



# BSIP UPDATE 2

## Draft

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL





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# 1

## OUR BUS VISION

# 1 OUR BUS VISION

## 1.1 EAST SUSSEX AND OUR VISION FOR BUS

East Sussex is a county council area incorporating five district councils and borough councils within the south-east of England. It covers an area of 1,725 km<sup>2</sup>, including Hastings, Bexhill, Eastbourne, Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven on the more urban coastal strip, as well as the towns of Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Heathfield, Hailsham, Polegate, Battle and Rye in the predominantly rural part of the county. There are several environmental protected areas in the county, with the South Downs National Park in the south and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the north.

**Figure 1-1 - BSIP Coverage Area - East Sussex authority boundary**



This updated BSIP builds on our original plan of three years ago. We are continuing the work already started and, as funding permits, expect to deliver further improvements. As part of our ongoing refinement of our BSIP we will update this document and prepare a concise, public facing summary by mid-August 2024.

**Our shared mission remains the same now as in 2021: to ensure that East Sussex residents and visitors enjoy the highest possible quality bus services that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice, reduce congestion and make a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation.**

## 1.2 OUR 2021 BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our first Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), agreed in 2021, is available on our website at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/bus-service-improvement-plan/bus-service-improvement-plan-for-east-sussex-county-council>. In it we set out comprehensive plans to address all aspects of the bus passenger experience in East Sussex, which were costed at £80 million. We were successful in being awarded £41.4 million by the Department for Transport (DfT) to support its implementation. This was one of the largest awards to any county council in England. Our BSIP is considered to share the ambition and goals of the National Bus Strategy which will lead to growth in bus patronage.

Our key investments following our 2021 BSIP include:

### **IMPROVEMENTS TO SCHEDULED SERVICES**

Significantly improved services introduced mainly from July 2023.

- New hourly service between Heathfield, Blackboys, Uckfield, Lewes and Brighton (route 29A).
- New half-hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service linking Eastbourne, Hailsham, Bulrush Lane, Laughton, Ringmer, Lewes and Brighton (route 28). Evening and Sunday journeys to run between Hailsham and Brighton.
- Routes 254, 304 and 305 relaunched as 'route 1066' with additional evening journeys and a new Sunday service. The service links to and from Hastings and Tunbridge Wells.
- Eastbourne Loop service doubled in frequency between Langney shopping centre and Eastbourne town centre via the Sovereign Centre and Seaside. Up to 15 minutes on weekdays and up to 30 minutes on Sundays.
- Significantly more evening and Sunday services including in and around Hastings, Bexhill, Rye, Hailsham and Eastbourne.

### **RURAL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WITH DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DRT)**

Significant improvements for rural areas with our new Flexibus DDRT (Digital Demand Responsive Transport) service, launched in May 2023, which brings 95% of rural residents within 30 minutes travel time of key destinations, 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.

### **DEVELOPMENT WORK ON BUS PRIORITY SCHEMES**

- Eastbourne – Seaside (subject to outcome of consultation)
- Eastbourne - Station area (implementation scheduled for September 2024)
- Peacehaven – A259 corridor (implementation scheduled for September 2024)
- Newhaven – Drove Road and Denton, Centre Ring Road (implementation scheduled for 2024)
- Design work to give buses priority at all 34 signal-controlled junctions in East Sussex (implementation currently in progress)

## **FARES**

- Young person's fare reductions: accompanied travel was free for under 19s until April 2024, now 50p each for up to 4 under 19s, unaccompanied travel is £1 flat fare for under 19s, 16-18 year olds travel at child fares; 19-29 year olds get 25% reduction on day tickets
- A new multi operator day ticket, extending the previous Stagecoach DaySaver product to be valid on all operators' services at no extra cost to the passenger
- National £2 fare cap for single trips (funded directly by DfT to the bus operators)

## **PASSENGER EXPERIENCE**

- Real-time information (RTI) improvements and investments at 197 existing display locations and 135 new installations
- QR codes at all bus stops, giving easy access to live running time information
- Interchange improvements
- Bus stop improvements across the county, including new bus stops, raised kerbs giving level boarding, new and refurbished shelters
- Construction of a new mobility hub at Uckfield (construction starting in summer 2024) and design work for the new hub at Hailsham (construction starting in September 2024).

Our BSIP is a joint plan in conjunction with East Sussex Enhanced Partnership (EP) members and agreed between ESCC and bus operators, who are the voting members of the EP Board. The EP covers the full East Sussex area and was formally made with our local bus operators in November 2022.

Progress in delivery our BSIP is reported quarterly to DfT and a full revision to the original BSIP is planned after 5 years (that is in 2026, when the original BSIP will have come to an end). In the meantime, the guidance from DfT for an update in 2024 has been followed, with the next update of this document due in mid-August 2024 and we expect to issue a further update in 2025.

## **1.3 INVESTMENT IMPACTS SINCE 2021**

Following this significant investment we have seen passenger numbers grow from their low point during the COVID-19 pandemic. On some routes and for some passenger groups passenger numbers are now higher than in 2019, i.e. before the pandemic. We are currently carrying out in-depth evaluation of the social and economic impacts of this investment and will include the results of this in the next update of this document (due in mid-August 2024). We expect to provide evidence of positive impacts in line with the ambitions set out in the National Bus Strategy, which are focused on growing patronage. These include:

- Running more frequent services across East Sussex
- Making bus services faster and more reliable with our investments in bus priority, including bus lanes and changes to traffic signals
- Improving bus stop infrastructure and real time information provision
- Lowering fares with new ticket products for specific groups of passengers and the National Bus Fare Cap for single tickets (£2, from January 2023 onwards)
- Making public transport provision more comprehensive, especially in our rural areas with demand responsive 'Flexibus' services.



## 1.4 PLANS FOR BEYOND THE CURRENT BSIP PERIOD

This BSIP sets out our ambitious plans to continue supporting and investing in our bus network:

- Improvements to more bus services, including urban, inter-urban and town networks
- Refinements to our demand responsive 'Flexibus' service, to improve the range of trips passengers can use it for and to improve operational efficiency
- Further design work for bus priority measures including bus lanes, junction improvements and virtual priority at signal-controlled junctions, including early delivery of some schemes
- Greater investment in bus stop infrastructure to improve bus accessibility, safety and overall bus user experience
- Working with bus operators to increase the number of low emission and zero emission buses in East Sussex (the County currently has no zero emission buses), including pursuing UK Government funding opportunities
- Ongoing revenue funding for BSIP delivery staff and joint marketing initiatives with bus operators
- Ongoing revenue support for services improved since 2021, with the aim that they achieve commercial viability over time.

Beyond 2025, and subject to the availability of funding from central government, East Sussex County Council budgets and bus operating companies, we will continue to improve the bus network for passengers. Section 4 of our BSIP sets out our ambitious medium and long-term plans.

## 1.5 BSIP AND THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

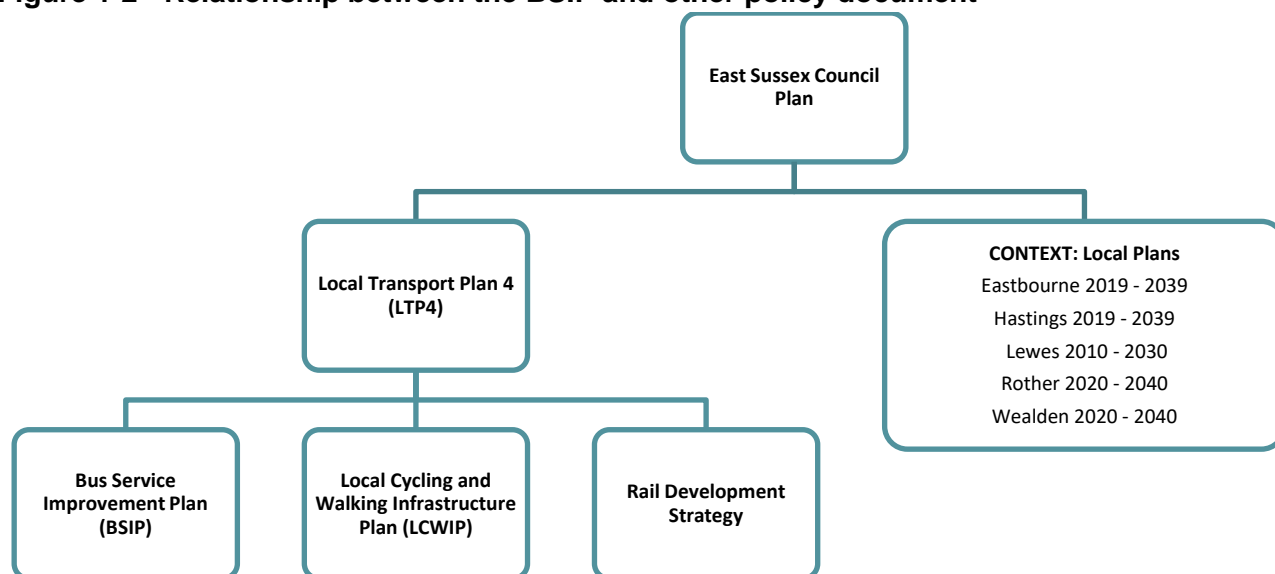
Our BSIP sits squarely within a suite of policies and plans which set out East Sussex County Council's ambitions for our four overarching priority outcomes, as set out in our overall Council Plan:

- Driving sustainable economic growth
- Keeping vulnerable people safe
- Helping people help themselves
- Making best use of resources now and for the future.

Our BSIP addresses all four priority areas and makes a particular contribution to driving sustainable economic growth and making the best uses of resources now and for the future.

**Figure 1-2** shows the relationship between the BSIP and the statutory LTP to which it forms a subsidiary document, alongside other local plans and strategies.

**Figure 1-2 - Relationship between the BSIP and other policy document**



### 1.5.1 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

We are currently finalising our next Local Transport Plan (LTP4), which will cover the period 2024-2050.

We consulted on a draft of LTP4 in early 2024. The public consultation closed on 25 February 2024, and we are now considering the feedback we received. We expect to publish a finalised LTP4, once agreed by ESCC, in October 2024, alongside an implementation plan.

It is important to note that while the LTP will be aspirational in setting a vision for transport in East Sussex, delivering the ideas and schemes in it depends on securing funding, likely to be from central government. At the time of writing, most schemes contained in the draft LTP are unfunded.

The draft LTP explicitly refers to the BSIP and outlines how the measures and investments in the BSIP support the achievement of the LTP's objectives. In particular, the draft LTP identifies two over-arching priorities where the BSIP is crucial: improving the convenience, comfort and cost of public transport; and supporting the growing use of zero and low emission vehicles. The draft LTP objectives then include specific outcomes which relate to the bus network (although many other outcomes are indirectly to buses, e.g. reducing emissions and decarbonisation):

Outcome 2.3: Redesign road space to balance the needs of different road users, including encouraging people to walk, wheel, cycle and use the bus.

Outcome 3.1: Increase the proportion of people travelling by walking, wheeling, cycling, public and shared transport.

The draft LTP includes sections setting out how bus, coach, DRT and community transport services can help make public transport accessible for all, alongside sections on integrating different modes of transport and the importance of investing in public transport infrastructure. The draft LTP also identifies improved bus networks, such as rapid transit networks connecting suburbs to town centres, mobility hubs, integrated ticketing and the roll out of 'mobility-as-a-service' (MaaS) applications as possible ways to improve the service and hence its attractiveness to residents and visitors.

The draft LTP also lists specific corridors and areas (major routes and urban areas) where bus improvements might be introduced, subject to funding, scheme design and consultation. These include potential on-street and signal-based bus priority schemes as well as network revisions and service enhancements.

These types of interventions over the 25-year validity period of the LTP are well aligned with the specific prioritised measures in this BSIP.

### **1.5.2 BSIP AND LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

Every bus journey includes some walking (or wheeling): getting to the bus stop at the start of the trip and moving on from the bus stop to the final destination. Many bus trips are seen by passengers as part of a multi-modal trip: getting the bus to the station and continuing by train or taking the bus and then walking further. Buses can also be part of multi-modal trips with cars (typically park and ride services) or – where suitable secure storage is available – with cycles. For all these reasons, it is important that bus services are integrated with walking and cycling networks at the strategic and local levels. The East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out proposed cycling and walking networks for the county and prioritises routes and walking zones for early development work. Given the importance of direct routes for both bus passengers and people walking and cycling, many of the routes identified in the LCWIP are also bus routes. This means that improvements to footways, pedestrian crossings and other infrastructure for walking and wheeling is likely to benefit bus passengers as well. It can be more difficult to adapt existing roads to improve facilities for both buses and cycling, and ESXC will always consider other sustainable modes when planning improvements specifically for one mode.

The mobility hubs included in this BSIP will be designed to encourage people to combine cycling with bus trips, by providing secure bike parking or hosting shared bike hire points (with the exact configuration of each mobility hub tailored to the specific location, so different services will be included in different places). The programme of improvements to bus stops, including more raised kerbs to allow level boarding, will encourage more people to combine walking and bus trips.

### **1.5.3 BSIP AND RAIL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Our key priorities for improving rail services in East Sussex are set out in our Rail Strategy and Action Plan (2013). They include electrification and dual tracking of the Ashford-Hastings line and the Uckfield-Hurst Green line, to reduce journey times, improve frequencies, allow more direct trips (without needing to change trains) and support investment in coastal communities. Replacing diesel trains with electric trains would also reduce carbon emissions.

These priorities fit well with the BSIP: improvements to rail services will encourage more people to make more trips by public transport, including trips which include travelling by both bus and train. We are implementing a mobility hub for Uckfield, which would benefit from better train services.

## 1.5.4 BSIP AND LOCAL PLANS

Our BSIP also aligns with the Local Plans of the five constituent district councils: Eastbourne (Local Plan in development, working alongside the South Downs National Park Authority), Hastings, Lewes (including a joint Core Strategy with South Downs National Park Authority), Rother and Wealden.

**Eastbourne [Draft Local Plan 2018/19 – 2038/39](#):** Eastbourne, a coastal tourist destination, attracts over 40,000 workers, with 28,000 being local residents. The majority (68%) commute by car, while 11% use public transport and 19% walk or cycle. Notably, a significant portion (33%) head to the Town Centre for work, yet more than half (54%) still opt for cars despite good public transport. Road transport contributes to 20% of carbon emissions, and therefore further initiatives are needed to support active travel and public transport to reduce this percentage.

**Hastings [Draft Local Plan 2019 - 2039](#):** Hastings faces several challenges in its transport infrastructure and overall development. Ranked as the 13th most deprived town in England and lowest life expectancy of all districts/boroughs in East Sussex, the need to improve access opportunities is evident. Infrastructure constraints such as the absence of high-speed rail connections and limitations on train lengths due to power supply and topography lead to car dominance. Enhancing walking, cycling, and public transport infrastructure is crucial to reducing reliance on cars and achieving environmental and health objectives.

**Lewes [District Local Plan 2010 - 2030](#):** Lewes is generally prosperous with relatively low unemployment levels and is home to part of the Sussex University campus. Despite this, jobs within the district are relatively poorly paid. To support the movement of people to key employment and education locations, sustainable travel options ensures that opportunities within Lewes and further afield are accessible without a private vehicle and enables economic growth.

**Rother [Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2040](#):** Rother's rural landscape and coastal environment creates unique challenges and opportunities for the district. With the Council declaring a climate emergency and amid a biodiversity crisis, the goals of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, halting the decline of nature by 2030 and mandates of Biodiversity Net Gain for developments creates difficulties. The challenge lies to maximise housing delivery, connecting developments with sustainable transport and protecting the national landscape and habitat areas.

**Wealden [Draft Local Plan 2020 – 2040](#):** The district of Wealden is expected to grow in the coming years, with significant increases in residents ages 65 and over – leading to an ageing population. This, in addition to out-migration of younger people, will impact housing, economy and infrastructure. With the Council declaring a climate emergency and a commitment to become carbon neutral by 2050, supporting sustainable transport is key to retaining a working population and connecting employees to job opportunities. Ensuring suitability for the ageing population is also important for independence and mobility.



# 2

## **CURRENT OFFER TO BUS PASSENGERS**

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## 2 CURRENT OFFER TO BUS PASSENGERS

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### 2.1 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: OUR BUS NETWORK

East Sussex's bus network combines traditional fixed route scheduled services with demand responsive services, between them reaching across the whole county.

**Figure 2-1** is a map of the network showing scheduled services, which include dense urban bus networks, town networks and longer-distance inter-urban services connecting the major towns with the smaller towns and villages. East Sussex includes large rural areas where our innovative digital demand responsive service, Flexibus, provides flexible public transport for residents and visitors (as shown in).

Bus operators include

- Stagecoach Southeast, who operate across most of East Sussex and to/from Kent
- Brighton & Hove Buses, who operate routes connecting Brighton with surrounding areas, including in East Sussex
- Metrobus, who operate some routes in East Sussex as part of their network extending north to Surrey, east to Kent, south to Brighton and across West Sussex
- Compass Travel, an independent operator whose contracted routes operate primarily in smaller towns and rural areas in the western part of East Sussex
- Cuckmere Buses, a long-established community bus operator, who focus on localised and rural routes

Figure 2-1 - Bus Network Map



Together with nearly doubling our own East Sussex County Council spending on maintaining bus services, we have invested significant sums in improving scheduled services following the award of funding from the Department for Transport for our 2021 BSIP. More details are included in section 2.18 below.

## **2.2 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT**

Our 2021 BSIP set out our plans to use digital demand responsive transport (DDRT) to provide public transport in areas, especially rural areas, where there are gaps in the fixed route network. Flexibus is the local digitally driven, on-demand bus service provided by East Sussex County Council and operates in areas that are not well-served by the existing bus services. Users can book a service via the Ride Pingo app or by calling the service centre. Services run from 07:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday and can be booked for up to nine passengers per trip – depending on availability. Flexibus serves a total of seven designated zones as displayed in Figure 2-2.





Our ongoing monitoring and evaluation work is assessing the impact and benefits of the investment in Flexibus, based on detailed passenger trip mapping being completed for ESCC by Podaris. This will allow us to calculate the cost per passenger trip of operating the service, and the return on that investment for ESCC and our residents.

## 2.3 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: SUPPORTED SERVICES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Community transport is non-profit making transport provision. In East Sussex, these services vary from local car lift schemes intended to address specific needs, like accessing a doctor's surgery, to minibus dial-a-ride and local bus services. Some rely exclusively on volunteers, whilst others employ paid staff.

Key community transport operators who provide local bus services in East Sussex include North Wealden Community Transport Partnership ('Wealdlink'), Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA), Bexhill Community Bus, Battle Area Community Bus, Rye & District Community Bus and Cuckmere Buses. Some of these services are contracted to East Sussex County Council. The County Council facilitates the East Sussex Community Transport Operators Association as well as underwriting the cost of community transport operators electronic ticket machines, to enable real time information provision and integrated ticketing between community bus services and the wider East Sussex bus network.

Despite their importance, community transport providers consistently express concerns about their limited capacity for expansion. Many of these providers heavily rely on the dedication of specific individuals, and the sector faces challenges in recruiting volunteers to sustain its services.

## 2.4 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: BUS, RAIL AND COACH INTEGRATION

As well as being able to connect buses with each other for onward travel, there is also high importance that the bus network has integration with other modes of transport, especially rail stations. **Figure 2-3** shows the area from where residents can reach a station within 30 minutes travel time by either scheduled bus or Flexibus.

