

Minutes of Gloucestershire Enhanced Partnership Board meeting

Held at 1200 on the 23rd of July 2024, in the Blaisdon Room, Shire Hall, Gloucester

Item 1

Welcome and introductions

Cllr Robinson welcomed all attendees to the Meeting, which commenced at 1200.

In attendance:

EP Board: Chris Hanson (representing Stagecoach), Luke Marion (representing the smaller operators), Cllr Philip Robinson (representing Gloucestershire County Council, also Chair for this meeting).

Supporting staff: Colin Chick, Jason Humm, Tom Main, Matthew Parker, Thea Rumer, Emily Walsh, Richard Adams (Gloucestershire County Council)

Considering that Luke Marion was joining via Teams (online), and that Chris has not attended a GCC EP meeting before, the Cllr accepted to Chair for a second time. Next meeting, Luke Marion will Chair.

Apologies: Karen Coventry and Philip Williams were unable to attend.

Item 2

Introduction to the meeting and declarations of interest

General discussion included that, considering that Luke Marion was joining via Teams (online), and that Chris has not attended a GCC Enhanced Partnership (EP) meeting before, **Cllr Robinson** accepted to Chair for a second time. Next meeting, Luke Marion will Chair.

Item 3

Actions from the previous EP Board Meeting

All actions are complete from January 26th 2024.

ACTION: ITU to circulate final version of TOR for comment

Item 4

BSIP recap

Emily Walsh ran through a summary of GCC's BSIP 2024 update, which was submitted to the DfT on the 12th of June 2024, and published on the GCC website. There are six key objectives with a delivery programme.

Cllr Robinson commented on the fantastic effort from GCC within the Travel Planning team and ITU. He commented that the BSIP document is greatly improved since the 2021 version, and that compliments from people he meets with are frequent. He summarised with noting this "excellent document" is practical, and can now lead to delivery.

Tom Main commented that both the consultancy ARUP and Wiltshire Council had specifically complimented GCC's BSIP compared to other councils' 2024 updates.

Chris Hanson noted that Stagecoach's comments on the BSIP 2024 update were actioned before publication, and that this dialogue was straightforward, which is appreciated. He agreed that the resulting document now includes useful information working as a good foundation for Stagecoach to use to promote bus use and showcase their work with GCC.

Luke Marion agreed, saying that GCC's BSIP is a professional document and that progress on some projects has been achieved already. He commented that progress was particularly good considering GCC didn't receive BSIP Round 1 funding.

Item 5

EP Working Groups

Tom Main summarised that since the first EP Board meeting the EP working groups have been progressed. These working groups will take the BSIP objectives forward leading to the delivery of all projects.

The Working Groups are

1. Improving infrastructure
2. Marketing and engagement
3. Multi-operator ticketing
4. Bus service provision

There was discussion on the appropriate involvement of the districts. There was discussion on the current stages of multi-operator ticketing across England, including progress of Project Coral. Some councils have launched multi-operator ticketing using various software and/or versions. They will need to change to use the Project Coral outcome when that occurs.

It was agreed that GCC need to progress with multi-operator ticketing and that GCC should prioritise minimising impact of moving the processing over to the Project Coral methodology and systems.

ACTION: ITU to circulate a short summary of Project Coral meeting taking place on 25/07/24.

Infrastructure works:

Jason Humm noted that BSIP+ funds should be protected and that CIL funding had worked well for several sites. There is more progress to hopefully achieve with CIL applications. It was agreed that BSIP+ funding should be to assist when the majority of funding is CIL based.

Marketing:

The EP Passenger Charter needs to be discussed at the next Fourm/Board meeting. This will lead into work for the Passenger forum (not yet developed).

ACTION: Karen Coventry to update Board

Ticketing:

There is no confirmed report on the National Bus Fare Cap being extended nor an update on the confirmed end date. The Welsh government did not previously have the Fare Cap in place and it is now confirmed Wales will not have it under the new Government.

Contactless:

It was noted that some smaller operators do not yet offer payment by contactless and that this is a likely a barrier to travel, especially for first time users who may not be carrying cash.

It was commented that GCC are working with operators so that payment options are available for all demographics, including those with no bank account.

Service provision:

Discussion mentioned that whilst driver shortages have improved from the lowest levels of recruitment, there are still areas of driver shortages and engineer shortages. Competition can be high between different counties' operators, and with coach and/or lorry industry. Skilled staff are needed and this need will increase when more operators are using more electric vehicles. In this upcoming case, engineers will be more comparable to those in the aircraft industry.

ACTION: GCC/ITU to ensure this is discussed with David Owen, alongside the need for skilled apprentices to be more readily available.

DECISION: After this discussion on the Working Groups, the Board **approved** the working groups' four names and their aims.

Item 6

Zebra

Matthew Parker discussed that the GCC Zebra team have monthly meetings with the DfT. There is good progress toward signing legal agreements. Whilst Stagecoach and Pulhams are ordering vehicles and infrastructure, GCC are procuring a charger for Lydney Dial a Ride.

The Cllr commented that as this is the first EP Board meeting since the March announcement of successful Zebra bids, it should be recognised and noted that he thanks everyone for their work during this bid. Partners and GCC officers worked together to gain Zebra funding and the project will be transformative for the county.

Item 7

BSIPs and EPs across the country

Chris and Luke discussed how a few other councils have now launched inter-ticketing projects via two or three different processing systems. A mature approach between themselves, councils, and other operators has been successful so far.

In Oxfordshire progress since BSIP (Round 1 funds) has been good. GCC reviewed funds in round two.

Luke commented that GCC's BSIP is one of the best which should allow a good pace of progress. The wording and structure used has resulted in a clear, concise and readable document. Both professionals in the bus industry and members of the public can read and understand GCC's BSIP.

Luke commented that for project/work items till 2029 Oxfordshire has a good visual which captures content and quantity of BSIP Objectives and work packages.

All agreed that GCC's BSIP sets us in a good working position for BSIP objectives.

ACTION: GCC to consider visual representation of BSIP spend by 2025 and BSIP spend by 2029.

Item 8

Any other business

Cllr discussed the topic of anti-social behaviour (ASB) at bus stops and transport hubs and on buses. Everyone agreed this behaviour should be reduced in any way. The Cllr and Tom Main recently met with Police and Crown Commissioner with feedback from certain user groups/county transport representatives.

An outcome is progressing at the moment but will likely include PSCOs riding on buses more often.

This enforcement and any work to reduce ASB would work well alongside many work streams, including the anti-drink drive campaign and the White Ribbon campaign.

Stagecoach have buses in other locations with posters where you can report live any ASB. This is useful data for the operator, for the LTA, for the police and for the DfT. Driver reporting is part of understanding ASB but often needs a report and/or CCTV to be an effective record.

PSCOs can travel free while on duty, and warrant cards for off-duty police offers.

ACTION: ASB to be added as an item on next EP Forum agenda.

ACTION: Joint meeting on ASB to be organised, and for this meeting to include decision for topic to appear in EP forum, or in EP WGs.

ACTION: GCC to source/circulate PCC Officer actions from aforementioned meeting.

Dates of next meeting

There will be an EP Forum in October and the third EP Board meeting in January.

Meeting ended at 1330.