



SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)






JUNE 2024



Passenger
Transport
Group



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Foreword

Leader of the Council & Executive Director of Place



By its very nature as a beautiful and predominantly rural county, Shropshire has somewhat suffered when it comes to public transport services in comparison to more urban authorities, where transformative funding has been more readily available in recent years.

We are very aware that residents of Shropshire and visitors alike want to see an improved public transport network, allowing them greater access to essential services, employment, education and of course the opportunity to explore our beautiful county in a more sustainable way.

That is why we have refreshed our Bus Service Improvement Plan for Shropshire to reflect what we believe is required to transform our bus services.

People want the option to travel more sustainably, with modern buses, with green technology at the fore and improvements such as Wi-Fi and USB charge points, but more importantly right now people want to see more bus services, greater frequencies on important routes, longer evening operating hours, the return of Sunday services, more affordable fares and simple multi-operator ticketing options.

We believe that through this plan we have made an extremely strong case to deliver a truly innovative and modern network and invite you to study our plans in detail.



Lezley Picton

Leader of The Council, Councillor for Tern & Portfolio Holder for Policy & Strategy, Improvement & Communications



I am delighted to bring this plan forward and share our ambitions for bus services across Shropshire. As a large rural county, we understand how vital it is that people are able to access services, employment and education no matter where they live.

Connecting people to opportunities is a theme that transcends a wide range of our activities and it underpins our ambitions economically, environmentally and socially.

Quality bus services are essential to the fabric of community life and I welcome seeing our vision translating into delivery.



Prof. Mark Barrow

Executive Director - Place
Shropshire Council





INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT



Shropshire
Council

SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)

JUNE 2024

Introduction

Shropshire's refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) sets out the Vision for Bus Travel in Shropshire, highlighting a programme or investment to transform the current bus offer in the county, creating the opportunity for bus to become a realistic first choice of travel for residents and visitors, whilst unlocking all the associated benefits that would bring.

The Council and the Shropshire Bus Enhanced Partnership are working hard to deliver a transport system that the county will be proud of, one which allows people to prosper by connecting our communities to opportunities in employment, access to education, health housing and leisure.

Public transport is essential for inclusive growth in the county and wider region and the bus is central to that public transport offer, our BSIP sets out those plans that with investment could transform the current public transport offer in Shropshire.

The bus network is facing serious challenges, since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic the majority of Public Transport Bus operators are reporting that many of their bus services and especially those in the more rural locations are failing to recover to levels beyond **70%** of pre pandemic passenger usage.

This combined with a number of other local and national factors, (including but not limited to) ambition, fuel prices, inflation and a general increase in transport operational costs has severely impacted the viability of the commercial bus market in the county.

This has seen over 95% of bus services in the county become either supported fully under contract to the Council or through the Department for Transport revenue support programme.

The following sections of the Bus Service Improvement Plan highlight the potential investment opportunities to bring that vision for bus to life, reflecting the ambitions set out in the Department for Transport's National Bus Strategy for England



Shropshire's Rural Challenge

Shropshire is the second largest inland County in England, bordering Wales, with a population of **343,000** across a landmass of **1250** square miles.

Shropshire's bus network has an indisputable, but often undervalued, role in our transport system, providing an essential access to employment, education, leisure, health and other key facilities. As you can see from the image/figure, a substantial number of residents in rural areas do not have access to a car and those that do have access to a car do not have a suitable public transport network as an alternative.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic, public transport will play a key role in supporting access to jobs, promoting inclusive economic growth and helping to achieve national goals and strategies. Unfortunately, our public transport network, including bus services and their passengers, currently face numerous external challenges (i.e. frequency and availability of services) that we must tackle if we wish to increase patronage and provide support for the long-term sustainability of services.

Many rural local authorities have understandably reduced their funding for public transport over the last few years, in Shropshire we have largely maintained our existing public transport funding commitments, but with the decline in passenger numbers there has been little scope for investment in the network through the Council or indeed the bus operators themselves.

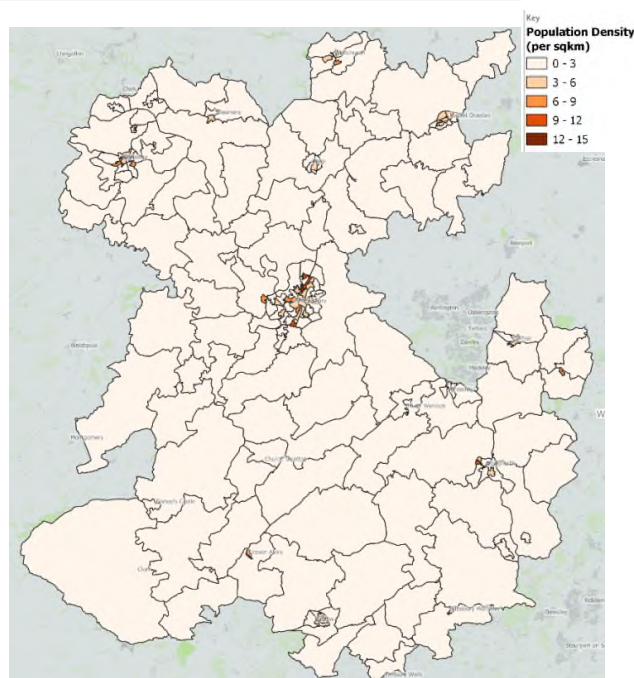


Figure 1A: Shropshire Population Density

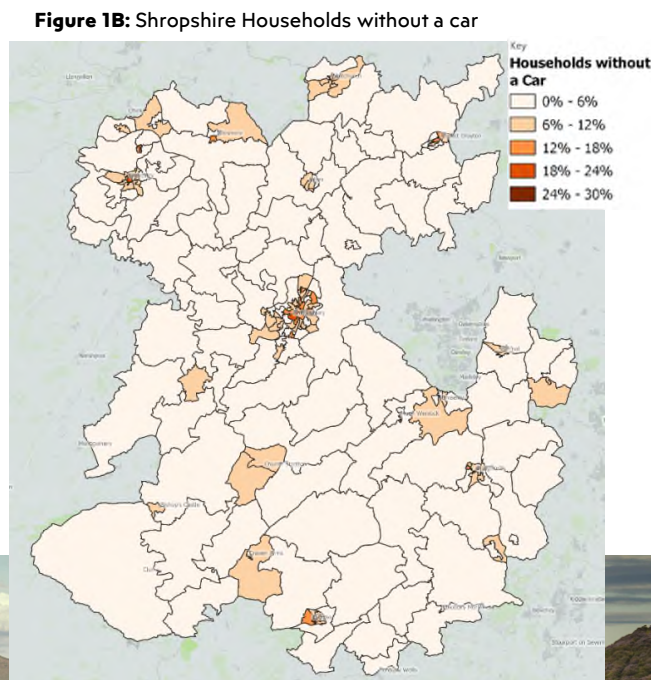


Figure 1B: Shropshire Households without a car

Image: The Longmynd – Area of outstanding natural beauty, Shropshire



The vast majority of “Socially Necessary Services” within Shropshire are subsidised by the Local Authority, which is very different to the National average outside of London, which the department has calculated at 13% (Bus Back Better – March 2021), which is perhaps more attributable to the more densely populated urban areas outside of London, which have significant commercially operated public transport networks. In more urban communities people tend to have higher levels of transport provision, in rural areas, where transport is key to helping maintain access to vital amenities and services, reduced budgets has meant those networks are much more limited.

It is often rural communities that are disproportionately more likely to experience transport isolation and in particular access to essential services.

In a 2021 survey of Rural Services Network (RSN) members generated 172 usable responses. When asked to select their top three “rural needs” **80%** of respondents identified public transport, along with broadband and phone coverage, these clearly can be identified as challenging factors to living in rural communities, loneliness and social isolation.

Rural areas embrace a wide range of people and communities. Although many of their diverse concerns overlap with those of urban dwellers, some are also distinctly rural, and some reflect the interdependency of rural and urban communities.

Market towns could act as engines for the rural economy with a focus for investment in services, facilities and transportation but careful management is required if these centres are to meet local needs. They are still valued by rural and urban dwellers for their cultural and historical heritage but at the moment rural residents may bypass them to work, shop and spend leisure time elsewhere.

An improved transport network needs to encourage:

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Better collaboration within and between market towns and other small centres of population. |
| 2. | Better promotion of travel opportunities, more awareness of solutions other than the car and therefore regular increase in the uptake of public transport. |
| 3. | Prioritising small town centres for change around a shared vision, incorporating the development of transport hubs to help ensure market towns become business and social hubs for the disparate communities that surround them, whilst enabling onward travel to the wider national transport network. The thinness of the transport services in rural areas is serving as a barrier to growth and productivity gains. |
| 4. | Comparatively small, but crucial, investment in Community Transport Organisations that underpin community volunteering and networking. |
| 5. | Housing development that fulfils population needs and is well integrated into the layout of the settlement and where appropriate the aligning of the existing transport solutions or the creation of new transport solutions through any development suitable funding opportunities. |
| 6. | Better forward thinking about potential linkages and synergies between provision for work/shopping/leisure within towns via quick and reliable means of sustainable travel. |

Effects of poor transport on rural locations

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Increased isolation | Limited transport options exacerbate feelings of isolation and contribute to poor mental health in rural communities ¹ |
| Transport poverty | The proportion of households in transport poverty in Shropshire is 36% |
| Income disparities | Rural households spend an average of about £113.90 per week on transport, compared to £76.20 for urban householders. This high expenditure eats into a larger portion of disposable income (12.3% vs 9.9%) ¹ |
| Lower earnings | Employees in rural areas with the lowest earning face wages that are 12% lower than those working in urban areas ¹ |
| Cost of transport | In rural communities, transport is the single largest household expense (excluding mortgage repayments), whereas in urban families, it ranks as the second-largest expenditure ² . This cost contributes significantly to poverty in rural areas, affecting over 5 million people (8% of the population) nationally. |

References;

¹ rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-cost-of-living.pdf

² [Getting-the-measure-of-transport-poverty-Nov-2023.pdf \(smf.co.uk\)](https://www.smf.co.uk/getting-the-measure-of-transport-poverty-nov-2023.pdf)

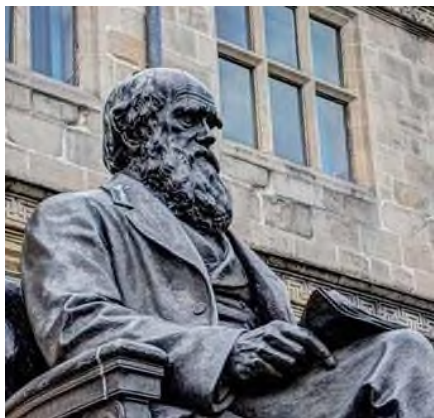


Image: Charles Darwin statue, Shrewsbury



Image: Stokesay Castle, Craven Arms



Image: English Bridge, Shrewsbury

Image: Shropshire Hills – Area of outstanding natural beauty



Shropshire population & residential addresses

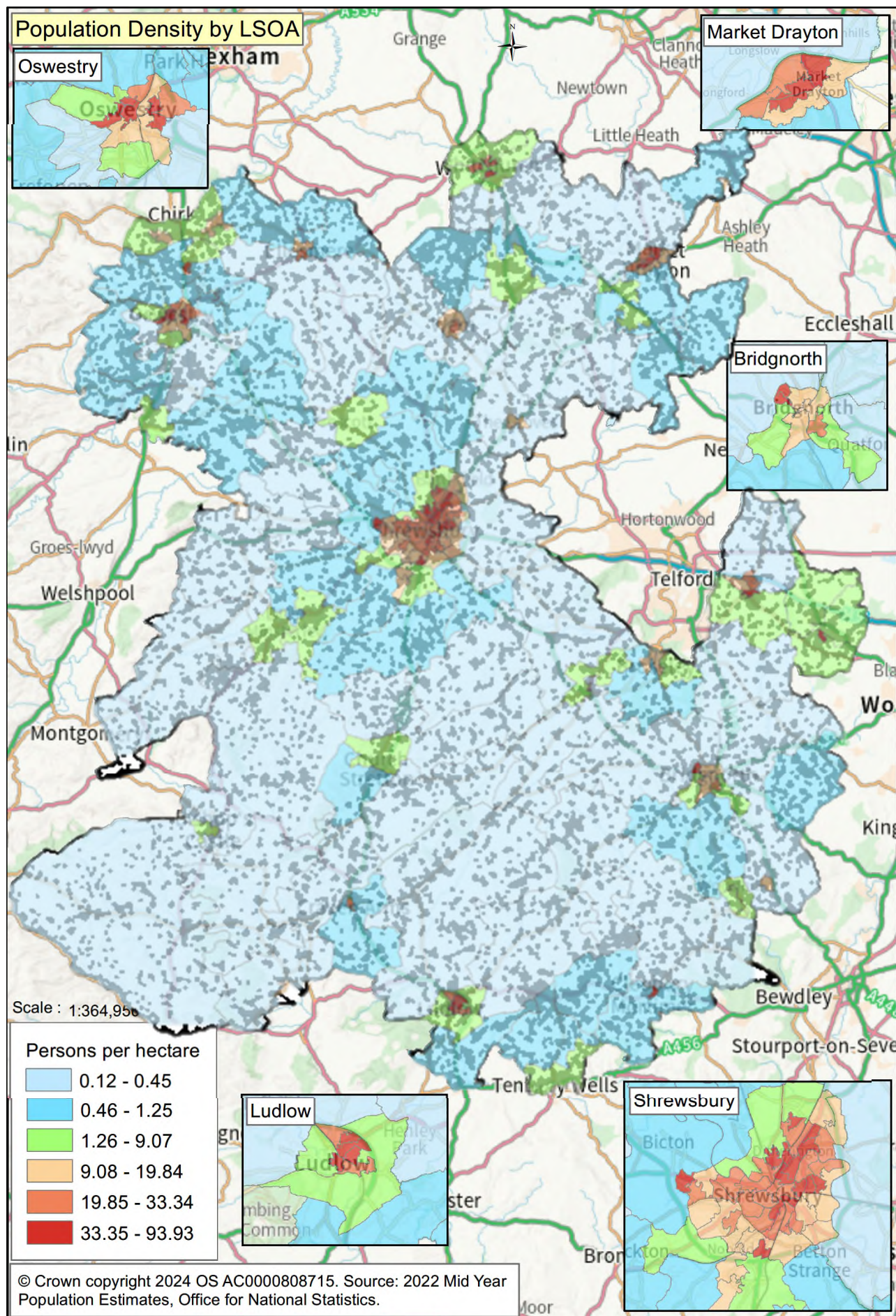
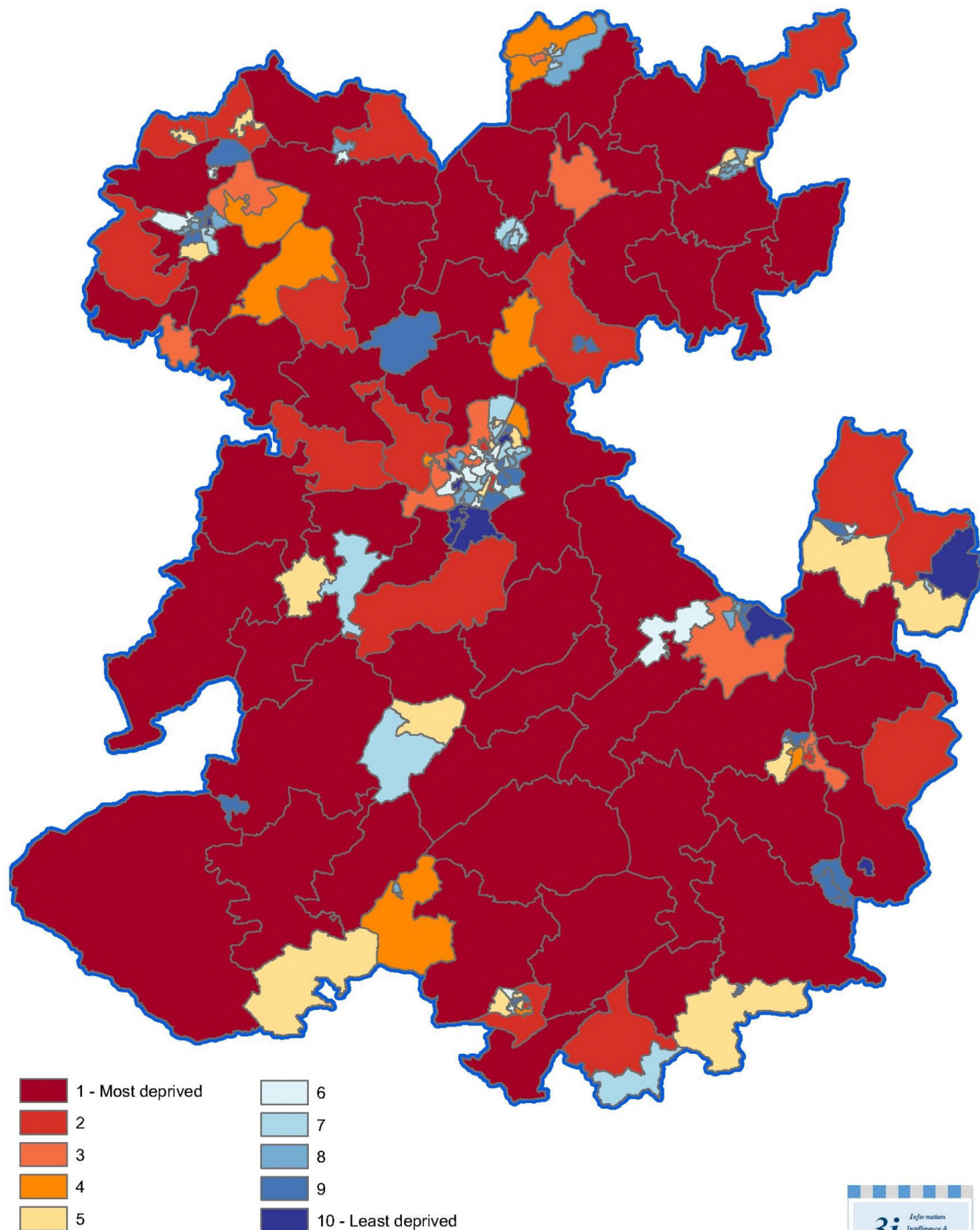


Figure 1C: Population & residential addresses

Barriers to Housing & Services – National Decline



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Scale: 1 inch = 7.39 miles

Figure 1D: Areas of deprivation in Shropshire

Transport is an essential facilitator of economic life and social activity. Buses make up the majority of the public transport network in Shropshire, so are crucial for providing affordable access to employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities – the bus network supports residents' and visitors' participation in society.

The idea of a 'travel time budget' is well established. Over many decades, data from across the world shows that people tend to limit how much time they are willing to spend travelling every day and week – commuting for long periods, for example, eats into the time people would prefer to spend in other ways – with their families, such as pursuing leisure activities or volunteering. This means that people are reluctant to travel too far – in time terms – so when changes in the transport network bring places closer, their travel horizons and their freedom to access destinations increases. As this is about travelling time, not distance, a more frequent bus service increases residents' freedom to travel further, because they will not have to wait as long for the bus. A faster service has the same effect – it increases the range of destinations people are willing to travel to within the same time.

All of this means that faster and more frequent services support residents and visitors in their daily lives, giving them access to jobs, education and other opportunities they would not otherwise be able to take advantage of, encourage more people to choose public transport for more trips, which reduces pollution, carbon emissions and congestion, and supports the ongoing viability of the bus network, which is especially important for people who have no alternative means of travel.

Image: Shropshire Hills – Area of outstanding natural beauty

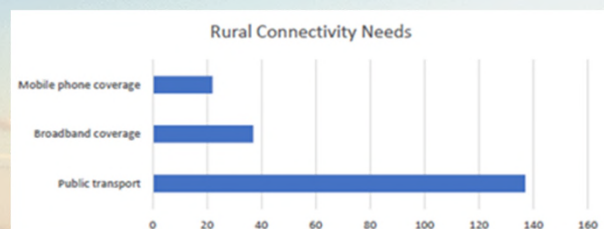


Figure 1E: Rural Connectivity Needs



Cross Party Members

Working Group

After the publication of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) it was identified that interest from local members in the county was strong in relation to public transport.

A working group representing the various political parties within Shropshire Council was created in 2022 and chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Transport to discuss the strategic direction of public transport.

The group has met on a number of times of the last two years and played an important role in ensuring that the DRT service that was being developed and latterly launched as OnDemand, was a model that could be delivered in other areas throughout the county.



“ Shropshire Council’s Cross Party Public Transport Working Group has representatives from all political groups representing both urban and rural areas. The working group has a strong influence on future plans and ambitions for public transport in Shropshire. The group collaborated over the plans for the introduction of the On Demand Service, and the service works across zones represented by cross party councillors. The aim of the group is to influence plans to improve bus services throughout the Local Authority area, regardless of political boundaries. ”



Councillor Ian Nellins
Portfolio Holder for Transport & Public Transport Working Group Chair

Working Group Members

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Rosemary Dartnall (Labour) | Councillor for Bayston Hill, Column & Sutton | Ian Nellins (Conservatives) CHAIR | Councillor for Market Drayton West | Roger Evans (Liberal Democrats) | Councillor for Longden |
| Andy Boddington (Liberal Democrats) | Councillor for Ludlow North | Julia Evans (Green Party) | Councillor for Radbrook | Claire Wild (Conservatives) | Councillor for Severn Valley |
| Geoff Elnor (Conservatives) | Councillor for Ellesmere Urban | Bernie Bentick (Liberal Democrats) | Councillor for Meole | Edward Towers (Independent) | Councillor for Wem |

Enhanced Partnership

In March 2021, the Government announced a new National Bus Strategy with the aim of levelling up the standard of bus services on offer across England in line with the high standard of services available in London. Alongside the delivery of this strategy, there was an expectation that local transport authorities work towards forming Enhanced Partnerships with local bus operators, including the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The requirement to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan gave Shropshire Council a welcome opportunity to work more collaboratively with our local bus operators to consider the current bus service being offered to residents and how improvements could be made. Shropshire Council met with our local bus operators individually initially and then convened a collective bus partnership meeting monthly to oversee the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, published at the end of October 2021.

On 30 June 2021 Shropshire Council gave approval to proceed with the development of an Enhanced Partnership. The commencement of this was confirmed through the notice of the intention to prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Enhanced Partnership Schemes, as required and set out in section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

Shropshire Council along with the members of Shropshire Bus Enhanced Partnership agreed an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme from 1 April 2022 including a local Bus Passenger Charter, following the required Local Bus Operator objection period and consultation with key stakeholders. As part of the key stakeholder consultation, points were raised for the Partnership to consider, however, no objections were recorded.

