Travel	Length of Bus Only Road	Hours of operation	Permitted vehicles
Marlborough Road	Northwest (offside lane)	From a point 90 metres southeast of its junction with the un-named link road to Liden Drive to its junction with that road.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
County Road	South	The offside lane from a point approximately 20 metres south of its junction with Elmina Road to its junction with Manchester Road.	7 Days a week 24 hours of each day	Pedal Cycles Taxis
Fleming Way 01	North	(East of Princes Street) from the westbound carriageway into Corporation Street in a northerly direction.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Taxis

Fleming Way 02	South	(West of Princes Street) From the eastbound carriageway into Princes Street in a southerly direction.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Taxis
Princes Street 03	West	(Junction with Fleming Way east) from the southbound carriageway into Fleming Way in a westerly direction.	7 days a week 24 hours a day	Taxis
A4311 Cirencester Way 02	South	The offside lane from a point approximately 85 metres south of its junction with Liddington Street for a distance of approximately 90 metres	7 days a week 24 hours a day	
Pipers Way	East	The offside lane from a point 7 metres north west of the centre line of the south access of Wroughton Park and Ride, for a distance of 46 metres in a north westerly direction.	7 Days a week 24 hours of each day	
Fleming Way (West)	West	The nearside lane from a point approximately 43 metres west of the western kerbline of Islington Street to a point approximately 39 metres east of the eastern kerbline of Fleet Street	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of each day	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
Fleming Way(East) 01	East	The nearside lane from a point approximately 64 metres west of the western kerbline of Medgbury Place to a point approximately 217 metres east of that kerbline.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of each day	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
Fleming Way(East) 02	West	The nearside lane from a point approximately 235 metres east of the eastern kerbline of Medgbury Place to a point approximately 65 metres west of that kerbline.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of each day	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles

Holbrook Way	South West	The nearside lane from a point approximately 41 metres north east of the north eastern kerbline of Bridge Street to a point approximately 132 metres south west of that kerbline.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
Faringdon Road	West	The offside lane from a point approximately 11 metres west of the western kerbline of East Street to a point approximately 84 metres west of that kerbline.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
A4259 Queens Drive	Northwest	The nearside lane from a point approximately 106 metres south of the southern kerbline of Upham Road to a point approximately 126 metres east of its junction with the Magic Roundabout.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
A4311 Cricklade Road 01	South	55 metres north of northern kerbline of the northern arm of Grafton Road to a point approximately 51 metres south of the southern kerbline Okus Grove.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
Penhill Drive	East	The nearside lane from a point approximately 40 metres east of the eastern kerbline of Inglesham Road to its junction with Cricklade Road.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
A4311 Cirencester Way 01	North	The nearside lane from a point approximately 165 metres south of the southern kerbline of Liddington Street to a point approximately 149 metres south of that junction.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles

A4311 Cricklade Road 02	North	The nearside lane from a point approximately 120 metres south of the southern kerbline of Liddington Street to a point approximately 87 metres north of the northern kerbline of Chestnut Avenue.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
A4311 Cricklade Road 03	North	The nearside lane from its junction with Menham Close to its junction with Cirencester Way.	7 Days a week 24 hours of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles
Regent Circus	East	From a point 31.4 metres east of the eastern kerbline of Commercial Road and Regent Circus for a distance of approximately 31 metres to the junction with Princes Street.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday.	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
Princes Street02	North	The nearside lane from the junction with Regent Circus to a point 131 metres north of the northern kerbline of Gordon Road.	7 Days a week 7am to 7pm of eachday	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
TewkesburyWay	East	The nearside lane from its junction with Mannington Lane to a point 68 metres west of Mannington Roundabout.	7 Days a week 24 hours of eachday	Pedal Cycles
PenzanceDrive	North East	The nearside lane from a point approximately 85 metres west of the section of Penzance Drive subject to a bus gate to the Penzance Dr bus gate.	7 Days a week 24 hours of eachday	Pedal Cycles
Emlyn Square	South	The nearside lane from its junction with London Street to its junction with Faringdon Road.	7 Days a week 24 hours of eachday	None

HighworthRoad	East	From a point 40 metres north of the property boundary of Tranatore and Rulcott for a distance of 218 metres in a southerly direction.	7 days a week 7am to 7pm	Motorcycles Pedal Cycles Taxis Authorised Vehicles
B4006 PipersWay	East	From a point 285metres southwest of the signalised junction of Pipers Way (B4996) with Applebee Road to a point in line with the southern kerbline of theun-named access road on the western side of the same junction.	7 Days a week 24 hours of eachday	None

