

# Bus Service Improvement Plan

2024

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## Version control

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Date	Details	Updated by
October 2021	First Published	-
June 2024	Second Edition	AL

This plan is available online at [www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements)

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For more information please contact [future.planning@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:future.planning@torbay.gov.uk)

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# Introduction

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) were introduced by the Department for Transport (DfT) in its National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better, published in March 2021. This document provides the BSIP for Torbay and will embody the "Vision for Torbay" above and be an integral part of achieving the aims and ambitions of the Council's Plans.

The purpose of this BSIP is to describe the bus network as it currently is, and the vision for the improved bus service we want to see in Torbay.

The National Bus Strategy sets out an ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England outside London through greater local leadership, to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport and encourage passengers back to bus. This strategic document sets out how this will be achieved at a local level in Torbay. This is the second version of the Torbay BSIP, replacing the 2021 document.

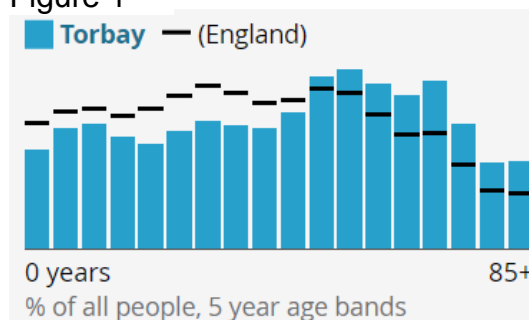
## Torbay Profile

Torbay's population is around 139,300 (2021 Census). There are three main urban areas, Torquay (69,600), Paignton (52,900) and Brixham (16,800).

Overall, Torbay has an aging population with proportionately more older people compared to England as shown in **Figure 1**.

27% of the population is 65+ which is 9% higher than the rate for England. Conversely the 20-64 age group makes up 54% of the local population compared with 58% nationally. Population forecasts suggest the older age groups will continue to rise.

Figure 1



Nearly 24% of residents are disabled under the measure of the Equality Act which is around 6.5% higher than the national average.

36% of Torbay households are deprived in one dimension, with over 5% in three or more according to the 2021 census.

Torbay is ranked as the most deprived upper-tier local authority in the South West which has been the case since 2007. There is significant disparity across the area and within the towns.

50.4% of people over 15 years of age are in employment, around 7% below the national average. Of those in employment, a greater number (6.1% more) are in part time employment compared with national averages.

## Section 1: Our Bus Vision

The BSIP covers the single Local Transport Authority (LTA) area of Torbay. **Figure 2** highlights Torbay set within the context of England, a 24 square mile area comprising of three towns, Torquay, Paignton and Brixham located around the east-facing natural harbour of Tor Bay in the South West of England.

A clearer map of the specific Torbay area and the extent of the BSIP geographical area is shown in **Figure 3**. This area is also covered by a single Enhanced Partnership scheme which will work to deliver this BSIP with partners working together.

To achieve all the aims we will also work in close partnership with our neighbouring authority Devon County Council with whom there is a joint Local Transport Plan in place. Some developments will also be proposed at a regional scale across the Peninsula Transport Sub-National Transport area.

Our corporate vision (as set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2023-2043) is rightly at the heart of all of our work and is a key determining factor in our approach to bus enhancements and how we apply the objectives of the National Bus Strategy at a local level. **That vision is to achieve a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay for all.**

We recognise the importance of stabilising the bus network following the impacts of 2020/21 and that recovery will only be possible with a solid foundation. In 2021 we set out highly ambitious proposals to development the bus offer across Torbay in terms of the level and quality of the service. We wanted to ensure the community and visitors had access to the services, facilities, and destinations that they needed and that the journey would be affordable and efficient. This is key to our transport aim of giving choice, allowing people to choose the way to make their journey that is right for them, with a realistic offer across modes.

