



3. Coach Supporting Statement

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1. Setting the Scene

- 1.1 Coach services in the JLTP area are made up of:
 - Scheduled inter-urban services
 - Leisure-related coaches
 - Airport services
 - Other miscellaneous services.
- 1.2 Scheduled services form an integral part of the public transport system providing a lower cost alternative to rail and supplementing buses for longer distance journeys. Leisure-related coaches support the local economy by bringing people to the JLTP area's tourism, shopping and other destinations.
- 1.3 Coach services to and from Bristol International Airport are a vital component of the Airport Surface Access Strategy, providing an alternative to car use. Other services provided by coaches include home-to-school travel and educational trips, dedicated commuter journeys and the wide range of trips associated with coach hire.

2. Vision

Our vision is to achieve a greater choice of coach services for longer distance travel, commuting and access to Bristol International Airport. Through providing better infrastructure we aim to enhance the coach travel experience and meet leisure and tourism needs.



3. Coaches and the Shared Priorities

Congestion

Coach services provide an alternative to the use of cars and thereby reduce congestion.

Road Safety

Travel by coach reduces the need for car use and therefore the potential for road accidents.

Accessibility

Coach services can enhance accessibility by providing a value for money alternative to rail and vital home-to-school transport.

Air Quality

Emissions per passenger in coaches are less than would be the case with the equivalent number of individual car trips.

Other Quality of Life Issues

The design of coach stations and on-street stops affects perceptions of crime and personal security and the appearance of the public realm and streetscape. Coach travel provides access to the countryside but the movement and parking of vehicles can have a negative impact.

4. Issues

- 4.1 Coaches are an integral part of the transport system and feature in the Bus Strategy and the Bus Action Plan set out in that strategy and in the JLTP document. They contribute to all the Shared Priorities with a particular role in helping tackle congestion and improve accessibility.

Scheduled Coach Services

- 4.2 The network of scheduled coach services in the JLTP area is provided commercially and is characterised by very good services connecting both Bristol and Bath to London, but more limited services on other corridors. Table 1 shows typical

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summer Monday-Thursday frequencies; there are modest enhancements on London services at weekends.

TABLE 1: COACH SERVICES - Summer 2005

Urban Area	Destinations	Journeys Daily in Each Direction
Bristol	London	26
Bristol	Heathrow/ Gatwick	11
Bath	Heathrow/ London	11
Bristol/ Bath	Bournemouth; Portsmouth; Weymouth	1 each
Bristol	Devon and Cornwall	9
Bristol	South Wales	5
Bristol	Cheltenham & Gloucester; Birmingham	4-7
Bristol	North West England	4
Bristol	North East England	3
Bristol	East Midlands & East Coast	3
Bristol	Coventry	1
Weston-s-Mare	London	5

- 4.3 Frequencies on services to destinations other than London are substantially less than on rail, and seating capacity even less. Over the last 10 years, the trend has been to withdraw from certain cross-country routes, notably to/ from East Anglia and North London, to which there are no through rail services. The coach companies suggest that these withdrawals reflect changing patterns of demand with people choosing to travel via London to benefit from more frequent services.
- 4.4 Express/ long distance bus services to/ from locations outside the JLTP area are generally infrequent and many operate only in peak periods. Destinations include Newport/Chepstow, Dursley, Tetbury, and Burnham-on-Sea/ Highbridge/ Bridgwater. Significant areas not served

include Stroud/ Nailsworth, and the Wye Valley/ Forest of Dean. Other destinations have regular services on local bus routes, but journey times are often long.

- 4.5 Scheduled services operate from the bus/ coach stations in Bath and Bristol city centres and the coach terminal at Weston-super-Mare. The Bath bus/ coach station offers a limited standard of amenities, but will be replaced by a new facility during the JLTP period. The new Bristol bus/ coach station was formally opened in February 2006 and has brought significant improvements for coach travellers. The terminal at Weston-super-Mare has had some improvements but there is scope for significant enhancement.
- 4.6 There are also a limited number of pick up/ set down points including The Centre in Bristol for some services to London. Some Weston-super-Mare to London coaches pick up in Worle, Clevedon, the M5 Gordano services, Clifton and Tesco Eastville. Bath to London services also pick up in Batheaston. However most people have to travel to one of the main terminals to catch scheduled services and rely for this on the availability of bus services, taxis or car sharing.

Leisure-related coaches

- 4.7 The LTP area is a major attractor of leisure-related coach services as well as having long established coach firms catering for locally generated demands. In Bristol the City Council's 1999 study into the future demand for coaches saw chartered services providing for educational, shopping and leisure markets and being very important in sustaining businesses such as hotels. A major issue in the city centre is the loss of coach parking facilities: the Broadmead expansion scheme is due to include some provision but other locations are needed.
- 4.8 At Bath the Riverside coach station continues to be well used and the Council has provided dedicated coach parking bays in the city centre. Nevertheless problems arise at peak holiday periods

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when foreign and domestic coaches seek to set down and pick up passengers in central locations. In Weston-super-Mare there are generally sufficient pick-up and set-down points at peak periods; however, the supply in the town of adequate daytime lay-over parking for coaches bringing day trippers is constrained. The focus for leisure-related coach journeys in South Gloucestershire tends to be The Mall regional shopping centre.

