

# Bus Times **WEST**

**August 2024**

**The latest news from North Somerset Council (NSC) on what we're doing to improve public transport across North Somerset and West of England to give residents a more reliable, frequent and affordable bus network they can rely on – for years to come.**

## **Welcome to the Bus Times newsletter!**

Here we'll update you on what's taking place across North Somerset to help create better public bus services that the people of North Somerset can rely on, throughout their lives.



## Latest headlines

### Working with MPs

Following the general election last month, we will be working closely with all three new MPs and discussing with them our plans to improve public transport across our area.

### The Big Lemon will run the X10 service

On Friday 12 July, we were informed that Transpora bus services, the company which was contracted to operate the X10 service, had been suspended without prior notice.

We immediately engaged in discussions with other bus operators to secure a longer-term solution for the X10 service, securing an agreement with The Big Lemon to run the X10 service until the end of August 2024, when we expect a longer-term solution will be reached.

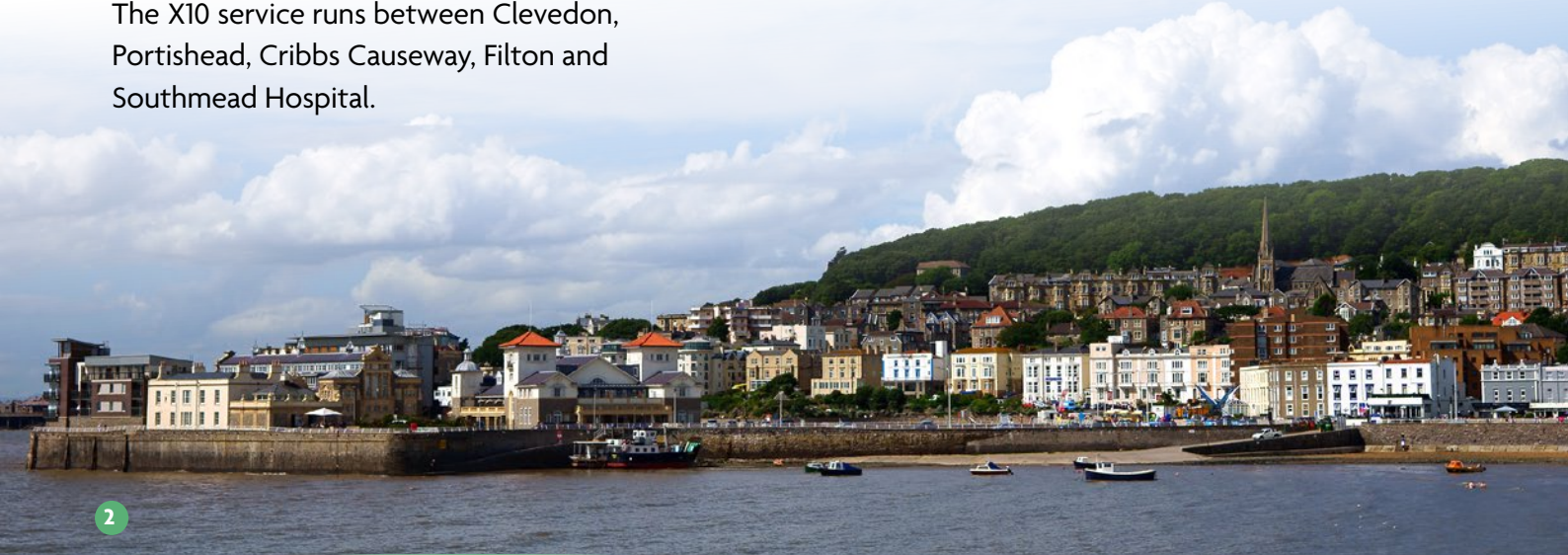
Transpora operated several bus services across the West of England area, including the X10 route, which is a commercial service and the only route in North Somerset directly affected by this suspension.

The X10 service runs between Clevedon, Portishead, Cribbs Causeway, Filton and Southmead Hospital.

### Weston town bus network campaign launch

The first of our joint campaigns with First Bus, encouraging more people to catch the bus in Weston-super-Mare, is now running. You can hear us on the radio, see adverts in key locations and on petrol pumps, watch videos on social media and will be receiving free bus travel offers and maps through your letterbox. Please help us get the message out by sharing information with family, friends, communities and colleagues.