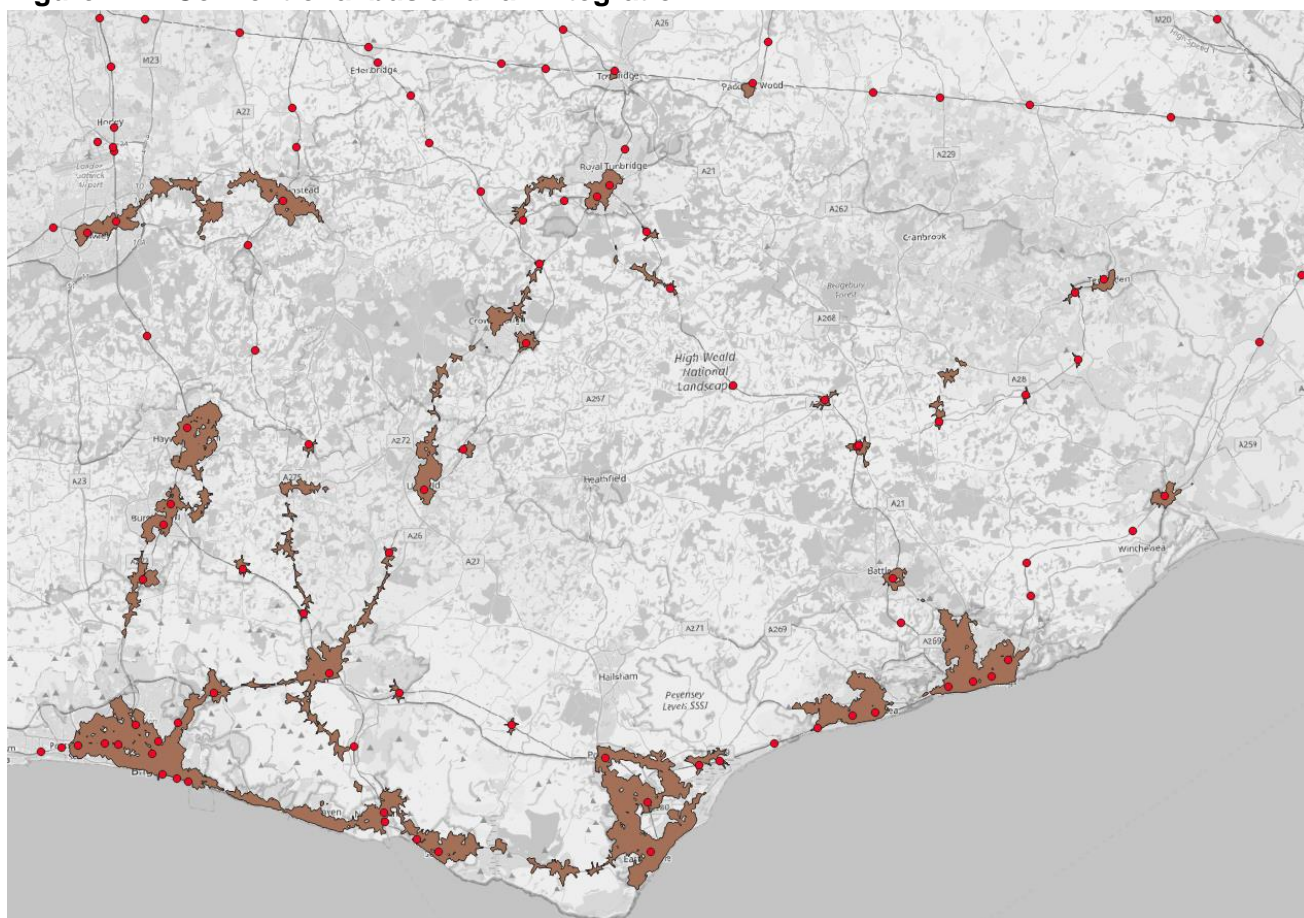
**Figure 2-3 – Conventional and flexible bus services rail integration**



Source: Podaris/WSP. Contains OpenStreetMap data

Considering just scheduled services and excluding Flexibus, 69% of urban residents and 16% of rural residents are within a 30-minute bus journey of a station, shown in Figure 2-4.

**Figure 2-4 - Conventional bus and rail integration**



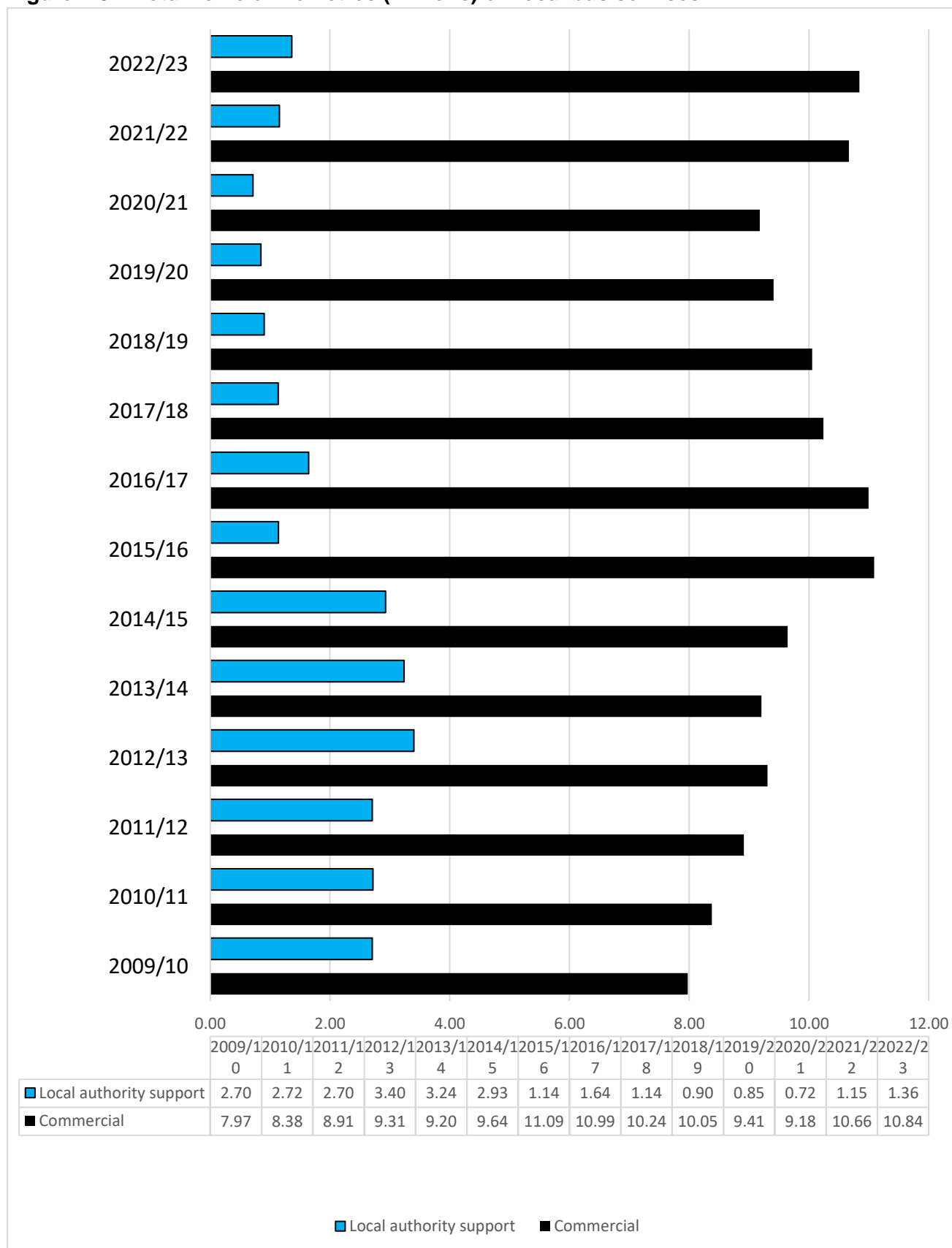
Source: Podaris/WSP. Contains OpenStreetMap data

## 2.5 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: SERVICE MILEAGE

**Figure 2-5** shows the total vehicle kilometres of all bus services in East Sussex from 2009/10 to 2023/24. Total vehicle kilometres were at their highest in 2012/13, this year also had the most amount of supported vehicle kilometres. From 2015/16, due to reductions in local government funding, the number of supported kilometres rapidly began to decrease reaching a relatively small amount of 720,000 supported kilometres in 2020/21 (the lowest throughout the period shown), which may have been impacted further due to the pandemic. Since then, total vehicle kilometres have risen back above 12 million kilometres per year, well above pre-pandemic levels and may be a causal effect for total passenger journeys in **Figure 2-14** nearing back to pre-covid level. The most recent increases are due to investment through our BSIP in increasing service frequencies.



**Figure 2-5 – Total vehicle kilometres (millions) on local bus services**



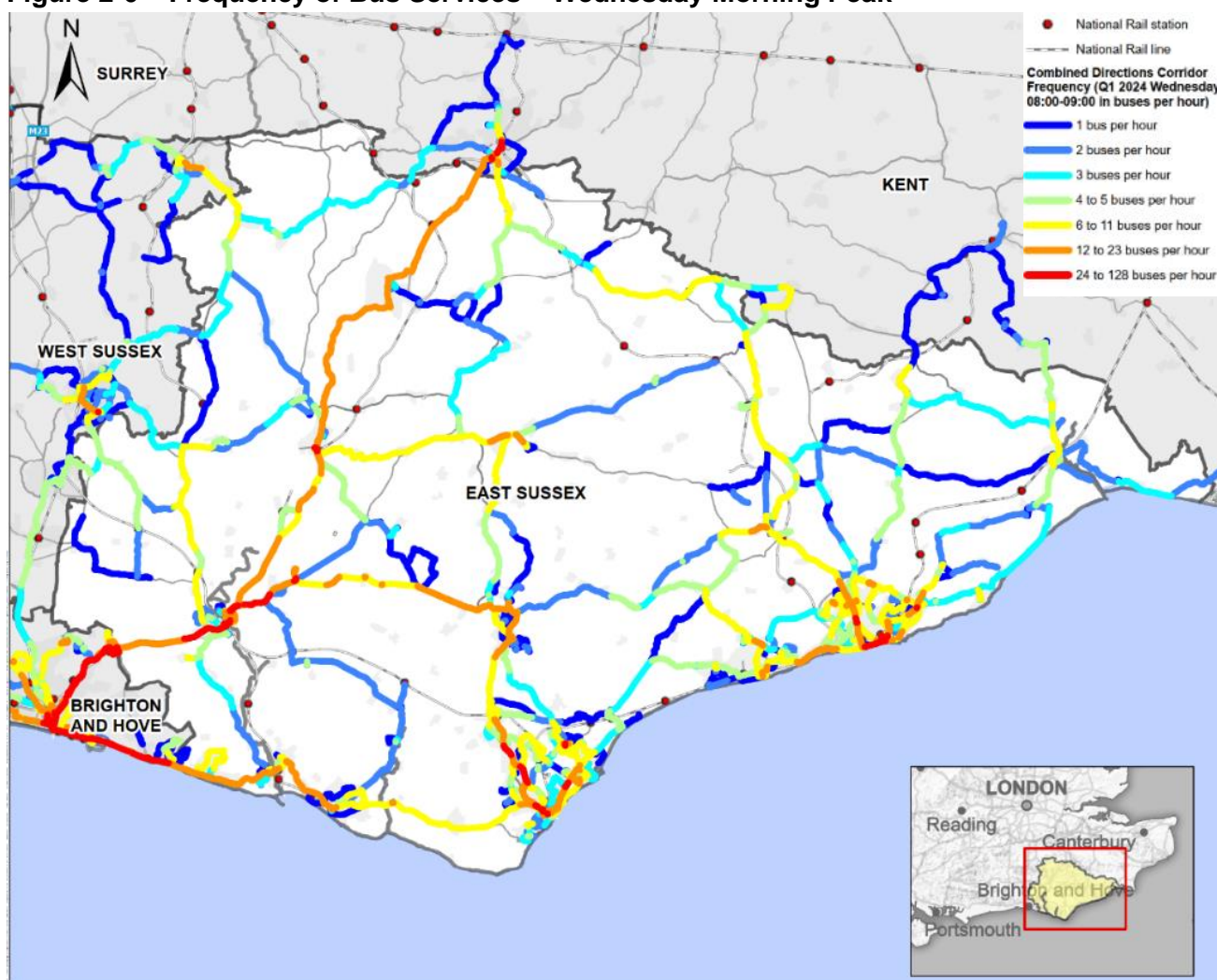
Source: DfT Bus Statistics [most recent set covers 2022/23]

## 2.6 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: FREQUENCY OF SERVICES MAP AND SUMMARY

This section of our BSIP shows on a series of maps how frequently bus services run on each section of the road network.

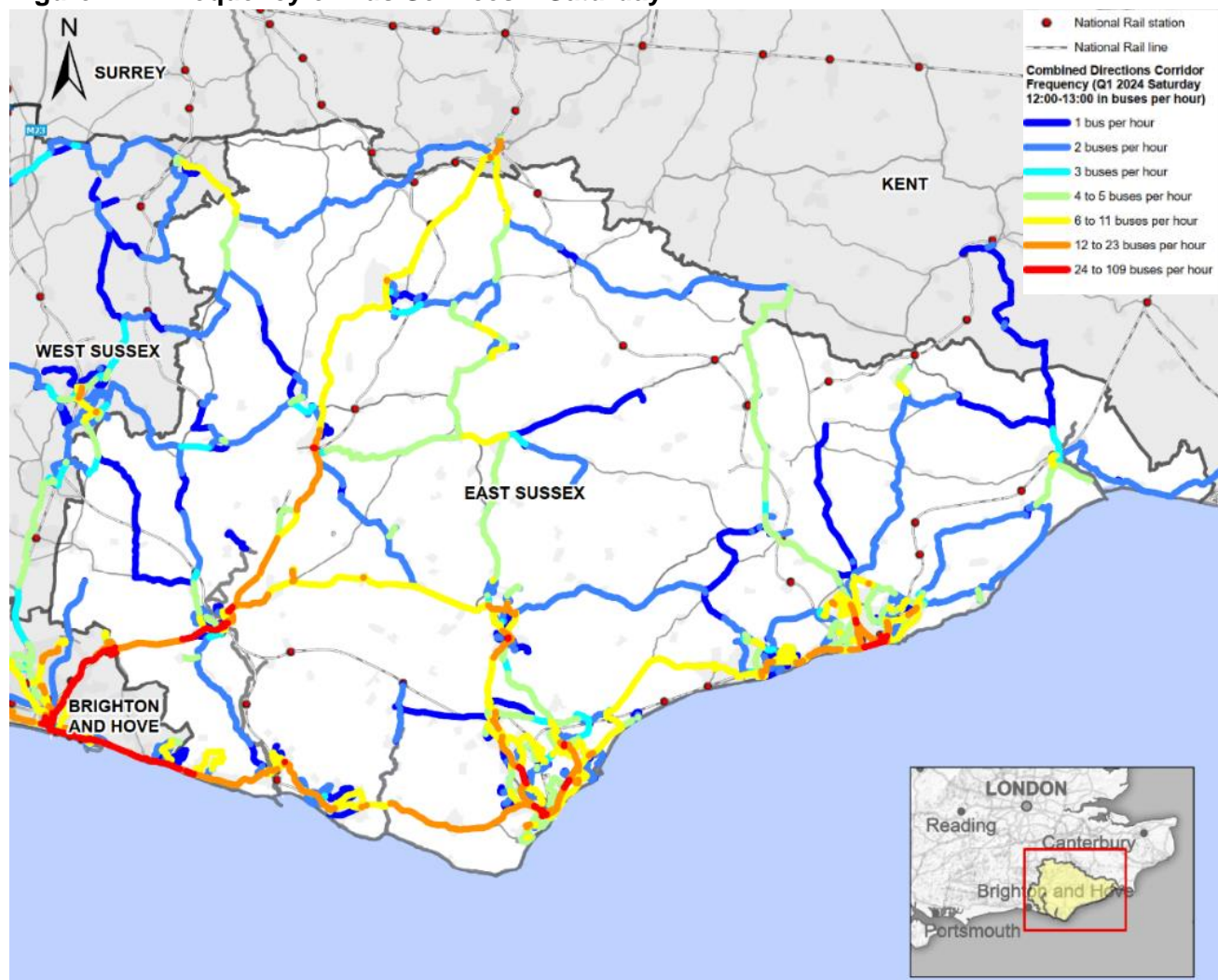
**Figure 2-6** shows frequencies for the Wednesday morning peak (reflecting a typical weekday). Roads shown in orange and red having higher frequency bus services, while roads shown in blue and dark blue have lower frequency bus services. The highest frequencies are in the main urban centres, especially Eastbourne, Lewes and Hastings (and in neighbouring Brighton). The orange and yellow lines show frequent services along key inter-urban corridors, including Lewes-Uckfield-Tunbridge Wells and Heathfield-Eastbourne. The blue and dark blue roads are served by 1 or 2 buses per hour in each direction.

**Figure 2-6 – Frequency of Bus Services – Wednesday Morning Peak**



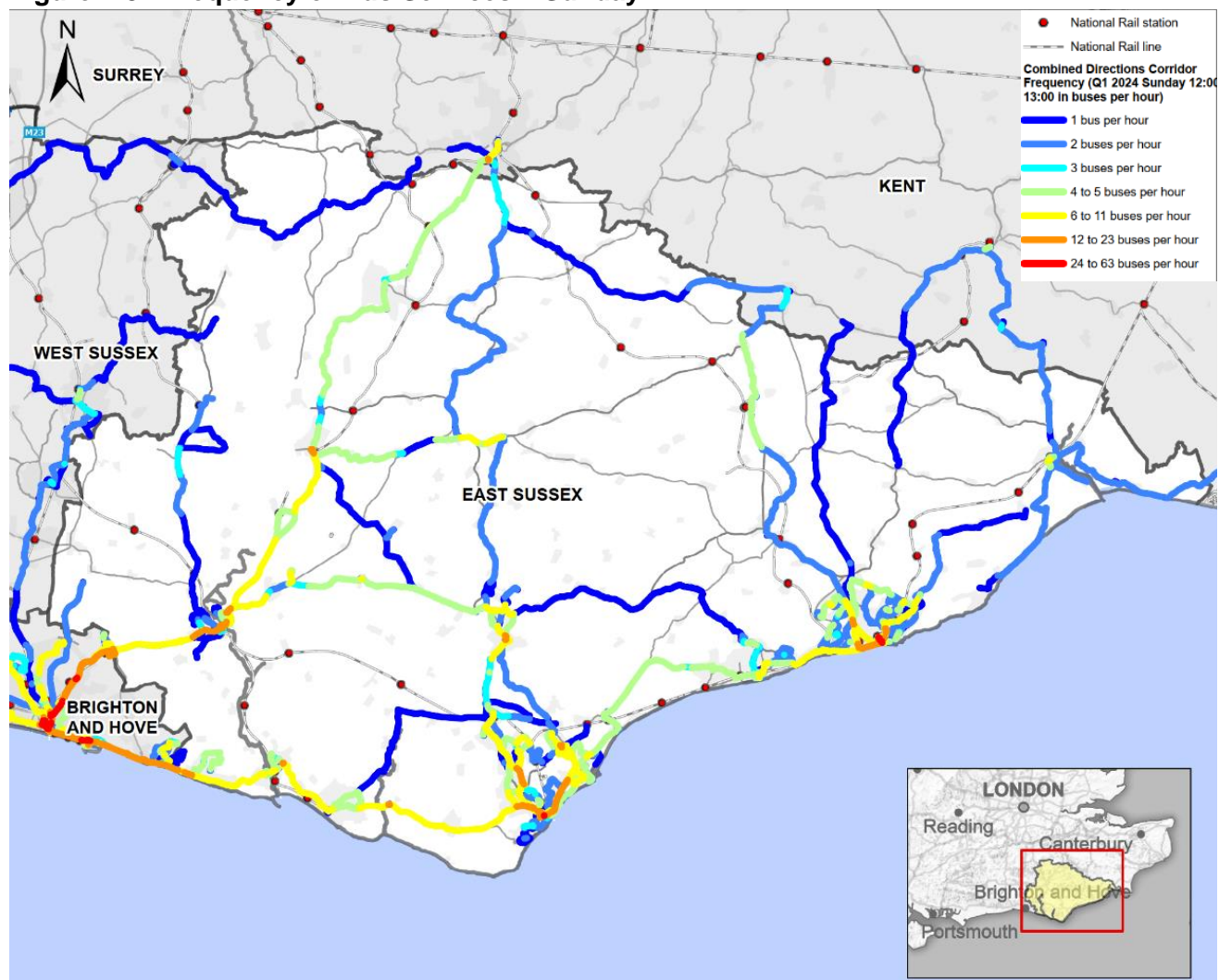
The map for Saturday services shows the same general pattern, with more frequent services in the urban areas and on key inter-urban routes, with less frequent services in rural areas. Frequencies are generally lower on Saturdays than during weekday peak hours.