Statement from the **Chair of the Shropshire Bus EP;**

“ In response to the National Bus Strategy in 2021, the development of the original BSIP gave a real opportunity for Shropshire Council to come together with its local bus operators to collectively consider the current bus service offer to residents and how it could be enhanced. Very quickly, a Shropshire Bus Partnership was established, meeting monthly to formulate the BSIP and then to formulate and put in place an Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Enhanced Partnership Scheme from April 2022, setting out some commitments and requirements on the authority and operators, including a Bus Passenger Charter.

The Partnership now meets quarterly. There are two parts to the meeting – the first being a session involving just Council officers and bus operators, the second part having wider representation including community transport and Bus Users Shropshire. This provides a very useful forum for discussions on wide ranging matters, such as multi-operator ticketing, and for sharing experiences and knowledge. It has provided the opportunity for collective responses to the emerging Movement Strategy for Shrewsbury and redevelopment proposals for the Riverside area of the town centre, which included the bus station. Furthermore, the Partnership has engaged with the Council’s Highways Team to seek to improve the management and coordination of roadworks and closures in respect of reducing impact on bus services. ”



Peter Hardy

Technical Director – ITP – **Shropshire Bus EP Chair**

Who is part of the EP?

The following local bus operators are represented as a member of the Shropshire Bus Enhanced Partnership.

The Partnership Board has been supported and chaired by representatives of transport consultancy ITP.



Key Issues

In March 2024, the Enhanced Partnership worked closely together to agree and present seven principles it would want considered in the Shrewsbury Movement Consultation, regarding Shrewsbury Bus Station and its placement within the Riverside development.

Shrewsbury Bus Station and its future will remain a key topic for the Partnership throughout the development and will provide an invaluable forum for feeding into proposals.



Image: Members of Shropshire Bus Enhanced Partnership – May 2024

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Formed July 2021 | Terms of reference confirmed | 12 organisations represented | Met quarterly from 2023 |
| NETWORK CHALLENGES | | PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES | |
| Large rural area | No commercial viability | Limited ambition | Managing decline |
| Lack of evening & Sunday services | Resources spread thinly | Lack of commercial opportunity | Fragmented & unstable network |
| Network built on concession journeys | | Starting from a low base | Lack of external funding |

Meeting frequency and format

The formation of a Bus Partnership that meets regularly has been a valuable forum to highlight bus operator and local authority issues, discuss ideas and put forward potential solutions.

The Partnership meetings initially were held monthly and online but after consultation changed to quarterly face to face meetings from January 2023. This format remains in place today and works extremely well, ensuring a full agenda and the meetings being well attended. Shropshire Council and bus operators have both noticeably benefited from the switch to face to face meetings with more open discussion and easier collaboration.

In September 2022, the Enhanced Partnership voted and agreed for local bus passenger group 'Bus Users Shropshire' to represent and join the partnership meetings. Bus Users Shropshire have provided invaluable feedback on behalf of local bus passengers highlighting current challenges for bus users and where improvements can be made.

Shropshire's Enhanced Partnership meetings are currently formatted in two parts. Bus operators attend the first part of the meeting, where discussions are focussed on day to day operations and improvements. The second part of the meeting is opened up to a wider audience which includes Bus Users Shropshire and representatives from Shropshire's Community Transport Consortium. Community Transport operators play a pivotal role in transport provision across Shropshire and often provide the only means of transport for many isolated and vulnerable residents who are unable to access a traditional bus service. In acknowledgement of the huge importance of this provision, it was felt appropriate that Community Transport representatives form part of the Enhanced Partnership and have their voice heard.

Following requests, Shropshire Council recently took the decision to invite guest speakers from both within and outside the Council to the second half of meetings to discuss relevant topics raised by the partnership such as roadworks and traffic and recently the Shrewsbury Movement Consultation and ongoing redevelopment of the Riverside quarter in Shrewsbury Town Centre. The guest speakers have been able to give an overview of their responsible areas and take questions from the Partnership.

SHROPSHIRE BUS ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME INTERESTS:

- SINGLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT WEBSITE
- BUS PASSENGER CHARTER
- ROADWORKS PLANNING & CONSULTATION
- NEW DEVELOPMENTS & OPERATOR INVOLVEMENT
- EXTERNAL FUNDING BIDS
- MULTI-OPERATOR TICKETING
- PASSENGER INFORMATION
- SHREWSBURY MOVEMENT STRATEGY
- BUS STATIONS & INTERCHANGES

Enhanced Partnership

The following are comments from members of the Shropshire Bus Enhanced Partnership;

“ The consortium has a long-standing relationship with Shropshire Council going back approximately 20 years, and a representative from the council has often attended the consortium meetings. As a consequence of this long-standing relationship, the consortium were invited to be part of the enhanced partnership. This was one of two community transport places in the partnership, which also includes a bus users representative group, and a number of bus and coach operators. The primary aim for involvement in the partnership is to improve collaboration and generate funding opportunities for the County. For the consortium, this is part of a wider strategy of involvement with several networks in the area, including regular engagement with Health and Wellbeing Board, the Board and Compact group of the VCS Assembly and other local networks. Joining has allowed the members to both stay in touch with local policy and provide feedback to local decision makers and communities, which some organisations, particular smaller organisations, may not have capacity to do otherwise. ”



Linda Cox

Shropshire Community Transport Consortium

“ As a company we have found the Enhanced Partnership (EP) on the whole beneficial. We have found having the EP meeting split into two with the first one part just with LTA and operator where we can have more specific meetings on legislation, funding and operator needs. Then the second part being open to a wider group and also have guest partners invited E.g. Road works team and town planner and hearing points from operators and looking at how we can work better to improve buses running and delays. ”



Lee Jones

Director – Minsterley Motors

“ Bus Users Shropshire, as the main organisation representing the interests of bus users in the county, and which is unconnected with the operators and is politically neutral, welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Enhanced Partnership. In respect of a local issue which is very important to us at the present time, we especially value being able to come to a consensus with the other members of the Partnership concerning the future of Shrewsbury Bus Station and the facilities which we believe to be essential when planning its possible replacement. We have been very pleased to be involved in The Big Town Plan (Shrewsbury Movement) and Future Oswestry. ”



Les Bell

Chair – Bus Users Shropshire

“ The Shropshire Enhancement Partnership is an opportunity for the decision makers of all the local bus service providers and officers of Shropshire Council to meet regularly and discuss topics of a shared interest with the objective of improving the bus provision in Shropshire. As well as discussing the challenges with operating a reliable and sustainable bus network, we discuss initiatives and solutions for mitigating these challenges and help steer future transport projects in the County. The Shropshire Enhancement Partnership also extends to an additional follow up meeting which is open to invited guests such as Shropshire Bus Users, DRT operators, Local Authority planners, Highways, health trusts and educational establishments, all with a shared interest and influence in public transport provision. Where a particular subject requires greater focus or more time, then separate focus meetings are arranged. The success of the Shropshire Enhancement Partnership will be measured on delivering a reliable and sustainable bus network that sees significant passenger growth and improvements in service delivery.

There is a significant threat over the sustainability of service levels throughout Shropshire. Bus operators' costs have increased, but patronage remains at pre pandemic levels and, because of its rural nature, has not recovered as strongly as the urban areas. Shropshire has an elderly demographic, and this market has not recovered. This makes many services unsustainable, and it's only through the welcome funding we receive from Shropshire Council, that we can maintain services at their current levels. A wider network reform approach in Shropshire which may require levels of transition funding to increase the longevity of the market is required.

Arriva prides itself on providing customers and stakeholders in Shropshire with a reliable and sustainable bus operator. Our objectives are to grow patronage, by operating all registered mileage and on time. Whilst there are elements that are within our gift, there are sometimes external influences that challenge these objectives, such as roadworks, traffic congestion, and infrastructure. By having the Shropshire Enhancement Partnership, these challenges are openly discussed, and viable solutions explored. ”



arriva
a DB company

Richard Emery

Head of Commercial – Arriva UK Bus

“ We have very much appreciated the opportunity to take part in the BSIP Enhanced Partnership meetings with our hard-working local council transport team, local commercial operators and representatives from the bus users Shropshire group. The partnership has given us an improved overall perspective on local transport issues, particularly concerning funding, planning and the various departments and organisations that work together to provide public transport in our county.

We have benefitted from improved two-way communication and the opportunity to participate in some of the decision making that will affect all future transport in our area. The various presentations from stakeholders and insights concerning local redevelopment have been informative and professional and will help with our future service planning. Overall, the meetings have made us feel less isolated as an organisation and more part of an integrated team. We are treated with respect, given the opportunity to participate and our experience and opinion feels valued. ”



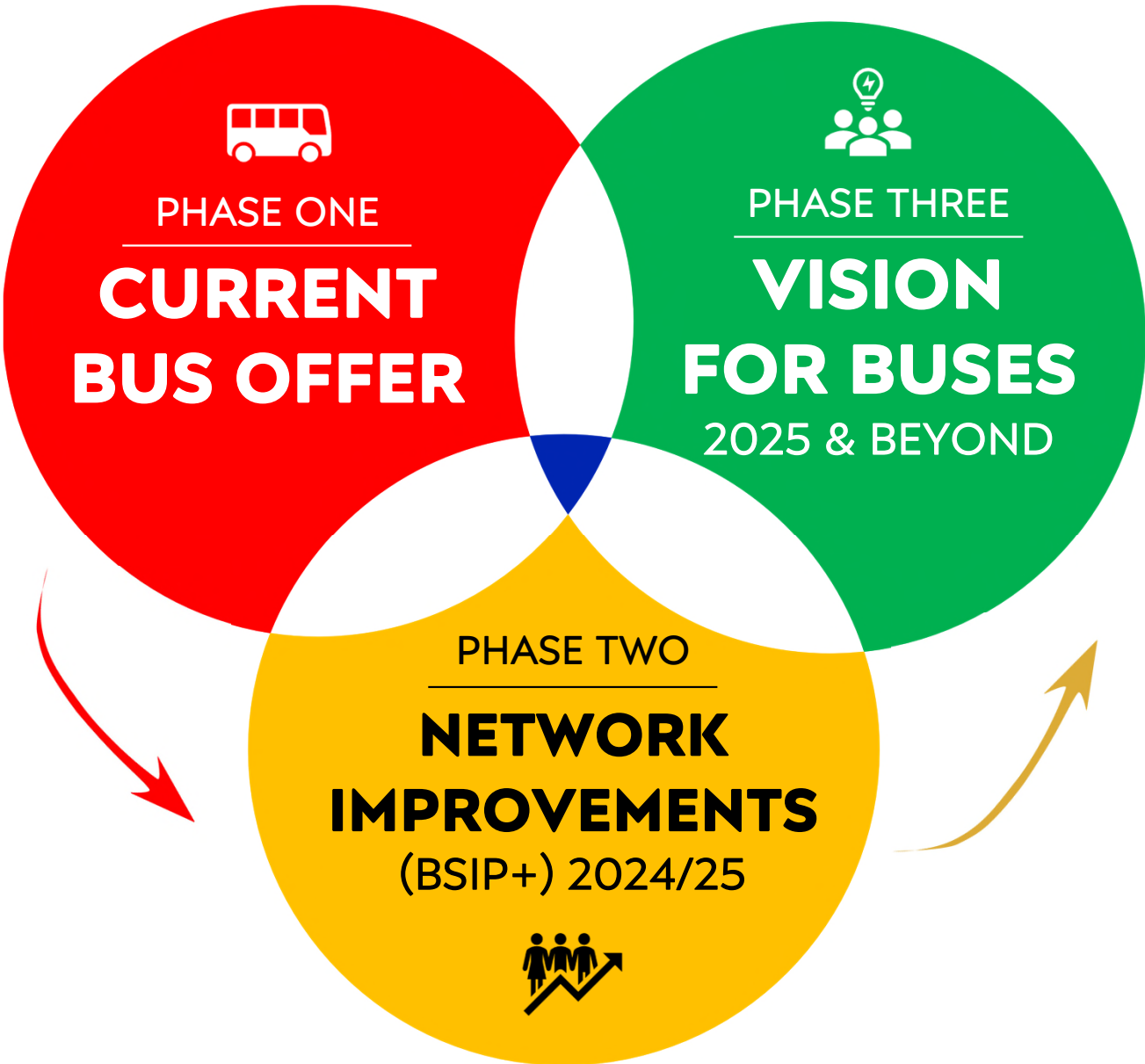
Shrewsbury
Dial a Ride

Andy Nelson

Chief Officer – Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride

Our BSIP Ambition

Our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been split into three key phases to ensure a sustainable network for the future:





PHASE ONE

**CURRENT
BUS OFFER**



Shropshire
Council

**SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE
IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)**

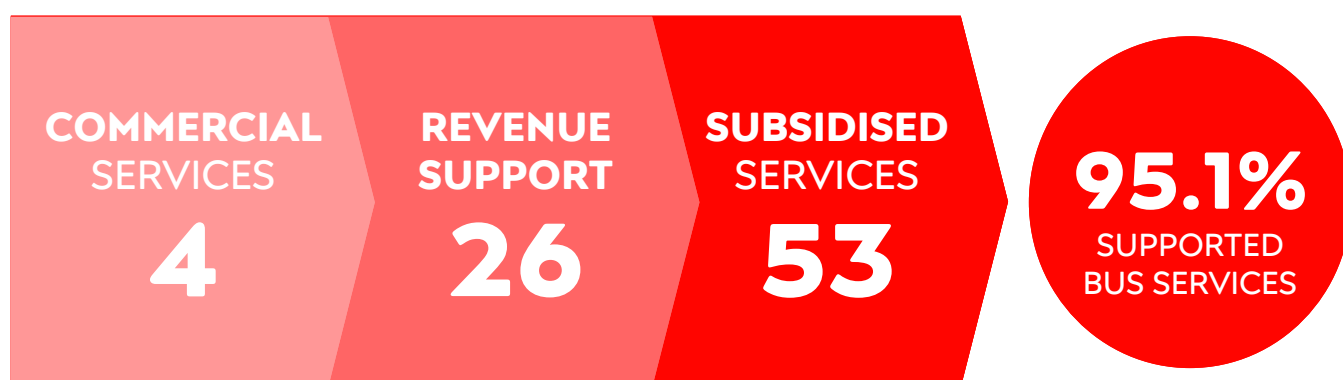
JUNE 2024

Current bus offer

Under the Transport Act 1985 s63 Shropshire Council has a statutory duty to; “secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose”.

The Council has always sought to support appropriate public bus services in Shropshire. The implications on people’s ability to access essential services, social exclusion, rural isolation, economic and environmental impact are important elements when considering service provision.

The Council currently contracts 53 subsidised local bus services. These contracts are awarded to several local bus operators following an open market tender process. Contracts are for a maximum 5-year duration before retender.



Shropshire Council acknowledge that Local Bus Services are vital to our community – they connect rural areas to urban centres and enable residents access to essential services for example, health services, shopping, leisure and the ability to commute to and from work.

Shropshire’s public transport network has historically operated unaltered for a large number of years with little investment to market services in order to increase patronage. This has resulted in the majority of these services being heavily supported (**95.1%**) by fully subsidising a service or providing DFT Revenue Support especially in the more rural areas of the county with poor coverage.

The percentage of services supported has risen from a pre-pandemic position of **c68%**.



Image: Service 722, operated by Minsterley Motors

To date, Shropshire Council has not cut any local bus services and whilst this has been challenging especially in rural areas where the timetabling of these services tends to be infrequent and doesn't tend to meet the needs of the passenger who are looking for a fast, efficient, punctual and frequent bus service, passengers are generally left with a service which in some cases can be slow, less punctual, and infrequent with long gaps (between 1 & 2 hours) for each bus. An example of this is the 64 service operated by Arriva and links 2 market towns namely Market Drayton and Shrewsbury. With no other public transport available to link these 2 market towns e.g. rail, this is the only public transport available.

The major dominant bus operator within Shropshire is Arriva with only 2 smaller independent bus companies currently located within the county and the remaining operators located close to the border but in neighbouring Authorities. The vehicle fleets are generally older, and fares (outside of the national £2 fare cap) can be extraordinarily high which discourages residents and visitors from using public transport, which doesn't help to ensure we reduce our carbon footprint and address the climate change agenda. As a rural county it is not financially viable for many commercial operators to provide certain routes commercially.

As a local authority we subsidise those services that are deemed as 'socially necessary'. Our ambition is to create a network that provides for all giving access to essential services including education, employment and health.



Image: Service 576 operated by Tanat Valley Coaches



Image: Service 20 operated by Lakeside Coaches

| FINANCIAL YEAR | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| PASSENGER BUS JOURNEYS | 4.3 M | 4.3 M | 4.2 M | 1.2 M | 2.4 M | 2.7 M |
| NOTES | PRE-PANDEMIC | PRE-PANDEMIC | PRE-PANDEMIC | COVID-19 PANDEMIC | PANDEMIC RECOVERY | REVENUE SUPPORT & FARE CAP |

Figure 2A: Data retrieved from the DfT – BUS01e – Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority: England; from year ending March 2010

Shropshire Public Transport Map - 2024

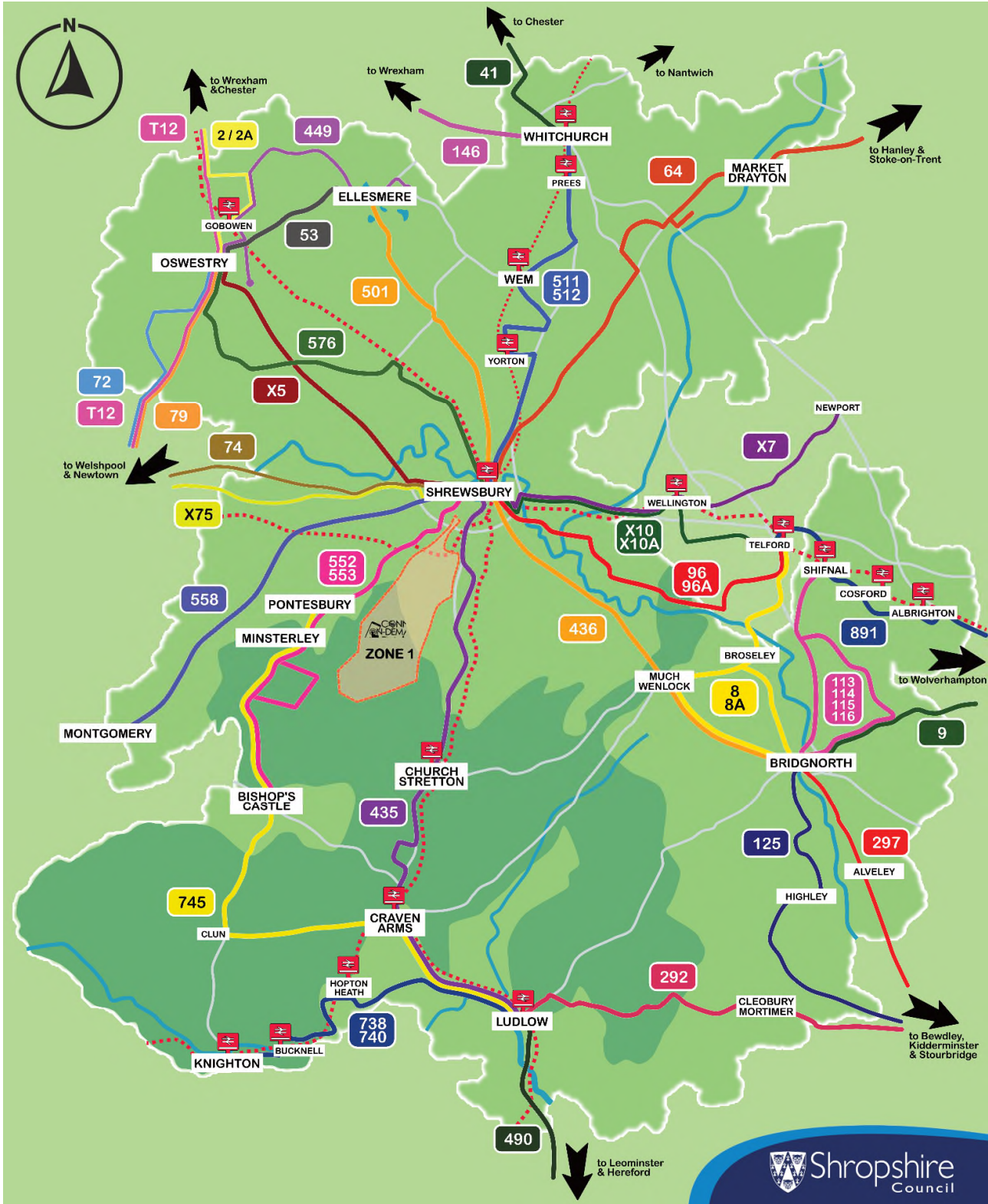
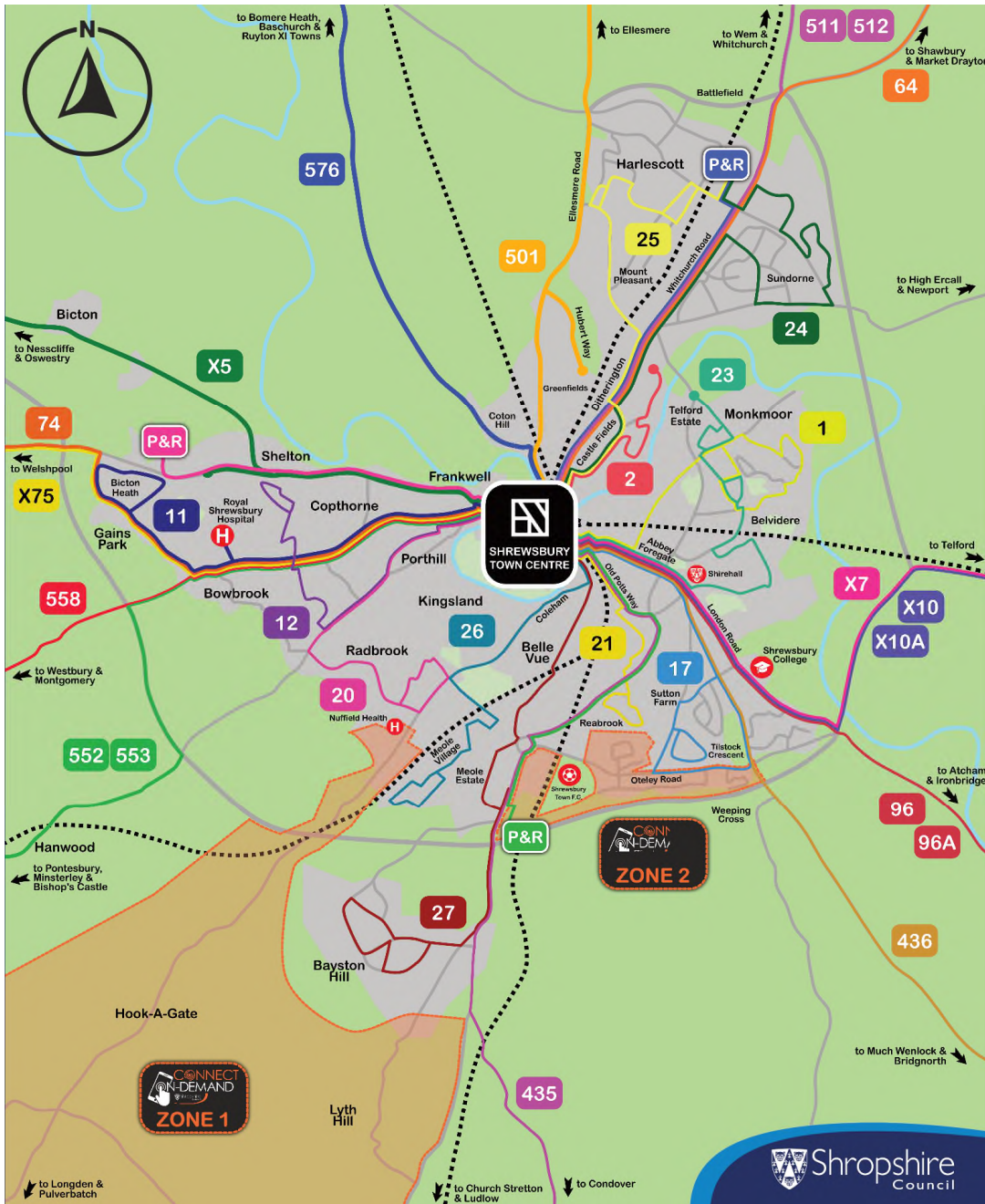