Airport-related services

- 4.8 The Flyer dedicated coach service between Bristol International Airport and Bristol city centre has operated since 1999 and patronage has grown from 60,000 in the first year to 267,000 in 2004/05. By 2030 BIA is forecast to have grown to 12 million passengers per annum. The June 2005 Provisional Revised Surface Access Strategy sees the service remaining the mainstay of the public transport offer to airline passengers during the JLTP period. Currently the Flyer carries 4.6% of air passengers and charter and travel agent coaches a further 2%. For the Flyer, issues continue to focus on ways and means of making the service more attractive in terms of frequency, reliability, journey times, fares and choice of routes.

Other Coach Services

- 4.10 Other coach services in the JLTP area include:
- Home-to-school
 - School and college trips
 - Charter coaches
 - Dedicated commuter services
- 4.11 Home-to-school coach services are contracted by the four local education authorities and make a vital contribution to the movement of pupils entitled to free travel under the 1944 Education Act. They also carry fare paying 'non entitled' pupils and thereby assist in reducing pressures from the car-borne 'school run'. A major issue is the need to procure services

within budgetary constraints whilst trying to improve quality.

- 4.12 Further transport issues will arise from the October 2005 White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All which foresees the entitlement to free home-to-school transport being extended for disadvantaged pupils. The Government also intends to work with local authorities "to test the impact of an extended transport offer for all pupils and explore the links between better transport and fair admissions. These pilots may include a charging regime for better-off families".
- 4.13 Many of the coach companies that have home-to-school contracts also provide vehicles for school and college trips as well as chartering coaches for a range of other group journeys. Issues tend to coincide with those of leisure-related services described in 4.7-4.8.
- 4.14 Charter coaches provide an important service for special events and leisure trips. They provide an efficient way of getting large numbers of people to and from venues. They are more flexible than timetabled services and can often drop-off and pick up passengers directly from the venue they are visiting, giving passengers a high level of confidence in the service. At peak times and in congested areas the provision of stops for these services can be difficult.



4.15 Dedicated commuter coach services have been piloted from time to time and there is a current initiative seeking to set up a demand responsive service from the Chew Valley to Bristol city centre. The main issue revolves around the viability of such services and their relationship with mainstream bus and taxi services. There could be scope to develop such services through travel plans.

5. Delivery Programme in the Plan Period 2001/02 to 2005/06

5.1 In the period of the first LTPs the following schemes and measures have been delivered:

- Provision of dedicated parking bays in Bath city centre for foreign and domestic coaches.
- Provision of 20 on-street coach parking bays in central Bristol.
- Redevelopment of Marlborough Street Bus and Coach Station and replacement with modern facilities, formally opened in February 2006.
- Refurbishment of the waiting shelter at Weston-super-Mare coach terminal.
- New bus station at The Mall, regional shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway, also catering for coaches.



6. Good Practice

The new Bristol city centre bus and coach station includes much improved facilities for coach travel. Bays are set aside for coach services and there is a new coach ticket sales and information office. An enclosed pedestrian concourse separates passengers from buses and coaches and extensive seating has been provided around the departure bays. Other facilities include public toilets, electronic destination displays, a café and newsagents.

The bus and coach station, operated by First and due to be fully operational by summer 2006, is a vast improvement on the old bus station and forms part of the regeneration of the city centre.

7. Strategy

- 7.1 The strategy for scheduled inter-urban services aims to widen travel choices and improve infrastructure for passengers and operators. We will encourage the development of better services to and from significant destinations not served by rail. Schemes and measures to achieve improvements to coach travel are included in the Bus Action Plan (see Bus Strategy in Appendix 1).
- 7.2 The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study foresees the level of usage increasing by providing increased locations to access coach services in the area. A new location is suggested by the study at Worle. Suggestions are also made for a new coach interchange in north Bristol in the vicinity of the motorway network. Possible sites include UWE and Parkway railway station. This and other locations will be explored during the JLTP period, for example at the M4 Tormarton rest area.
- 7.3 Construction of a new bus/ coach/ rail interchange is due to start in 2006 in Bath city centre, linked with the commercial redevelopment of the Southgate area. Together with the new coach facilities at

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Marlborough Street in Bristol these will greatly enhance the quality of provision for scheduled coach passengers.

- 7.4 The expansion of the Broadmead shopping area in Bristol, now underway, will incorporate basement parking for shoppers arriving by coach. Both Bath & North East Somerset and Bristol City Councils will continue to investigate ways and means of improving city centre coach waiting and parking facilities.
- 7.5 We will work with Bristol International Airport to enhance the Flyer coach service. The June 2005 Provisional Revised Surface Access Strategy for the airport aims to almost double by 2011 the proportion of air passengers travelling by the Flyer. Actions to achieve this include increasing, over time, the frequency of the service; extending the hours; providing real time information; internet ticketing; more sales and service points in the airport terminal; and improving reliability and reducing journey times through bus priority measures. The potential to increase the extent of coach services to the airport (e.g. from Bristol Parkway and Worle) will also be considered with the Airport operators.
- 7.6 In relation to the use of coaches for home-to-school transport the Councils will investigate the future delivery of services against the background of the 2005 Education White Paper and continuing budgetary constraints.
- 7.7 We will consider with interested parties the potential for introducing dedicated commuter coach services.

8. Targets

No specific target has been set but the provision of coach services will have an influence on:

LTP1a, b, c Accessibility

LTP4 Mode share of journeys to school

LTP6 Peak period flows to Bristol city centre

LTP7 Congestion.