**Figure 2-7 - Frequency of Bus Services – Saturday**



The map for Sunday services shows frequencies are lower than Saturdays, with various routes not served at all.

Figure 2-8 - Frequency of Bus Services – Sunday



**Figure 2-9** shows the distribution of bus stops across the area. This indicates that East Sussex has a good distribution of bus stops except in the most rural of areas, which reflects population distribution / sparse population in the rural areas.



Figure 2-9 – Bus Stops in East Sussex and neighbouring authorities

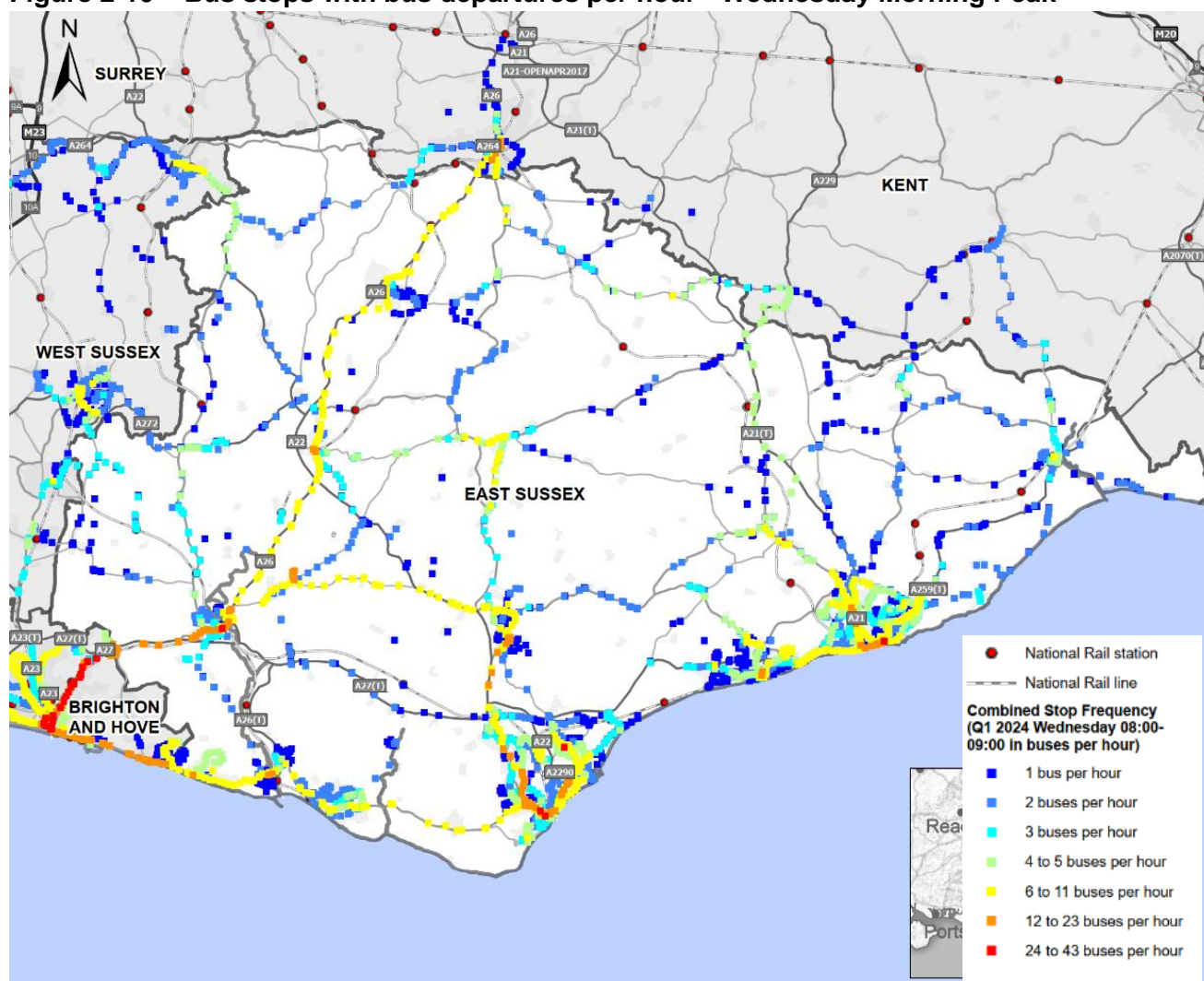




In **Figure 2-10** each dot on the maps represents a bus stop, and the colour shows the number of departures from each bus stop at a particular time in the week. **Figure 2-10** shows departures in the morning peak hour (Wednesday 0800-0900). The orange and red dots show clusters of stops in town centres (Lewes, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings) with 12 or more departures in the peak hour, meaning a bus calls at the stop every 5 minutes on average or better. Corridors with relatively high frequencies show with yellow or orange dots along the road, including Lewes-Uckfield-Tunbridge Wells, Lewes-Ringmer-Hailsham-Eastbourne, and Brighton-Newhaven-Eastbourne.

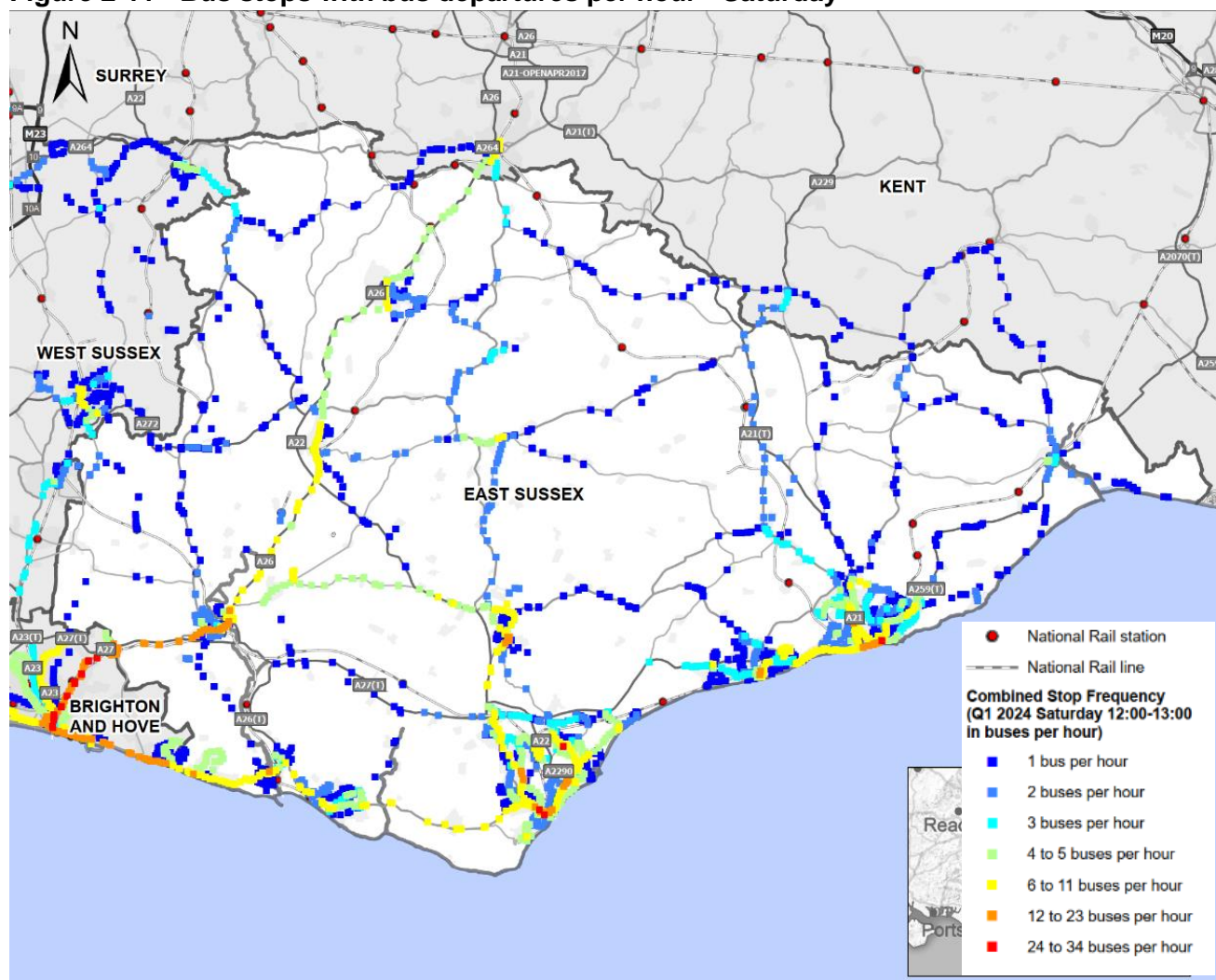
The blue and dark blue dots show bus stops which have 1 or 2 buses calling in the peak hour, most typically in our rural areas.

**Figure 2-10 – Bus stops with bus departures per hour - Wednesday Morning Peak**



**Figure 2-11** shows departures on a Saturday (between 1200 and 1300). There is a similar pattern with higher frequency routes in the main town centres and along key inter-urban corridors, although some frequencies are lower. Green dots show 4-5 buses per hour on the Lewes-Hailsham route, for example, and service is also less frequent on a Saturday than on a Wednesday morning between Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells.

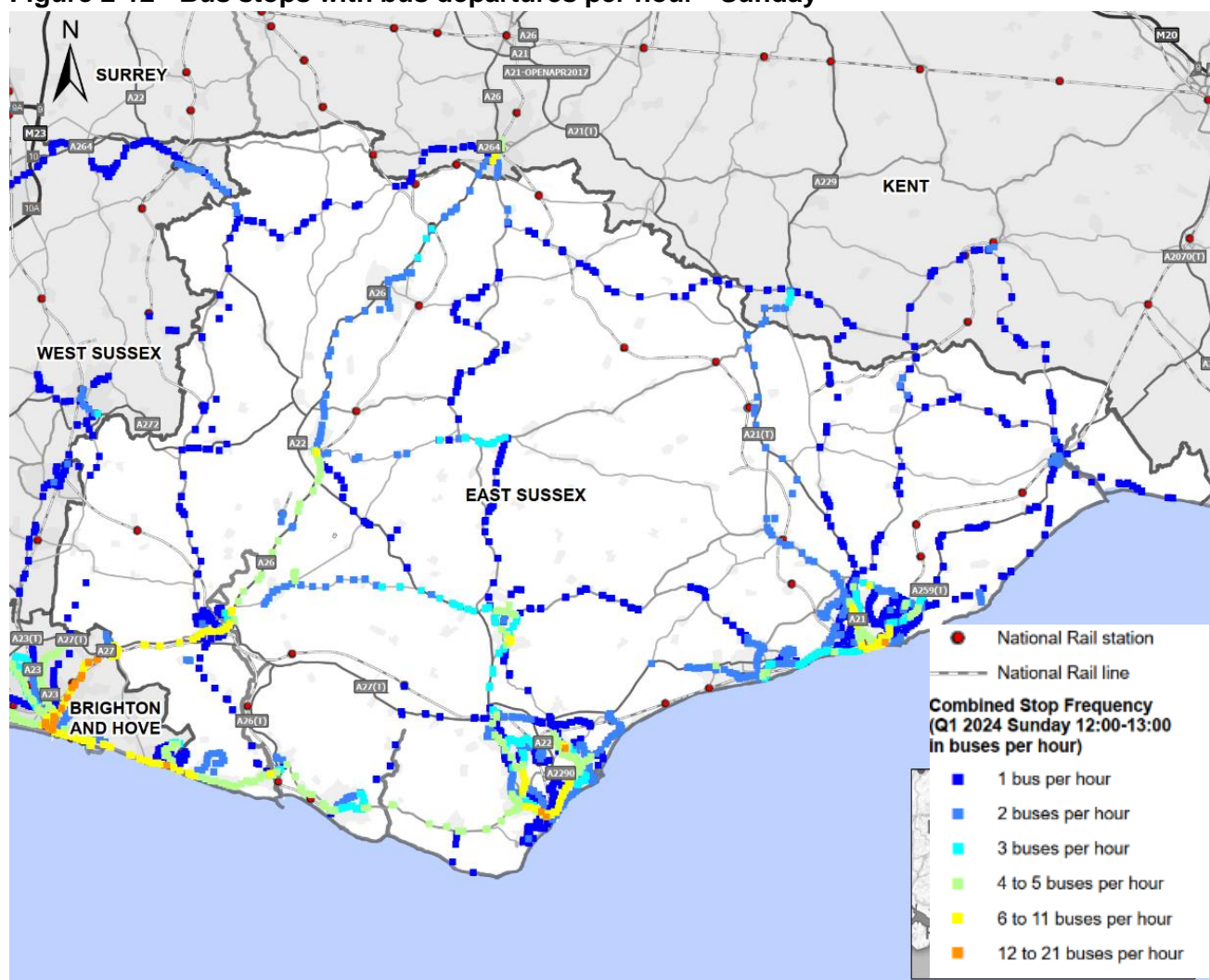
**Figure 2-11 - Bus stops with bus departures per hour - Saturday**



**Figure 2-12** shows Sunday services, with lower frequencies than Wednesdays and Saturdays – many bus stops which have services are shown as blue or dark blue, representing one or two buses per hour. The bus stops are not shown on many rural routes, where there are no bus services on Sundays.



Figure 2-12 - Bus stops with bus departures per hour - Sunday



In some of the deeper rural areas, buses operate on a hail and ride basis stopping where safe to do so at the request of passengers. These locations are not represented on these maps. Flexibus demand-responsive services operate throughout rural East Sussex, providing opportunities to travel which are not picked up by these route and bus stop frequency maps.

## 2.7 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: PASSENGER FACILITIES

Since 2021 we have invested in improved passenger facilities, with bus stop upgrades including new hard standing, new or replacement timetable cases, poles and flags.

In addition, the programme includes a significant number of new or revised bus stop clearways (designed with input from bus operators), which are important in helping to ensure buses can reach the kerb to pick-up and set-down passengers safely without being impeded by parked vehicles.

**Table 2-1 – Bus Stop Infrastructure**

	Total
Hard Standing	88
Timetable cases	228
Poles	268
Flags	255
QR Codes Plates	2,562

We have plans to improve facilities at significantly more bus stops over the next three years, as part of a rolling investment programme, subject to funding availability beyond 2025.

We have updated the provision of real-time information with improved display screens carrying richer and more targeted information, keeping passengers up to date on services (and any delays) and promoting ticketing offers. Real time information was already in place at 197 locations, now supplemented with a further 135 new installations.

New QR code plates are now provided at nearly every East Sussex bus stop to provide access to real time information and, shortly, other relevant information such as ticketing schemes and service updates.

## 2.8 OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL: CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PLACES

Our Bus Connectivity Assessment, which sits below this BSIP and informs our ongoing network development work, seeks to answer the question of what our bus service provision means for people getting to key destinations (work, education, healthcare, leisure opportunities), and what proportion of the population can reach key destinations by bus within 30 minutes.

We have assessed the journey opportunities which our bus network provides to residents and visitors, in terms of access to the following key destination types:

- Access to business
- Access to healthcare
- Access to work
- Access to education
- Access to retail
- Access to leisure opportunities
- Access to other modes of transport

We have assessed what proportion of East Sussex residents can travel to these destinations within 30 minutes by bus in the morning peak hour, or on a direct bus route at any time of the day. We have also compared average times to travel to these different destination types by bus.

We have completed this analysis looking only at fixed route services and looking at both fixed-route and Flexibus demand-responsive services. The introduction of Flexibus DDRT services, covering most rural areas of the county, has led to very significant improvements in access for rural residents. Considering only fixed-route bus services, rural residents have noticeable poorer bus access to most destination types, reflecting the network, with many rural areas not served at all or only by infrequent buses, making a 30-minute trip difficult or impossible. With Flexibus, however, rural access matches and in some cases exceeds the access available on fixed-route services in urban areas.



**Table 2-2 – Bus Connectivity Summary**

Access to		RURAL Population within 30 mins by bus (%) (fixed route only)	RURAL Population within 30 mins by bus (%) (fixed route and Flexibus DDRT)	URBAN Population within 30 mins by bus (%)
<b>Business</b>	Business Parks and Industrial Areas	43%	88%	89%
<b>Healthcare</b>	Dentists	27%	84%	83%
	Hospitals	3%	64%	33%
	Pharmacies	29%	85%	87%
	GPs	44%	87%	87%
<b>Work</b>	Town Centres and Cities	9%	76%	64%
	Offices	5%	68%	61%
	Banks	10%	76%	68%
<b>Education</b>	Primary Schools	47%	87%	89%
	Secondary Schools	12%	67%	49%
	Further Education	3%	50%	27%
	Universities	0%	0%	11%
<b>Retail</b>	Shopping	19%	84%	86%
<b>Leisure opportunities</b>	Restaurants	61%	92%	92%
	Cinemas	3%	42%	38%
	Play Spaces	56%	92%	93%
	Playing fields	54%	90%	88%
	Parks	22%	83%	83%
<b>Other modes of transport</b>	Ports and Ferries *	0%	0%	6%
	Airports **	0%	0%	0%
	Bus Stations	4%	64%	14%
	Interchanges	16%	75%	68%

\* Access to ports and ferries relates to the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry

*\*\* Access to Gatwick Airport is not possible from East Sussex within 30 minutes by bus, nor by any direct bus route*

Some of the results from more detailed assessments show the importance of where facilities are located:

- around two thirds of rural residents and 19 out of 20 urban residents can reach a **major shopping area** by direct scheduled bus. About one fifth of rural residents can reach a major shopping area by bus within 30 minutes, while 86% of urban residents can. Considering Flexibus as well as scheduled buses, 84% of rural residents enjoy this level of access. The average journey time is faster for urban residents at 19 minutes, compared with 29 minutes for rural residents. This reflects the location of major shopping areas in or on the edge of urban areas
- there are relatively few **hospitals** in or close to East Sussex, so almost all rural residents (97%) and two thirds of urban residents are further away from them than a 30-minute scheduled bus trip.
- the numbers are similar for **cinemas**: nearly half of rural residents (48%) can access a cinema by scheduled bus, but only 3% of them can complete the journey within 30 minutes. Over four fifths (83%) of urban residents can reach a cinema by bus, but for around half of these (42% of all urban residents) the trip would be longer than 30 minutes by bus.
- very few urban residents and no rural residents of East Sussex can access a **port or ferry terminal** by bus – those who can live in or close to Newhaven.