Figure 2B: Shropshire public transport network map – June 2024

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 12 Local Bus Operators | 4 Commercial services | 1 DRT service operating 2 zones | 3 allocated bus stations/hubs | 1 Sunday service (Commercial) |
| 1 service operating every 15 minutes or less | 20 Cross border services into 9 neighbouring local authorities | 26 services receive revenue support currently | 53 subsidised services (supported by Shropshire Council) | 25 local town services (operating every 20 minutes to every 2 hours) |

Shrewsbury Public Transport Map - 2024



- Local Bus Network - Shrewsbury**
- 6** Local Bus Operators
 - 2** Commercial services
 - 1** service operating every 15 minutes or less
 - 7** Cross border services into **3** other local authorities
 - 13** services receive revenue support
 - 24** subsidised services supported by Shropshire Council
 - 0** Sunday services
 - 1** DRT service operating **2** zones
 - 1** allocated bus station/hub

Figure 2C: Shrewsbury Public Transport Map - 2024

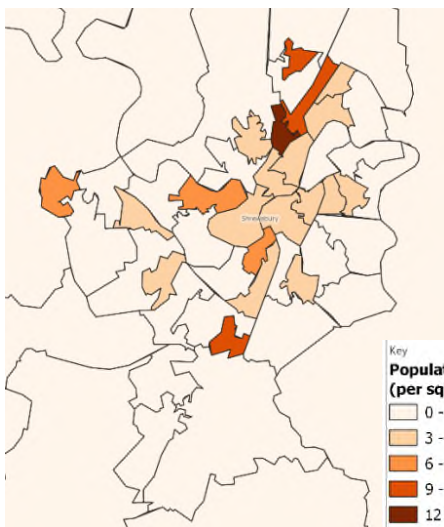


Figure 2D: Shrewsbury Population Density



Image: Shrewsbury town skyline

Population within 400m of a bus route

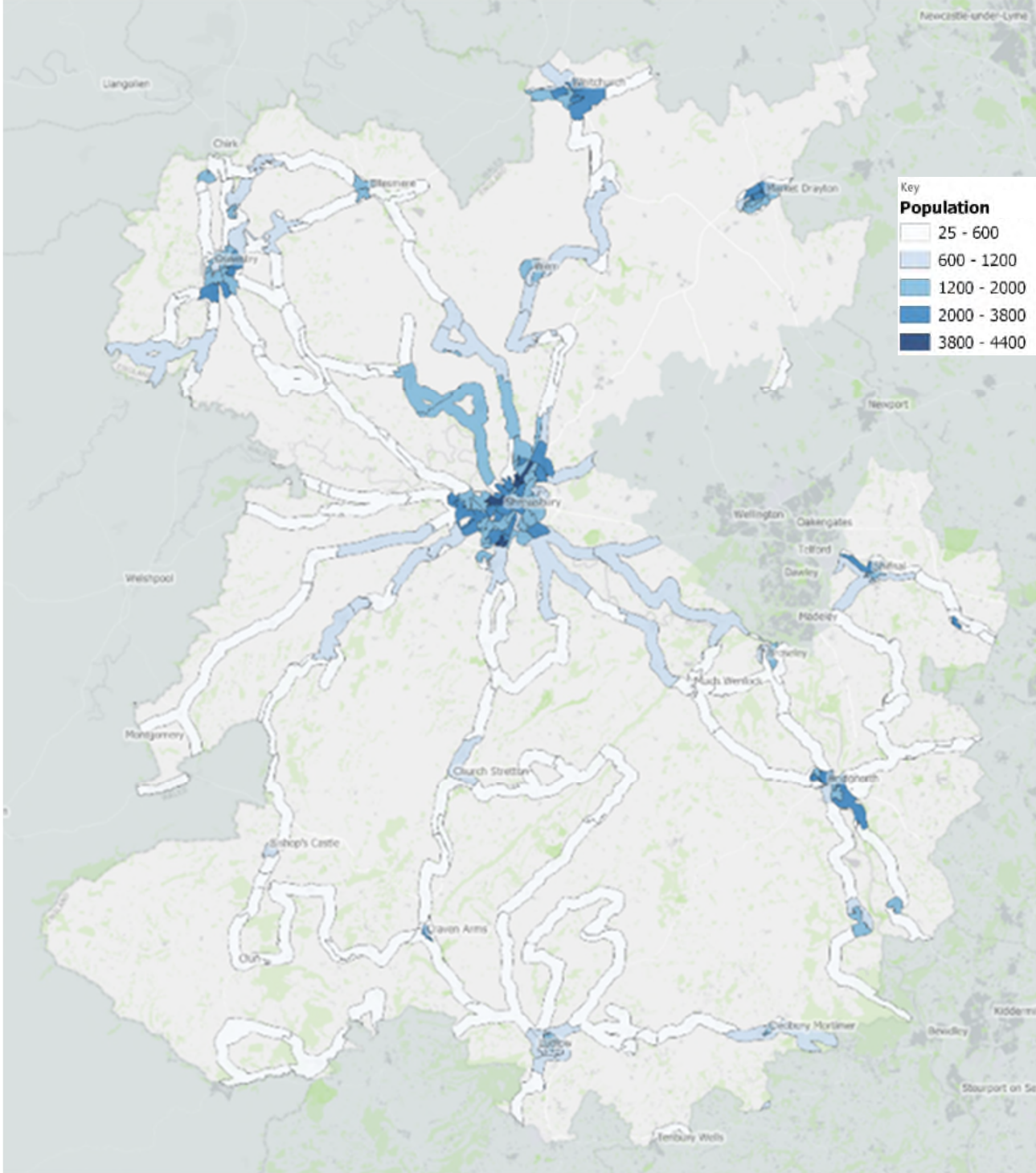


Figure 2E: Population within 400m of a bus route

Image: Bus stop in Pant, Shropshire

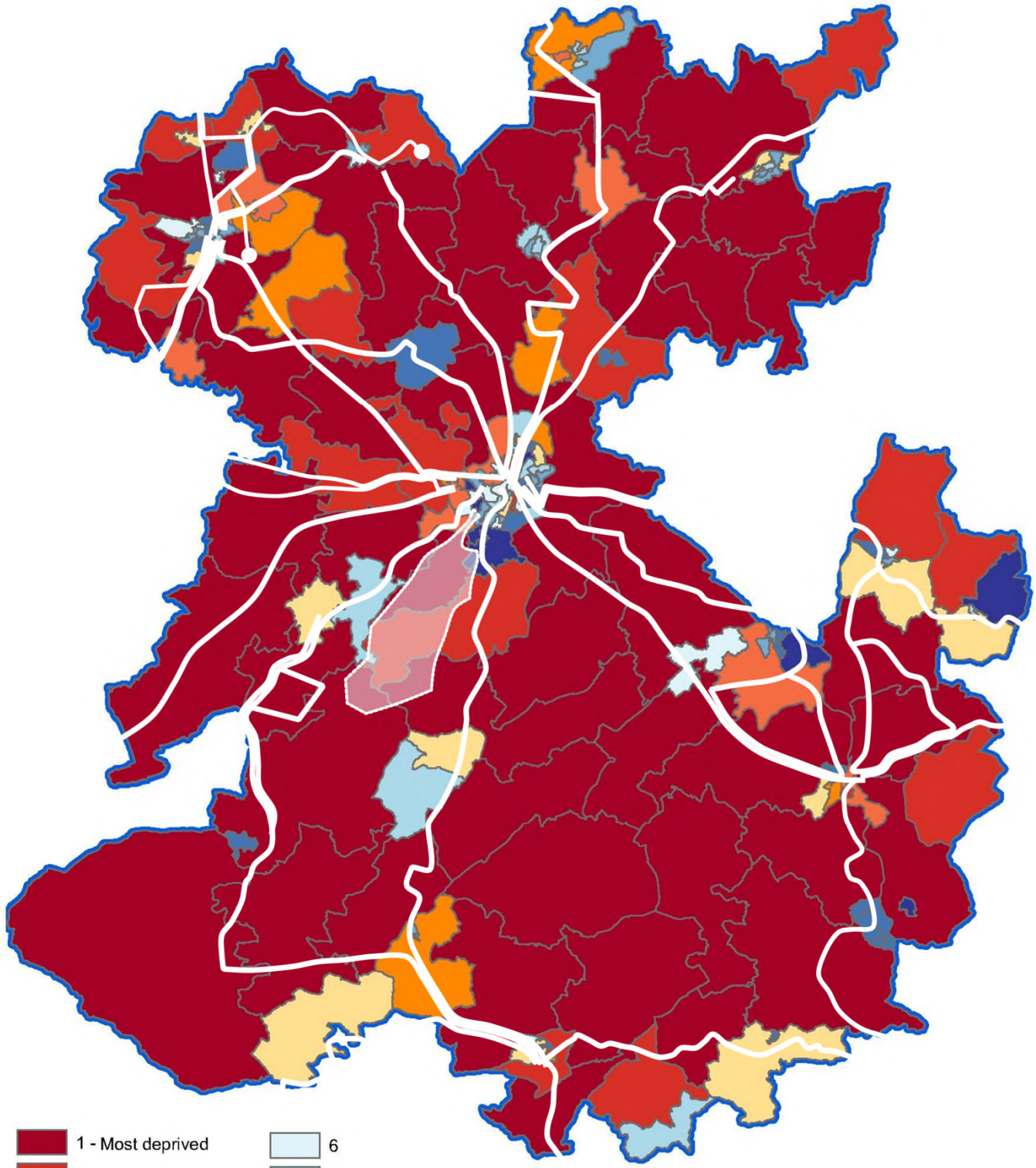


Image: Arriva service at Shrewsbury Bus Station



Barriers to Housing & Services – National Decline

This map outlines the challenges faced in accessing essential services using the current local bus network in relation to the above barriers.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 - Most deprived | 6 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 8 |
| 4 | 9 |
| 5 | 10 - Least deprived |

Figure 2F: Barriers to accessing essential services – public transport network overlaid.

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Scale: 1 inch = 7.39 miles

Bus network **without DfT revenue support** (April 2025)

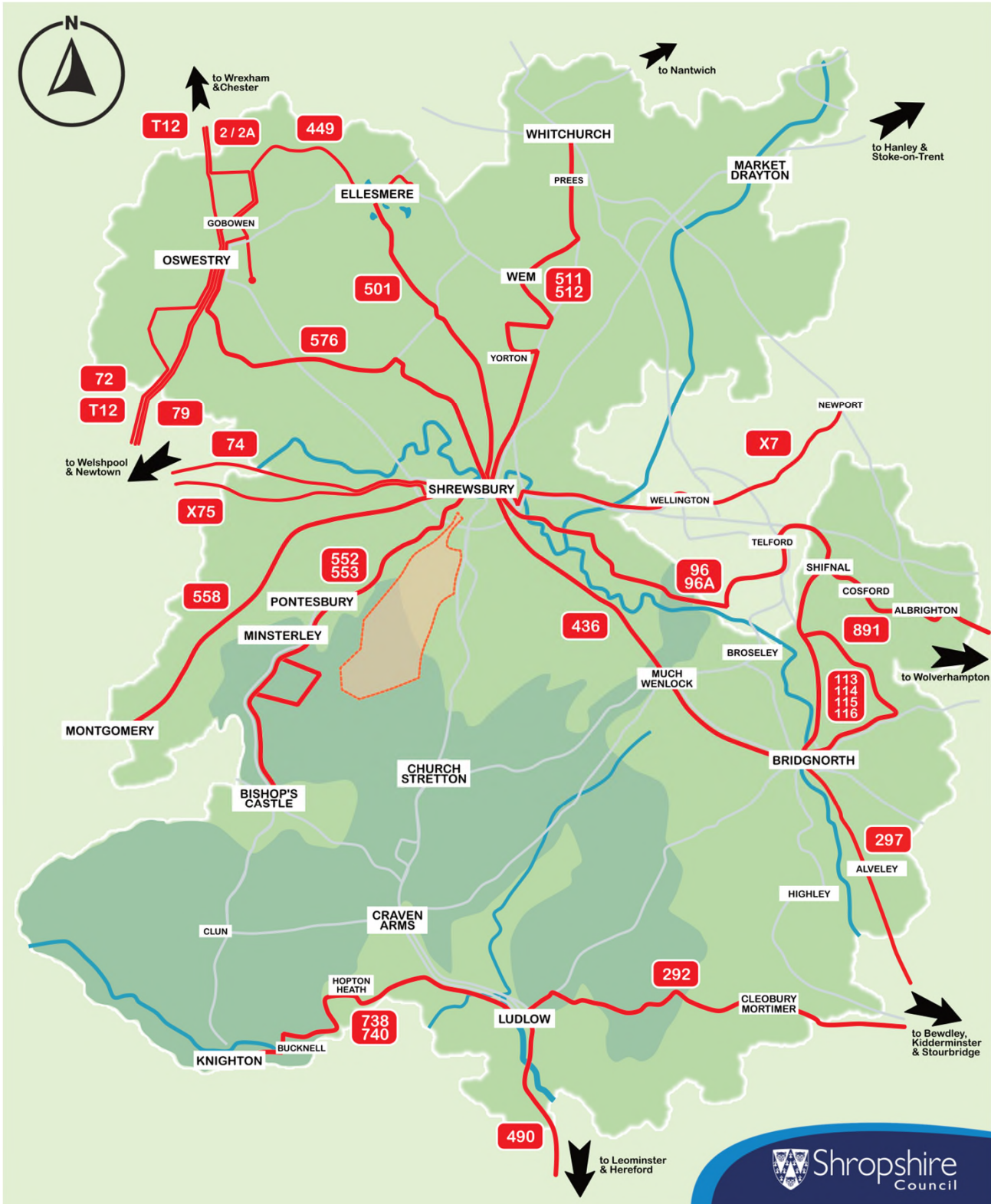


Figure 2G: Shropshire public transport network map – without DfT revenue support

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| 12 Local Bus Operators | 4 Commercial services | 1 DRT service operating 2 zones | 3 allocated bus stations/hubs | 1 Sunday service (Commercial) |
| 0 services operating every 15 minutes or less | 12 Cross border services into 7 neighbouring local authorities | 0 services receive revenue support | 53 subsidised services (supported by Shropshire Council) | 17 local town services (operating every 20 minutes to every 2 hours) |



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN SHROPSHIRE

Seven Community Transport (CT) groups covering the county



Supporting over
2000 members

327,472
Miles



51,690
Passenger
journeys

85%

Over
65



50%

Have a physical or
sensory **disability**

Only 2.5%

**Would cope
without CT**

Almost 40% would
find travel
very difficult

Despite increasing
demand for
services, 100% of
surveyed members
are happy with
services, but want
more on other days
at other times

**Journey
types**



31.6%

Shopping



22.6%

Social



20.6%

Healthcare



12.5%

Leisure



7.4%

Education &
Employment



4.9%

Personal
business

Community organisations

102 use our services (including schools
and care homes). Over 40% use
them at least monthly.



80,000

Individual passenger
journeys

82.6%

say CT is essential to all or
some of their members
participating in their
activities.

Over half want to see services expanded.



£3,620,107

Social value in 2022/2023

**High
value:**

Every £1 spent on delivering
services creates benefits worth
between £5.09 to £5.30.



CT generates savings between
£2.1m and **£61k** in health costs
each year.

£989,125

Spent by passengers
in Shropshire whilst
using CT services.

How we compare

By accessing data provided by local operators to the Department for Transport (DfT) we have highlighted below some of the key indicators that relate to Shropshire.

Figures taken from: Annual Bus Statistics, 2023

| Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority (in millions) | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| County | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Herefordshire | 2.1 | 2.0 | 1.7 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.5 |
| Shropshire | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 2.7 |
| Staffordshire | 16.6 | 15.9 | 14.8 | 4.9 | 9.2 | 10.3 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 10.4 | 9.3 | 8.6 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 6.7 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 3.9 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 1.3 | 2.9 | 3.3 |
| Warwickshire | 14.0 | 13.7 | 11.0 | 3.6 | 7.8 | 9.2 |
| Worcestershire | 10.7 | 10.4 | 9.4 | 2.7 | 6.2 | 7.1 |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 259.2 | 264.7 | 248.3 | 100.0 | 175.4 | 212.4 |
| West Midlands Area Total | 321.2 | 324.2 | 301.6 | 117.2 | 210.7 | 253.2 |

Shropshire is 2nd lowest in the West Midlands & joint 9th lowest Nationally.

| Passenger journeys on local bus services per head by local authority (in millions) | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| County | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Herefordshire | 11.0 | 10.6 | 8.9 | 2.8 | 6.1 | 8.1 |
| Shropshire | 13.5 | 13.5 | 12.8 | 3.7 | 7.4 | 8.2 |
| Staffordshire | 19.0 | 18.2 | 16.8 | 5.5 | 10.5 | 11.7 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 40.5 | 36.3 | 33.4 | 11.6 | 21.8 | 26.0 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 22.2 | 21.3 | 20.9 | 7.3 | 15.4 | 17.5 |
| Warwickshire | 24.8 | 24.1 | 19.1 | 6.1 | 13.1 | 15.4 |
| Worcestershire | 18.2 | 17.6 | 15.7 | 4.5 | 10.3 | 11.8 |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 54.8 | 54.9 | 50.8 | 19.7 | 35.4 | 42.5 |
| West Midlands Area Total | 321.2 | 324.2 | 301.6 | 117.2 | 210.7 | 253.2 |

Shropshire is 2nd lowest in the West Midlands & 5th lowest Nationally.

| Elderly and disabled concessionary passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority (in millions) | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| County | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Herefordshire | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Shropshire | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| Staffordshire | 7.1 | 6.8 | 6.1 | 1.8 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 3.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Warwickshire | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 1.2 | 2.2 | 2.6 |
| Worcestershire | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 1.1 | 2.0 | 2.3 |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 53.4 | 53.5 | 49.0 | 18.0 | 30.0 | 34.2 |
| West Midlands Area Total | 76.9 | 75.8 | 69.8 | 24.1 | 41.0 | 46.9 |

Shropshire is 3rd lowest in the West Midlands & 7th lowest Nationally.

(note: a number of positions above are held by joint LA's)

| Elderly and disabled concessionary passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority as a percentage of total passenger journeys (in millions) | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| County | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Herefordshire | 46 | 48 | 49 | 37 | 37 | 36 |
| Shropshire | 49 | 46 | 47 | 44 | 40 | 40 |
| Staffordshire | 43 | 42 | 41 | 36 | 34 | 34 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 34 | 32 | 32 | 29 | 26 | 25 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 35 | 35 | 34 | 32 | 27 | 27 |
| Warwickshire | 34 | 34 | 38 | 35 | 29 | 28 |
| Worcestershire | 34 | 35 | 39 | 39 | 32 | 33 |
| West Midlands Combined Authority | 21 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 17 | 16 |
| West Midlands Area Total | 24 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 19 | 19 |

Shropshire is highest in the West Midlands & 2nd highest behind joint top Nationally.

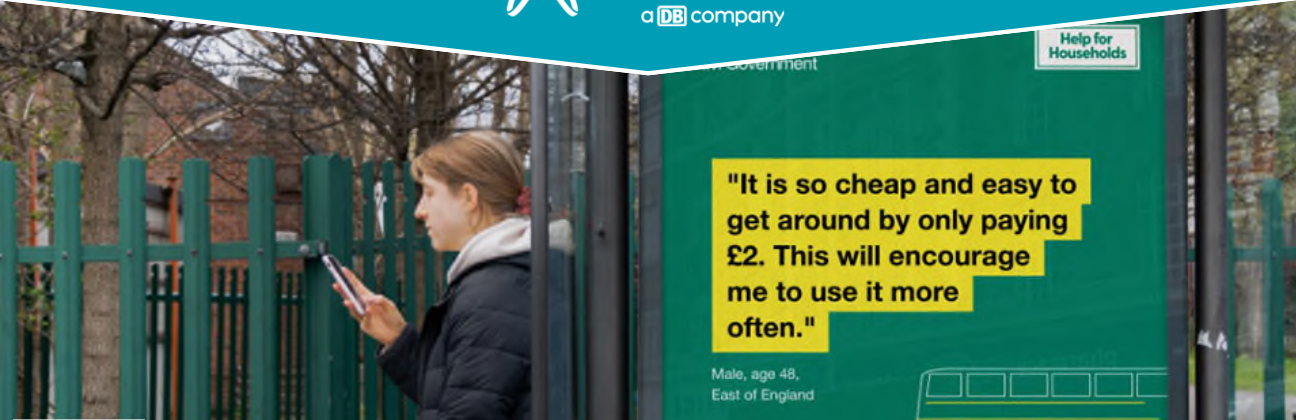
Joint top LA's are 1 & 4% down from 2019 respectfully, while Shropshire is 6% down from 2019.