We want to encourage more people to catch the bus, which helps beat traffic congestion, is better for the environment, supports residents' independence and makes bus services more financially sustainable in future, once short-term Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding has gone.







## Free travel days to kick off the summer holidays

To celebrate the start of the summer holidays, we encouraged local people to try out their local bus network with free bus travel on Friday 26 and Monday 29 July. We offered free travel all day on services 5, 6, 7, 9, X1-X9, X10, 125 and 126, operated by First Bus and The Big Lemon. People could simply turn up and get on board, with no need to book tickets.

We will be launching more free ticket offers in the coming weeks. North Somerset residents will have the chance to get a free adult day ticket from First Bus, worth £7. The day pass can be used on First Bus routes across North Somerset. Local people will be able to sign up for their free pass via adverts on social media and online. Keep an eye on our social media for the offer launch.

## Bus roadshows near you

We will be on the road in the coming months with some pop-up bus promotion events. Look out for our team at eat:Portishead on Saturday 10 August, Clevedon's Charter Market on Thursday 5 September and eat:Weston on Saturday 28 September. The events will be an opportunity for local people to get information on BSIP, bus routes, travel offers and more. Keep an eye on North Somerset Council's social media over the coming weeks for more information on these events, and any other pop-up events that we organise.



## NSC officers working in your area

You may see North Somerset Council staff out and about in your area in the coming weeks and months reviewing sites of proposed BSIP schemes. This is to gather data and to conduct monitoring work that is essential for understanding the feasibility of schemes. It is vital our officers can gather data effectively as we rely on this to inform any further proposals – enabling us to achieve a clearer picture for the whole community as early as possible. We would be very grateful if you could support our staff's efforts locally.

# The BSIP in a nutshell

## What is the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)?

Our communities tell us they want more reliable, frequent and affordable bus services – and that’s what we’re working hard to deliver.

Funding to spend on improving bus services through the government’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is available only for a short time, but its long-term legacy will be:



more reliable, efficient and frequent bus services

new electric buses which are better for the environment



more financially secure bus services which are fit for our growing population, today and tomorrow

We’re also aiming to deliver:



more affordable fares, such as the current £2 offer, and free bus travel for care leavers



upgraded bus stops and shelters



attractive new transport hubs offering a range of facilities such as secure cycle parking, local information displays and electric charging points for communities



new cycling and pedestrian crossings and dedicated bus lanes to help people move more efficiently across key North Somerset locations.

This all helps make buses the first public transport choice and more commercially-sustainable in the longer-term, helping protect vital bus services in future.

BSIP is a joint initiative between North Somerset Council (NSC), the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), the Department for Transport (DfT) and bus operators.