These proportions and average journey times reflect how different facilities and services are distributed, with many located in or close to town centres (and therefore closer to urban residents).

Ongoing analytical work by ESCC will identify changes in access to key destinations for residents brought about by network changes since 2022 and will be reported in the next update of this BSIP.

## 2.9 COST OF TRAVEL: LTA AREA TICKETING

Bus operators in the East Sussex area offer a range of fares and ticket options. These are generally aimed at encouraging passengers to forward purchase period tickets valid for a whole day or more, rather than simply pay individually for each journey made.

### SINGLE FARES

With the current single fare cap in England introduced by central government, and all the County's principal bus operators participating, nearly all single fares in East Sussex are capped at £2 until December 2024.

### MULTI-OPERATOR TICKETING

To offer bus users in East Sussex better value for their fares, the East Sussex Day Rider ticket became a multi-operator ticket from April 2023; it was previously a Stagecoach product. This change allows bus passengers to make unlimited journeys on any Stagecoach, Compass, Brighton & Hove and Metrobus service within East Sussex or where your first journey of the day starts in East Sussex. The fare of an East Sussex DayRider varies depending on age.

- East Sussex Day Rider (adult): £5.50
- East Sussex Day Rider U30 (for ages 19 to 29): £4.10
- East Sussex Day Rider U19 (for ages up to 18): £3.50

Tickets can be purchased via the operators' apps.

Integrated ticketing is also available beyond East Sussex through the regional Discovery ticket scheme. Though this is limited to a one-day ticket and only available to purchase on bus, it is accepted on all East Sussex bus services, except the Eastbourne Sightseeing service. It costs £10 for Adult Discovery, £8 for Child Discovery (5-15) and £20 for Family Discovery (for 5 people with a minimum of 1 adult and a maximum of 2 adults).

Brighton & Hove Buses have worked with Compass Travel to ensure some other ticket products can be used on both operator's services, and there is a Lewes ticket available on all operators' services.

Metrobus and Brighton & Hove have joined with Southern's KeyGo initiative which consists of obtaining a Key Smartcard and then using it to tap in & out for rail fares with bus trips added at both ends of the journey, with the best fare being automatically calculated. It is available for add-on local urban bus journeys in Eastbourne and Lewes.

KeyGo is in addition to the availability of PlusBus, which allows local bus trips at the end of a rail journey for major towns throughout England. In East Sussex these are Bexhill & Hastings PlusBus, Brighton & Hove PlusBus (including Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven), Eastbourne PlusBus, Lewes PlusBus (including Selmeston, Rodmell, Ringmer and South Chailey), Rye PlusBus (including Iden, Beckley Broad Oak, Winchelsea and Camber).

## **CONCESSIONS AND JOBSEEKERS**

In East Sussex the standard statutory travel time restrictions apply to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme for older and disabled people, meaning bus travel is free on weekdays between 0930 and 2300 and all day at weekend. Companion passes are also issued to eligible disabled people.

Stagecoach, Brighton & Hove and Metrobus offer jobseekers discounted travel.

## **GROUP AND FAMILY FARES**

Through BSIP funding, a common group/family ticket is offered on nearly every bus in East Sussex thereby providing significantly better value. The '50p accompanied child' ticket offers an add-on ticket for up to four children (aged 5-18) for 50p each, for any adult bus ticket or concessionary pass.

A South East Family DayRider is also available and valid for one day's unlimited travel on all Stagecoach buses within Kent and East Sussex. For a total of £17.70, two adults and up to three children or one adult and up to four children can purchase the group ticket. If bus journeys are within East Sussex (not including Brighton), an East Sussex Family DayRider can be purchased for £11.00, with the same conditions.

Brighton & Hove Buses offer a child fare of £1 during school holidays, weekends and after 6pm on schooldays (50p if accompanied by an adult) up to age 18, along with family networkSAVER tickets



for up to 5 people (minimum 1 adult, maximum 2 adults) providing unlimited travel on their services for a day for £12.50 (£10.40 via their app).

## **YOUNGER PERSONS FARES**

The situation in East Sussex regarding young persons' fares is relatively straightforward. All operators offer half fare to under 16s. We have developed an age verification app to allow young people easier and quicker access to Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) age-related fare reductions.

Unaccompanied children (aged up to 18 years) can travel for just £1 with an East Sussex Under 19 single tickets at designated off-peak times. This ticket is valid on any bus journey starting in East Sussex and is available from 6pm on Mondays to Fridays, as well as all day at weekends and during school holidays.

East Sussex County Council's long-standing Freedom ticket scheme offers under 19s unlimited weekly travel on any bus service in the County for £15.00 (reduced from £17.50) per week. All operators have agreed to participate in this straight-forward unsubsidised scheme, with no revenue apportioning arrangement in place between operators. Young people pay on bus and the operator which sells the ticket keeps the revenue.

## **OTHER DISCOUNTS**

Various types of DayRider tickets can be purchased to provide unlimited travel on Stagecoach services. This includes the South East Evening Rider and South East DayRider. Prices vary depending on age:

- South East DayRider (adult): £9.10
- South East EveningRider (adult): £3.80
- South East DayRider U19 (for ages up to 18): £6.50

Promotions are available on the adult DayRider tickets through purchasing 'Flexi5' or 'Flexi10', depending on how frequently you travel. These promotions are only available when using Stagecoach services – they are not multi-operator tickets. The Flexi5 offer provides five DayRider tickets for the price of four, enabling the use of these over the year, whilst the Flexi 10 offer provides ten DayRider tickets for the price of seven for the year. The fare for these Flexi tickets is dependent on the geographical extent of travel:

- Flexi 5: Local Area - £21.30, South East - £34.80
- Flexi 10: Local Area: £37.80, South East - £60.90

## **2.10 PUNCTUALITY**

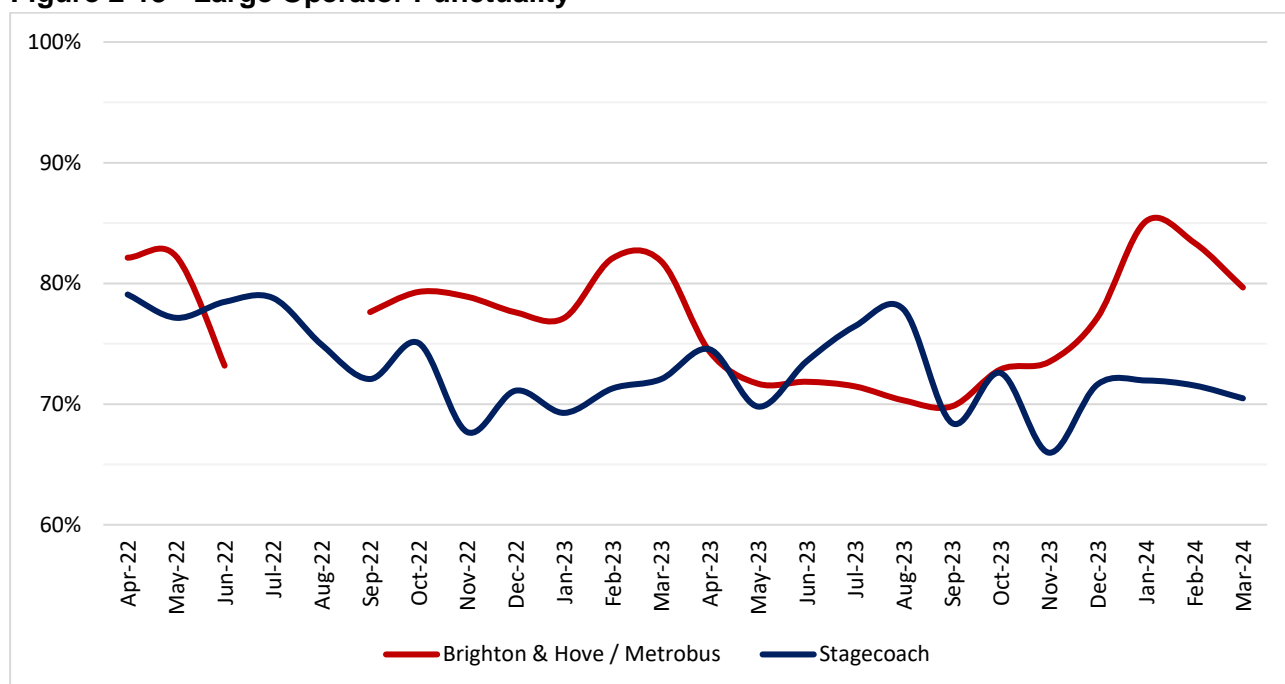
Bus operators have supplied data to ESCC which shows that approximately 77% of buses in East Sussex ran on time in 2022/23, and approximately 74% in 2023/24. The decrease reflects increasingly challenging traffic conditions as travel patterns returned to pre-COVID levels through 2023 and into 2024. We have compared data from operators with that collected by the Bus Open

Data Service (BODS). Both use data from bus ticket machines, captured in real time, but operators find that their own data is more complete than that held by BODS.

The following chart shows punctuality month by month for the two largest operators in East Sussex in 2022/23 and 2023/24.



**Figure 2-13 - Large Operator Punctuality**



Source: Bus operating companies

## 2.11 BUS PRIORITY

Faster and more reliable services helped by bus priority measures was the third most requested improvement in the survey undertaken to explore East Sussex residents' views on what they would most like to be introduced, during the development of our BSIP in 2021. Slower buses also impact on fares as more buses and drivers may be needed to maintain the timetabled frequencies. More attractive and predictable journey times compared to using a car will also increase patronage.

Bus priority projects in East Sussex have already demonstrated their benefits. For example, the A259 bus lane has seen the journey time along the coast from Peacehaven to Brighton reduced from 40 mins to just 27 mins, a 67% increase in patronage and now 48% of the people using that road in the morning peak are on the bus, taking up just 2% of the road space.

Bus operators regard more bus priority measures as critical in their efforts to improve the reliability of their services and highlight these as their highest priority for BSIP investment.

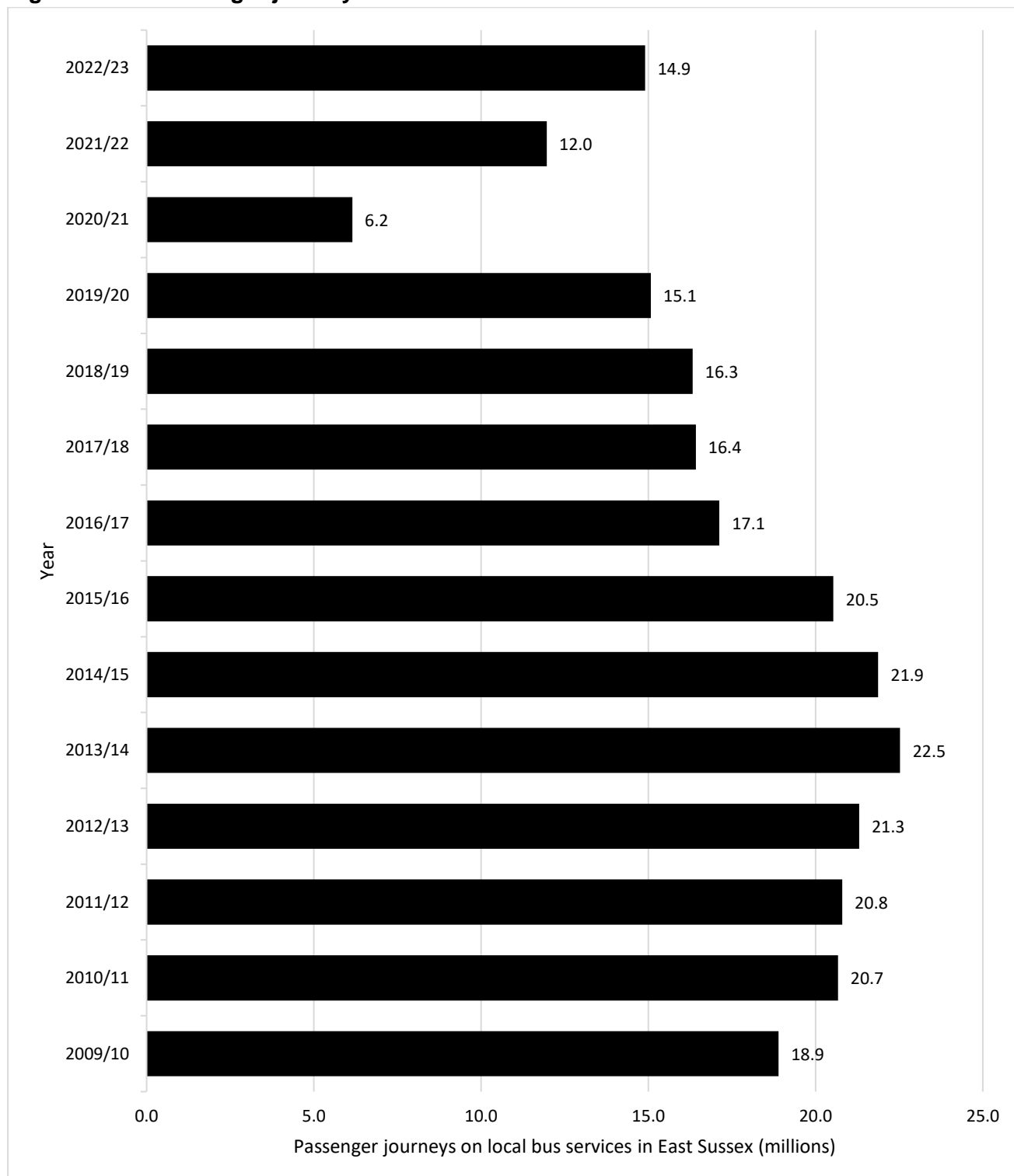
We allocated £20 million from our 2021 BSIP funding award to the development, design and construction of bus priority measures, including £18.5 million for physical measures (bus lanes and junction reconfigurations), with the remaining £1.5 million for technological improvements to traffic signals at all 34 junctions across the county where buses are controlled by traffic lights.

We have made good progress with the development and design work and will move to construction of prioritised schemes before September 2025. We continue to seek funding from other sources where appropriate, including National Highways / DfT Major Road Network (MRN) funding.

## 2.12 BUS USAGE

The chart in **Figure 2-14** below shows the number of passenger journeys taken on local bus services in East Sussex between 2009/10 and 2022/23.

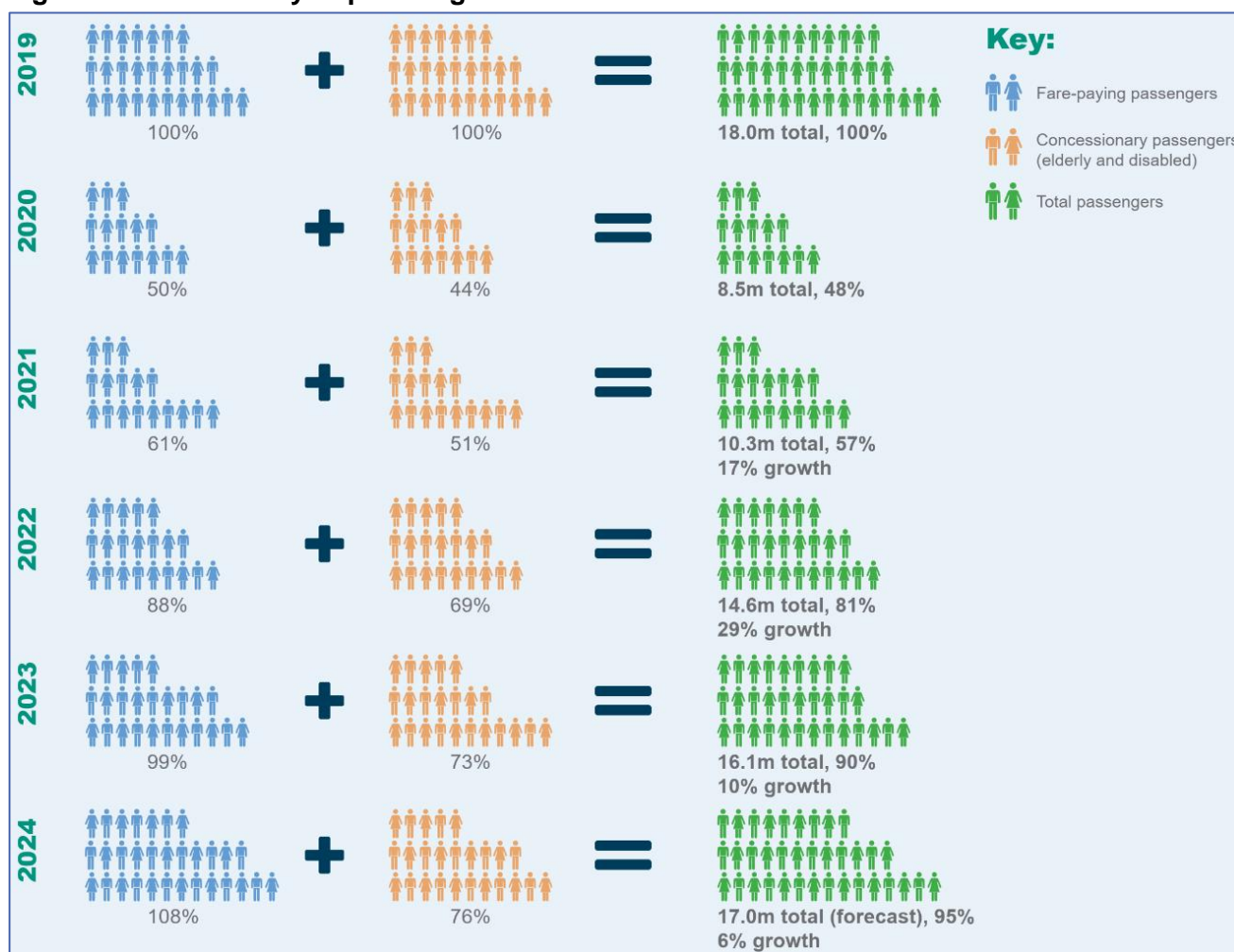
**Figure 2-14 - Passenger journeys on local bus services in East Sussex**



Source: DfT Bus Statistics [most recent set available covers 2022/23]