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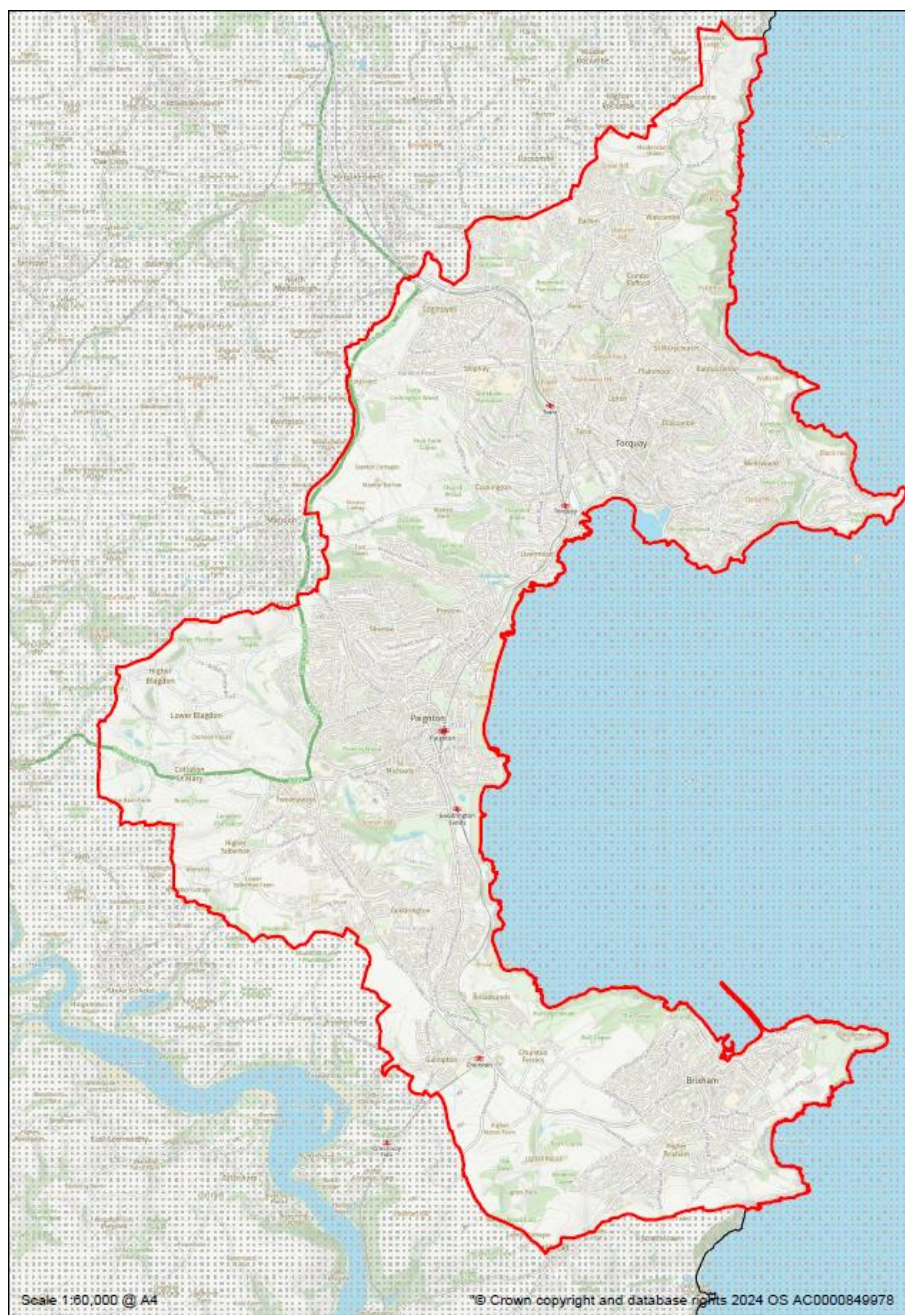
*Our ambition for buses in Torbay is for step change in the quality of service and infrastructure.*

*Bus travel will be more affordable, integrated with other forms of transport and accessible to all the community. We will strive for carbon neutrality and prioritise bus travel alongside active modes of transport in Torbay, giving genuine choice to our residents and visitors for how they can travel.*