£2 Fare Cap (2022-24)

As part of the Governments Help for Households campaign, the £2 fare cap was introduced in January 2023 resulting in 4 out of 7 bus operators taking advantage of this scheme in Shropshire and applying the fare cap to majority of their services which has been welcomed by new and existing bus passengers.

There is a consensus that this has seen an increase in passengers, and the following feedback has been received from operators who have taken part in the scheme:

“ Arriva have supported the introduction of the national £2 flat fare albeit only affordable due to the level of funding available. Significant risk remains of the elasticity impact from increasing fares to pre-scheme levels which would impact volumes across the county further. Shropshire has a high proportion of longer interurban services due to the rural nature with wide coverage, and it is these routes which face the biggest price increases thus threat to connectivity. We urge the Government to introduce a phasing out of the scheme over a longer period versus an immediate end of the scheme on 31st December 2024 with an increase to £2.50 for the first six months or changing the scheme to provide a more targeted approach towards certain funding such as Young People. This approach should continue to be a national option to remove unnecessary local administration burden plus ensures the customer proposition doesn't change at invisible country boundaries, nor face a post code lottery as to whether they receive the support. ”



“ Regarding the £2 scheme, we joined it as we thought we had nothing to lose, and it was worth a try and see what the outcome will be. The problem will be if the scheme comes to an end it will face a cliff edge, although even if the LTAs continued to subsidise it or tried to phase it out, this will obviously have to include commercial services, if not it wouldn't work. The scheme has obviously helped passengers which it was intended to do, as it has made services look attractive to passengers as they are cheaper. ”

SELECT





PHASE ONE

**CURRENT
BUS OFFER**

“ Our perspective on market stability at present reflects a period of relative consistency over the past year to year and a half. However, we anticipate potential challenges ahead, particularly with the cessation of the £2 fare cap scheme.

The implementation of the £2 fare cap has undoubtedly played a significant role in maintaining market stability by offering an affordable and attractive option for bus travel. This sustained affordability has contributed to steady patronage levels during this period.

The cessation of the £2 fare cap scheme at the end of 2024 represents a critical juncture for the bus industry in Shropshire. With fares anticipated to increase substantially overnight, there is a looming risk of decreased ridership, particularly among price-sensitive passengers. This abrupt return to the required fare structure will likely significantly impact the affordability and attractiveness of bus travel, potentially exacerbating existing challenges in maintaining patronage levels.

Looking ahead, we recognise the likelihood of a significant impact on ridership once the £2 fare cap scheme concludes. With the return to standard fare pricing, we anticipate a decline in numbers, particularly on our longer routes where fare increases could be more substantial, ranging from £3 to £5.

The implementation of the £2 fare cap scheme has indeed had a positive impact on our patronage levels. We've observed a notable stability, and a slight increase particularly in non-commute patronage, since introducing this initiative.

While the overall growth may be modest, the scheme has effectively encouraged more individuals to utilise our bus services for non-commute purposes. ”



UK Government

Help for Households

Get around for £2 in Shropshire

Whether you are heading to work or into town, until 31st December 2024 a single bus journey will cost no more than £2 on most routes across England.

Search 'Help for Households'

Current financial support

During and since the pandemic in 2020, the Government through the Department for Transport, have provided revenue support funding to LTA's. In April of 2023 the Council were awarded funding of £1.4m for the 23/24 & 24/25 financial years, with the intention to allow Local Authorities to provide some stability to the bus market and where funding allowed, plan activities that increased patronage.

In the same period Shropshire Council continued to support Local Bus Services, through its own resources, at pre covid levels and that support continues today, despite rising contract costs and the significant financial challenges all local council's face.

Other funding opportunities to bring about positive changes to the network are also developed on a local level through the appropriate use of s106 monies where public transport can provide value to the local residents of a new development.

Once revenue support ceases on **31 March 2025** those services marked as supported by the Council would either need to see their level of service **reduced** or **removed entirely** to continue to operate within budget.

For those services marked as Commercially operated, several of the operators have already indicated that without the current levels of financial support, it is likely that many of these services would be withdrawn.



Image: Local buses operated by Lakeside Coaches

Operator concerns

Local bus operators in Shropshire have raised the following concerns about the network from April 2025 after Network Revenue Support is due to end;

The cessation of revenue support will undoubtedly exert pressure on our ability to maintain current service levels. Rising operating costs, which cannot entirely be transferred to passengers without rendering bus travel less competitive than private car usage, pose a substantial challenge. Moreover, the discontinuation of the £2 fare cap is expected to contribute to a decline in patronage, further exacerbating the financial strain on our services.

One of our primary apprehensions is the potential onset of a cycle of decline in bus usage. As operating costs escalate, the necessity to increase ticket prices becomes inevitable. However, price increases deter passengers, leading to a reduction in ridership. Consequently, fewer passengers translate to diminished revenue, prompting the need for further fare increases—a cycle that could ultimately render bus travel financially unfeasible for many.

In response to these challenges, we anticipate the necessity of reassessing our service provision. Regrettably, this may entail contemplating reductions in service frequency or coverage to mitigate escalating operating costs. However, such adjustments risk creating a feedback loop wherein diminished service attractiveness leads to decreased ridership, further straining our financial sustainability.

Of particular concern is the potential scenario wherein reduced services primarily attract concession holders, whose fares do not cover the full cost of service provision. While concessions play a vital role in public transportation, their limited contribution to revenue is insufficient to sustain operations, ultimately jeopardising the continuity of our services.



The network revenue support currently being offered by Shropshire Council on most commercial services until March 2025 is welcome and essential, as it ensures that bus operators can continue to provide passengers with a reliable and stable bus network that will instill confidence in the travelling public which will in turn drive patronage growth.

If network revenue support is to end in April 2025, this could re-introduce the significant and real threat over the sustainability of service levels, and the future of the bus network in Shropshire. Whilst we accept that the current levels of network revenue support are not sustainable as a long-term solution, continued revenue support is required as we look to transition into a wider network reform approach in Shropshire to increase the longevity of the market



Driver recruitment

The following are statements from local bus operators in Shropshire relating to the issue of driver recruitment and retention across the industry;

The situation surrounding bus drivers is dire and has been for years. Often job adverts do not attract applicants, even where the adverts offer full driver training provided and paid for by the firm. Wage rates have had to increase in an attempt to attract drivers, but we then experience difficulties in passing costs on to fares.

We feel that a national campaign for PSV drivers, like the Government did for HGVs would help. As the cost of obtaining a PSV and CPC qualification has become very costly, with a scheme having the cost covered with a caveat that they have to stay within the industry for 2 years.

The average age of drivers in the bus industry is going to cause an issue as retirements set in so we also need a scheme to get younger drivers in the industry. Also attracting younger people into the maintenance side of the industry where there is also a shortage of PSV vehicle technicians.



After the Covid pandemic, bus operators were faced with a severe shortage of qualified PSV drivers. Some of our drivers, especially those who had been in the bus industry for many years, had left because of personal reasons. Some drivers were drawn to the higher wages being offered by the haulage industry or other employment at the time, as well as those who had their employment terminated through our conduct procedure. The latter continued to be a necessity to ensure our drivers met the high standards we demanded from them. The backlog of training new drivers was an initial challenge, as the DVLA were unable to process applications or renew existing drivers' licences quick enough. This created a massive shortage of qualified PSV drivers required to operate our registered mileage. Whilst we offered existing drivers' overtime and some duties were covered by office / salary staff, we appreciated this was a temporary fix and not sustainable in the long term.

To address this issue, we reviewed our network in Shropshire. The size of our operation in Shropshire was reduced with some services being transferred to our neighbouring Telford depot. It's proximately to the West Midlands conurbation meant it wasn't as much of a challenge to recruit new drivers. The reduced network reduced our daily driver requirements.

As a short-term solution, we brought agency drivers into our business to cover some duties, but this was an expensive and unsustainable option, and their standards were not as high as those being delivered by our regular driving team. Punctuality suffered as a result, and we saw an increase in customer comments. Our objective was to eliminate our dependence on all agency staff by the end of 2023.

Arriva has a dedicated training academy, based in Shrewsbury and Telford, and this operation was brought under the responsibility of the local management team. Efforts to recruit would be drivers from outside of the industry were stepped up, with an increased presence at job fairs and other events, as well as through marketing channels. We deployed a dedicated manager into this role.

Pay rates in our depots were addressed, with all existing and new drivers seeing a significant increase in their weekly pay. This increase in our drivers' wages has resulted in commercial and tendered services now more costly to operate, whilst patronage hasn't recovered to their pre pandemic levels to offset this cost. Work patterns and working conditions have been addressed. At our Shrewsbury depot, around half of the drivers are now on four-day weeks, and they don't work any Sunday or late night duties. This different approach to work patterns has helped us to retain and recruit drivers.

The whole process has been a success. We are running at 100% driver establish at our Shrewsbury depot with no dependency on agency staff and we are currently loaning drivers to assist in other areas of the UK. Lost mileage because of staff shortage is now non-existent.



New service developments

Connect On-Demand

Due to the falling number of passengers currently travelling on bus services, the council and operators wanted to both protect people's access to essential services and at the same time improve the current offer to the bus passenger. We also wanted to ensure that public transport becomes a realistic first choice of travel for the non-bus user, providing services that reflected more of when and how people wanted to travel, improving the on-board experience and improving reliability at an affordable price point.

To help address these challenges Connect On-Demand was developed and started full service in December of 2023, replacing 2 underutilised bus services whilst at the same time serving an area of the town that had until that point no direct access to public transport.

The service provided the opportunity for residents who live within the zone of operation to book the service on the same day they wish to travel or 4 weeks in advance of a planned journey. A hotline to members of staff within the On-Demand operation team is available to those people who do not wish to use the app or need assistance in doing so.

The app itself allows the passenger to plan journeys, look at trip availability and pay for their journey without needing cash. Once the journey is booked the passenger is able to use the app to track the vehicle in real time, identify the vehicle picking them up and see which driver is allocated to their journey.

The first electric bus has been deployed on the service, funded by the Department for Transport and is supplemented by other new low emission vehicles and a further smaller electric vehicle for more rural areas.

An expansion of the On-Demand zones is planned for 24/25 & 25/26 providing bus services for residents who either currently have a very limited or no public transport offer, or where On-Demand is seen as an alternative to low patronaged fixed bus routes, ultimately improving the use of public transport and a sustainable alternative to the car.



Image: Launch of Connect On-Demand with James Willocks & Councillor Ian Nellins



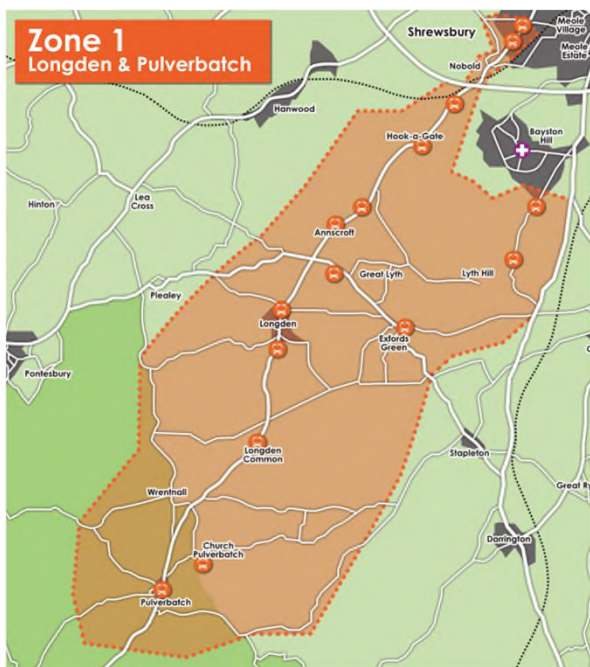


Figure 2H: Connect On-Demand Zone 1 as of 2024



Figure 2I: Current Connect On-Demand Zone 2 as of 2024

| Initiative | Currently Providing |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Operating Days/Hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Saturday – 7.30am to 6.30pm |
| Fare Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2.00 single adult fare £1.50 for young people aged 5 to 18 years old Free for concessionary pass holders and children under 5 years old |
| Bookings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book via the dedicated app or telephone Booking lines open Monday to Friday – 10am to 2pm |
| Areas of operation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially operating in a rural locality south of Shrewsbury Villages including Pulverbatch, Longden & Hook-A-Gate Second zone also launched in urban area in the South-East of Shrewsbury known as Oteley Road Significant development in Oteley Road and includes retail parks and supermarkets which passengers in zone 1 can also take advantage of |

The road to launch in December 2023 had a number of challenges, we have taken the opportunity to learn from these and adapt the new scheme.

Utilising the services of VIA (software developer for operations and flexible transport) we have launched a full back office and app-based booking platform for the service which provides on-demand and pre-scheduled journeys for customers.

Vehicle procurement brought new challenges as the lead in time for delivery varied depending on the point of origin. We took the decision to purchase one fully electric Sigma-7 and several City line Mercedes EVM's (diesel fuelled) to manage the more rural locations. These brought significant awareness to the service, being the first fully electric bus operating in Shropshire.

Driver recruitment was initiated in the summer of 2023 and we experienced challenges similar to the whole bus industry across the country.

Before launch we worked with our cross-party working group, which consists of several local members, regardless of their political affiliation, to determine parameters for launch. It was identified early on that operating a free-trial period throughout November 2023 would ensure awareness and provide customers with a try-before-you-buy experience.

This was met with great enthusiasm from the local public. Entwined with public roadshows throughout both zones we were able to reassure potential passengers relating to the change and answer any questions they may have about the service, app or bookings.

Modernised advertising has also enabled us to target consumers and provide them with critical daily updates, such as flooding in Shrewsbury town centre and also provide awareness to offers and campaigns we are launching.

Additionally, we have installed information screens in all vehicles which are linked through to advertising on-board. These boards currently loop, detailing places of interest in the zones and up coming events in and around Shrewsbury that passengers can use the service to attend. Our intention is to acquire additional revenue from businesses in and around the zones to attract customers, helping to make the service thrive as we move forward in its growth.

A further expansion is planned for Summer 2024, which will see another suburban area included within zone 2 and we will use BSIP+ funding to provide this.



Image: Public roadshow for the service in November 2023

Image: Shropshire's first fully electric bus operating on Connect On-Demand



CONNECT ON-DEMAND



Launched December 2023
A brand-new flexible bus service in Shropshire



OR CALL **0345 678 9013**
Phone lines available Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm



Shropshire's **first** fully electric bus!



Operating from **7.30am to 6.30pm**, Monday to Saturday



Travel from as little as **£2.00!**
£1.50 for people aged 6 - 19 & Free for concessionary pass holders after 9.30am Monday to Friday and all day on Saturdays.



Travel anywhere within both zones, including additional selected stops...

- BUS STATION
- RAILWAY STATION
- THE SQUARE
- BEECHES MEDICAL PRACTICE



The future of Shropshire's public transport network

Our vision isn't limited to the initial two zones. As opportunity arises or external funding is received we will look to widen the scope of the project.

Our ambition is to see all corners of the county receiving a variation of Connect On-Demand, operated by a partnership of council fleet services and local bus operators to maximise coverage.

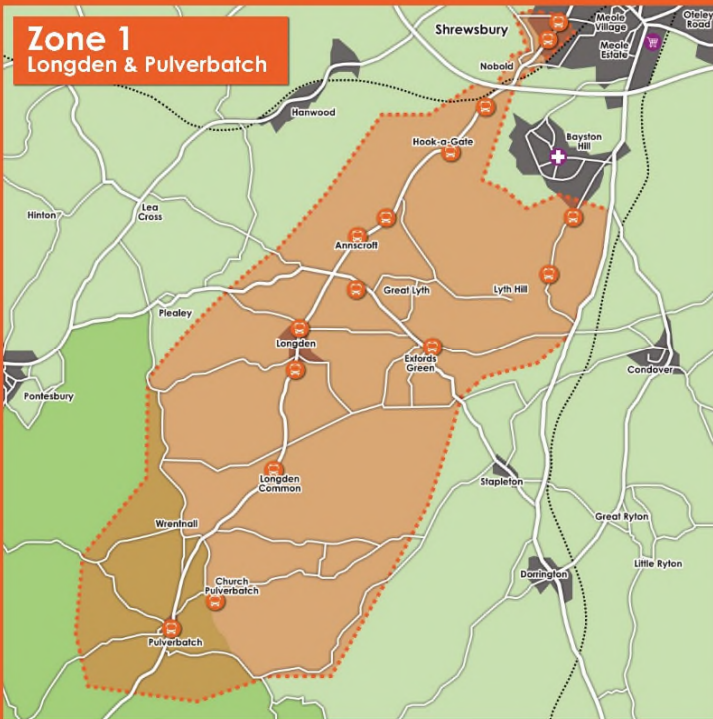
The 17 market towns in Shropshire are in need of public transport support to ensure rural and urban residents have suitable and sustainable public transport in the future.



Hi, we're **Connect On-Demand!**
Your flexible way to travel by bus in Shropshire



Get Started



MEOLE BRACE RETAIL PARK - INCLUDED IN ZONE 2



PHASE TWO

**NETWORK
IMPROVEMENTS**
(BSIP+) 2024/25



Shropshire
Council

**SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE
IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)**

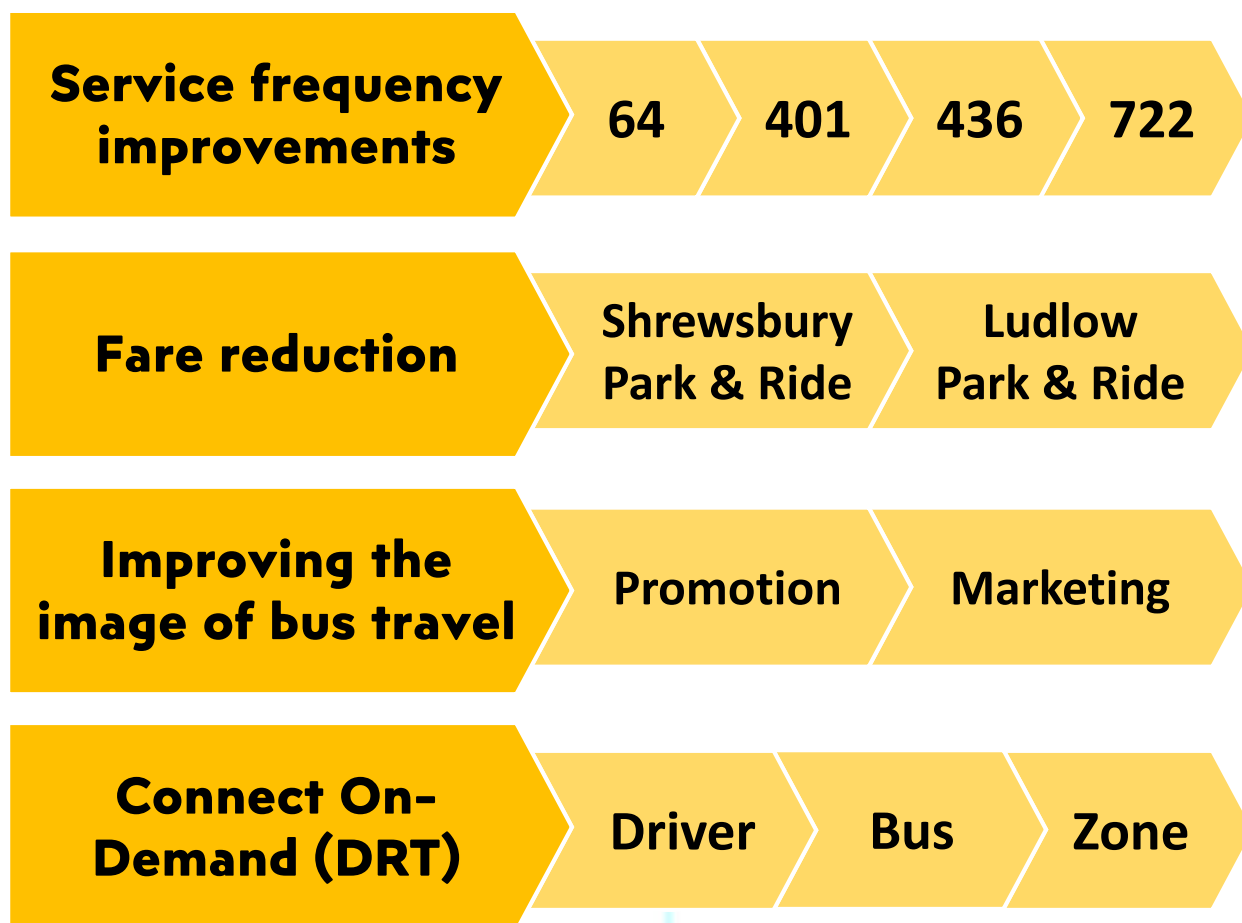
JUNE 2024

Network improvements (BSIP+)

Although unsuccessful with the initial BSIP submission in 2021, Shropshire were allocated an amount due to the cancelling of HS2 north of Birmingham. This funding allocation, distributed as Network North and then as BSIP Phase 3 came to the sum of £1.84M. Funding is to be made available from the Summer 2024 until March 2025.

We have identified several opportunities to improve public transport services in Shropshire utilising this funding and the following pages set out those proposals.

However, more funding is required to vastly improve the network within the county to bring about positive change and alter travel habits.





Service frequency improvements

64

401

436

722

64

Market Drayton > Shrewsbury

Service 64 is an established cross boundary bus service operated by Arriva linking Hanley in Staffordshire with Shrewsbury in Shropshire. The service which primarily operates in Shropshire is registered commercially by Arriva but receives network revenue support by Shropshire Council in addition to regular subsidy for the last 2 journeys of the day.

This is an important core service which not only connects important towns and villages along A53 road but also provides a valuable service for students travelling to colleges in both directions. The service is also well used by workers as well as shoppers which is vital for the economy.

This service formerly operated every hour but Arriva took the commercial decision in 2023 to operate every 2 hours as they deemed that this service wasn't commercially viable to operate an hourly timetable.