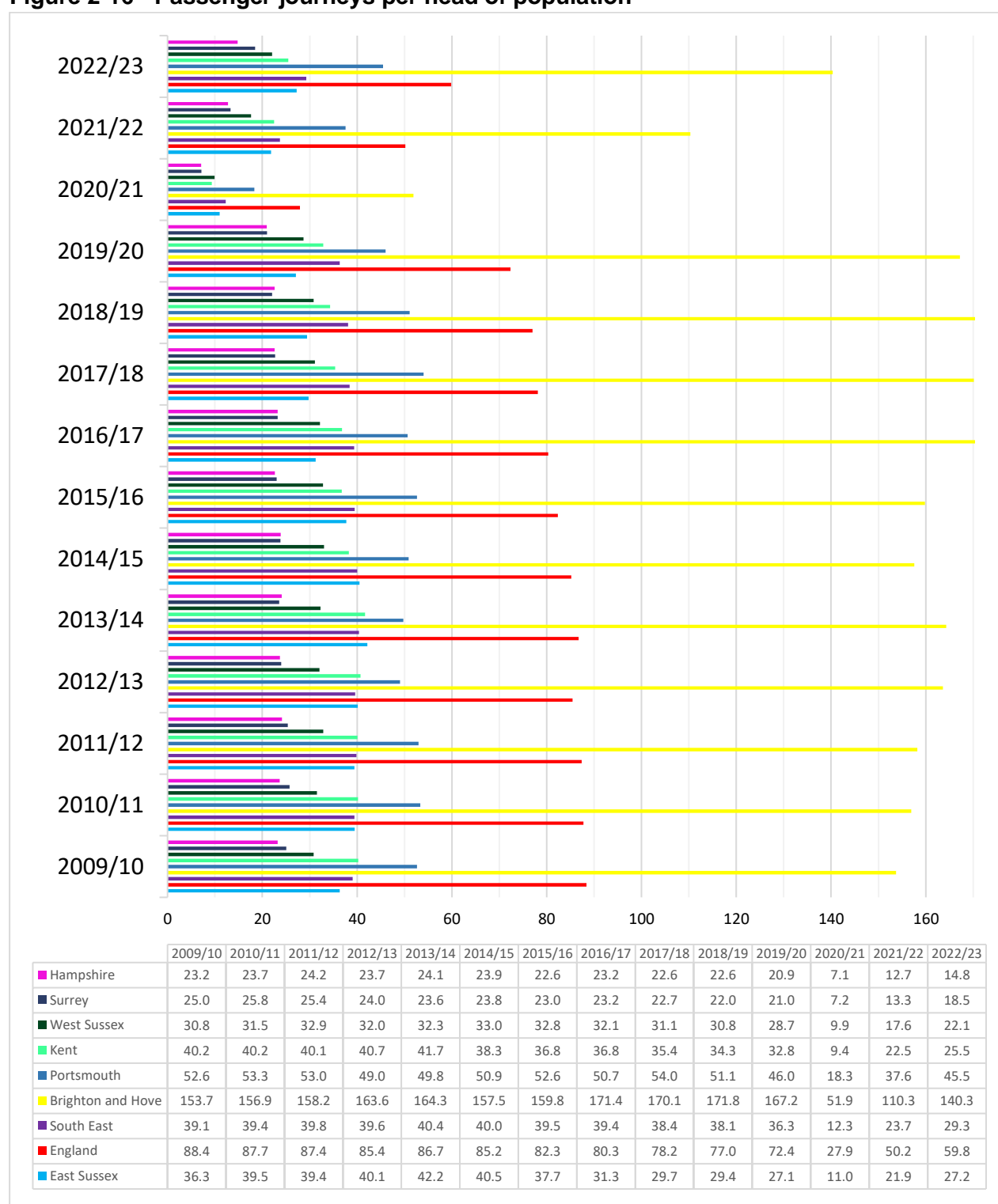
Whilst patronage reached a peak of 22.5 million passengers in 2013/14, patronage declined slowly to 15.1 million passengers just before the pandemic and the United Kingdom's first national lockdown in 2020. Following the national lockdown in 2020/21, patronage had fallen in East Sussex to 6.2 million passengers. Since then, patronage has returned relatively close to pre-pandemic levels as members of the public begin to return to bus travel. These trends are summarised in the figure below.

**Figure 2-15 - Summary of patronage trends**



Figures above are shown as a percentage of pre-Covid (2019) bus passenger numbers

**Figure 2-16 - Passenger journeys per head of population**



Source: DfT Bus Statistics [most recent set available covers 2022/23]

Passenger journeys per head of population in the figure above show that East Sussex had a similar decline to neighbouring areas as well as a majority of England. However, East Sussex is the only area that has a higher number of passenger journeys per head of population in 2022/23 than they

did pre-pandemic in 2019/20 which shows a good recovery post-pandemic. **Table 2-3 - Passenger journeys by local authority England 2023/ 2024 as a % of 2020 (pre-Covid) -2018/2019 Levels**

Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19	Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19	Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19
1	Thurrock	110%	30	Southend-on-Sea	88%	60	Durham	78%
2	Blackburn with Darwen	107%	31	Merseyside ITA	87%	61	Hampshire	77%
3	Central Bedfordshire	107%	32	Reading	87%	62	Stockton-on-Tees	76%
4	Southampton	101%	33	Bristol, City of	87%	63	Somerset	75%
5	Portsmouth	100%	34	Suffolk	87%	64	Derby	75%
6	East Sussex	99%	35	Warrington	87%	65	Gloucestershire	74%
7	Lincolnshire	98%	36	Wokingham	86%	66	Leicestershire	74%
8	South Gloucestershire	98%	37	Greater Manchester ITA	86%	67	Tyne and Wear ITA	74%
9	North Yorkshire	96%	38	Kent	86%	68	Kingston upon Hull, City of	74%
10	Cambridgeshire	94%	39	Stoke-on-Trent	85%	69	Torbay	73%
11	North Somerset	94%	40	Nottingham	85%	70	West Berkshire	73%
12	Windsor and Maidenhead	94%	41	Leicester	85%	71	Worcestershire	72%
13	Isle of Wight	94%	42	Nottinghamshire	84%	72	Darlington	72%
14	Essex	93%	43	Cumbria	84%	73	Bath and North East Somerset	72%
15	Surrey	93%	44	Wiltshire	84%	74	Bedford	71%
16	York	93%	45	West Sussex	84%	75	Herefordshire, County of	71%
17	Norfolk	92%	46	Swindon	84%	76	Devon	71%
18	Bracknell Forest	92%	47	West Yorkshire ITA	83%	77	South Yorkshire ITA	71%
19	Cornwall including Isles of Scilly	92%	48	Blackpool	83%	78	Dorset excluding Poole & Bournemouth	71%
20	Telford and Wrekin	92%	49	Plymouth	83%	79	Halton	70%
21	Luton	92%	50	Milton Keynes	83%	80	Warwickshire	70%
22	Northumberland	92%	51	Hertfordshire	82%	81	Cheshire East	68%
23	Lancashire	92%	52	Brighton and Hove	82%	82	Staffordshire	63%
24	Slough	91%	53	Hartlepool	82%	83	North Lincolnshire	62%
25	East Riding of Yorkshire	89%	54	Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes	81%	84	Shropshire	62%
26	West Midlands ITA	89%	55	Redcar and Cleveland	81%	85	Rutland	38%
27	Oxfordshire	89%	56	North East Lincolnshire	81%			
28	Middlesbrough	89%	57	Derbyshire	79%			
29	Medway	89%	58	Peterborough	79%			
			59	Cheshire West and Chester	79%			

**Table 2-3 - Passenger journeys by local authority England 2023/ 2024 as a % of 2020 (pre-Covid) -2018/2019 Levels**



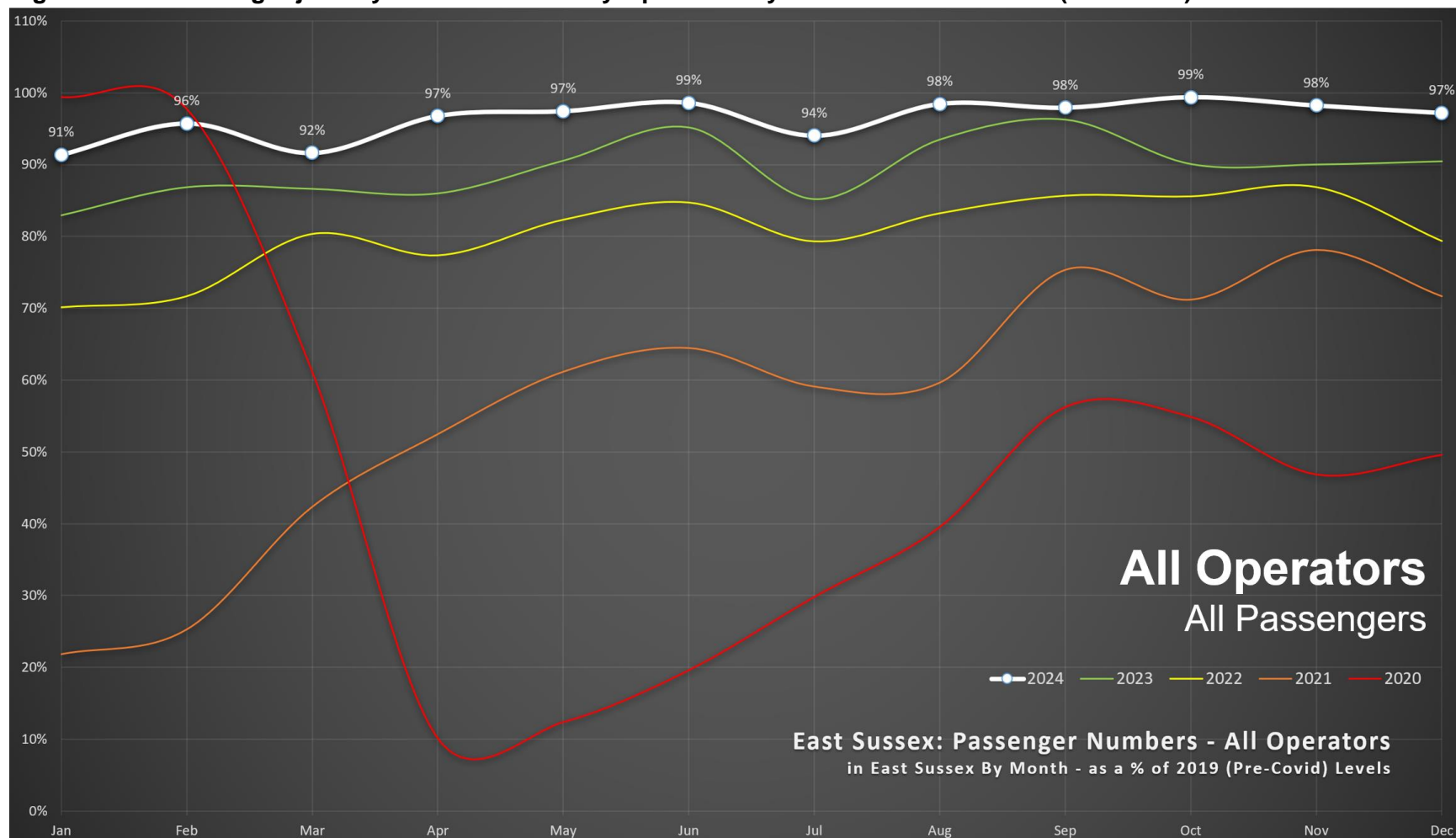
Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19
1	Thurrock	110%
2	Blackburn with Darwen	107%
3	Central Bedfordshire	107%
4	Southampton	101%
5	Portsmouth	100%
6	East Sussex	99%
7	Lincolnshire	98%
8	South Gloucestershire	98%
9	North Yorkshire	96%
10	Cambridgeshire	94%
11	North Somerset	94%
12	Windsor and Maidenhead	94%
13	Isle of Wight	94%
14	Essex	93%
15	Surrey	93%
16	York	93%
17	Norfolk	92%
18	Bracknell Forest	92%
19	Cornwall including Isles of Scilly	92%
20	Telford and Wrekin	92%
21	Luton	92%
22	Northumberland	92%
23	Lancashire	92%
24	Slough	91%
25	East Riding of Yorkshire	89%
26	West Midlands ITA	89%
27	Oxfordshire	89%
28	Middlesbrough	89%
29	Medway	89%

Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19
30	Southend-on-Sea	88%
31	Merseyside ITA	87%
32	Reading	87%
33	Bristol, City of	87%
34	Suffolk	87%
35	Warrington	87%
36	Wokingham	86%
37	Greater Manchester ITA	86%
38	Kent	86%
39	Stoke-on-Trent	85%
40	Nottingham	85%
41	Leicester	85%
42	Nottinghamshire	84%
43	Cumbria	84%
44	Wiltshire	84%
45	West Sussex	84%
46	Swindon	84%
47	West Yorkshire ITA	83%
48	Blackpool	83%
49	Plymouth	83%
50	Milton Keynes	83%
51	Hertfordshire	82%
52	Brighton and Hove	82%
53	Hartlepool	82%
54	Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes	81%
55	Redcar and Cleveland	81%
56	North East Lincolnshire	81%
57	Derbyshire	79%
58	Peterborough	79%
59	Cheshire West and Chester	79%

Rank	LA or Region	23/24 as % of 18/19
60	Durham	78%
61	Hampshire	77%
62	Stockton-on-Tees	76%
63	Somerset	75%
64	Derby	75%
65	Gloucestershire	74%
66	Leicestershire	74%
67	Tyne and Wear ITA	74%
68	Kingston upon Hull, City of	74%
69	Torbay	73%
70	West Berkshire	73%
71	Worcestershire	72%
72	Darlington	72%
73	Bath and North East Somerset	72%
74	Bedford	71%
75	Herefordshire, County of	71%
76	Devon	71%
77	South Yorkshire ITA	71%
78	Dorset excluding Poole & Bournemouth	71%
79	Halton	70%
80	Warwickshire	70%
81	Cheshire East	68%
82	Staffordshire	63%
83	North Lincolnshire	62%
84	Shropshire	62%
85	Rutland	38%

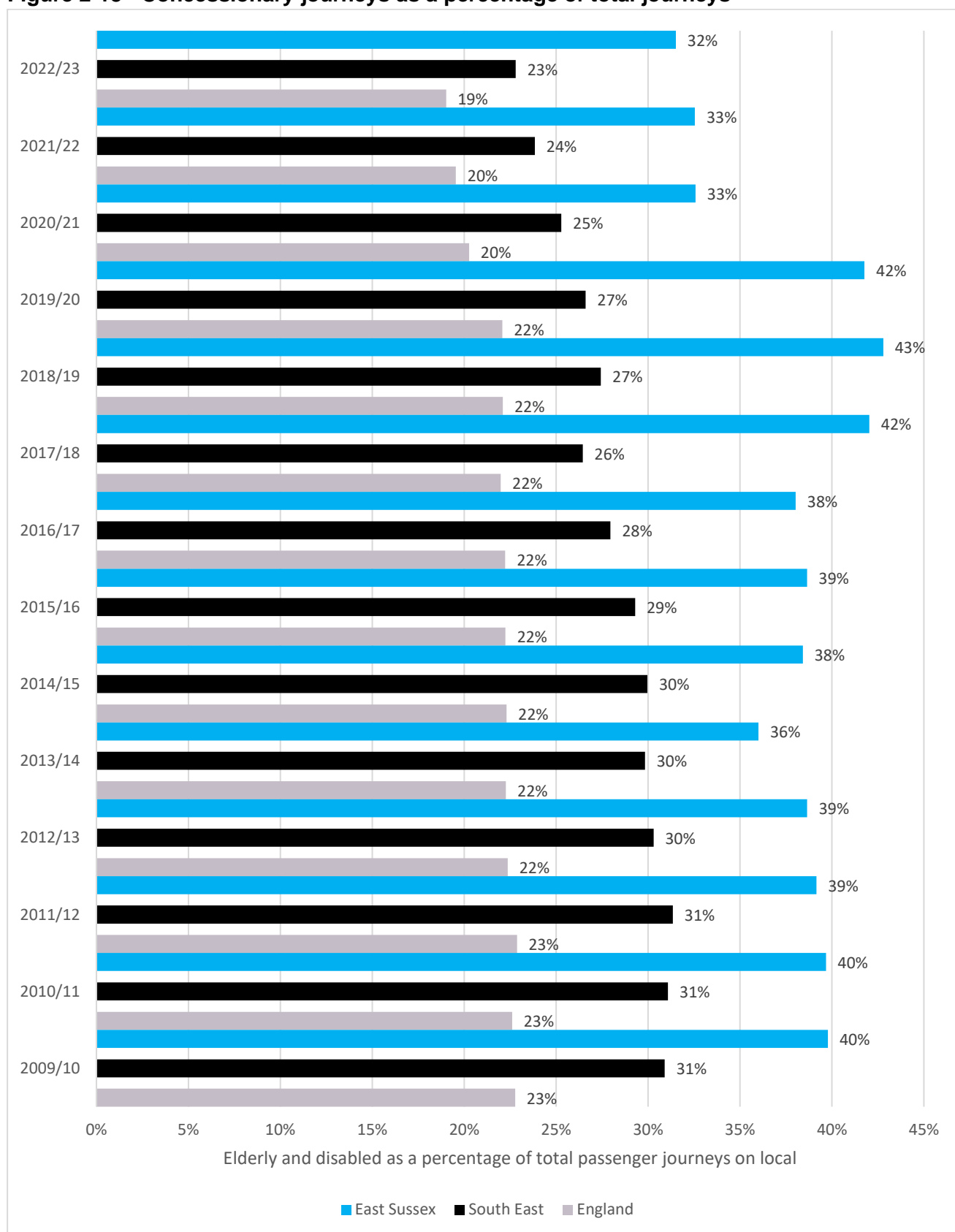
Source: DfT - [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus-statistics-data-tables#local-bus-passenger-journeys-bus01](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus-statistics-data-tables#local-bus-passenger-journeys-bus01)

Figure 2-17 - Passenger journeys in East Sussex by Operator - By Month - as a % of 2019 (Pre-Covid) Levels



All Passengers													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTALS
2024	91%	96%	92%	97%	97%	99%	94%	98%	98%	99%	98%	97%	96%
2023	83%	87%	87%	86%	91%	95%	85%	93%	96%	90%	90%	90%	89%
2022	70%	72%	80%	77%	82%	85%	79%	83%	86%	86%	87%	79%	81%
2021	22%	25%	42%	52%	61%	64%	59%	60%	75%	71%	78%	72%	57%
2020	99%	98%	61%	10%	12%	20%	30%	40%	56%	55%	47%	50%	48%

**Figure 2-18 - Concessionary journeys as a percentage of total journeys**



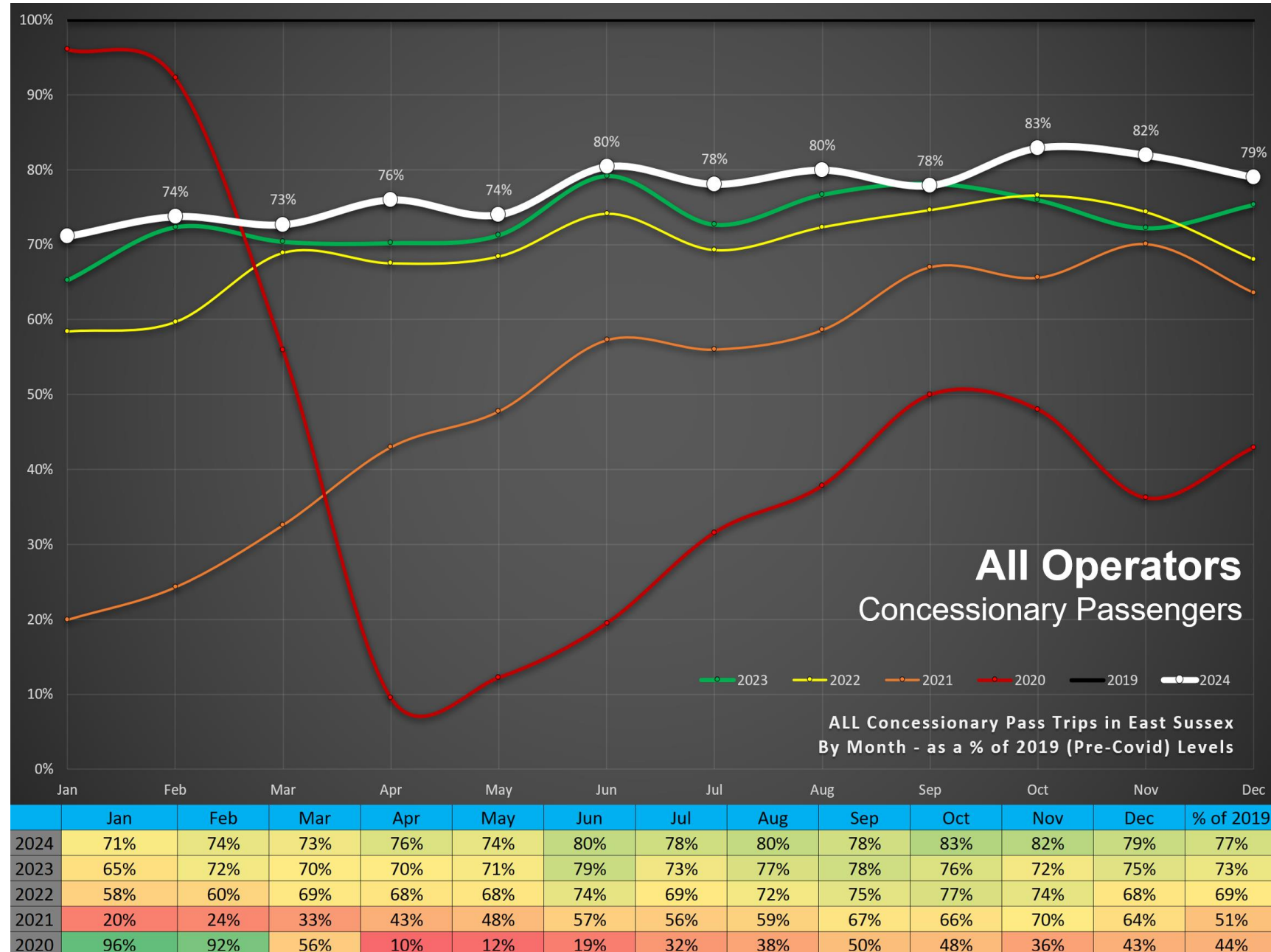
Source: DfT Bus Statistics

When considering the proportion of bus journeys made by elderly or disabled concessionary passengers each year, **Figure 2-18** shows that East Sussex has a very high percentage compared to both England as a whole and to the South East. On some bus services in East Sussex, daytime usage is almost exclusively by concessionary pass holders.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ESCC maintained pre-COVID concessionary reimbursement payment levels to operators, supporting them at a time when their revenues were vastly reduced, in recognition of the vital role buses played in supporting essential travel, and to ensure that a functioning bus network was still in place for when the pandemic receded. ESCC maintained these payment levels until March 2024, then returning to reimbursing operators based on actual concessionary passenger numbers.