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Figure 3 – Torbay BSIP Area



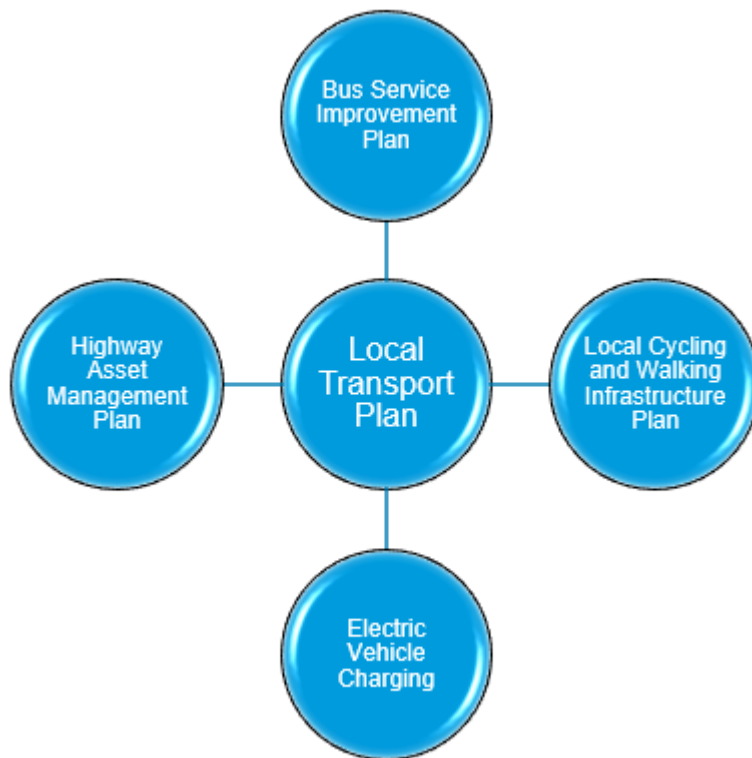
## Local Transport Plan

It is important that our bus vision for Torbay and Devon and Torbay (joint) Local Transport Plan align with each other. The existing local transport plan sets out priorities to:

- Enable Economic Growth and Development
- Enhance Torbay's Built and Natural Environment
- Improve Health and Activity Levels
- Improve Access to Education, employment and Services
- Make Big Connections

The BSIP also has to sit alongside plans and proposals for Electric Vehicles, Active Travel, Highway Management, and Rail Investment. This relationship is outlined in the diagram.

Torbay and Devon are currently developing a new Local Transport Plan as well as progressing the proposals for devolution which will result in the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DT CCA) becoming the single combined Local Transport Authority. It will be necessary, once the DT CCA LTA is established, to reconsider the policy position and the geography of the Enhanced Partnership and BSIPs.



The need for economic growth has been identified as one of the key drivers for change in Torbay. The Local Transport Plan is fundamental to delivering the developments identified, and ensuring the transport network can accommodate the housing, jobs and services Torbay requires.

Improvements to local bus services linking town centres, residential and employment areas will be targeted to provide sustainable access. Torquay, Paignton and Brixham town centres will be supported in their function as successful retail and leisure centres.

Buses must contribute to maintaining Torbay as an attractive place to live, work and enjoy leisure time in a high quality environment. Promoting and sustaining a transport network that is flexible, sustainable and readily available to meet the needs of its residents is critical. This will benefit all by ensuring access to key services at a reasonable cost.

## Other Strategic Connections

It is not just the Local Transport Plan and transport policies to which this BSIP relates. It is important to recognise and ensure consistency with a number of other policy areas and funding streams. They have a role in applying the national policy position at a local level, considering the regional policy framework and working with non-transport policy documents at a local level such as the Local Plan, Economic Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Destination Management Plan for example. Below is a wider list of policy areas and funds that are supported and that have an effect on the BSIP (this list is not exhaustive):

- Transport Decarbonisation Plan
- Greener Way for Our Bay
- Community and Corporate Plan
- Levelling Up
- Town Deal and Future High Streets
- Long Term Plan for Towns
- New Stations Fund
- Bus Needs and DRT Studies
- Zero Emission Bus Study
- Local Plan
- Economic Strategy
- Destination Management Plan

## Section 2: Current Offer to Bus Passengers

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## Section 3: Improvements Programme to 2025

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Since 2021, Torbay have invested in new waiting shelters and have undertaken an audit of all bus stops in preparation for a programme of flag replacements and information updates beginning in 2024/25.