This still remains Shropshire's only core 2 hourly bus service, which doesn't encourage passengers to switch to public transport. In addition to this, unlike a small number of alternative services, this corridor operating within the north east of Shropshire does not have a railway line as an alternative mode of transport which then impacts on the already congested roads in the north of Shrewsbury.

It is our intention with new funding to revert the 64 service to a one hourly timetable thereby providing an appetite for existing and new users as an alternative to the private car.



Figure 3A: Current route for service 64, Shrewsbury to Market Drayton operated by Arriva.

Image: Shawbury, Shropshire





Service frequency improvements

64

401

436

722

401

Oswestry Town Service

Oswestry is located in the north-west of Shropshire and is the 2nd largest town in the county with a population around 17,000 residents.

The town has always been served with a local town service which enables residents and visitors to easily travel around the town in order to attend medical appointments, shopping and access other amenities.

The town service is split into areas which is currently subsidised by Shropshire Council and each area is served by its own individual bus timetable but not necessarily an individual bus. An example of this is that a school journey for non-entitled pupils is provided morning and afternoon by utilising the existing 'town service' vehicle which helps reduce costs.

However, an element of the town service used to be operated commercially by Tanat Valley Coaches but was deregistered before the pandemic due to low passenger numbers. Subsequently Arriva Midlands stepped in and registered this service commercially. However, as a result of the pandemic passenger numbers continued to decline, and Arriva then made the business decision to also deregister this particular element of the Oswestry town service.

Unfortunately, the Council were unable to subsidise this service as a standalone service due to budgetary pressures, but our intention is to undertake a review of the existing elements of the town service in order to ensure that the town is again fully covered by a town service meeting the needs of the residents who have been unable to access a bus service since the commercial service was deregistered.

Clearly, we have to ensure any potential changes are future proof in order to meet the needs of the public within the town.



Image: Oswestry Bus Station



Image: Oswestry Town Service operated by Tanat Valley Coaches

Image: Oswestry, Shropshire





Service frequency improvements

64

401

436

722

436

Bridgnorth > Shrewsbury

Service 436 is one of Shropshire’s most vital bus services. Currently operating under contract by Select Bus Services, the service completely operates within Shropshire boundary connecting Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock to Shrewsbury for onwards travel via rail services or to attend medical appointments at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital or education services at Shrewsbury College.

The service is also well used by commuters and has proven to be vital to the local economy to ensure residents in the area access vital services as there is no available rail connection along this corridor.

The service currently operates every hour throughout the day, Monday to Saturday. However, in September 2023, due to additional numbers of students requiring transport Shropshire Council took the decision to add an additional journey at peak time provided by Lakeside Coaches to ensure capacity and punctuality issues were addressed.

It is our intention to further support the service and increase the frequency to every 30 minutes throughout the day. Ensuring suitable network coverage and providing a suitable alternative mode of transport for residents who would otherwise resort to car travel.

We believe the improvement to this service will see an increase in patronage to the service and further allow us to understand passenger needs and requirements as we look to review other similar services across the county.



Figure 3B: Current route for service 436, Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth operated by Select Bus Services Ltd.

Image: Bridgnorth, Shropshire





Service frequency improvements

64

401

436

722

722

Ludlow Park & Ride

Ludlow is Shropshire’s fifth largest market town and located 28 miles south of Shrewsbury. Its historic town centre and regular festivals and concerts attract visitors nationally.

Currently two local bus services operate solely within the town centre, 701 operating towards the north of the town and the 722 operating to the south and incorporating the Ludlow Park & Ride service.



Figure 3C: Proposed route of the updated Ludlow Park & Ride.

For several years, Ludlow Park & Ride was a standalone service operating from the eastern fringes of the town at a dedicated car park providing express travel into the town centre.

Unfortunately, this had to be reviewed due to budget restraints and was incorporated into the existing Ludlow Town Service to ensure its continued operation.

Since the pandemic, patronage on the service has declined as customers have to navigate suburban areas linked to the town service it has been incorporated with.

Our ambition is to separate the town service and park and ride services, providing an express link for visitors directly to the railway station and town centre. Operating every 30 minutes, the service would look to make its first steps into mirroring the current Shrewsbury Park and Ride service, ensuring a consistent brand image for park and ride services operating in the county.

The remaining town services in Ludlow would be reviewed to incorporate new developments across the town, providing Ludlow with two dedicated town bus services and a separate park and ride shuttle.

Image: Ludlow, Shropshire





Fare reduction

Shrewsbury Park & Ride

Ludlow Park & Ride

Shrewsbury P&R

Fare reduction

Shrewsbury Park & Ride has provided an express link into Shrewsbury town centre, from three dedicated car park sites for over 25 years.

The current fare offer on the service is £2 per person for a return journey, £1 for concessions and free for children under the age of 5.

Historically, the service has always competed with the low parking charges in the town centre and as such, many potential customers resort to driving into the town centre to take advantage of these reduced parking costs.

However, parking charges provides us with the opportunity to provide a cost-effective solution for passengers, whilst also attempting to attract users back to the service.

It is as such our ambition to reduce the fare cost on the service to a £1 return fare for all customers, streamlining the advertising of the service to provide the same cost for all.

We would look to push a robust communications and marketing plan with ourselves, Shropshire Council and the current contracted operator of the service, Arriva. This would also be one of our first steps to transition the service into our future vision of the service, Shrewsbury Connect.



Image: Pride Hill, Shrewsbury



Image: Local Business, Shrewsbury

Image: Oxon Park & Ride operated by Arriva





Fare reduction

Shrewsbury Park & Ride

Ludlow Park & Ride

Ludlow P&R

Fare reduction



Image: Ludlow Food Festival



Image: River Teme, Ludlow

Image: Ludlow Park & Ride site

To provide consistency across all our park and ride services, the fares on the Ludlow Park and Ride would also be reduced.

As previously described, our ambition is to provide a separate park and ride service in Ludlow, not incorporated within the current town service.

To push this new service and provide improvements for customers looking to use it, the price for using the service would be £1 return.

Currently, the service is £2 return, if parking at ECO Park site, free for concessions and £1.50 for children.

We would look to undertake a robust communications and marketing push on the upgraded service to highlight the changes to residents and visitors. This will also give us insight into how the future of park and ride services in Shropshire look.





Improving the image of bus travel

Promotion

Marketing

Marketing

Citymapper

To improve our marketing and promotion of all local bus services, we are looking to bring the 'Citymapper' app to Shropshire. The journey planning app allows us to deliver the highest quality public transport data to customers, including;

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Timetables | Real-time departures | Network disruptions | Integrated ticketing | Integrated travel with local bus, rail & DRT |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|

There are also a number of accessibility features available for customers, including audible directions.

Citymapper also integrates with our Connect On-Demand service to enhance connections with the wider transport network, allowing users to combine on-demand and fixed route transport into a single trip.

There is also the ability to allow users to plan, book and pay for their transport requirements in app. This would then be Shropshire's entrance into multi-operator ticketing.

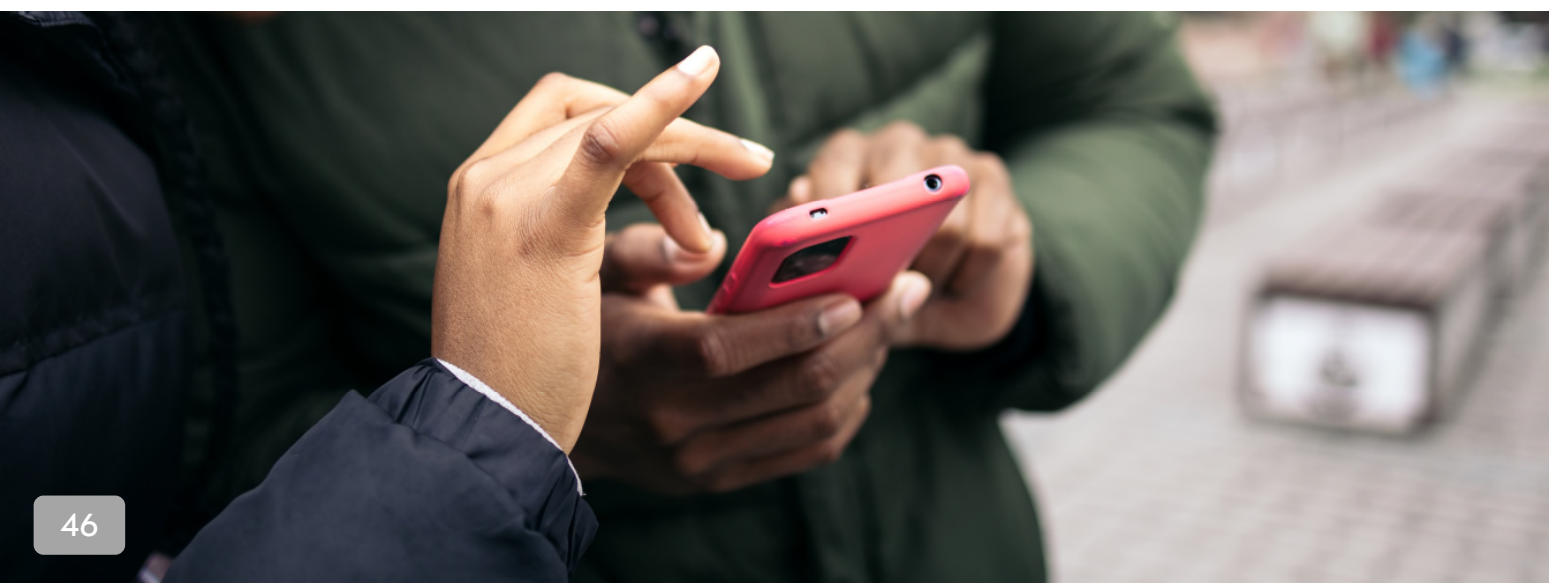


Promotion

Comms & Adverts

To ensure all initiatives mentioned are highlighted to customers we will provide a comprehensive marketing plan utilising Shropshire Council's Communications team and work with local operators to ensure existing and potential customers are made aware.

Utilising social media, advertisements (printed & online) and press releases we will look to highlight the service improvements and raise awareness of the enhanced frequencies along these corridors.





Connect On-Demand (DRT)

Driver

Bus

Zone

Zone 2 Upgrade

Sutton Farm & Weir Hill

From July 2024 we will look to expand the current operation of Connect On-Demand in the urban zone to the south-east of Shrewsbury.

Currently Zone 2 operates around the urban development along Oteley Road, however, immediately to the north of this area is Sutton Farm a suburban development with around 2000 homes.

A proportion of the location is served by a commercial service operated by Arriva between roughly 9am and 2pm. Any stops identified within the zone that are served by the commercial service customers will be directed to Arriva to ensure services work together in unison.

Outside of Arriva’s commercial service, Connect On-Demand will offer residents and visitors travel on the DRT buses to and from the town centre from 7.30am to 9am and 2pm to 6.30pm

Additionally, around January 2025 we will look to launch the service in the far eastern section of the zone, a new development called Weir Hill. This brand-new estate consisting of around 1000 homes will be offered a similar experience as previous zones connecting them to the wider network in Shrewsbury.

To ensure the success and availability for customers looking to book in these areas we are also providing a brand-new vehicle into the fleet and an additional driver.



Image: Mercedes Cityline EVM operating on Connect On-Demand

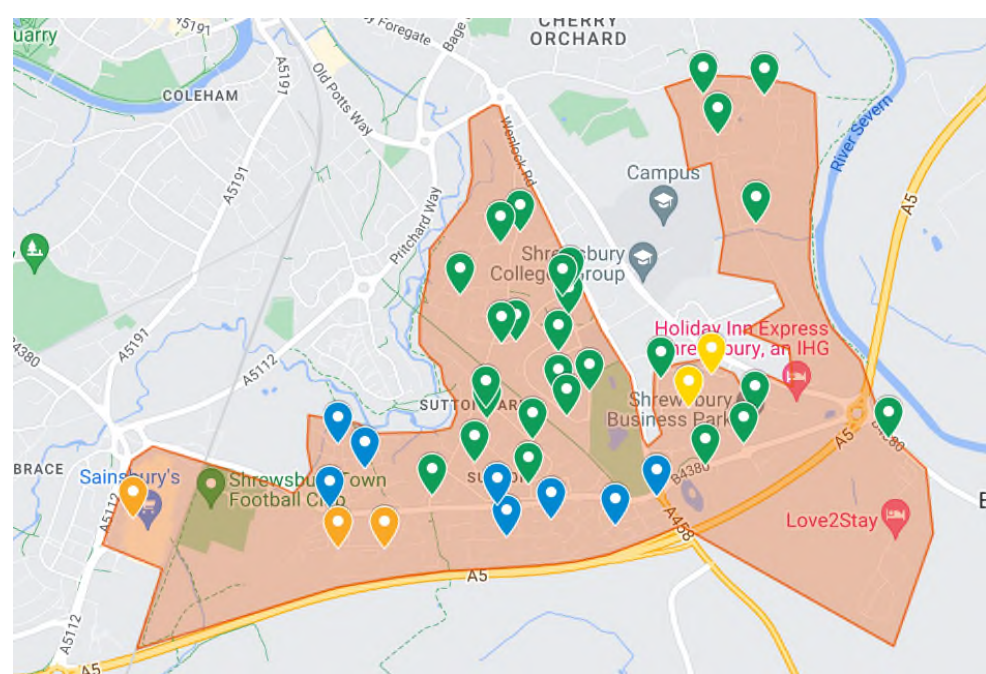


Figure 3D: Proposed upgrade to Zone 2 – operating in the south-east of Shrewsbury.

| |
|---------------------------------|
| ZONE 2 UPDATE |
| BLUE & ORANGE STOPS |
| EXISTING STOPS IN ZONE 2 |
| GREEN & YELLOW STOPS |
| PROVISIONAL NEW STOPS ADDED |



Overview & delivery plan

BSIP+ 2024/25 (£1.84M)

| Project number | Bus Improvement Scheme | Estimated Timescale of delivery (on receipt of funding) |
|----------------|--|---|
| #BP13 | Service frequency improvements – 436 (Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth) | 3-6 months |
| #BP11 | Service frequency improvements – 64 (Shrewsbury to Market Drayton) | 3-6 months |
| #BP14 | Service frequency improvements – 722 (Ludlow Park & Ride) | 3-6 months |
| #BP12 | Service frequency improvements – 401 (Oswestry Town Service) | 3-6 months |
| #BP21 | Fare reduction – Shrewsbury Park & Ride | 3 months |
| #BP22 | Fare reduction – Ludlow Park & Ride | 3 months |
| #BP31 | Improving the image of bus travel – Citymapper | 3-6 months |
| #BP32 | Improving the image of bus travel – Marketing | 3-6 months |
| #BP41 | Connect On-Demand – Zone expansion | 3-7 months |

The above table details the key projects outlined for funding through the BSIP+ allocation of £1.84M. Dates listed are subject to receipt of funding in July 2024. Should funding be received at a later date, these timescales will need to be reviewed in partnership with local operators, elected members and affected residents.



Future Network Enhancements

With the rural nature and topography of Shropshire, there is very much the thinking in Shropshire that there will need to be more than one fuel solution, electric for the shorter distance town routes and hybrid or hydrogen for those longer distance journeys. Through our funding request for buses, we can utilise the national bus strategy as a platform to develop services and increase patronage, and so the business case for buses becomes much clearer, but they will need that initial support and with LTA's help, to create that environment for services to prosper, based upon what the prospective and current passenger wants to see. At this time the only single Zero Emission Bus operating within Shropshire is the "Sigma" which operates within the zones of our Connect On-Demand operation.

Whilst we need to ensure that we have a reliable and sufficient public transport network operating within Shropshire, we must not lose focus on "Green" vehicles that we have asked for within the BSIP as this will be completely transformational for our residents and visitors.

Without the funding that we have asked for within the BSIP you can see that it would be very unlikely that we would have any further Green Buses in Shropshire for many years. To this date we only have 1 single fully electric vehicle operating in Shropshire which was introduced within the Connect on Demand operation in December 2023.

One of the priorities that came through very clearly from our consultation and survey back in 2021 that is summarised in the earlier sections of this prospectus, highlighted to us that not only did people wish to see improvements to existing bus services but there were significant gaps in the current bus network provision. People want to see better links to our health facilities, greater integration with rail and bus service operations that are frequent and critically serve more communities.

We therefore provided a number of proposals to enhance our network, utilising existing resources (current services) to create a bus network that serves more people and giving them access to the communities and services that they desire.





PHASE THREE

**VISION
FOR BUSES
2025 & BEYOND**



Shropshire
Council

**SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE
IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)**

JUNE 2024

VISION FOR BUSES 2025 & BEYOND

It has been well documented nationally that bus travel is the most frequented form of public transport yet had been in decline prior to the pandemic in 2020, which then impacted its decline further.

During the same period the commercial bus market in Shropshire has reduced to such an extent that virtually all bus services in the county currently either rely upon government funded revenue support or existing bus subsidy from the Council itself.

Whilst it is essential that support continues to retain the existing levels of bus provision in the County, the following section in our refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan, highlights both the case for change with public transport and the case for investment to address this decline and bring about a public transport system in Shropshire that can deliver the benefits that we see nationally, which up until now has been mainly reserved for more urban areas.

You will see from the following sections that our vision for bus is not centred around one solution, but multiple interventions. We are well aware that whilst one transport solution may be successful in one scenario it doesn't mean it will be in the next and will be about adapting solutions locally to meet the needs of those communities.

These interventions/improvements are based on many years of listening to people and their communities and understanding that foremost they want better bus services and this plan would help deliver that.

We will talk about enhanced frequencies so that passengers can have the flexibility to choose more when they travel, enhanced operating hours to help with access to education and support our night-time economy.



VISION FOR BUSES – 2025 & BEYOND

We need to provide additional bus services to those communities that have little or no transport and bring our successful Connect On-Demand service to new communities across the County. And through supporting our bus operators, provide simple, seamless and affordable ticketing options. Then we will have the platform to realise a truly integrated public transport network.



Figure 4A: The Shropshire Plan, published by Shropshire Council

At the heart of our BSIP is the Council's **Shropshire Plan**, a strategy to ensure Shropshire people and visitors alike, can live their best lives through 4 strategic priorities, making the most of our beautiful unique surroundings and places that Shropshire has to offer.

Connectivity and movement has a significant role to play in any place and Shropshire like any other county deserves to have a public transport network that can help deliver those priorities.



Vision for buses (Part 1)

Phase **three**, part **one** looks at the current bus network Shropshire has to offer and improves upon them, ensuring the foundations of the network are preserved and enables us to build upon them. This includes the minimum level of bus services in the county that people in Shropshire would expect to see.

We don't believe that we should simply be replicating frequencies and services that occur in urban areas but reflect what we need to do as a minimum to ensure people can use public transport to access services that they need, including education, employment, health and shopping (to name a few).

When asking Shropshire residents, stakeholders and visitors for their views, either through direct surveys or those undertaken on behalf on complimenting strategies, it was clear that an improvement in frequency and the other elements we have included were crucial in ensuring public transport was a viable option in Shropshire.

The following tiers are listed from our highest priority for investment at the top, which would see the biggest impact in terms of increased patronage and benefits to the local community:

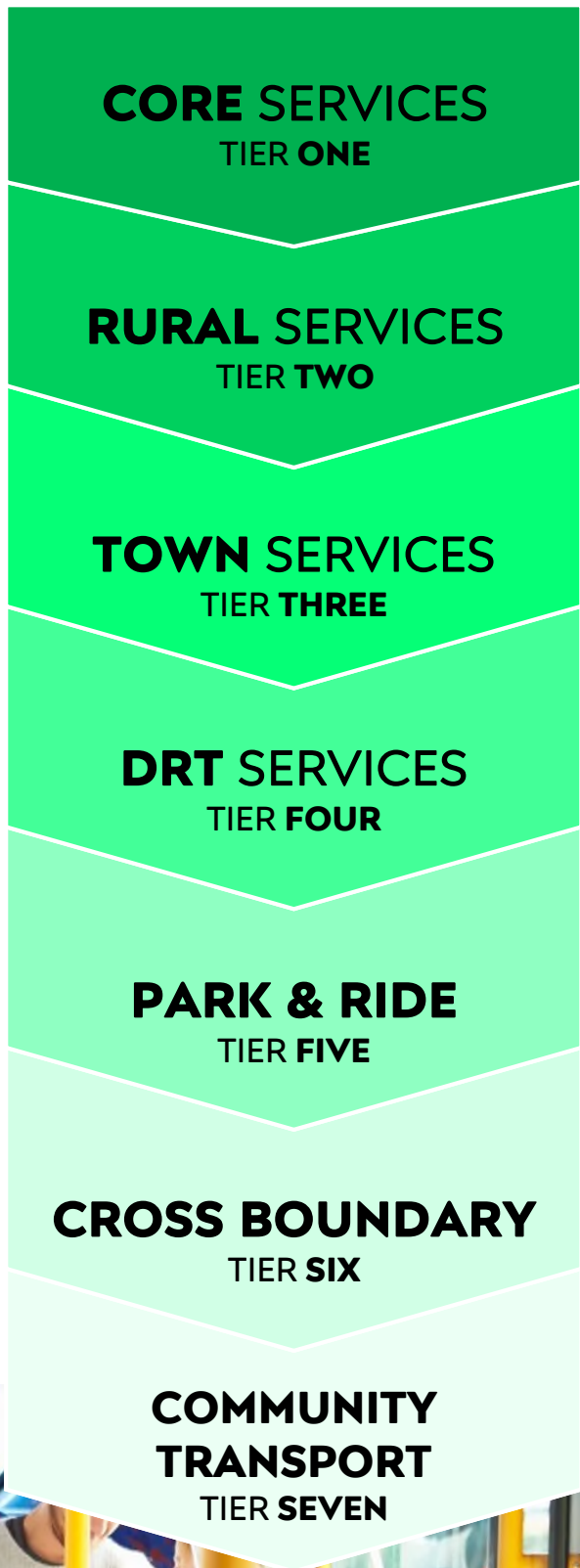


Image: Arriva bus, Shrewsbury



Image: Shropshire bus flag



RURAL SERVICES TIER TWO

Rural services are those linking rural market towns across Shropshire to another urban area that is not Shrewsbury.

These services are currently subsidised by the local authority and provide vital links for more isolated communities.

As a result of limited investment and dwindling passenger numbers over the past few years, these services are the highest affected in terms of reduced frequency and operating hours and are usually the first casualties in terms of cuts made on the network.

These services have over the required mileage for DRT and would still require a fixed timetable service in operation.