Supporting operators to maintain the network has been vital in allowing patronage in East Sussex to recover back towards, and in some places beyond, pre-COVID levels.

Figure 2-19 - Concessionary Pass Trips in East Sussex by Month as a % of 2019 (pre-Covid)





## 2.13 BUS FLEET AND EMISSIONS STANDARD

The table below shows the current fleet of vehicles by operator in East Sussex, indicating their emissions standard. The fleet consists of a mix of double deckers, standard single deckers, midi buses and minibuses.

**Table 2-4 – Bus Fleet and Emission Standards**

Year of Registration	Euro III diesel	Euro IV diesel	Euro V diesel	Euro VI diesel	Total
<b>2003 or earlier</b>	5	0	0	0	<b>5</b>
<b>2004</b>	5	4	0	0	<b>9</b>
<b>2005</b>	2	1	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>2006</b>	3	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>2007</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>2008</b>	0	2	4	0	<b>6</b>
<b>2009</b>	0	16	15	0	<b>31</b>
<b>2010</b>	0	0	16	0	<b>16</b>
<b>2011</b>	0	0	8	23	<b>31</b>
<b>2012</b>	0	0	27	18	<b>45</b>
<b>2013</b>	0	0	21	26	<b>47</b>
<b>2014</b>	0	0	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>2015</b>	0	0	5	24	<b>29</b>
<b>2016</b>	0	0	0	32	<b>32</b>
<b>2017</b>	0	0	0	35	<b>35</b>
<b>2018</b>	0	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>2019</b>	0	0	0	3	<b>3</b>
<b>2020</b>	0	0	0	24	<b>24</b>
<b>2021</b>	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>2022</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>2023</b>	0	0	0	5	<b>5</b>
<b>2024</b>	0	0	0	48	<b>48</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>379</b>

The average age of the fleet across all operators is 9.5 years. One fifth of the fleet is less than 5 years old, with first registration dates of 2020 or later. Nearly two thirds of the fleet (244 vehicles) have Euro VI diesel engines, therefore meeting current standards on emissions. This is a noticeable change since our 2021 BSIP, when only 28% of the fleet had Euro VI engines.

There is no hydrogen, battery electric, compressed natural gas / biomethane or diesel-hybrid vehicles currently operating in East Sussex.

## 2.14 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN SURVEY

East Sussex County Council carried out a Bus Service Improvement Plan Survey between 17th August 2021 and 14 September 2021. We received 2,016 responses. Of those responding to the consultation 46% used buses frequently at the time and just under 6.5% were not currently using

buses. The answers indicated that more frequent services, including operating in evenings and on Sundays, were the highest priority by a significant margin of all those responding.

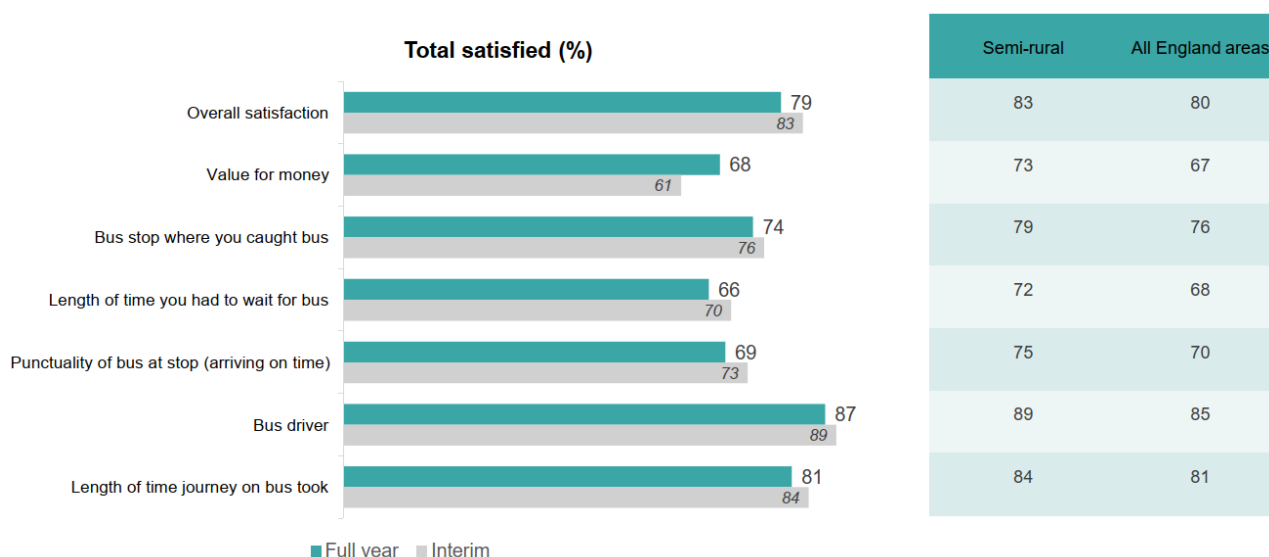
The next highest priorities were better real time information and then more reliable, faster services, however when those holding a concessionary permit were removed from the results, the second highest priority was to have lower fares and the third priority was to have faster and more reliable services, helped by bus priority measures. This survey informed the prioritisation of different measures in our 2021 BSIP.

## Transport Focus – Your Bus Journey

In 2023 we participated in the Transport Focus ‘Your Bus Journey’ survey, with hundreds of passengers surveyed across the year. We were one of 35 local transport authorities taking part, allowing us to benchmark our results against those from other similar areas. Interim results relate to surveys completed in the first half of 2023; the full year results cover all surveys from January to December. The results are like those from our 2021 BSIP Survey – they again identify punctuality, journey speed and better information as key priorities.

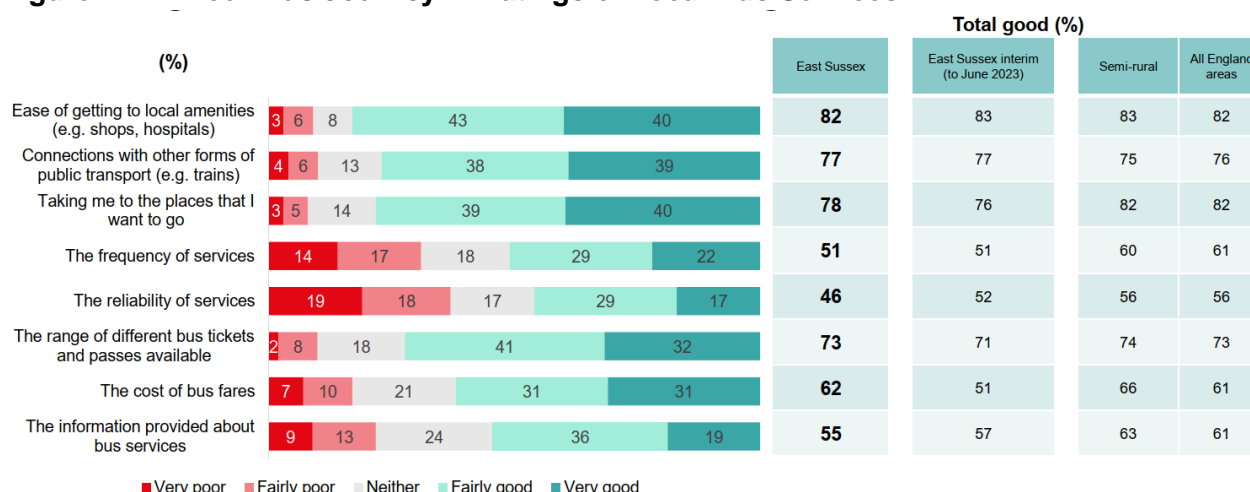
One notable finding is that one of the operators in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove Buses, achieved very high passenger satisfaction scores in this survey, although the sample size fell slightly short of the threshold for statistical robustness. Had a slightly higher number of responses been collected in the surveys, Brighton & Hove would have achieved a reportable satisfaction score of 94%, some three percentage points above the best placed operator who participated in the survey and who did meet the sample size threshold.

**Figure 2-20 – Summary of ‘Your Bus Journey’ Headline Results**



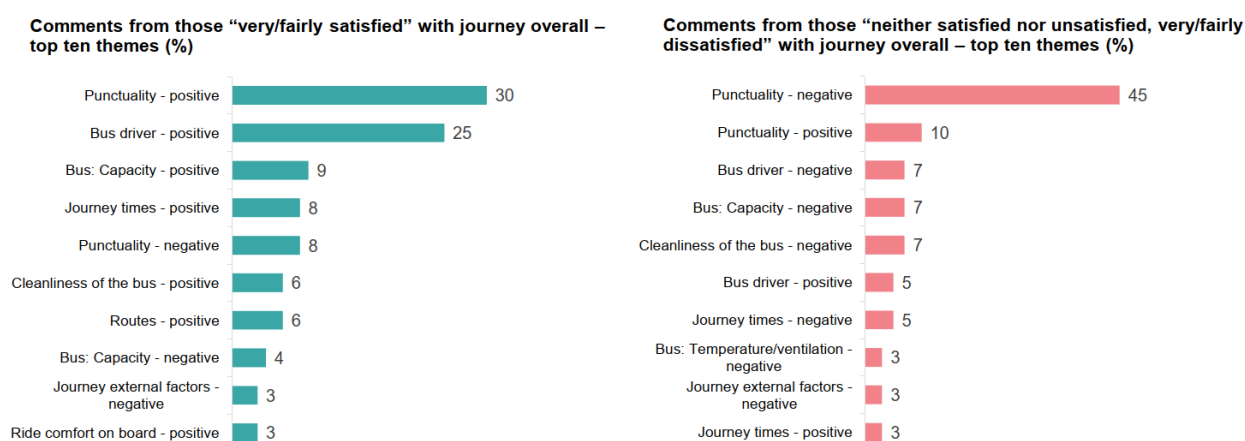
We are somewhat disappointed with the results, where overall satisfaction is lower in East Sussex than in England as a whole on most of the questions included in the headline summary, and lower here than in other semi-rural counties on all the questions. On specific important aspects of bus services, our scores are comparable to those in other parts of the country, with frequency and reliability identified as clear areas for improvement.

**Figure 2-21 - Your Bus Journey' – Ratings of Local Bus Services**



The following graphic shows the importance of punctuality, journey times and bus drivers, with passengers who are satisfied and dissatisfied identifying these factors as important.

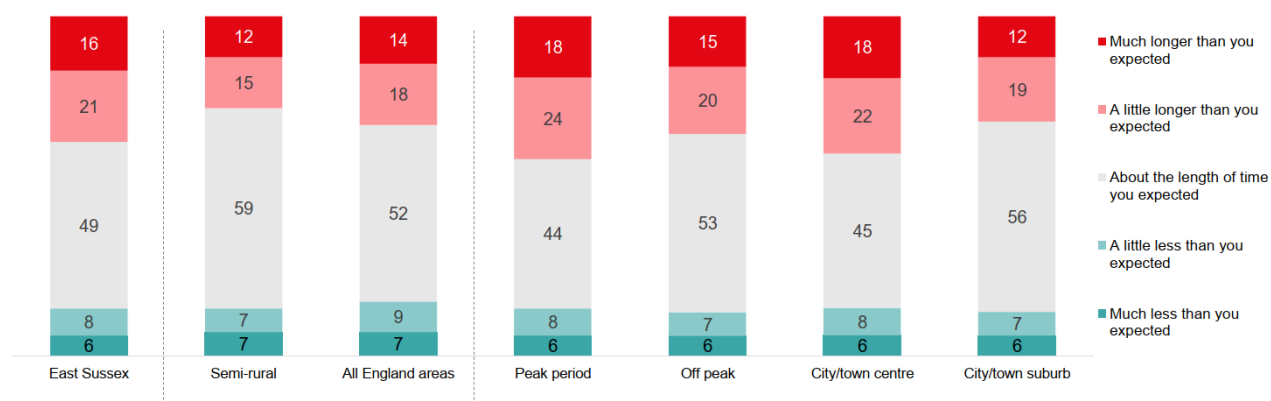
**Figure 2-22 - Your Bus Journey' – Stand Out Moments**



Punctuality and service frequency combine in how long passengers wait at the bus stop. Our scores here are lower than in comparable areas and England as a whole, with 37% of passengers reporting that they waited longer than they were expecting. This is why we continue to invest in improving service frequencies, measures to improve punctuality (including bus lanes and junction priority), as well as providing more real-time information so that passengers can easily find out how long it is till their bus will arrive.

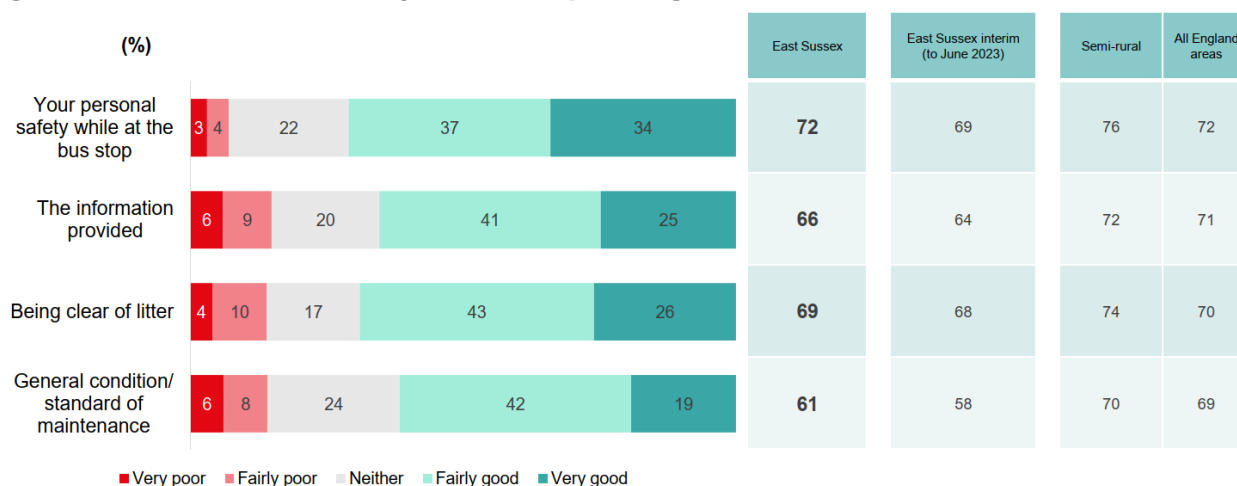
**Figure 2-23 - Your Bus Journey' – Wait Compared to Expectations**

How long the wait was compared to expectations (%)



Our passengers are less satisfied with the quality of our bus stops than comparable semi-rural areas; we have invested some BSIP funding in improving bus stops since 2021 and have an ongoing programme to improve more stops.

**Figure 2-24 - Your Bus Journey' – Bus Stop Ratings**



## 2.15 INVESTMENT AND SPENDING: COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BUS SERVICES IN 2022/23 AND 2023/24

The following table summarises ESCC funding for buses. The full table is included in our Bus Connectivity Assessment.

**Table 2-5 – Funding Summary**

	2022/23	2023/24
<b><i>Bus budget(s) funded from the LTA's own resources</i></b>		
Concessionary Travel	£4,641,917	£5,428,448
Public Transport Support	£1,010,271	£2,675,982
S106 <sup>1</sup>	£60,467	£60,844
all other LTA funds <sup>4</sup>	£2,655,600	£1,855,600
<b><i>DfT bus funding</i></b>		
BSIP <sup>2</sup>	£553,725	£8,472,830
Local authority Bus Service Operator Grant	£440,109	£438,120
Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) <sup>3</sup>	£403,367	£212,114
Zero-Emission Bus	£0	£0
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements	£0	£0
<b><i>Other Government funding</i></b>		
Transforming Cities Fund	£0	£0
Housing Infrastructure Fund	£0	£0
Levelling Up Fund	£0	£0

<sup>1</sup>S106 is funding contributed by a developer to mitigate the (transport) impact of their development. As such, its availability varies by year and is not assured every year.

<sup>2</sup>BSIP funding is detailed in Section 6.

<sup>3</sup>BRG funding was financial support for the continued operation of tendered bus services, following the Covid-19 pandemic, reducing as patronage returned.

<sup>4</sup>All other LTA funds is funding received from ESCC Parking Reserves towards our Concessionary Travel and tendered bus services.