Learn more at <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/bsip>



## More time from DfT for BSIP bus priority schemes

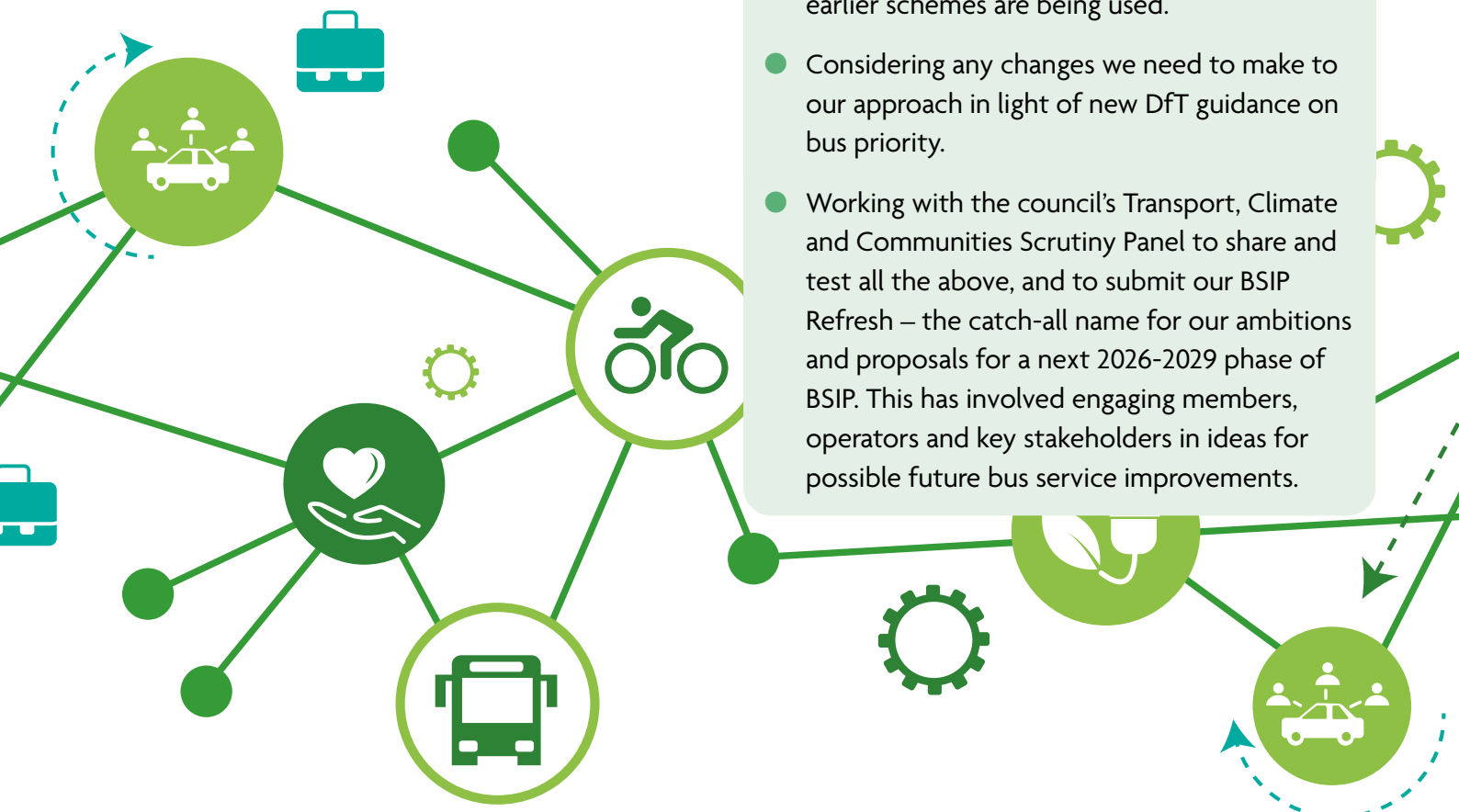
**In April we announced we were asking the Department for Transport (DfT) for an extension to the bus priority infrastructure part of the BSIP programme for 2023- 2025.**

This will allow us to pause, review and reflect on the proposals for remaining bus priority infrastructure schemes, and plan further works over a longer period to minimise disruption as much as possible.

This means the only scheme currently under way is at Wood Hill (part of the Congresbury congestion scheme). We will not start works on any other BSIP bus priority schemes before November 2024.

What are we doing during this time?

- Continuing to engage with local people and community representatives about the different schemes so they can help shape future schemes. We'll also be in touch to talk about transport hubs and upgrading around 150 priority bus stops and shelters.
- Setting a new timeline for making formal decisions on progressing schemes, to allow for further review and reflection, alongside carrying out additional data gathering and testing where needed, to inform these decisions.
- Assessing completed schemes to monitor their effectiveness and learn any lessons to apply to future works. This includes continuing to work with First Bus to understand how earlier schemes are being used.
- Considering any changes we need to make to our approach in light of new DfT guidance on bus priority.
- Working with the council's Transport, Climate and Communities Scrutiny Panel to share and test all the above, and to submit our BSIP Refresh – the catch-all name for our ambitions and proposals for a next 2026-2029 phase of BSIP. This has involved engaging members, operators and key stakeholders in ideas for possible future bus service improvements.



# Status update: our bus infrastructure schemes

**A quick status update on all live schemes since announcing our BSIP 'pause'. We're posting scheme updates at <https://nsomerset.gov.uk/bsip> when we have them, as well as sharing them in Bus Times.**

## Main transport hubs

Towards the end of the summer, we'll be in touch with local ward members and town councils to gather their views to inform our plans for four main transport hubs.