Figure 4D: Current rural network in Shropshire

| Initiative | Minimum Required Standard (with funding) | Ambition |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Frequency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 1-2 hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every hour |
| Operating Days/Hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Saturday – 8am to 8pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Saturday – 7am to 10pm Sundays - 8am to 8pm |
| Fare Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3.00 single fare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2.00 single fare |
| Ticketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticketing available | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticket 'Shropshire Bus Ticket' Integrated ticketing with local rail services, if applicable. |
| Passenger Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated website detailing timetables and fares. Roadside displays at key stops. New E-Paper signage at key terminals (real-time etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated website detailing timetables and fares. Roadside displays at key stops. New E-Paper signage at key terminals (real-time etc.) |

Figure 4E: Table above requires funding to achieve our minimum required standard and ultimately the ambition highlighted.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

TOWN SERVICES TIER THREE

Town services are a vital route throughout many communities in the county. These are identified as high frequency links between suburban areas and the local town centre.

Shrewsbury, the county town of Shropshire, has a number of town services, some of which are commercially operated via main artery roads. Other towns, listed below have between one and two dedicated town routes serving residents and connecting them to vital services such as GP's, hospitals, shops and employment.

Town services outside of Shrewsbury are fully subsidised by the local authority.

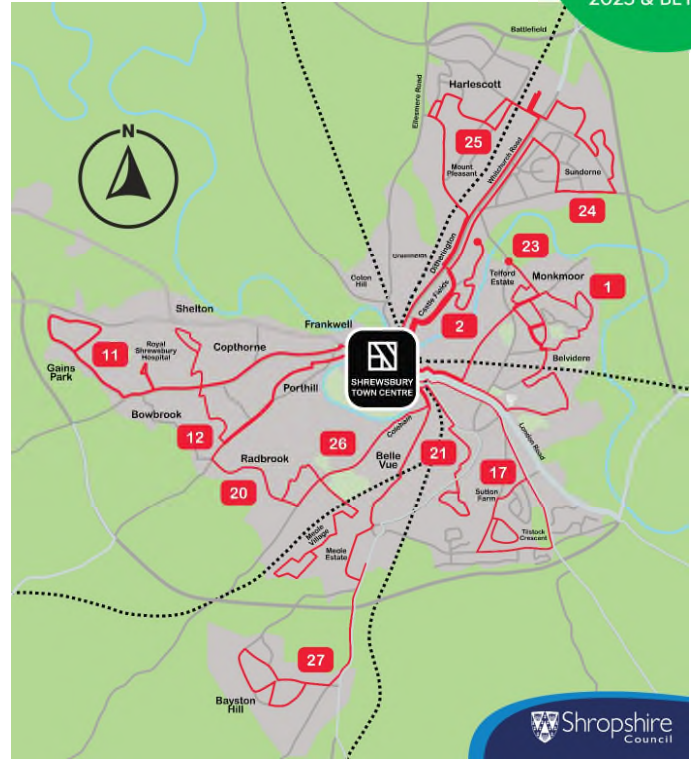


Figure 4F: Current town network in Shrewsbury

Other communities with dedicated town services outside of Shrewsbury

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----|------------|--------|
| Market Drayton | Whitchurch | Ellesmere | Oswestry | Wem | Bridgnorth | Ludlow |
|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|-----|------------|--------|

| Initiative | Minimum Required Standard (with funding) | Ambition |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Frequency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 30 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 15 minutes |
| Operating Days/Hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Saturday – 6.30am to 11pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Saturday - 6.30am to 11pm Sundays - 8am to 10pm |
| Fare Cost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3.00 single fare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £2.00 single fare |
| Ticketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticketing available | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticket 'Shropshire Bus Ticket' |
| Passenger Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated website detailing timetables and fares. Roadside displays at key stops. New E-Paper signage at key terminals (real-time etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated website detailing timetables and fares. Roadside displays at key stops. New E-Paper signage at key terminals (real-time etc.) |

Figure 4G: Table above requires funding to achieve our minimum required standard and ultimately the ambition highlighted.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

DRT SERVICES *ctd.* **TIER FOUR**

Health Connect

Recently the NHSE (National Health Service England) Transport Team outlined the continuing issue of the missed appointment rate which is rising year-on-year. In 2022/23 a staggering 7.2m outpatient appointments were missed (1 in 12 people missing an appointment) and a major contribution to this, is simply transport being a barrier.

A transport network that is easily accessible, reliable and affordable contributes to life satisfaction and wellbeing. It enables access to health supporting facilities such as education establishments, outdoor & open spaces and more directly, health care establishments.

The quality of a transport network captures a broad range of factors, including journey times and the availability of public transport, as well as the reliability and affordability of services. Barriers to people using public transport vary geographically, and across demographic groups but the combination have the power to make it hard, or completely impossible for people to access essential aspects of day-to-day life.

This can contribute to stress, fatigue, low mood and social exclusion, which all have impacts on the local Health Trust and local Authority services.

We have set up two simple local solutions in which we are actively addressing some of the issues mentioned above and offer a resolution to very real and often different issues experienced by patients and health visitors:

Within Shropshire there is a Strategic Transformation Partnership which meets to explore opportunities for collaboration across the public sector. The partnership has identified Transport as one of the key enablers to unlock efficiencies within the Health Sector and beyond.

SHIFNAL SHUTTLE

In collaboration with a local Community Transport Group, we have put in place a means of transport for people in areas not served by any form of public transport to travel to the local health facility and its partner site some distance away, in ensuring doctor & health appointments are met.

Passengers may also utilize the service to use of other vital facilities within the town.

This small trial has only become available as a result of the use of Section 106 money from developments within the town.



Image: Shifnal Shuttle, Shropshire Community Transport Consortium

P&R SHUTTLE TO ROYAL SHREWSBURY HOSPITAL

With the current Transformation Programme under way within the Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin Heath Trust (SaTH) we have worked together to provide a P&R service from a location approx 10mins away from RSH for NHS staff and all third-party organisations in the first instance.

By moving staff parking away from the hospital site, this has freed up additional outpatient & visitor parking zones, which the Trust are seeing that appointments are being made on time and improved resource management of NHS staff and facilities missed outpatient rate for the site is reduced. A small but important step in reducing the overall national rate.



Image: Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

DRT SERVICES *ctd.* **TIER FOUR**

Schools Connect

School transport is important to the bus industry but vital to young people and within a rural county like Shropshire this can be a challenge with ever increasing costs and a reduction in the number of school transport operators who provide this transport.

Shropshire Council transports around 6,000 pupils to school each day (around 12,000 trips) and most of these pupils are transported mainly by the commercial market utilising coaches, buses, minibuses and taxis.

Whilst fewer children travel to school by bus, services have ceased to be commercially viable for many operators resulting in some cases, operators ceasing to exist resulting in an increase in costs by the remaining operators.

By identifying high-cost school transport routes it will be possible to utilise the Connect On-Demand vehicles at peak times to transport entitled pupils to school thereby reducing the cost of home to school transport but also inviting and educating pupils to use this service outside of the school journeys which will create independence and hopefully ensure public transport is the first choice of travel.



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

PARK & RIDE TIER FIVE

Park and Rides have been a staple in both Shrewsbury and Ludlow for many years. Initially very successful, sadly over the years the service has seen a sharp decline in patronage.

This was further exacerbated due to the pandemic and very limited investment in sites, vehicles and information over recent years.

Ambition for Shrewsbury Park & Ride remains as identified in the Shrewsbury Movement Strategy, the service remains a key pillar to accessing the town centre and ensuring carbon emissions in the centre reduce. There are three sites in use in Shrewsbury; Oxon, Meole Brace and Harlescott.

Ludlow Park & Ride was initially a dedicated service operating out of ECO Park to the east of the town. Over the years, and to keep it operational, it has been amalgamated into local town service, losing its identity and efficiency as a park and ride service.

Our ambition remains to improve both services with a complete branding overhaul and offer an improved service on both, ensuring both services become the number one choice for residents and visitors looking to access either town.

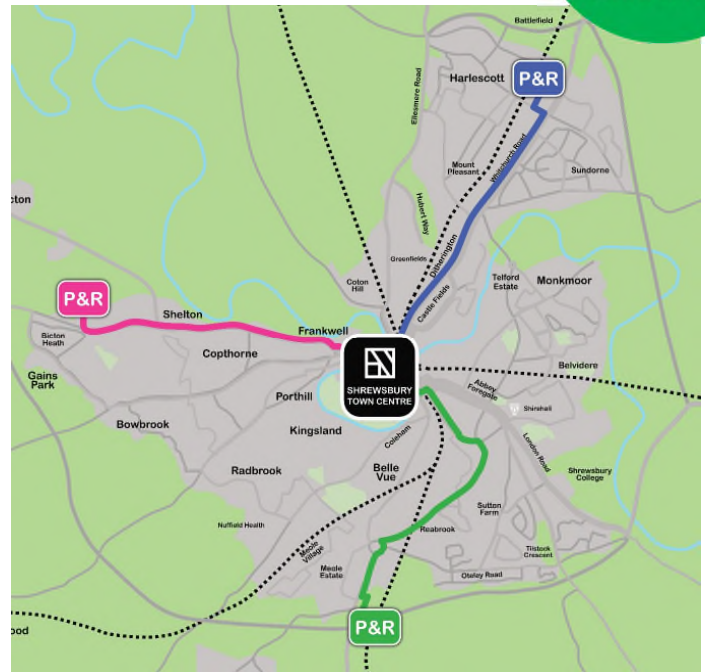


Figure 4J: Current Shrewsbury Park & Ride site map and route



Figure 4K: Current Ludlow Park & Ride site map and route (Service 722)

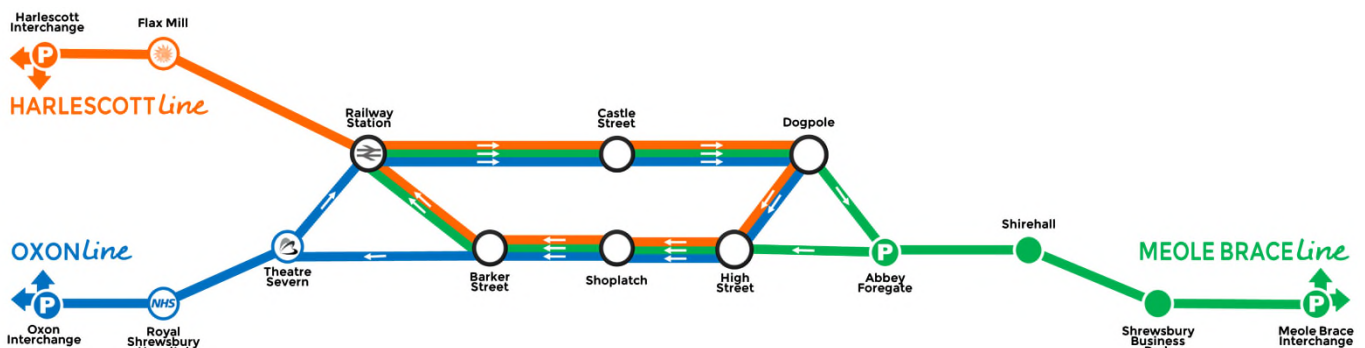


Figure 4L: Current Shrewsbury P&R network map, town centre

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

PARK & RIDE TIER FIVE

Shrewsbury Connect

Shrewsbury Park & Ride is a tried and tested formula for the town; however, the current service provides passengers with a semi-express link from three strategically placed sites across the outskirts of Shrewsbury to the town centre.








Ultimately giving passengers one choice in destination, and whilst there is plenty for Shrewsbury Town Centre to offer, a changing population requires more choice and potentially access to more destinations across the entire town, outside of the river loop.

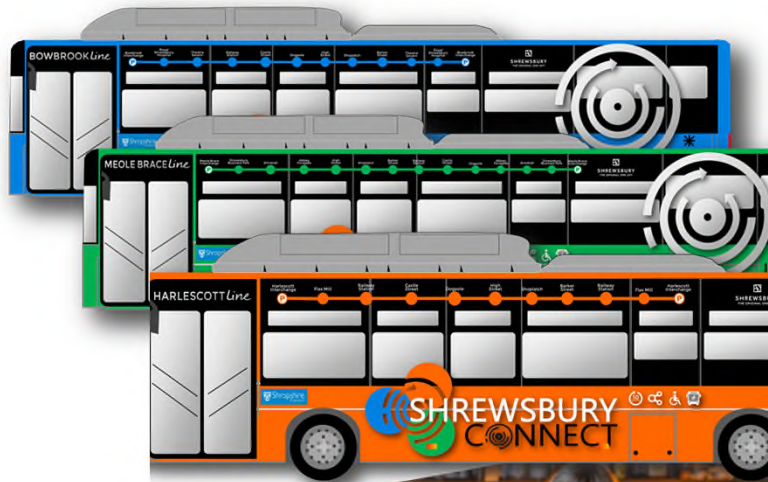
Along with the rebranding of the service to Shrewsbury Connect, we are currently determining the feasibility of a brand-new site in West-Shrewsbury close to Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

This would replace the current Oxon site and provide better connectivity and access to the hospital for staff and visitors.

With plans underway for redevelopment of the riverside complex in Shrewsbury, the new service will complement the development as well as provide an improved service for the launch.

Shrewsbury Connect improvements

| | |
|---|--|
|  | New stops added to each route, including Royal Shrewsbury Hospital |
|  | Operational hours of 6.30am to 10pm, Monday to Saturday |
|  | Improved frequency of every 10 minutes (currently every 20 minutes) |
|  | New hop-on-hop-off tickets available, allowing more connectivity across the town |
|  | New, fully electric buses introduced, smaller buses utilised off-peak |
|  | Affordable fares and multi-modal ticketing introduced to plan your entire journey |
|  | New site introduced at Bowbrook to provide crucial connections to the Hospital for patients, staff and visitors. |



Images: Selection of promotional images of Shrewsbury Town Centre

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

PARK & RIDE TIER FIVE

Ludlow Connect

Ludlow Park & Ride was in the past a dedicated service operating between the ECO Park site towards the east of the town, directly into the town centre. Sadly over the years, under-utilised town services had to either be cut or amalgamated with the P&R service.

What's left is a town service in all but name and due to the large diversion the service must undertake, passengers can be sat on buses for a while as it navigates the suburban communities of the town.

Plans are to bring back a dedicated park and ride service for the town, with improved frequency, operating directly to key strategic sites, such as the Railway Station and Assembly Rooms in the town centre.

Improvements will need to be made to the branding as well as investment into the site itself to bring it up to the standard expected of potential passengers looking to use it.

Fares will also need to be reviewed and branded alongside its sister service operating in Shrewsbury for consistency.

| Ludlow Connect improvements | |
|---|---|
|  | Dedicated Park & Ride route from ECO Park site, operating to key stops in the town such as Railway Station, Corve Street and Ludlow Castle. |
|  | Operational hours of 7am to 10pm, Monday to Saturday |
|  | Improved frequency of every 15 minutes (currently every 30 minutes) |
|  | New hop-on-hop-off tickets available, allowing more connectivity across the town |
|  | New, fully electric buses introduced, smaller buses utilised off-peak |
|  | Affordable fares and multi-modal ticketing introduced to plan your entire journey |
|  | Improvements to existing site such as security, CCTV and information. |

Figure 4M: Proposed Ludlow Connect route and stops



Images: Selection of promotional images of Ludlow Town Centre

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

CROSS BOUNDARY TIER SIX

Shropshire’s unique cross-boundary network links services between English counties such as Herefordshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire, as well as urban authorities like the West Midlands and Telford & Wrekin and crosses at numerous points along the county boundary into Wales.

This poses a challenge to meet the needs of Shropshire residents and move passengers between authorities that may have their own view of how services such as these may be required to operate.

We propose to invest in simplifying cross border travel for Shropshire residents.

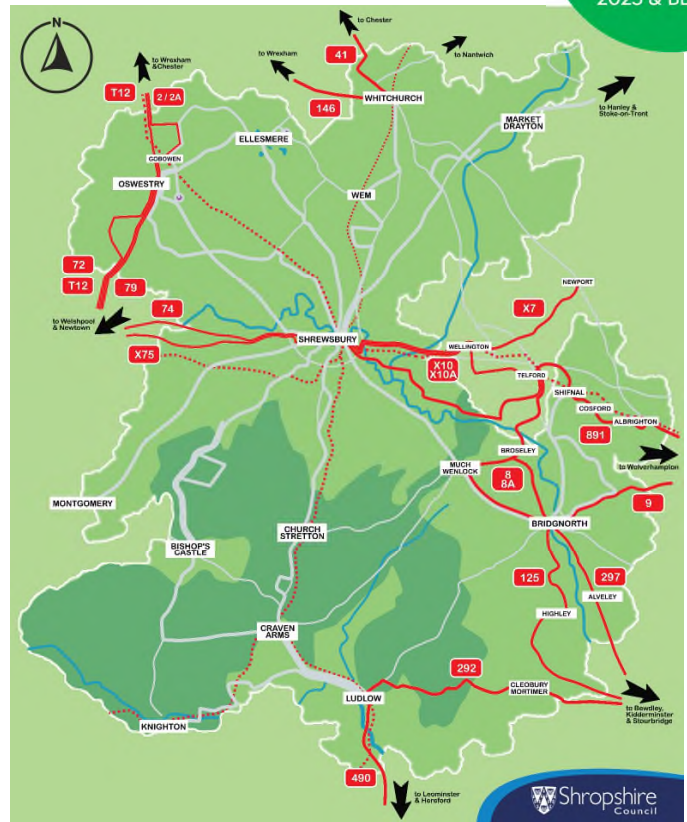


Figure 4N: Current cross boundary network in Shropshire

| Neighbouring Local Authorities | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Cheshire East | Staffordshire | Worcestershire |
| Powys | Wrexham | Herefordshire |
| Telford & Wrekin | West Midlands Combined Authority | |

| Initiative | Minimum Required Standard (with funding) | Ambition |
|------------------|--|--|
| Ticketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticketing available | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-operator ticket ‘Shropshire Bus Ticket’ Work with neighbouring authorities to identify local ticketing schemes. |

Figure 4O: Table above requires funding to achieve our minimum required standard and ultimately the ambition highlighted.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT TIER SEVEN

In Shropshire seven separate CT Groups, who between them serve all areas of the county, have come together to form Shropshire Community Transport Consortium (SCTC). The Consortium’s primary aims are to share good practice, improve standards and raise awareness of the role and activities of CT in Shropshire.

Most of the seven CT Groups are stand-alone organisations but there are also a couple (Mayfair and Qube) that operate under the umbrella of a wider community organisation. While all Groups provide not-for-profit minibus services for those with a mobility impairment, there are differences in the scale and type of transport services each CT offers.

Use of the social value tool has enabled many (although, not all) of these benefits to be quantified and valued. Overall, this demonstrates a benefit cost ratio for the seven Shropshire CT projects in 2022/23 of at least 5.29:1. This is equivalent to the CT services generating benefits worth £5.29p for every £1 spent on delivering them, indicating very high value for money (as defined by the UK Department for Transport in their WebTAG transport appraisal guidance).

Other key headline indicators of the impact Community Transport has in the county, include, in 2022/23:

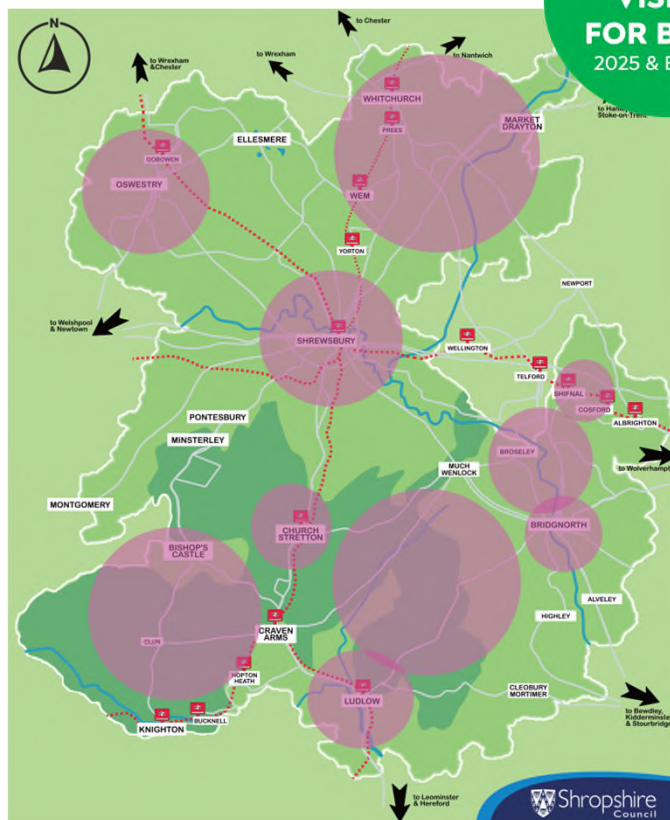


Figure 4P: Areas of operation for CT services in Shropshire.

Shropshire Community Transport Services

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Corvedale Buzzard | The Ludlow Traveller | Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride |
| Bishop's Castle Dial-a-Ride | North Salop Wheelers | Broseley Friendly Bus |
| Bridgnorth Community Transport | Qube Dial-a-Ride | Church Stretton Ring and Ride |
| Oswestry | | |



Image: Broseley Friendly Bus, Shropshire Community Transport Consortium

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| CT projects provided transport for 2,002 individual members, 85% of whom are aged over 65 and 50% of whom have a physical or sensory disability | CT projects provided 51,690 passenger journeys for their individual members and around 4,672 journeys (group bookings) for organisations, providing approximately a further 80,000 individual passenger journeys on these | CT projects utilised 34 minibuses, most of which are accessible to wheelchair users, and 139 volunteer cars to provide their services, covering a total of 327,472 miles | 73% (1,461) individual passengers regard CT as essential or would find travel very difficult without it and 82.6% (84) of stakeholder organisations say CT is essential to all or some of their members participating in their activities |
|--|--|---|---|

Vision for buses (Part 2)

Phase **three**, part **two** looks at further developments to the public transport network that can complement all the initiatives brought to services in the previous section.

This looks at proven strategies to help bring Shropshire forward in levelling up to a national standard of what passengers should expect when using bus services.