Building on the identified need for a stable network as the foundation for future development and funding decisions, operators and the Council have worked collectively to ensure that services are retained and in almost all cases this has been possible, utilising funding from the Council and Government grants where there have been challenges to commercial viability following the reduction in passenger numbers. April 2024 was the start of a group of new contracts for supported bus services where commercial viability was not currently possible. This enhances the stability in the network, with 8-year contract commitments, and supports investment in those routes from the vehicles to the customer information and fare offerings.

The BSIP+ funding is primarily funding the establishment and initial implementation of the bus contracts. These deliver on several of the ambitions proposed within the 2021 BSIP and this is considered to be a very effective way to deliver on those.

The new contracts have seen improvements to services across Torbay, addressing several key points in the 2021 BSIP but also enabling progression of others.

Through investment from Section 106 Planning Contributions there have been some minor service enhancements on an identified core route connecting across Torbay, including South Devon College and Torbay Hospital.

Working with Stagecoach, the Council has also been successful in securing funding for Zero Emission Buses. This delivery programme has just commenced.

Further work on bus stop facilities and information, as well as bus marketing and ticket arrangements are also all proposed during 2024. This will include replacement of bus flags with a new, consistent, design alongside decluttering of information at bus stops to help users to understand the bus network.

As an area, the level of concessionary journeys on the network is substantial at just under 50% pre-covid, putting Torbay in the top 5 nationally for Local Authority areas (at times in the past 10 years it has been the highest in the country as a proportion of total journeys). Following the impact to services in 2020, there has been a drop in concessionary journeys with Torbay now 9<sup>th</sup> nationally with a rate of around 35%. This significant reduction not only impacts the viability and wider provision of services, but also has social and economic consequences in relation to accessibility for older and disabled persons and use of services. As such, a priority for 2024 is to boost the marketing and public awareness around concessionary travel, using the DfT guidance.

It is noted that there is a requirement for 2024 BSIPs to consider steps needed to address bus driver and other key staff shortages. The Council is pleased that currently, in relation to the Torbay network and the depots affecting that, there is not a significant issue to address. This will be continually monitored through the Enhanced Partnership.



**Table XXX** below highlights the priorities identified in the 2021 BSIP and how they have been supported and delivered since then, the level of progress made, and the work still required.

Table 1 – BSIP priorities, progress and next steps

Identified Priority	Progress to date	Work required
<b>Buses to serve the wider community</b>	Enhancements to the Service 13 and improvements in the times of service operation across the supported network have significantly improved access to the wider community.	There remain pockets of the community who are either not well served by the bus network or do not have efficient or suitable connection points to enable improved journey access to key facilities
<b>Buses to link with facilities</b>	Enhancements to the Service 13 have provided improved connectivity to Torbay Hospital, South Devon College and key employment areas	<p>The frequency and timing of the Service 13 still requires further development in order to better meet the needs of the community and give viable accessibility opportunities. Extending the service to broaden the reach within the community and/or to serve retail facilities would be of greater benefit.</p> <p>Providing the connections or greater direct links at certain times of the day would assist in making facilities well served for those who need it.</p>
<b>Lower fares</b>	The continuation of the £2 fare cap is important.	A plan and proposal to ensure best value for the community
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>Following the award of new contracts, the new vehicles provided with some of those services greatly enhances the accessibility of those routes.</p> <p>New shelters in some locations have helped too.</p>	Work on broadening the next stop audio/visual announcements on board services, and improving those that are already in place is the priority.
<b>Decarbonisation</b>	Following the award of new contracts, the new vehicles provided with some of those services greatly reduces the emissions levels of those routes.	Implementation of the Zero Emission Bus Funding and the consideration for broadening of that to other services and operators is the next step.

## Section 4: Ambitions and Proposals for 2025 and Beyond

A fundamental part of a solid foundation is consistency and as such the Council and Bus Partnership have continuing to prioritise the ambitions previously set out in the 2021 BSIP. Below is a table containing the full list of ambitions, and the progress and delivery necessary against each of those. These are listed here for consistency under the same headings as the 2021 BSIP but may appear presented differently within the BSIP summary table due to the required template format for that.

Table 2 – Ambitions and Delivery Programme.