## 2.16 ESCC'S SUPPORTED BUS NETWORK

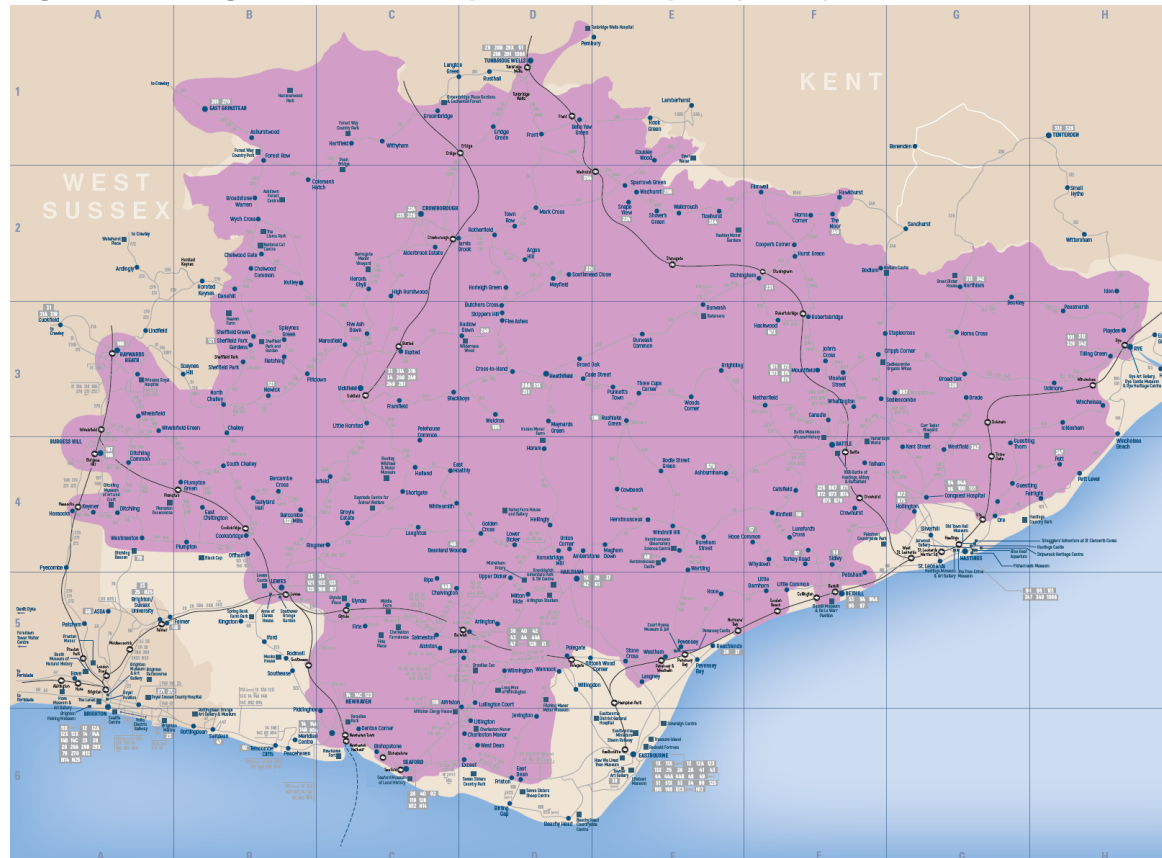
A table setting out the supported fixed-route network, including routes and times of the day/days of the week, is included in Appendix A.



## **2.17 INVESTMENT AND SPENDING: HOW WE HAVE INVESTED BSIP FUNDING IN 2022/23 AND 2023/24**

We have delivered many service improvements set out in our 2021 BSIP, investing £13 million of BSIP funding over the full BSIP period, with operators also investing in service improvements, showing the benefits of partnership working. Figure 2-26 shows the impact of investment in our flex bus demand responsive service, focused in rural areas of East Sussex (described in section 2.2).

Figure 2-25 - Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) 'Flexibus' overview



**27,000**  
Total Passenger  
Trips Per Year



**76%**  
of rural residents now within **30 minutes** of nearest town centre.  
This would be **9%** without the flexibus services.



**87%**  
of rural residents now within **30 minutes** of nearest GP surgery.  
This would be **44%** without the flexibus services.



**60,000**  
Requests Per Year



**Up to 700**  
Passenger Trips Per  
Week (average)

**Error! Reference source not found.** summarises the routes where we have invested in improving conventional bus services, with more detail on specific services following below.

**Figure 2-26 - Investment in conventional bus services (fixed route and timetable)**



We have invested **£10.5** million in the services shown on this map, with new routes, better frequencies, increased evening and Sunday services



1.36 million km supported services per annum with BSIP investment  
**(+18%)**

### ***EASTBOURNE-SEAFORD-NEWHAVEN-PEACEHAVEN-BRIGHTON***

- Service N12 night bus reintroduction – achieved (provided commercially)
- Service 11X seasonal service reintroduction – achieved (provided commercially)
- Reintroduce an hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service between North Peacehaven and Newhaven – partially achieved though morning extension of route 14C on a commercial basis.

### ***BRIGHTON-LEWES-RINGMER-UCKFIELD-CROWBOROUGH-TUNBRIDGE WELLS***

- Lewes-Uckfield Monday to Saturday daytime frequency increased from 2 to 3 buses per hour achieved (through introduction of new BSIP funded service 29A linking Brighton, Lewes, Uckfield and Heathfield)
- Sunday frequency between Lewes and Brighton 2 to 3 buses per hour (provided commercially as part of new service 29A)
- Improved local Lewes bus network through doubling of town service 128 and new route 129. Improved Crowborough town bus frequency through reconfigured route 228 and additional day of operation on community bus service 224. Uckfield bus network improvement through more modest increases to community bus service 248/249

### ***HAILSHAM-POLEGATE-EASTBOURNE***

- Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne Monday to Saturday daytime frequency increased from 4 to 6 buses per hour – achieved through introduction of new BSIP funded service 28
- Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne evening and Sunday frequency increased from 2 to 3 per hour – achieved through introduction of new BSIP funded evening journeys on services 54 and 98

### ***HAILSHAM-LANGNEY-EASTBOURNE***

- Hailsham-Langney-Eastbourne Monday to Saturday daytime frequency doubled to 4 buses per hour, new 2 buses per hour evening service and Sunday service doubled to 2 buses per hour – improvement achieved of a new hourly evening service (Service 1X).

### ***EASTBOURNE-BEXHILL-HASTINGS***

- Bexhill-Pebsham-Hastings section of service 98 improved frequencies. Monday to Saturday daytime frequency increased from 2 to 3 buses per hour, introduction of new hourly evening service – achieved with BSIP funding. The service remains hourly on Sundays, although new earlier Sunday journeys have been introduced, which also extend from/to Sidley.
- Eastbourne-Polegate-Hailsham-Ninfield-Bexhill section of service 98 improved service. New hourly evening service and Sunday service has been delivered with BSIP funding.
- Split service 98 west of Sidley to separate route (to improve timekeeping and to assist in providing better timing between services on the Hailsham-Eastbourne and Bexhill-Hastings corridors) – will be introduced in September 2024.

- Wave route 99 Eastbourne-Bexhill-Hastings new hourly evening service and Sunday service doubled to half-hourly – the service has been extended later into the evening with BSIP funding and there is an expectation of further commercial service improvements. The Sunday service improvement has been achieved on a commercial basis.

### **INTER-URBAN BUS ROUTES**

- New inter-urban bus route between Hailsham and Lewes, to link this area of significant new housing development with connections from Lewes to the education, employment and leisure opportunities in the city of Brighton: achieved through the successful BSIP funded extension of Brighton & Hove Buses Brighton-Lewes-Ringmer Regency Route 28 to also serve Laughton, Hellingly and Hailsham. The route also extends to Polegate and Eastbourne, Monday to Saturday daytime, as part of the Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne BSIP corridor improvements.
- The extended Regency Route 28 is a more direct route too than the previous circuitous two-hourly Monday to Friday only provision which merely ran between Lewes, Laughton and Hailsham, which deviated to serve Deanland Wood (now instead catered for by a combination of demand responsive transport and a community bus service).

Improvements to individual bus routes include:

### **Stagecoach services**

- Route 2: Hastings–Westfield–Northiam–Tenterden–Ashford – now renumbered 29. BSIP funding now provides an improved hourly daytime frequency between Hastings and Tenterden. Later evening journeys and a 2 hourly Sunday service. Note: the Tenterden–Ashford route section in Kent is now provided as a separate service.
- Route 51/251/252: Eastbourne–Polegate–Hailsham–Heathfield–Mayfield–Tunbridge Wells
- Renumbered 51 throughout. BSIP funding now provides an hourly evening and Sunday service throughout.
- Route 54: Eastbourne–Polegate–Hailsham–Uckfield: BSIP funding now provides a new 2 hourly evening and Sunday service.
- Route 98: Hastings–Bexhill–Sidley–Ninfield–Herstmonceux–Hailsham–Eastbourne: BSIP funding on the Hastings–Bexhill provides Monday to Saturday daytime frequency increase from 2 to 3 buses per hour, introduction of new hourly evening service and Sunday service doubling to 2 buses per hour. On the Eastbourne–Bexhill sections it provides a new 2 hourly evening and Sunday service
- Route 100/101: Conquest Hospital–Hastings–Rye: extended to Camber, Lydd and New Romney in place of service 102. BSIP funding provides a new 2 hourly evening service
- Route 254/304/305: Hastings–Battle–Robertsbridge–Hurst Green–Hawkhurst–Wadhurst–Tunbridge Wells: Since October 2022 this service has been funded by ESCC as Stagecoach were unable to sustain the route on a commercial basis. Now numbered route 1066. BSIP funding provides new evening journeys a new 2 hourly Sunday service.



- Route 312: Rye–Playden–Iden–Wittersham–Tenterden. BSIP funding provides a new 2 hourly Sunday service. ESCC funds the Mondays to Saturday daytime service.
- Route 313: Rye–Playden–Peasmarsh–Beckley–Northiam: BSIP funding provides new evening journeys and a 2 hourly Sunday service. ESCC funds the Mondays to Saturday daytime service.
- Route 349: Hastings–Sedlescombe–Bodiam–Hawkhurst: Since October 2022 this service has been funded by ESCC as Stagecoach were unable to sustain the route on a commercial basis. BSIP funding provides for a slightly later evening service.
- Route 701: Eastbourne–Seaford–Newhaven–Falmer–Brighton: New commercial hourly Monday to Saturday daytime route, introduced from May 2024. This new service provides links to the Brighton campuses of Brighton University and the University of Sussex.

### **Metrobus services**

- Route 270 Brighton–Burgess Hill–Haywards Heath–Danehill–Forest Row–East Grinstead (jointly promoted with Brighton & Hove City Council and West Sussex County Council): BSIP funding provides for new evening journeys (funded jointly through East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove City Council BSIP funding allocations).
- Route 291 Tunbridge Wells–Groombridge–Hartfield–Forest Row–East Grinstead–Crawley (jointly promoted with West Sussex County Council): BSIP funding provides for new evening journeys (funded jointly through East Sussex and West Sussex BSIP funding allocations; although the route serves Kent, no contribution has been made by Kent County Council).
- The improvements to services 270 and 291 are likely to be commercially viable in the medium term.

### **Compass Travel**

- Route 121: Lewes–Offham–Cooksbridge–Chailey–Newick -BSIP funding provides an improved hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service and a new 2 hourly Sunday service.
- Route 123: Newhaven–Piddinghoe–Rodmell–Kingston–Lewes): BSIP funding provides a slightly improved frequency on Monday to Saturday daytime (though still mainly 2 hourly) and a new 2 hourly Sunday service.
- Route 126: Seaford–Alfriston: replaced by Flexibus
- Route 143: Lewes–Ringmer–Laughton–Deanland Wood–Hailsham, replaced by a significantly improved service: BSIP funding provided a significantly improved service directly linking Brighton, Lewes, Ringmer, Laughton, Hailsham and Eastbourne (through an extension to Brighton & Hove Regency service 28). This runs 2 per Monday to Saturday along its whole route. Evenings and weekends it runs hourly between Brighton and Hailsham. Deanland Wood is now served instead by a combination of community bus provision and demand responsive transport.
- Route 166: Lewes–Plumpton–Wivelsfield Green–Princess Royal Hospital–Haywards Heath: BSIP funding provides for a new Saturday service. The service remains 2 hourly due to relatively low level of use.

- Route 167/168: Lewes-Plumpton-Wivelsfield Green-Burgess Hill and 'Village Rider' services Heath: BSIP funding provides for this service to run on additional weekdays.
- Route 231: Uckfield-Framfield-Blackboys-Heathfield: replaced by demand responsive transport between Heathfield, Burwash and Etchingham. BSIP funding provides for a significantly improved hourly daytime and evening service between Heathfield and Uckfield (previously 2 hourly, Monday to Friday only) which also extends to Ringmer and Brighton as new Brighton & Hove Regency route 28. The section of route between Heathfield and Etchingham remains as a conventional bus route, though again with an improved frequency funded by BSIP. It now runs hourly/2 hourly on Mondays to Saturdays (previously 2 hourly or less and no Saturday service). In addition, there is now a new semi-flexible 'on-demand' section of route serving Burwash Bateman's National Trust Property.
- Route 261: Uckfield-Nutley-Forest Row-East Grinstead: BSIP funding provides for new evening peak journeys and a new Saturday service.

### **Wealdlink Community Transport Services**

- Route 224: Wadhurst-Mayfield-Rotherfield-Crowborough: BSIP funding was not prioritised to replace this service due to public concerns and operational issues. Instead, a housing development contribution has been utilised to provide this service on an additional day of the week.
- Route 225: Crowborough-Rotherfield-Heathfield-Rushlake Green-Netherfield-Battle: New Saturday journeys have been introduced between Heathfield and Rushlake Green.

### ***TOWN BUS NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS***

Improvements to the urban bus services in the main towns of East Sussex (Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings) and in the smaller towns were proposed in our 2021 BSIP. These were designed to address concerns over service frequencies and evening and Sunday availability.

Achieving improvements to the Eastbourne and Hastings town networks, the two biggest towns in East Sussex, has been particularly challenging due to Stagecoach being unable to financially sustain the level of commercial service provision that existed pre-Covid. This has been due to lower levels of fares income (due to changes in travel demand) and significantly higher operating costs (primarily due to increased pay rates needed to address bus driver shortage issues).

Individual bus routes have been improved as follows:

#### **Eastbourne**

- Loop: BSIP funding has allowed the doubling of the Monday to Saturday daytime frequency between Langney, Seaside and Eastbourne town centre, but not on the full loop via Hampden Park and the District General Hospital. The Sunday daytime frequency was doubled to half-hourly throughout the Loop's route length.
- Route 1X: BSIP funding has allowed a new hourly service to be introduced.
- Route 3: New evening service for Meads delivered with BSIP funding.

- Routes 5, 5A, 6: Stagecoach in September 2022 took the decision not to continue with the more poorly used section of route 5/5A between Beachlands, Pevensey, Westham, Langney, Winkney Farm, Broadwater Way Sainsbury's, District General Hospital and Eastbourne town centre. ESCC stepped in with its own funding to provide a replacement hourly route (previously half-hourly on the section between Langney and Eastbourne town centre). Some new evening journeys were however provided with BSIP funding. Stagecoach continues to provide service 5/5A between Eastbourne town centre, Bridgemere and Sovereign Harbour. Improvements to the 5/5A evening service have been achieved. In relation to service 6, Stagecoach took the decision from September 2022 not to continue with this previously commercial service. ESCC now funds this service (Monday to Saturday daytime) and funding from development contributions has been used to provide a new 2 hourly Sunday service.

## Hastings

- Route 20: BSIP funding has supported Sunday evening services.
- Route 21,21A: Additional late evening services provided with BSIP funding.
- Route 26,26A: Stagecoach replaced this commercial service from September 2022 by amending their routes 21 and 29. This resulted in the Monday to Saturday daytime frequency reducing from 20 minutes to 30 minutes, although some additional evening journeys were introduced. These were supplemented with further early morning and evening journeys (7 days a week) with BSIP funding. These additional early morning and evening journeys are suited to Hospital staff shift times and have proved to be well used.
- Route 28: Stagecoach commercial service changes from September 2022 included the improvement of the service 28 from every 70 minutes to every 60 minutes. BSIP funded improvements have provided new early morning and evening journeys, on seven days a week, suited to Hospital staff shift times.
- Routes 31 Ore-Malvern Way-Hastings town centre: New ESCC funded hourly daily service was introduced from September 2022 to replace sections of previously commercial routes 21/21A and 22A withdrawn in the Ore area by Stagecoach. Route 31 was subsequently extended with BSIP funding to provide an improved level of service for West St Leonards, Filsham Valley and Harley Shute. In combination with route 23, this BSIP route extension doubled the Monday to Saturday daytime frequency to those areas and provided West St Leonards and Filsham Valley with a new Sunday service.

## Lewes

- Lewes town services have been improved through BSIP funded frequency uplifts to service 128 (Monday to Saturday daytime frequency doubled to half-hourly) and service 129 (now operating as a BSIP funded community bus route on 6 days a week with wider service coverage). The revised BSIP funded community bus service 129 did initially additionally serve South Malling, but this was changed to conventional bus service 127 following user feedback about the limited space in the vehicle. Services 127 and 128 have also been improved through the provision of new buses.

## Crowborough

- New Crowborough area Flexibus in place of the current Monday to Saturday daytime only service 228/229

## Rye, Battle, Heathfield

- New Flexibus DRT service provides improved coverage in these towns.

Further details on BSIP bus service enhancements can be online at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/bus-service-improvement-plan/bus-service-changes](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/bus-service-improvement-plan/bus-service-changes) and though our interactive online bus map at [www.cartogold.co.uk/eastsussex\\_bsip/map.html](http://www.cartogold.co.uk/eastsussex_bsip/map.html).

## 2.18 KEY OUTCOMES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Our ongoing monitoring and evaluation work is assessing the impact and benefits of this investment in bus services and infrastructure. The key outputs include:

- 56,750km of additional bus service is provided on the network each week
- Flexibus covers more than 90% of East Sussex
- Fares are being held down, increasing affordability for residents and visitors

This means that our bus network is now delivering improved accessibility to towns and services – with consequential social and economic benefits. And as people increasingly choose the bus for more of their journeys, replacing car travel, we see reductions in carbon emissions and other harmful side-effects from car-based transport.

We estimate that the benefit-cost ratio for our investments in bus service improvements is 3.87 (representing ‘High’ value for money in DfT appraisals) for conventional bus service improvements and Flexibus combined, with £9.6 million of investment across three years creating £37 million of wider economic impacts. This assessment is based on actual passenger numbers carried on enhanced services to the end of September 2024 and forecasts for the remainder of the BSIP funding period. We have followed DfT’s Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) in completing our appraisal.