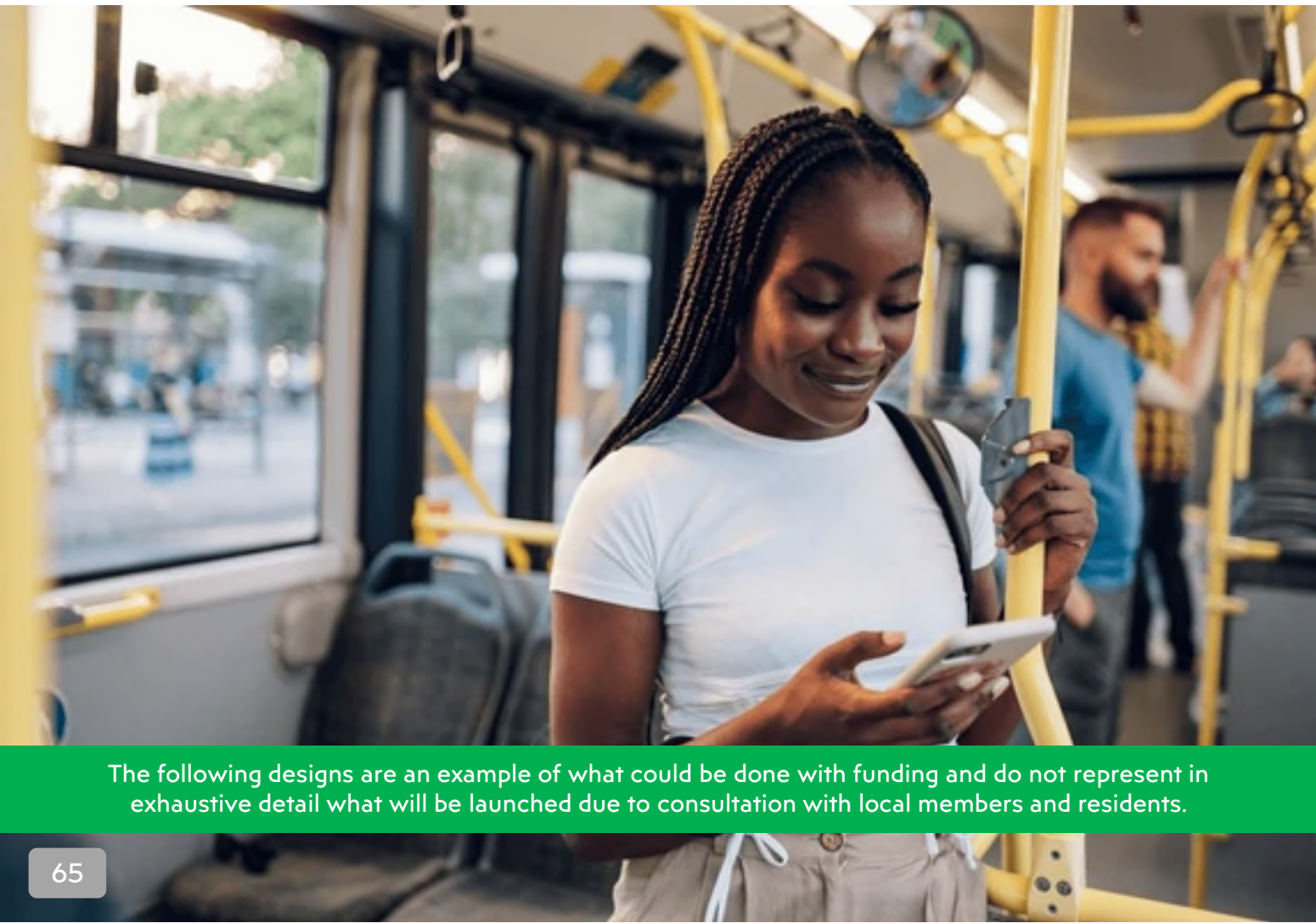
**MULTI-
OPERATOR
TICKETING**

**PASSENGER
INFORMATION**

**RAIL
INTEGRATION**

**ALTERNATIVELY
FUELLED
BUSES**

**BUS
PRIORITY**



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Multi-operator ticketing

The Shropshire Bus Partnership wishes to promote the Shropshire bus network as a whole. Given that services are provided by a number of operators, the Partnership understands the need to introduce ticketing products that will allow travel across different operators.

Whilst the demand for such a ticket is considered to be quite limited, particularly with the current £2 single fare cap in place, the Partnership wishes to firstly establish a multi-operator day ticket. This will offer the ability to promote the bus network for leisure travel. There are also needs amongst students travelling to Shrewsbury College, who find themselves using two different operators with a change of buses in Shrewsbury town centre.

The Partnership is committed to introducing a multi-operator ticket and, in the coming months, will consider how this should operate and how it should be priced, recognising that it will be at a premium to operators' own tickets.

Is Multi-operator ticketing right for Shropshire?

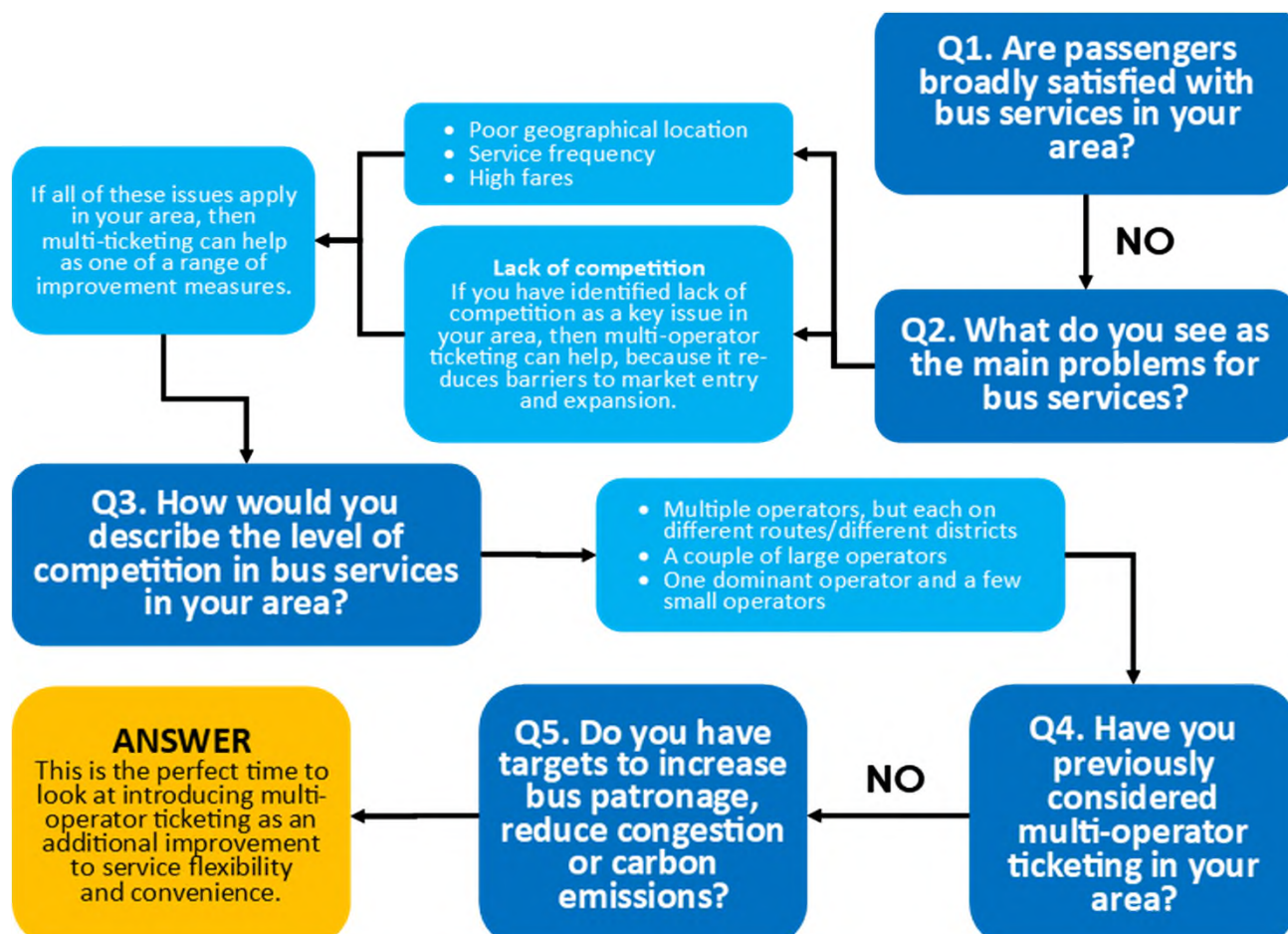


Figure 4Q: Flowchart explaining the process to determine multi-operator ticketing within a local authority area.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Broad principles for introducing a multi-operator scheme²²

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Revenue collection | Users purchase tickets through the smart ticketing system. The system records usage and transactions data. |
| Revenue allocation | Funds are distributed to transport operators according to their involvement and service usage. Some revenue may be reinvested for system maintenance and improvements. |
| Financial management | The Council manages financial operations, ensuring transparency and accountability. Regular financial reporting monitors the system's financial status and guides decision-making. |
| Competition law | It is essential that any multi-operator ticketing arrangements comply with competition law. The Competition and Markets Authority oversees a Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption Order (due to expire in Feb 2026, currently under review) which gives blanket exemption to all multi-operator schemes which meet certain conditions. |

UrbanThings partnered with Welsh Government

To roll out a smart-mobility platform on the TrawsCymru network across Wales. TrawsCymru comprises 6 separate operators running 13 interurban routes under the same brand²³



Nottingham: Multi-modal and multi-operator ticketing²⁶

The Robin Hood Card, previously known as the Kangaroo card, debuted in 2010 for use on buses, trams, and local trains, featuring top-up machines and a mobile app with a £5.70 daily cap.

The Covid-19-driven development of the Robin Hood Ticketing app initially saw 85% reliance on ticket machines, but subsequent marketing efforts achieved a 50/50 split between app and machine usage.

Operator reimbursement, based on mileage, eliminates penalties for low-demand service times, while collaborative marketing focuses on social media and bus stop signage.

The Robin Hood Card commands 25% of Nottingham's current ticket market.

Challenges: Nottingham City Council manages the scheme's administration, which is resource-intensive but lacks a built-in fee, making it difficult to sustain; formal mechanisms are needed for continuous operation, and while data is scarce due to Covid-19, the high adoption rate suggests the Robin Hood Card's appeal.

Lessons learnt: It's crucial to establish the market need and operator engagement for multi-operator ticketing, with clear business cases and continuous participation mechanisms; early agreement and revenue distribution fairness are essential, alongside built-in administration costs. Funding support aids infrastructure development, limiting competition boosts success, and operator engagement ensures fair benefit sharing, with user testing pivotal for app development success.





West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)²⁴

Swift was introduced in 2012 and offers various card options²⁵ Initially facing slow adoption due to non-participation of the largest operator, National Express, it is now included and introduced fare caps; now accepting contactless bank cards alongside Swift cards - the system continues to evolve to include non-public transport services like car parking and cycle hire. In 2019, Swift was rolled out further afield, extending out into Hereford, Milton Keynes, and Cannock.

After Oyster, Swift is the most popular smartcard scheme for travel payments in the UK with approximately 250,000 regular users making more than 60 million journeys per year.

Within the West Midlands, one operator (National Express) controls 95% of the market, which means that this operator has a significant influence on how the market can be shaped. However, multi-operator tickets are subject to competition and market issues.

Single-operator tickets on Swift provide revenue directly to the operator, while multi-operator tickets contribute to a shared revenue pot, with reimbursement based on the number of journeys sold, and agreed distribution percentages for multi-modal tickets between buses and trams.

Challenges: Historically, operators have shown reluctance towards multi-operator ticketing schemes. Lack of interoperability in contactless payments among operators results in manual capping calculations, posing significant back-office challenges. Additionally, integrating local rail with Swift faces obstacles due to infrastructure limitations at stations.

Lessons learnt: Adopt a long-term perspective for scheme success, considering gradual changes over a decade. Prioritise project and risk management for stable implementation, with rigorous and agile supplier procurement processes. Ensure adequate scheme resourcing, with a dedicated team for oversight and management. Focus on user experience to enhance journey satisfaction and increase patronage. Utilize operator insights to address concerns and facilitate scheme expansion, as demonstrated in the West Midlands' experience.



Transport for
West Midlands

 **swift**



Swift Go



You travel, and we cap the cost so you pay the best fare at the end of the day! Find out more at tfwm.org.uk/swift-go

You can now
enjoy the
benefit of
3-day & 7-day
capping!

Leicester: Multi-operator ticketing

Introduced in 2019, Flexi enables passengers to travel on any bus services within the area – with a family flexi day ticket implemented.

Operators utilise tap-on and tap-off technology to calculate fares per journey within the scheme, ensuring they do not exceed the cap; Family Flexi Day tickets are accessible via individual operators' apps, with Littlepay and Ticketer providing the technology backbone, allowing for multi-operator capping without a centralised app.

Operator reimbursements are provided if the passenger exceeds the daily or weekly cap – there has been some criticism on the timing for these

Social media and bus stop signage have been the main promotional techniques employed.

24,000 journeys made, saving passengers **£54,000**.

2.74 average trips per day using the multi operator ticket. This is higher than the national average of ~2.

11% of the market is on the multi-operator cap.

Fare revenue doubled due to usage. However, how much of this is attributable to decreases in single operator ticketing still needs to be clarified.

From operators where data has been sourced thus far, the decrease in single operator journeys has been outweighed by increases in multi-operator journeys.

Challenges: Lack of a dominant operator complicates multi-operator ticketing adoption, requiring negotiation for premium reduction and addressing discrepancies in fare zones. Varying operator opinions on premiums and concerns over revenue impact of successful summer ticket necessitate careful management and agreement.

Key Lessons: Integrate ticketing into broader strategies, manage reimbursement processes diligently, and ensure consistency in definitions. Involve diverse stakeholders in communications to foster operator ownership, create simple long-term roadmaps to mitigate the continuation risks when key personnel leave, and prioritise multi-operator over multi-modal initiatives for enhanced quality and simplicity.



References;

²² 20221031 UTG Final Report - Published version v1.pdf (urbantransportgroup.org)

²³ <https://urbanthings.co/2020/11/04/how-to-build-a-successful-multi-operator-smart-ticketing-scheme-the-trawscymru-project/>

²⁴ <https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/BBB-SP1-Fares-and-Ticketing-Technical-Note-1.pdf>

²⁵ <https://bettertransport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/legacy-files/pdfs/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>

²⁶ <https://www.transporteast.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/BBB-SP1-Fares-and-Ticketing-Technical-Note-1.pdf>

Passenger Information

It is essential that passengers and potential passengers can easily access information about bus trips. This includes information which is fixed or changes relatively infrequently, such as routes, timetables and fares, and also information which changes day by day, including whether the bus is running on time or late – or has been cancelled, any diversions or delays on the route, or timetables for special events. Giving passengers better access to information is crucial in building confidence and keeping them informed in times of disruption.

Information needs to be provided in different ways to suit different people. Some passengers are comfortable using apps and websites; others choose to refer to printed timetables or to speak to an information phone line or the bus driver or staff at a travel centre or bus station.

Keeping information up to date is important but can be time consuming. The responsibility to update information is shared between the Council and bus operators. Some information services are provided by third parties, including Traveline (the national online and telephone transport information service, which covers trains, buses and trams across the country). Traveline does not hold information about our demand responsive Connect On Demand services, nor does it help with planning walking or cycling trips. Online maps (e.g. Google maps) do allow journey planning by active modes and scheduled public transport as well as by car, but also exclude Connect On Demand services. In large cities privately provided apps, such as Moovit and CityMapper, include the full range of ways of travelling, and also act as a platform for booking and paying for some transport services.



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.



Printed timetables at bus stops are relatively expensive to maintain and update. Alternatives include e-ink displays (electronic paper, using the same technology as Kindles and other e-readers), which can be updated centrally over wifi or the mobile phone network and can display a wider range of information.

E-ink displays being trialled in London in different sizes provide “next bus” real-time information, timetables and other information. For the passenger, the experience is very similar to reading a printed timetable display

QR codes can be provided which link through to static timetables and real-time running information, linked to buses’ locations as reported by the on-board ticket machine. These rely on passengers having a suitable device and network connection and coverage.

Example QR code from Herefordshire Council



At busy town centre bus stops across the country it is increasingly common to see real-time information screens, displaying information on when buses are due and whether they are delayed, as well as other information and marketing messages. These can be fed from the same system that serves information to mobile apps and websites, with a single source of truth providing confidence to passengers that the information they see, however they see it, is accurate and up-to-date.

The following examples from East Sussex show modern screen displays on the street in the historic town centre of Lewes.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Information also covers marketing materials – posters, leaflets, webpages and social media posts. This plays an important role in informing passengers and potential passengers of the opportunities open to them when travelling by bus, and can entice them to try new ways of travelling, new destinations or advertise particular ticketing products.

Shropshire Council and the bus operators work together on publicity, coordinated through the Enhanced Partnership. The Enhanced Partnership and our Passenger Charter also set out minimum expectations on operators to provide up-to-date information.

With additional funding we would look to:

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | Invest in updated real-time information displays at key town centre bus stops |
| B | In the short term, provide QR codes which link to real time “next bus” information |
| C | In the medium term, roll out e-ink readers to a number of our bus stops |
| D | Consider options for an all-mode journey planner including our Connect On Demand services |

Figure 4S: Example of Shropshire roadside timetable display, currently utilised throughout the county, printed and distributed by Shropshire Council.

Figure 4R: Example of local bus service information utilising app-based products. Above example is from East Sussex County Council.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Rail Integration

For passengers and potential passengers, bus and rail networks frequently appear to be entirely separate from one another. Information often comes from different places, tickets are separate and there is little sense that bus and train operating companies and their staff see their customers as “public transport passengers”. This limits the attractiveness of both rail and bus as alternatives to car for many trips.

Better integration between bus and train services would make bus and train trips more attractive, encouraging more people to choose public transport for more trips, leading to reductions in road traffic and congestion and increased revenue for the public transport network, reducing the need for public subsidy.

Transport for Cornwall has improved bus-rail integration over recent years under its “One Public Transport System for Cornwall” brand through a range of changes and investments, including:

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | Some timetable coordination, so that buses meet trains at stations to allow convenient interchange. Buses are sometimes held at stations if trains are running late. |
| B | Information screens at stations showing real-time bus information. |
| C | Announcements on trains telling passengers about bus links from stations. |
| D | Promotion of the Ride Cornwall ticket, giving unlimited travel on all buses and trains across the county. This product is relatively expensive (£18 for a one-day ticket), which reflects the higher price of train travel. |

In the short term, there are improvements we can make, working with bus operators and train companies:

| | |
|----------|---|
| A | Provide bus information at stations, including real time “next bus” information. |
| B | Agree with train companies that announcements on trains should refer to onward connectivity by bus. |
| C | Explore options for a unified journey planning website and app. |



Image: Shrewsbury Railway Station

In the medium term, a key ambition is to coordinate bus and train timetables more closely. This can help reduce waiting times for passengers when a trip includes bus and rail. This is particularly important when either bus or train runs relatively infrequently, for example every hour. Without this coordination, a passenger may end up waiting a long time at the interchange, while a coordinated timetable might save them up to an hour – making that trip a realistic option. An additional factor here is the importance of allowing buses or trains to be held, so that passengers on a late-running service can still make their connection, giving passengers confidence that their plans will not be hugely disrupted.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.



This type of coordination can be complex and typically the bus timetable has to follow the train timetable – but the prize of increasing passengers' options and reducing their journey times makes it worth the effort.

Another area where difficult decisions can lead to significant change is in fares and tickets. Train fares in Shropshire are much higher than bus fares, and a journey which combines bus and train travel typically means paying two fares. There is no through ticketing covering bus and train, except for the PlusBus scheme (Shrewsbury only), where you can add bus travel within the town to a train ticket. PlusBus tickets cannot be bought on the bus, only from the station or when buying a train ticket in advance. Concessionary passes which give free off-peak travel on buses are not valid on trains, so there is little incentive for passengers with passes to choose the train over the bus on price grounds. In the medium term we aim to work with bus operators and Transport for Wales (who operate the majority of train services in Shropshire) to explore options for integrated ticket products.

In the long term we will explore with bus operators and train companies how the bus network might be reconfigured to reduce duplication along key rail routes, where the train provides a faster service and bus resources could be better deployed elsewhere in the network.



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Alternatively fuelled buses

The bus industry (from Board Directors to Fleet Engineers/Managers) are looking at how they can reduce the operating cost and improve the environment output of their vehicles.

However, this continues to be an on-going challenge with many different solutions being explored and tested (in some cases abandoned, simply because of cost and practical roll-out).

All Shropshire bus operators running traditional services across the county operate vehicles powered by the standard and well proven diesel engine, but this is not the most environmentally friendly power source in our congested market towns.

The current alternative power sources, apart from diesel are; Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Hydrogen, Methane, Electric, Electric Battery, Hybrid and also now the Nitrogen Hybrid. All these bring a variety of different operating issues & challenges.



In the cases of gases there is a requirement to have either a storage system to hold the gases at high pressure (gas is stored in liquid form) or have a compressor system which compresses the gas into liquid form. In most instances this high pressure requires specialist heavy duty storage which are very expensive, especially to small (non-national) operators with limited investment.

Hydrogen is a well-served gas propulsion system and well proven over many thousands of miles, in varying temperatures and operating environments.

Bio-Methane fuel is now being more widely used and Bio-Methane gas that fuels buses comes from food waste and is supplied from anaerobic digesters across the UK. Bio-Methane gas powered vehicles offer more than 85% reduction in greenhouse gases compared to older diesel vehicles and clearly helps to improve air quality.

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Diesel/Liquid Nitrogen powered vehicles utilise the liquid nitrogen when pulling away from stops, where conventional buses emit the most NOx & CO2. At speeds of 20mph (as in our towns), liquid nitrogen will be drawn from a low-pressure insulated storage tank and goes through an evaporation cycle and drives via a multi-cycle Dearman engine. Crucially, the only emission from the engine is air or nitrogen, with no NOx or CO2 particles.

The Electric option is a move into the electrical arena where either battery electric systems or full electric systems are utilised. Bus operation normally allows routes to be planned and EV's allocated to routes where the performance capacity of batteries is not challenged or where charging points are available at terminus points or mid-route points/hubs.

Nottingham is a very fine example of the use of electric buses, which they use on their EV Park & Ride fleet.

SHROPSHIRE TRANSPORT CHALLENGE >>

Without the funding that we have asked for within the BSIP you can see that it would be very unlikely that we would have Green Buses in Shropshire for many years.

To this date we only have one electric powered bus, and that is used on Connect On-Demand, operated by Shropshire Council.