Investing in creating these transport hubs or interchanges in Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and upgrading the interchange in Worle will enhance public spaces and support sustainable travel connections. A main hub could be designed to include a range of beneficial features such as high-quality bus shelters and waiting areas, charging points for electric vehicles and wheelers, real-time passenger information terminals, cycle parking, and more.

## Smaller transport hubs

Engagement is continuing with town and parish councils on the smaller hubs in Pill, Weston General Hospital, Long Ashton, Yatton, Congresbury and Cleve/Claverham. These smaller hubs could include some of the same features as a main transport hub, but on a smaller scale. We'll be sharing any opportunities for shaping these ideas locally, and updates on how these schemes are developing, when we have them.

## Worle High Street

Our three community workshops in late 2023 – early 2024 enabled us to invite and discuss ideas for the High Street from local people and businesses. We've since been using the feedback we received to help shape a new plan for transforming the area into a vibrant, revitalised and safer place to live, work and visit. Providing a new transport hub and high-quality bus waiting facilities with good pedestrian connections. We're now refining these early designs and will be sharing them for feedback in an online public survey later in 2024.

## Lime Kiln roundabout near Bristol

We're proposing to update the busy A38 Lime Kiln roundabout on the outskirts of Bristol to improve congestion and bus journey times. Earlier in 2024 we engaged on the initial concept design, with features including modern traffic signals, bus lanes and toucan crossings. The summary report from our engagement period has now been shared with local councillors and is now publicly available at: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/Engagement%20summary%20-%20Lime%20Kiln%20roundabout%20BSIP%20scheme%20-%20July%202024.pdf>



## Churchill junction (A38/A368)

We're engaging on proposals to turn the crossroads between Churchill and Langford into a roundabout with smart traffic signals, to improve congestion and modernise our infrastructure as our population grows. Earlier in the year we held a six-week public survey on the initial concept design. We'll update you on progress shortly.

## Brockley Combe

Our contractors recently spent time tidying Chelvey Lane, which needed to be used to access residents' properties during the Brockley Combe junction works. As you can see from the below the lane was left neater and more accessible.



We continue to monitor the Brockley Combe junction and work closely with First Bus and other key stakeholders as we move towards the end of the bedding in period.

## Wood Hill

Works are underway to reconfigure the Wood Hill A370 crossroads, as part of a bigger long-term plan to improve local traffic flow.

Due to the need for additional third-party works on site, we can now confirm that the work at Wood Hill will be continuing into the autumn. These works are to move underground power cables at the site which transport electricity in and around Congresbury. We are working closely with the utility company to ensure the cables are moved to an appropriate new location as soon as possible.

We appreciate that the Wood Hill junction lies on one of North Somerset's major transport corridors, which means that these road works may cause delays for road users at peak times. We do apologise for any inconvenience caused, however the amount of work to move the underground cables could not have been foreseen. We now expect most of the junction improvements to be completed towards the end of October.

We currently plan to remove the existing three-way temporary traffic lights in early September. The continuation of the works will be achieved by temporarily installing narrower lanes which will allow a free flow of traffic in both directions on the A370 until the site works are completed.

As ever, please be sure to check your journey before you travel, by visiting One Network (<https://one.network/>), or Google Maps (<https://www.google.co.uk/maps>) for the latest traffic updates.

## Backwell junction

The proposed bus priority scheme and transport hub(s) are under review following a six-week public survey and in-person engagement event in winter 2023-24. The initial concept designs for Backwell – aimed at reducing congestion and improving traffic flow into the future – included proposals to create a new, full-time bus lane on the A370 south-westbound only, a bus priority traffic light system, new pavements, and changes for Dark Lane and Church Lane. An engagement summary report detailing next steps was shared with local members, parish councils, and event attendees in April, and can be viewed at [https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Engagement%20summary%20report%20-%20Backwell%20BSIP%20scheme%20-%20April%202024\\_0.pdf](https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-04/Engagement%20summary%20report%20-%20Backwell%20BSIP%20scheme%20-%20April%202024_0.pdf)

## Smallway junction, near Congresbury

We will be in contact with local councillors, the parish council and other community representatives to share scheme concept designs for engagement as soon as we can. There'll then be an opportunity for a wider group of local people to share their views on the designs later in 2024.