	Ambitions	Progress and Delivery
<b>Intensive Services and Investment on Key Corridors, including Bus Priority</b>	Increase the frequency of the 13 and 22 to focus on three core corridors (East, West, and East/West Link) alongside the 12 and to re-instate the night service 12 with extended provision to develop a 24-7 route alongside a night service 22	Saturday services have been introduced on the 13 but there remains an opportunity to increase the frequency of the service. The 22 has also not been increased in frequency. The night services have been reintroduced on the 12 but a better understanding is needed of the commercial viability and business case before broadening the offer to other routes.
	Increase frequency and amended route planning of ‘town’ services with extended service operation times for all routes to cover evenings and weekends across Brixham, Paignton and Torquay to better connect the communities to the core corridors and improve ‘sub-corridors’ to Town Centres, health facilities, education facilities, employment areas, and shopping destinations.	Many of the supported bus services have seen an increase to their operational hours. As a partnership work is still needed to consider the opportunities for wider expansion of this and ensure the retention of weekend and evening services on commercial routes.
	Provide bus priority at all key signalised junctions on those core corridors and review other opportunities	This work needs to integrate with a wider signal replacement programme and is currently in the design phase. Delivery of the first junction is likely to be in 2025.

	<p>Enhance hub points, including Real Time Information, along the corridors including Brixham Town Centre, Brixham Park and Ride, South Devon College, Paignton Bus Station, and Torquay Town Centre, Torbay Hospital, and district shopping centres.</p>	<p>Focus has been around Torquay Harbourside, integrating Town Deal Public Realm improvements with the bus ‘hub’ improvements. For 2025 and beyond, improvements to the quality and range of real time information will be a focus, as well as ensuring other information and facilities such as clear flags and comfortable shelters are provided at the key locations.</p>
	<p>Review on-street parking layouts on all routes to improve efficiency of bus services</p>	<p>This aim is yet to have commenced but remains an ambition.</p>
	<p>East of Exeter Bus Service (Exeter Corridor)</p>	<p>Some progress has been made around timetable development and optioneering. It is likely that this will be delivered as part of the combined transport authority proposals following the implementation of devolution and necessary transition phase. Consideration is being given to funding streams as an enabler.</p>
<p><b>Lower Fares with Integrated Local Ticketing</b></p>	<p>Have an affordable multi-operator (bus only) ticket</p>	<p>This was not possible before the bus contract arrangements as there was only one commercial operator in Torbay. With the stable network in place, this is a top priority for 2024.</p>
	<p>Reduced price ticketing for families</p>	<p>Ticketing opportunities are on hold until further information on the bus contracts and national ticketing schemes have been determined.</p>
	<p>Reduced price young person’s ticketing</p>	<p>Ticketing opportunities are on hold until further information on the bus contracts and national ticketing schemes have been determined.</p>

	Multi-modal tickets including sales of through tickets to/from national rail	Some work has been progressed with Great Western Railway and this will be continued. It is the intention that this will be in place before 2025.
<b>Service Patterns Integrated with Other Modes</b>	Increased service frequencies at railway stations with services timed to connect with train services where achievable	Service frequency increases on the 12 and 22 will support this (see above) but also those on some of the town services. The timing of buses to serve trains more directly is more applicable to the extension of a service to Torquay Railway Station (see below)
	Extension of service to Torquay Railway Station	Some timetable development work has progressed around this but more work is needed on enablement funding
	Night service 12 timed to meet sleeper train at Newton Abbot with direct ticketing options	As noted above, work on the business case and viability of the night services need to be considered
	Improved wayfinding between bus and rail at all railway stations	This task is expected in 2024 and 2025.
	New stop infrastructure for Edginswell Station	Subject to delivery programme for the station
	First steps towards redevelopment of Paignton Bus Station as hub	Further work as part of the regeneration of Paignton Town Centre being considered.
	Walking and Cycling connectivity, in particular the South West Coast Path and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	This task is expected in 2024 and 2025 but will be ongoing.
<b>Bus Network Presented as a Single System with Clear</b>	Marketing campaigns	This task is expected in 2024 and 2025 but will be ongoing.
	Replacement bus stop flags with consistent design	This task will commence in 2024 but will be a programme over at least 2 years.
	Enhanced maintenance programme for bus stops	This will be put in place alongside the new flag and other infrastructure provision.