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

Electric buses

Carry a battery which can be recharged at the depot (plugged in) or at a suitably equipped bus station / stop (e.g. pantograph).

While many electric buses advertise ranges up to 250 miles, actual performance data from operators shows that single-deck buses typically achieve an average yearly range of 160 miles, and double-decker buses about 140 miles. This discrepancy is largely due to factors like weather, which significantly affects energy efficiency, and the need to maintain a residual charge in the battery to extend its lifespan. Rural bus services, which can average 240 miles per day and sometimes reach up to 400 miles, often require more electric buses to match the mileage covered by fewer diesel buses. This leads to higher costs for bus fleets and increased space requirements at depots¹⁴

Battery electric buses require on average 25% more space per vehicle in the depot than diesel buses¹⁵

Rural areas tend to have limited electrical grid capacity, meaning operators need to apply to their DNO for an increase in the electricity received at their depot. This process is often complex.

Hydrogen-powered buses

Are essentially electric buses where the energy is not stored in a battery, but instead in a compressed hydrogen tank. An electrochemical fuel cell converts the chemical energy stored in the hydrogen, mixed with oxygen from the air, into electrical energy to power the bus.

Some key Fuel-Cell Electric Bus benefits include a longer driving range than Battery-Electric Buses before needing to refuel or recharge. FCEB refuelling is also much faster than BEB recharging (i.e. Minutes to fill an empty hydrogen tank, versus three to four hours to recharge a depleted BEB battery)¹⁶

A study by Eurac found that, for the same mileage, fuel cell bus's operating costs are on average 2.3 times higher than those of battery electric buses¹⁷

A study's findings indicate that Battery Electric Buses (BEBs) display greater variability in energy consumption compared to Fuel Cell Electric Buses (FCEBs). As a result, when introducing BEBs in areas with a limited number of very cold days, it's advisable to either provide fuel-based backup heating systems or ensure the availability of additional charging opportunities. This approach helps avoid the necessity of equipping the buses with larger-than-needed batteries, which would be excessive for most of the year¹⁸

More recent reports from the EU showed increasing availability of the FCEB achieving 70% in 2014 and 74% in 2015 in the US and estimated at 85% in 2015 in EU¹⁹

Installing hydrogen infrastructure at a depot is expensive, with operators quoting circa £432,000 for an average sized depot. Therefore, for there to be a viable business case, operators will need a minimum of 20 hydrogen buses²⁰

For an average size bus depot, operators have been quoted upwards of £432,000 for hydrogen and over £540,000 for electric buses.

The UK hydrogen supply chain remains immature, with much hydrogen currently produced from fossil fuel-based industrial processes

Biomethane buses use the renewable gas (typically sourced from organic waste products such as slurry and food waste) in a spark ignition engine to power the bus. They typically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 82% compared with a Euro V diesel bus²¹

References;

¹⁴ [rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf](https://www.rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf) (cpt-uk.org)

¹⁵ [rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf](https://www.rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf) (cpt-uk.org)

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¹⁷ <https://www.sustainable-bus.com/news/battery-electric-vs-fuel-cell-buses-comparison-costs/> -original study - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352152X2301808X#bb0330> (pg 16)

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¹⁹ Comparative study of fuel cell, battery and hybrid buses for renewable energy constrained areas (sciencedirectassets.com)

²⁰ [rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf](https://www.rural-zero-emission-bus-taskforce-report-final.pdf) (cpt-uk.org)

²¹ <https://www.zemo.org.uk/work-with-us/buses-coaches/low-emission-buses/technologies/biomethane.htm>

Bus Priority

The introduction of bus priority measures can drastically improve journey times and reliability, which will result in increased passenger numbers, reduced pollution and a bus network that is continuously improving. Bus priority can take many forms from small local measures to large urban schemes and can include bus priority at junctions & traffic lights, bus only roads & lanes (road network permitting) and park & ride schemes/services.

What needs to happen here in Shropshire?

We need to look to introduce bus priority measures to improve times and reliability. Given the nature of the road network in some of our market towns new bus lanes maybe not be a feasible solution, so other solutions need to be considered such as:

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1. | Bus given priority at junctions and traffic lights will improve bus reliability and journey times which then encourages more passengers to 'try the bus' |
| 2. | Bus only roads provide a direct travel option to town centres, which create cleaner, safer and more desirable environment, reduces the need for parking spaces, allows passengers to alight in the town centre, which ultimately boosts the local economy |
| 3. | Park & Ride schemes/services enable passengers to park outside of town centres and continue their journey by bus. This reduces congestion and improves journey times for all road users whilst having a positive reduction on pollution levels |

Successful bus priority schemes (and there are many throughout the country) have been shown to increase passenger numbers by reversing the negative impact increasing levels of congestion has on the frequency and reliability of bus services.

They also start people thinking about journeys to work, shopping, social engagements in town centres which starts the modal change in travel patterns away from the private car and more to public transport.



The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.



Benefits of bus lanes⁴

In cities and busy urban regions, bus lanes help separate traffic, ensuring smoother flow for buses.

On routes with significant bus demand, dedicated lanes prioritise buses over other vehicles.

Bus lanes improve the reliability of bus services by minimising delays caused by traffic congestion.

Bus lanes can enhance safety for both passengers and other road users such as cyclists. E.g. Leeds - Lower road congestion has taken over a minute off morning peak journeys, a large reduction given the length of the bus lane. Cyclists are permitted to use the bus lanes, contributing to a 33% rise in cycle trips on the road⁵

Taking a local bus emits a little over half the greenhouse gases of a single occupancy car journey and also helps to remove congestion from the roads⁶

Value of bus priority

Leicester, A47 Hinckley Road: The bus priority measures had a minimal effect on car journey times; during the morning peak they dropped by 5% in the inbound direction and during the evening peak they increased by 2% in the outbound direction. But there were significant improvements in bus journey times; a 22% drop in the AM peak (from 23 to 18 minutes) and 23% in the evening⁷

Manchester: In the Regional Centre [Manchester and Salford city centres] and along Oxford Road, the variability of bus journey times has reduced by over 30% in some time periods in relation to the period before bus priority measures and associated infrastructure were introduced⁸

Birmingham: The Sprint priority bus corridor has implemented enhanced bus priority measures, resulting in journey time savings of up to 22% for all services using the corridor⁹

There is a direct correlation between operating speeds and patronage: a 10% increase in bus speeds typically increases patronage by at least 10%¹⁰

Priority at signalised junctions

Efficient signal priority encourages more people to use buses, further reducing car traffic – a case study on Edinburgh's Greenway found that a 10% improvement in bus speeds would result in an increase in passengers of between 10% and 14%¹¹

Coordinating traffic signals to give buses priority helps reduce delays.

Implementing bus priority at traffic signals provides an average benefit of 2 to 4 seconds per bus per junction. However, it's essential to note that bus priority is not suitable for all junctions. For optimal results, a junction should have between 20 and 40 buses passing through it per hour and spare green signal time – which is unlikely to be true for many junctions in Shropshire outside Shrewsbury town centre¹²

SWARCO's tests have shown that the use of signal priority for buses lowers the average time going through an intersection from 60 seconds to 41 seconds, about 1/3 of the time. In other words, the travel time will have been reduced by a full minute for every 3 intersection the bus passes through¹³

References;

⁴ Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁵ Urban Transport Group

⁶ How our daily travel harms the planet - BBC Future

⁷ University of Leeds Bus Priority

⁸ TfGM (2020) Cross City Bus Package and Busway Programme

⁹ Sprint Priority Bus Corridor, Birmingham City Council

¹⁰ Prof David Begg, The impact of congestion on bus passengers

¹¹ Prof-David-Begg-The-Impact-of-Congestion-on-Bus-Passengers-Digital-FINAL.pdf (greener-vision.com)

¹² Improving the bus network in London through traffic signalling Henry Axon TfL.pdf (jctconsultancy.co.uk)

¹³ The benefits of a Bus Priority system | SWARCO

Our Investment Plan

The investment profile below reflects the ambition and innovation required to truly transform the public transport offer in Shropshire and ensure public transport becomes a legitimate choice of travel in a rural county, such as ours. Whilst at the same time realising the positive additional benefits that come with an improved public transport network, including the economy of our towns and communities, social and rural isolation, access to health and essential services and improved access to employment and education. These indicative costings are based on 3 years of funding, more detailed costings would need to be undertaken upon financial award.

| Project Number | Bus Improvement Scheme | Funding Required Capital/Revenue (£) |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| #VB11 | Core services – Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | £5.6M |
| #VB31 | Shrewsbury Park & ride services – extended hours & frequency | £3.27M |
| #VB32 | Ludlow Park & Ride services – extended hours & frequency | £485.1K |
| #VB21 | DRT services - Countywide roll out. | £14.49M |
| #VB13 | Town services - Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | £5.55M |
| #VB12 | Rural services - Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | £2.95M |
| #VB61 | One-Stop bus information website/app | £288.7K |
| #VB50 | Integrated/SMART ticketing across Shropshire bus services. | £440K |
| #VB62 | Improved passenger information & infrastructure | £4.14M |
| #VB40 | Community Transport - Integration and financial support | £346.5K |
| #VB14 | Cross boundary - fare promotion (Shropshire Bus Ticket) | £1.5M |
| #VB15 | Sunday bus services. | £4.78M |
| #VB71 | Alternatively fuelled buses (40) | £20M |
| #VB81 | Bus priority measures | £706.2K |
| #VB90 | Network Developments & New Services | £8.97M |
| Total | | £73.5M |

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.

BSIP DELIVERY PLAN 2025 & BEYOND

| Project Number | Bus Improvement Scheme | Estimated timescale of delivery (on receipt of funding) |
|----------------|--|---|
| #VB11 | Core services – Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | 6-12 months |
| #VB31 | Shrewsbury Park & ride services – extended hours & frequency | 9 months |
| #VB32 | Ludlow Park & Ride services – extended hours & frequency | 3 months |
| #VB21 | DRT services - Countywide roll out. | 6-24 months |
| #VB13 | Town services - Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | 6-12 months |
| #VB12 | Rural services - Increased frequency and extended hours of operation. | 6-12 months |
| #VB61 | One-Stop bus information website/app | 3 months |
| #VB50 | Integrated/SMART ticketing across Shropshire bus services. | 12-18 months |
| #VB62 | Improved passenger information & infrastructure | 6-18 months |
| #VB40 | Community Transport - Integration and financial support | 9-12 months |
| #VB14 | Cross boundary - fare promotion (Shropshire Bus Ticket) | 12-18 months |
| #VB15 | Sunday bus services. | 9-18 months |
| #VB71 | Alternatively fuelled buses (40) | 12-36 months |
| #VB81 | Bus priority measures | 18-24 months |
| #VB90 | Network Developments & New Services | 6-18 months |

The following designs are an example of what could be done with funding and do not represent in exhaustive detail what will be launched due to consultation with local members and residents.



CONCLUSION & CLOSING REMARKS



Shropshire
Council

SHROPSHIRE BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)

JUNE 2024

Franchising

Franchising enables a Local Transport Authority (LTA) – such as Shropshire Council (SC) – to specify all aspects of bus services running in the area, including routes, timetables, fares, ticketing and vehicle specifications. It is an established model used for bus services in London and similar variations used in many cities and regions around the world. In a franchised (essentially a fully contracted) operation, on-street competition between operators for passengers is not permitted and no operator is allowed to run their own commercial service within the franchised area. Franchising powers are automatically available to English Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs); other authorities in England wishing to establish franchising must seek approval from the Secretary of State.

The Department for Transport updated their guidance for franchising schemes in March 2024 highlighting that Franchising can be an effective way of correcting a market failure. Franchising can harness the knowledge and expertise of the private sector and improve service levels, customer satisfaction and overall patronage.

They do not have to be used across the whole of a local authority's area or require all bus services to be operated exclusively under contract – it does not have to be an 'all or nothing' proposition. For example, franchising could be introduced to maximise the benefits of a bus rapid transit scheme and cover that corridor only.

Or in a rural area or market town it could be used to deliver a fully integrated network, with good 'branch' connections to key corridors, through a combination of franchised services and commercial services operating under 'service permits' awarded by the authority.

Franchising and an enhanced partnership (EP) cannot both cover the same geographical area but there is no reason why they can't be used alongside each other to deliver bus service improvement plans (BSIPs) and achieve the best overall outcomes for passengers and communities.

At a high-level, the process to introduce franchising can be broken down into 5 key stages:

| No. | Key stages |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Accessing the statutory powers and committing to prepare a franchising proposal. |
| 2. | Developing the franchising proposal and assessing it against (an)other option(s). |
| 3. | Consulting on the proposal. |
| 4. | Decision to proceed with franchising. |
| 5. | Implementation. |

Whilst the franchising Model may not be at first glance an obvious route for a rural LTA to pursue, it is a strategic tool that can be used to develop an improved network and to realise the associated benefits should the local enhanced partnership be unable to deliver this on its own, especially where operator investment in bus services locally is very challenging.

In Shropshire, where the Council already supports almost all bus services financially but does not enjoy control over the network, it would be feasible to move to a franchised model. It would mean the Council holding all revenue risk for operating the bus network but would allow for a consistent approach to planning the network across the county and a more efficient use of resources. It should also allow for more streamlined dialogue with Transport for Wales about cross-border bus services and better integrating bus and rail services, where the Council and TfW would be in positions of controlling most public transport services which would need to be considered.

Total Transport



SHROPSHIREBSIP

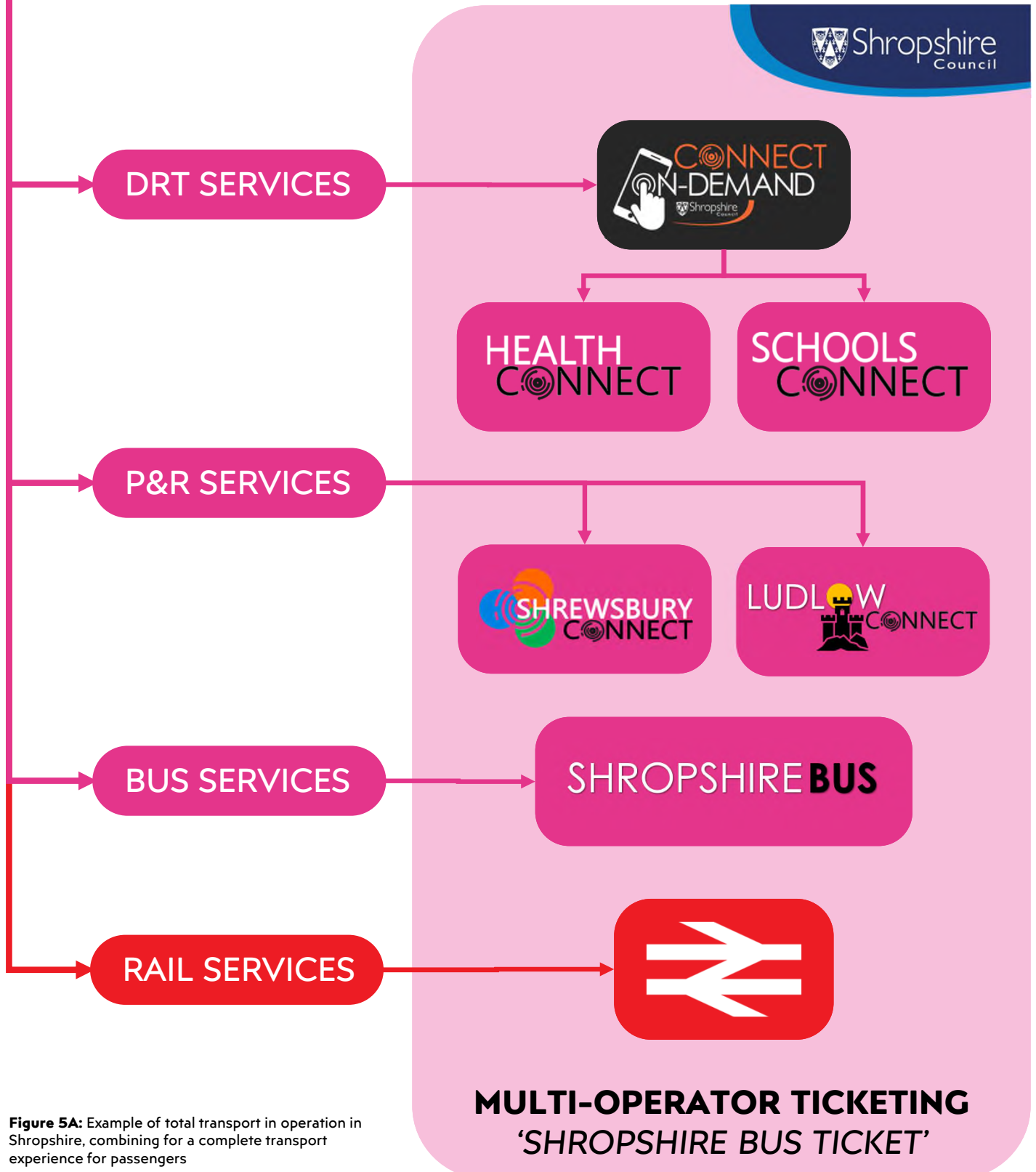


Figure 5A: Example of total transport in operation in Shropshire, combining for a complete transport experience for passengers

Links to key strategies

Below, are links to key strategies that would be further supported by an enhanced public transport network.

| Strategy Title | Publisher | Link |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Shropshire Local Plan | Shropshire Council | https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-planning/local-plan-review/ |
| Shrewsbury Movement Strategy (2024) | Shropshire Council | https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/documents/s36504/Shrewsbury%20Movement%20Public%20Realm%20Strategy-05092023%201251.pdf |
| SaTH Hospital Transformation (2023/24) | Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital Trust | https://www.sath.nhs.uk/about-us/hospitals-transformation-programme/ |
| Shropshire Climate Strategy | Shropshire Council | https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/22365/appendix-1-climate-strategy-2021-progress-report.pdf |
| Shropshire Plan (Shropshire Council) | Shropshire Council | https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/media/cz3f4tu4/shropshire-plan-may-2022.pdf |
| Adult Social Care – Shropshire | Shropshire Council | https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/24594/hwbb-strategy-2022-2027.pdf |
| Tackling Loneliness | HM Government | https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8514/CBP-8514.pdf |
| Transport Decarbonisation Strategy | Department for Transport | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/610d63ffe90e0706d92fa282/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf |
| Air Quality Annual Status Report | Shropshire Council | https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/26948/annual-status-report-air-quality-2023.pdf |
| Decarbonising Transport 2021 – A better greener Britain | Department for Transport | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/610d63ffe90e0706d92fa282/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf |
| Decarbonising Transport Strategy 2020 – Setting the Challenge | Department for Transport | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fa03423d3bf7f03a7a99151/decarbonising-transport-setting-the-challenge.pdf |
| National Bus Strategy | Department for Transport | https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6086912fd3bf7f013c8f4510/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf |
| Shropshire Local Transport Plan | Shropshire Council | https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/local-transport-plan/ |



Conclusion

The Shropshire Public Transport network is predominantly supported through Shropshire Council funding and in contrast to more urban areas, it is very unlikely that any of the ambitions within the Governments National Bus Strategy could be achieved in Shropshire, without the funding we have identified within this refreshed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

The Shropshire Bus Service Improvement Plan is ambitious and has the potential to transform the use of public transport in Shropshire. Without the level of support, we are seeking, public transport in rural areas will continue to decline and there will be an even greater disparity and reliance on car usage between how people move in urban and rural settings.

Public Transport has been impacted significantly by a number of national factors including the Covid-19 Pandemic and the financial challenges the country has and continues to face and without the financial support the Government and Council has already provided, the public transport offer in Shropshire would be greatly reduced from where it is today.

The commercial bus network in Shropshire is almost fully reliant on financial support and whilst that support has been essential, we now need to transform the existing network into one that becomes the backbone of movement in the County.

There is, however, shoots of positivity that provide hope that public transport can become that viable alternative to the car for residents of the County. The Councils initial Bus Service Improvement Plan highlighted that financial challenge in its funding submission of £98m, to realise the ambitions of the Governments National Bus Strategy.

We have the first electric bus operating in the County and with Connect On-Demand, providing an insight into how public transport could be seen going forwards. That is of course only part of the solution, we need to secure funding to provide stability to the core bus network beyond the 24/25 financial year and attract investment to increase the bus offer in the County, whilst ensuring public transport is both affordable and available to a much greater proportion of the county.

We firmly believe that our Bus Service Improvement plan is reflective of current passenger needs whilst also being attuned to the developments that need to come and reflect both the ambition of the council, the Shropshire Enhanced Bus Partnership and residents and visitors to the county alike.

Our Connect On-Demand service has been a small insight into the improvements that we can bring to the County and make public transport a realistic first choice of travel and can present a template model for other rural authorities, which may find themselves in a similar position.





Closing Remarks

Portfolio Holder & Passenger Transport Group Manager



The provision of adequate, accessible and reliable public transport is increasingly more essential in a large rural Local Authority area. Shropshire Council continues to be ambitious with its plans to vastly improve Public Transport in order to meet the needs of Shropshire residents.

Residents need public transport to get to work, education, medical facilities and for social and recreational activities. The recently implemented 'On Demand' service in two zones in south-west Shrewsbury has been successful and is the envy of other areas who would benefit from public transport services in their locality.

To expand that service, both in Shrewsbury and in future zones in other market towns, will give residents the ability to access core bus services and increase patronage across the network. Improved coverage and services will greatly improve the quality of life for residents, whilst helping to reduce the reliance of cars, ultimately reducing our carbon footprint here in Shropshire.



Ian Nellins

Councillor for Market Drayton West, Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment & Transport



When considering our BSIP and the principles within it, we recognise that treated individually these principles will help deliver significant change but bring them all together into a package of improvements as we have laid out in our BSIP, then that will create the platform for truly transformational change, bringing with it all the associated benefits.

Those benefits are clear to see when investment is made and the bus and train become a cohesive network that makes model shift a reality, benefiting our rural economy, addressing social isolation, creating better access to healthcare, employment, and education, whilst underpinning the country's ambitions of decarbonising our transport system.

We are passionate about bringing about positive change, but we stand at a crossroads, where public transport with investment can truly become the choice of travel for the many rather than the only option for the few.



James Willocks

Passenger Transport Group Manager
Shropshire Council



Shropshire
Council

SHROPSHIRE **BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)**

JUNE 2024



Passenger
Transport
Group

Passenger Transport Group
Shropshire Council
107 Longden Road
Shrewsbury
SY3 9DS

✉ Buses@Shropshire.gov.uk

www.shropshire.gov.uk/public-transport/