



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Surrey Bus Service Improvement Plan Target Summary

October 2023



Overview

This summary paper sets out how Surrey has progressed against the initial targets stated in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The target areas are set by Government and are used to assess the success of the BSIP for each Local Transport Authority (LTA).

In early November 2022, Surrey County Council entered into the Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators in the county. Prior, and subsequently, to the creation of the EP, the County Council had already set out a clear path of investment and improvement for bus use. This was backed by local funding from County Council budgets and were not boosted by the initial round of national BSIP funding.

It is hoped that through continued partnership working with operators, ongoing local investment and use of the recently announced BSIP+ funding the results of the targets in this summary can be maintained or improved upon.

Target 1. Average Journey Speed

| Location | 2019/20 | Oct 2023 Update | Target for 2024/25 | Target for 2026/27 | Target for 2029/30 |
|--|----------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Countywide | 14.53mph | 15.7mph | +2% | +3% | +6% |
| East Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area (with a focus on Redhill and Reigate) | 10.61mph | | +8% | | |
| Guildford and Woking (including surrounding environment) Bus Priority Programme Area | 12.73mph | | | +5% | |
| Blackwater Valley Bus Priority Programme Area | 14.28mph | | | | +7% |
| Wider Elmbridge Bus Priority Programme Area | 15.90mph | | | | +5% |
| North-west Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area (including access to Heathrow) | 15.19mph | | | | +5% |

Target Commentary

Increasing average journey speeds across the county is a complex mix of investment in bus priority, which takes time to plan, design and deliver, and analysing journey patterns and demand to review timetables and service provision.

Average speeds, as a countywide figure, are improved from the 2019/20 and ahead of our 2024/25 target of a 2% increase in speed. However, an increase of this amount was not expected and will be reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the countywide average speed. This will be part of the next round of reporting to ensure there are not outliers in speeds or errors in data artificially inflating the overall speed.

Whilst any increase in average speed is welcome, this does not correspond with an improvement in reliability. This shows that there are wider associated factors affecting bus industry performance such as road works and length of route, etc. It is hoped that these results will continue to be seen once bus priority has been delivered, starting with East Surrey, and that this corresponds with improved reliability.

Target 2. Reliability

| Location | Nov-19 | June-21 | Oct-23 | Target for 2024/25 | Target for 2026/27 | Target for 2029/30 |
|--|--------|---------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Countywide | 73% | 85.5% | 73.8% | 88.5% | 89% | 90% |
| East Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area (with a focus on Redhill and Reigate) | 75.1% | 87.7% | 71.6% | 90.7% | | |
| Guildford and Woking (including surrounding environment) Bus Priority Programme Area | 78.5% | 87.2% | 75.0% | | 90.2% | |
| Blackwater Valley Bus Priority Programme Area | 76.9% | 89.7% | 77.3% | | | 92.7% |
| Wider Elmbridge Bus Priority Programme Area | 71.7% | 78.2% | 70.5% | | | 81.2% |
| North-west Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area (including access to Heathrow) | 65.2% | 71.5% | 69.0% | | | 74.5% |

Target Commentary

Bus service reliability across the Surrey bus network is 74%, that is 3 out of every 4 buses operate on time. This data includes every bus stop along the route and at all times of the day. This is more detailed than standard reporting to the DfT reporting which only requires data on peak periods.

“On time” is defined as 1 minute early and up to 5 minutes 59 seconds late.

Bus reliability is not as good as we expect in Surrey. This is due to Surrey having some of the most traffic congested roads outside of London which continues to be exacerbated by the number of roadworks taking place.

We are working with bus operators we are identifying several pinch-points where we will be able to improve bus journey time and reliability. Intelligent traffic light priority for buses is installed at 28 traffic signal-controlled junctions across Guildford and this will be rolled out elsewhere in the county.

Target 3. Passenger Numbers

| Location | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | Target for 2024/25 | Target for 2026/27 | Target for 2029/30 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Countywide | 25.2m | 8.6m | 17.1m | 23.2m | 26m | 27m | 28.78m |
| East Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area | 3.62m | | | - | 3.85m | | |
| Guildford and Woking Bus Priority Programme Area | 7.24m | | | - | | 8.53m | |
| Blackwater Valley Bus Priority Programme Area | 2.05m | | | - | | | 2.30m |
| Wider Elmbridge Bus Priority Programme Area | 1.87m | | | - | | | 1.96m |
| North-west Surrey Bus Priority Programme Area (including Access to Heathrow) | 2.21m | | | - | | | 2.39m |

Target commentary

Passenger numbers in Surrey have built back well with 23.2m journeys made last year. This is up from 17.1m in 2021/22 and is viewed as a significant success in bouncing back towards pre-pandemic levels.

With the continued investment from the County Council and with Government BSIP+ funding available to support service enhancements and other BSIP priorities, it is hoped to get passenger growth back to and above pre-pandemic levels.

Target 4. Average passenger satisfaction

| Location | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | Oct-23 | 2023/24 | Target for 2024/25 | Target for 2026/27 | Target for 2029/30 |
|------------|---------|---------|------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Countywide | 60% | 56% | 81% | 80% | 82% | 84% | 88% |

Target commentary

As mentioned in the May update to the BSIP, since January this year Surrey has been part of the Transport Focus “Your Bus Journey” user survey for 2023.

The interim survey results from January to September 2023 are showing that overall satisfaction is at 81%. This is a significant increase from previous satisfaction scores and is extremely positive.

This increase in overall satisfaction can be attributed to the surveys being targeted at bus users, unlike the National Highways and Transport Surveys previously used to measure satisfaction. The NHT survey is sent to a random sample of households in Surrey, many of whom were not regular bus users or bus users at all and covers a wide range of subjects, not just public transport.

Whilst overall satisfaction is high, this drops when considering other aspects. Particularly, “Value for Money” (VFM) and “Length of Bus Wait”. The lower VFM score was not expected due to, and as reported by the DfT, 90% of all bus journeys in the last year were made using the National Bus Fare Cap scheme that gives people a £2 single fare.

However, as mentioned by Transport Focus in their interim report, VFM for buses is viewed more highly than when compared with rail. Also, that there are multiple factors that could be affecting the responses. For example, the current cost of living pressures making people think more about every expense.

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