<b>Passenger Information</b>	Single network branding	This remains under consideration and the inclusion of the Torbay Story branding is part of this. This is unlikely to be developed too far until devolved arrangements are in place as it may influence any branding.
	Real Time Information	The existing system remains in place and future improvements and system expansions are envisaged but not currently planned for.
	Simple effective passenger information at stops	This will be a rolling programme of initial information replacement, followed by regular updating.
	Clear online information	A new 'single source' destination website will be developed for 2025.
<b>Modern Buses and a Decarbonised Network</b>	On board audio-visual equipment	
	Accessible vehicles for the community	This is completed following the award of new contracts. New vehicles are awaiting delivery.
	All vehicles on core routes to have CCTV, WI-FI & USB Charging	This will be delivered through the vehicle improvements programme associated with the zero emission roll out.
	Green roof shelters	This is an ongoing programme, only shelters requiring replacement are programmed
	Charging infrastructure to support a zero-emission network (Tranche 1)	The Council have been successful in securing funding and the programme for delivery has commenced with vehicles being introduced to service during 2025/26
	A minimum of 17 zero emission electric buses (Tranche 1)	The Council have been successful in securing funding and the programme for delivery has commenced with vehicles being introduced to service during 2025/26

	Transitional fleet changes to modernise and reduce emissions	This is being delivered through the zero emission bus fleet roll out and the new contracts.
<b>Giving Passengers a Voice and Making Buses Safe</b>	Develop a passenger charter	This is in place.
	Set up and administer a bus forum, partnership, delivery of this BSIP, and overview of passenger charter	This is in place.
	Improve the customer information, person to person, online, and hard copies as appropriate	This will be improved during 2024 and 2025.
	Provide REAL disability and Equality training	This is intended for 2024.
	Improve waiting facilities at stops with safe boarding areas as appropriate	This is part of an ongoing programme.
<b>Demand Responsive and Socially Necessary Transport</b>	Increase provision and hours of socially necessary services	This has been delivered through the new supported bus service contracts.
	Increase accessibility of socially necessary services	This has been delivered through the new supported bus service contracts.
	Modifying the Concessionary Fares offer	This is currently under review.
	Fare Car and Demand Responsive Transport	A study has shown that there is potential for some areas where bus services are currently contracted to operate. Further work will take place to review other areas that may be less well served.
	Community Transport	No further work has been undertaken for this at the current time but the Council continues to support the community transport operators in the area.

## Section 5: Targets Performance Monitoring and Reporting

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The below sets out the broad headline targets for this BSIP that will be incorporated and refined into the Enhanced Partnership. The targets will be more specifically set after further discussions with the operators and when more information about funding is known.

### Targets

#### JOURNEY TIMES

**TARGET** – A decrease in journey times and improvement of accessibility to each of the Town Centres and Torbay Hospital

**BASELINE** – Assessment of Accessibility “Torbay Bus Support Phase 2” report by WSP on behalf of Torbay Council August 2021

#### RELIABILITY

**TARGET** – A decrease in journey delay with an increase in ‘on-time’ services.

**BASELINE** – DfT ‘Analyse Bus Open Data’. 2mins 46sec journey delay and 75.18% on time 6 months April to September 2021.

#### PASSENGER GROWTH

**TARGET** – An increase in patronage and journeys per head population

**BASELINE** – Operator reported figures, verified annually DfT tables bus0109 and bus0110.

#### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

**TARGET** – An increase in passenger satisfaction and decrease in number of complaints

**BASELINE** – NHTN survey result 63%, 3% above average; Wider survey data to follow

#### AVERAGE FARES

**TARGET** – A decrease in overall average fare cost

**BASELINE** – 2021 Fare Structure

#### NUMBER OF ZERO EMISSION BUSES IN FLEET

**TARGET** – An increase in number of zero emission vehicles operating as a percentage of fleet

**BASELINE** – October 2021 – 0

### Reporting

The partnership will work together to report on the performance of the BSIP targets.

We anticipate that updates will be published at [www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements).

## Section 6: BSIP Overview Table

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### Summary Information

<b>Name of Local Authority</b>	Torbay Council
<b>Enhanced Partnership(s) and/or Franchising Scheme(s) covered by the BSIP</b>	Torbay Bus Enhanced Partnership
<b>Date of publication:</b>	June 2024
<b>Web address (URL) of the published BSIP:</b>	<a href="http://www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements">www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements</a>

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