## Weston-super-Mare: Queensway, Worle and B3440 slip-road

Crucial junction reconfiguration works aimed at tackling congestion between Queensway and the B3440 M5 slip road in Worle are set to start later this year, as part of a wider strategic vision for developing our road and transport network. The area has long been highlighted for improvements to tackle chronic traffic jams and tailbacks for road users. Discussions with ward members and Weston-super-Mare Town Council are underway, and further stakeholder engagement is set to start in August/September. A wider, public news release will be issued later this month sharing full details. More details to come in an upcoming edition of Bus Times.

## Rownham Hill junction

Earlier in the year we engaged on early proposals to address congestion at Rownham Hill on the A369 outside Bristol. The proposals included traffic signal upgrades, new bus lane infrastructure, and improved bus stops and cyclist access into Ashton Court. This scheme's design is under review following feedback we received during the six-week public engagement. An update will be shared with local councillors once ready.

## Martcombe Road

The proposed scheme, to convert the current HOV (2+) lane westbound into a bus lane with enforcement measures, is under review following ward member engagement. An update on scheme proposals will be shared with local councillors for further feedback later in the year.

## Clevedon schemes

In January and February, we held a six-week public survey and drop-in event inviting feedback on proposed changes to improve traffic flow at Clevedon's Tickenham Road, Ettlingen Way and Southern Way roundabouts. The proposed changes at the three roundabouts were designed to benefit bus passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists and help to support the future commercial viability of bus services. At Tickenham Road roundabout, changes would improve the general flow of traffic, benefiting all road users. An engagement summary report is now available to view online, and has been shared with local members, the town council, and event attendees: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/Engagement%20summary%20-%20Clevedon%20roundabouts%20BSIP%20schemes%20-%20July%202024.pdf>

Following public engagement in January and February, we are updating the designs for changes at the Tickenham Road roundabout (including possible mitigations for All Saints Lane), Ettlingen Way and Southern Way roundabout. We will share proposals with local ward and town councillors later in the year.





# Cheers Drive!

Through BSIP, we have rolled out incentive schemes to encourage residents to get on board the bus and consider a new way of travelling around North Somerset. This includes the Birthday Bus offer and free travel for care leavers. Some members of the public have kindly shared their experiences of using these schemes below.

## Care Leavers WESTfares pass

Young care leavers can access free bus travel across North Somerset and the West of England Combined Authority areas, thanks to the **WESTfares** pass. North Somerset Council is helping young care leavers get to work, attend appointments, gain independence and learn new skills.

### One carer of a teenager said:

*"The bus pass has allowed him to learn about safety on buses and try out some smaller bus routes around his accommodation. As he has autism this is allowing him to learn independent skills and know the bus routes, so he will be able to do them independently in the future."*

### Another young care leaver praised the scheme:

*"This has allowed me to look for jobs in Weston-super-Mare town centre and other areas instead of just in my area in Yatton, this has opened up more opportunities for me."*

## Find out more...

Visit our new **BSIP** webpages and 'like' the North Somerset Council Facebook page.

Got a question for us? Email

**bsip.engagement@n-somerset.gov.uk** and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

## Birthday Bus month



The Birthday Bus scheme, which began in August 2023 and finished July 2024, has offered local people free bus travel during their birthday month, hoping to encourage people to try the bus and build new routines for the future. In total over a million bus journeys have been made across the West of England area thanks to the birthday bus offer. The Birthday Bus scheme for this year has now closed but watch this space for future offers and incentives!

The Birthday Bus scheme has received great feedback from users. **One resident said:**

*"Before I got my birthday bus pass I was an occasional bus user, but rediscovered the love of bus travel in April. Every bus ran on time and I enjoyed the travel time catching up on work and messages, as well as getting to see town from the top deck. As well as commuting, I also caught the bus to get to the shops in Weston and to meet friends for drinks in Worle. So much easier not having to find—or pay for—a parking space and no-one had to be designated driver either."*

### Another resident said:

*"It was super quick and easy to apply for and it came really quickly. I took my two children on a bus adventure last Tuesday. We got on the bus from Grandma's house in Little Stoke and went to the end of the route to Severn Beach. We had lunch and played in the park then got the bus home. We did another bus adventure the following week and went on a different route. My three-year-old loves going on the bus and my one-year-old slept both ways of the journey so winning all round!"*

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