The value for money of our BSIP investment includes impacts across multiple areas:

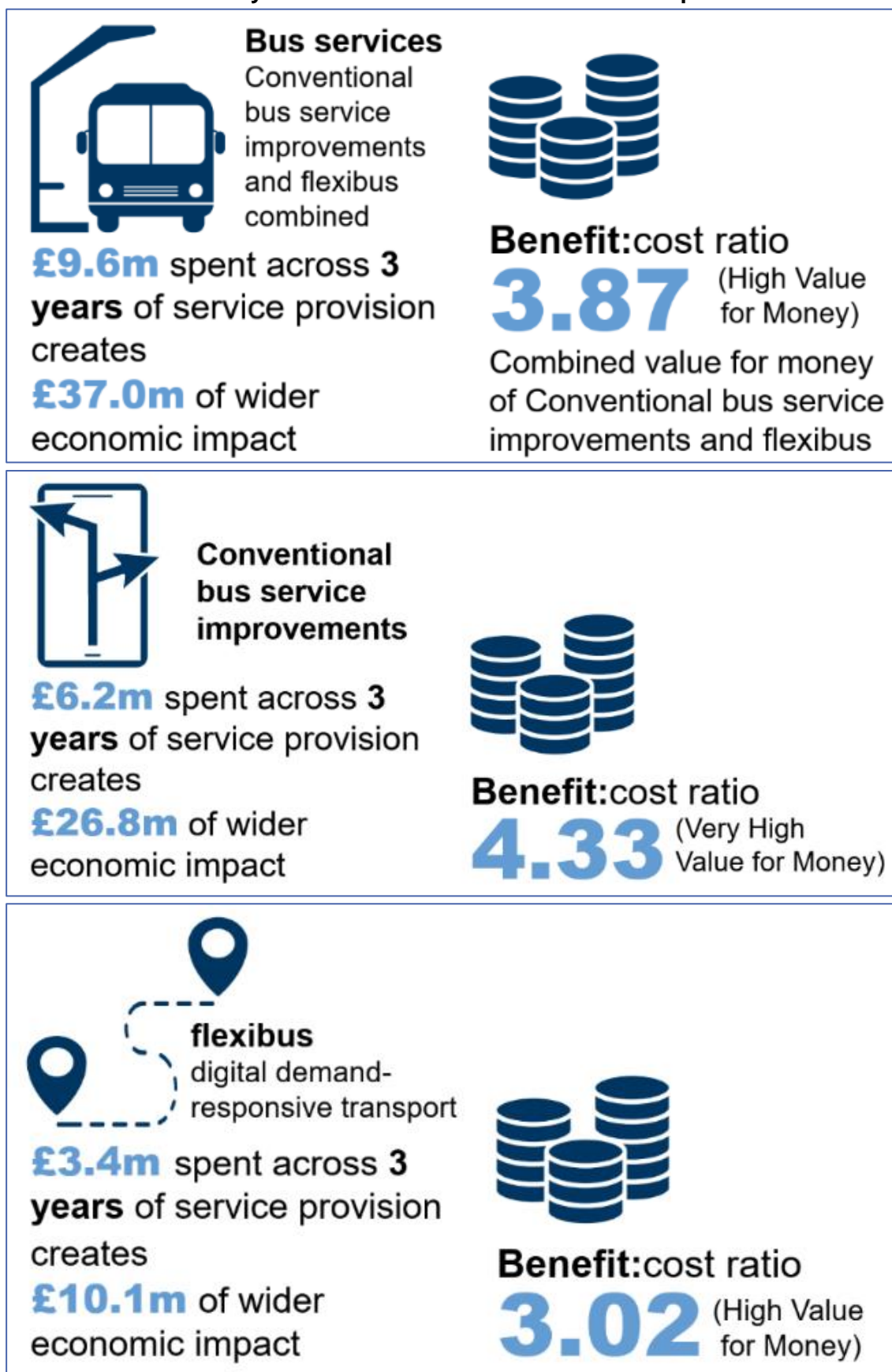
- Increased local employment as bus companies employ more staff to operate new and improved services – the largest category of benefits, and which typically remain in the local economy
- Greater local spending power where residents are better able to access local businesses – the second largest single category of benefits, which is also focused in East Sussex
- Benefits to passengers from reduced waiting times (where bus frequencies have improved)
- Reduced road congestion and a small reduction in road traffic collisions (where some trips previously made by car switch to bus – reducing overall traffic levels)
- Improvements to the environment from reduced pollution and carbon emissions (where drivers switch some trips to less polluting buses)
- Increased revenue for bus operators, where improved services and lower fares encourage people to make more trips by bus, and downstream benefits through local supply chains

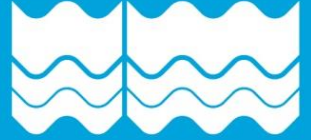
- Social benefits for passengers, including better access to education and reduced levels of social isolation

The improvements in conventional bus services contribute £26.8 million of these benefits from investment of £6.2 million across three years, giving a benefit-cost ratio of 4.33 ('Very High' value for money), while the Flexibus investment of £3.4 million across three years generates £10.1 million of wider economic impact. The benefit-cost ratio for Flexibus is therefore 3.02 ('High' value for money). Figure 2-26 summarises these impacts.



Figure 2-27 - Value for money of BSIP investment in Bus Service Improvements





# 3

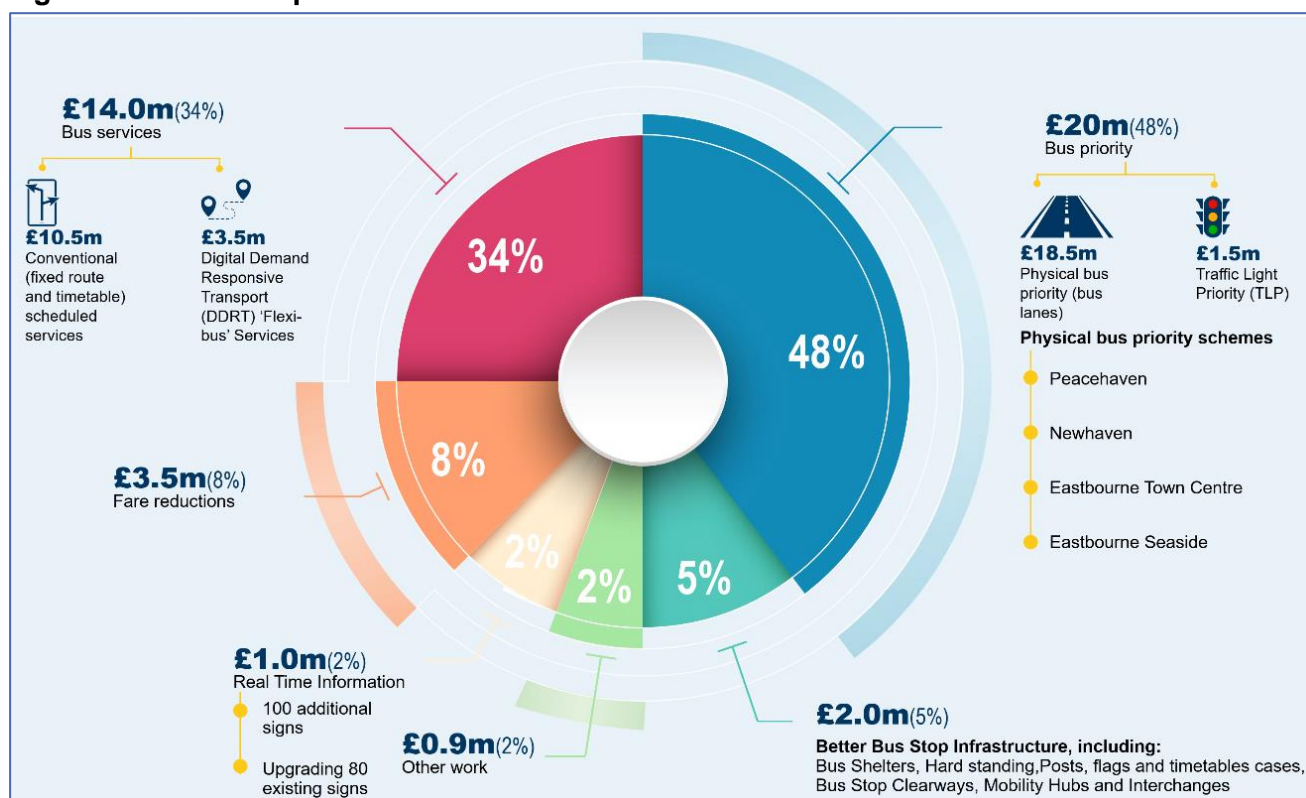
## **IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME CURRENT BSIP PERIOD**

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### 3 IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME CURRENT BSIP PERIOD

Our improvements programme for the current BSIP period is a continuation of the investments funded from our 2021 BSIP – supporting services, keeping fares affordable, rolling out digital demand responsive transport (branded as 'Flexibus'), delivering mobility hubs, implementing bus stop improvements, providing better information and designing and installing bus priority measures. Figure 3-1 summarises our investment plan.

**Figure 3-1 – BSIP1 Spend - 22 to 26**



Total BSIP1 allocation of £41.4m.

**Table 3-1** summarises how we have invested BSIP funding in 2022/23 and 2023/24, and how we plan to spend the rest of our funding allocation during 2024/25.

**Table 3-1 – BSIP Investment Summary**

Category of Scheme	Scheme title or intervention	Total Scheme Allocation	2022/23 spend	2023/24 spend	2024/25 forecast
<b>Bus Priority Infrastructure</b>		£18,500,000	£160,000	£250,000	£18,090,000
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>	Key Interchanges - Improved waiting and boarding and alighting facilities - including high quality and cutting edge RTI x 52 locations	£625,000	£24,925	£369,033	£180,383
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>	2 Mobility hubs in conjunction with the countywide DDRT scheme	£300,000		£102,438	£197,562
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>	Provision of QR codes at all stops	£60,000	£20,023	£90,636	
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>	Refurbishment and general improvement of bus shelters across the county	£390,000	£105,435	£258,317	£112,949
<b>Other Infrastructure</b>	Real Time Information – RTI signs	£625,000	£42,118	£485,348	£97,534
<b>Bus Service Support</b>	DDRT	£2,500,000		£1,258,841	£1,221,483
<b>EP Delivery: LTA Costs</b>	ESCC Bus Back Better Team	£500,000	£93,782	£298,953	£200,000
<b>EP Delivery: LTA Costs</b>	Consultancy Support	£100,000	£33,930	£101,559	£30,000
<b>Bus Service Support</b>	Conventional Public Bus Service Enhancements	£10,500,000		£2,275,656	£8,421,509
<b>Fares Support</b>	Reducing Fares (focus on levelling up / rural fare reductions)	£2,550,000	£5,400	£944,597	£1,384,563
<b>Fares Support</b>	Setup and On-Going Costs for smart ticketing	£350,000	£20,915	£42,620	£50,000
<b>Fares Support</b>	Young Persons fare scheme - Extra Discount	£2,550,000		£1,167,837	£1,382,163
<b>Marketing</b>	Promoting a general return to bus and the specific BSIP Schemes. Focus on schemes such as DDRT that are new to the public.	£100,000	£10,130	£125,586	£20,000
<b>Other</b>	Enforcement of bus lanes by ANPR cameras	£135,025	£ 22,330	-£9,630	£122,325
<b>Other</b>	Parking enforcement	£80,000	£ 15,000	£34,000	£32,500

No other public funding has been identified for spending on bus improvements in the current financial year.

In parallel with the BSIP-funded improvements which will continue to be implemented in the current financial year, bus operators are working with ESCC through the EP to plan forthcoming investments e.g. relating to the vehicles and improve the quality of services. Details of fleet investment are provided in sections 2.13 (above) and 3.5 (below).

### **3.1 NETWORK (ROUTES, FREQUENCIES)**

During 2024/25 we will maintain enhancements to conventional services (enhanced frequencies, evening services, weekend services), using revenue funding allocated for our 2021 BSIP, County Council budget resources and, as appropriate, contributions from other sources (such as Section 106 agreements related to planning consent). Bus operating companies are also investing resources in maintaining these service improvements by recruiting additional drivers and deploying their fleet more intensively.

#### ***Flexibus***

We will enhance our demand responsive service, Flexibus, to provide for longer trips, including those across current zone boundaries, by merging all seven current zones into one. This will also allow for more efficient vehicle and driver deployment. While we will allow passengers to make trips which cross current zone boundaries, we will either introduce a limit on the distance for a single passenger trip or introduce higher fares for longer trips in order to maintain a manageable balance between the passenger demand and the availability of vehicles to carry more than 1 passenger at a time, as we have designed Flexibus for local trips rather than long trips across the whole county. We will consider extending the Flexibus zone to include Eastbourne District General Hospital, bringing it into line with Haywards Heath and Tunbridge Wells hospitals.

We will pilot the use of private hire taxis as additions to the existing Flexibus fleet, where this does not exclude passengers on accessibility grounds.

These changes will be made within our existing BSIP funding allocation. During 2024/25 we will also consider how best to use funding streams to maintain the Flexibus service beyond the existing BSIP funding period, to avoid any “cliff edge” service withdrawal. We have agreement from the DfT to defray some BSIP funding into 2025/26 to continue to support Flexibus.

### **3.2 ON STREET PRIORITY FOR SPEED AND RELIABILITY**

During 2024/25 we will complete improvement works at all the signal-controlled junctions in East Sussex which buses use, giving buses priority through junctions by extending or advancing green stages when buses are running late. We will monitor bus journey times through junctions and continue to review and revise signal timings and sequences to identify any further improvements.

We will progress work on the following bus lanes and junction improvements, taking them through initial and detailed design to construction within funding constraints and subject to necessary approvals:



### **Eastbourne**

1. Seaside
2. Town centre (Station Parade)

### **Peacehaven**

3. South Coast Road

### **Newhaven**

4. Town centre ring road (for delivery during 2024/25)  
Denton / The Drove

## **3.3 FARES AND TICKETING**

During 2024/25 we will maintain reduced fares and the wider range of new ticketing products supported by our BSIP funding. This includes young person's fare reductions which mean accompanied travel is 50p for up to four under 19s, unaccompanied travel has a £1 flat fare for under 19s, 16–18-year-olds travel at child fares, and 19–29-year-olds enjoy a 25% reduction on adult day ticket prices. We will also maintain general fare reductions, including the multi operator day ticket. Bus operators in East Sussex participate in the national £2 fare cap scheme and we expect participation to continue (until its planned end date at the end of December 2024). If the national fare cap is changed from the start of 2025, operators will consider how to maintain their participation and ESCC will support them as much as possible.

## **3.4 PASSENGER EXPERIENCE**

### **Mobility hubs**

We will complete the new Uckfield mobility hub, which is due to open in autumn 2024, and we will start constructions works for the Hailsham mobility hub in September 2024.

### **Other infrastructure**

We will continue to invest in bus stop improvements, including new bus stops where new demand is clear (for example close to new residential developments). Our upgrades of existing stops cover shelters, kerbs to allow easier boarding, bus stop clearways and improvements to key access immediately around the stop.

We will continue our roll out of improved and new real-time installations across the county, supplementing the 197 existing sites with 135 new installations. The updated system allows us to display location-specific service messages and promotional material in addition to providing core real time running information (next bus, main calling points, expected departure time).

### **Marketing and promotion**

During 2024/25 we will continue to coordinate marketing across members of the East Sussex Enhanced Partnership. This includes general marketing campaigns as well as activities directed at specific routes and locations where we have invested in the network. Operators contribute to these

efforts from their own marketing budgets, and we will continue to allocate a proportionate amount of BSIP revenue funding to support the delivery of agreed campaigns.

### **Passenger Charter**

Our passenger charter, which was agreed in 2022 will be reviewed through the Enhanced Partnership in 2025, in line with the regular cycle of review.

## **3.5 FLEET**

New Flexibus vehicles are to be delivered in July 2024. Operators continue to invest their own resources in fleet renewal, with new vehicle on order for delivery in 2024.

We will continue to work with bus operators, as well as community bus providers, to increase the number of low emission and zero emission buses in East Sussex. Currently the county has no zero emission buses although we have supported the successful West Sussex County Council and Metrobus bid for new hydrogen fuel cell vehicles on their routes which operate from their Crawley depot (in West Sussex) into East Sussex, and which are due to enter into service by March 2026. East Sussex County Council, in partnership with the bus operators, will pursue future funding opportunities as they occur, as the upfront costs of moving to zero emission technology are still understood to be at a level which is too high for the commercial viability of the bus network in East Sussex to sustain.

## **3.6 MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS**

ESCC will keep our enlarged BSIP-funded Bus Team in post in ESCC in 2025/26 and seek to identify longer-term funding streams to maintain these roles beyond 25/26.

ESCC will continue to operate ANPR enforcement on existing and any new bus lanes, to deter other motorists from driving in them. We will also keep one person employed as dedicated civil parking enforcement officer, with the aim of keeping buses moving.

All these roles require revenue funding.

## **3.7 BUS DRIVER RECRUITMENT**

Bus driver shortages have been a significant issue for bus operators in East Sussex over the last 2 years. This situation has resulted in significant passenger dissatisfaction due to abnormal levels of bus service reliability and undoubtedly inhibited growth in bus use.

All operators in East Sussex have ongoing recruitment and training programmes for bus drivers, with periodic or open-ended recruitment drives, as appropriate to the organisation. Some operators (e.g. Stagecoach) cover the full costs of training new drivers up to receiving their PCV licence and a national qualification in passenger transport. The national average wage (Great Britain) is currently around £35,700 (average weekly earnings including overtime and bonuses for April 2024, according to ONS data). Current typical salaries (including overtime) for bus drivers in East Sussex are close to the national average wage: large operators in East Sussex are currently (June 2024) advertising driving roles with typical salaries including overtime of £33,500 - £37,000 after training, depending on company and depot. Other operators' wages differ. Bus operators remain best placed to manage

driver recruitment and retention, and ESCC continues to engage with them on this vital question through the Enhanced Partnership.

Good levels of bus service reliability are not again in place, though increased bus operating costs due to higher driver wage rates is endangering the financial viability of some bus services. This has led to higher bus contract prices being suffered by East Sussex County Council when tendering for new or replacement bus services.



# 4

## **AMBITIONS AND PROPOSALS BEYOND 2026**

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## 4 AMBITIONS AND PROPOSALS BEYOND 2026

### 4.1 FUTURE PLANS

Our ambitions and proposals for the next phase of bus service improvements are categorised in line with those set out in the DfT guidance on updating BSIPs. We have focussed on the next 5 years as a manageable period over which to assess the needs and deliverability of proposals. Should opportunities arise, implementation of specific proposals will be brought forward so to occur earlier than 2026.

While the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4, when finalised, will extend to 2050, the BSIP is considered to be a more near-term plan for changes to existing services and approaches, with the longer-term for buses being directly informed by the achievements and trend which will be established over the next 5 years.

This is an aspirational list of changes which would improve our bus network and which we expect would lead to more people choosing the bus for more trips. But it is important to remember that we do not have guaranteed funding to invest in these changes. We will only be able to make these changes if we can secure investment – likely to be from a combination of sources, but largely from central government, as the National Bus Strategy remains the reference for how all LTAs will be able to deliver on their ambitions (although we are mindful that the forthcoming General Election may yet inform the amount and distribution of funding available).

### 4.2 NETWORK (ROUTES, FREQUENCIES)

2025-2029: Improve frequencies and introduce better evening and weekend services on other services (when funding becomes available). Some enhancements introduced through BSIP funding may become commercially self-sustaining. ESCC and bus operators, working together, will also seek to make the following service improvements, where funding allows. Where we cannot make these improvements during 2024/25, we will seek to introduce them in the following years. Some are expected to require pump-priming support before becoming established as commercial services; others may require longer-term revenue support.

#### **EASTBOURNE-SEAFORD-NEWHAVEN-PEACEHAVEN-BRIGHTON**

- Night bus service linking Eastbourne, Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Brighton
- Revised and Improved Provision for North Peacehaven:

Currently Brighton Marina, which is a major leisure and retail hub, is only linked from this corridor during Sunday daytime. ESCC will pursue options to provide new Monday to Saturday evening links to this important destination from the Peacehaven area and potentially beyond. In doing so options will be explored to potentially simplify the service 14 group of routes, possibly by way of extending Brighton & Hove city route service 23 beyond its Brighton Marina terminus.

- Newhaven Bus Service Improvements Linking New Housing Developments:

New housing developments at Newhaven Marina and Harbour Heights in south-west Newhaven are expected to be integrated with the Newhaven – Brighton key bus corridor, thereby avoiding the need to change buses. This new provision is expected to be funded through development contributions secured by the planning authority (Lewes District Council). Newhaven town bus service 145 (funded by ESCC) would likely be reconfigured as part of this project.



## **BRIGHTON-LEWES-RINGMER-UCKFIELD-CROWBOROUGH-TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

- Lewes-Uckfield Monday to Saturday daytime frequency increased from 3 to 4 buses per hour, possibly with funding from development contributions relating to new housing in Uckfield, subject to the Planning Authority securing sufficient funding.
- Night Bus Service linking Brighton, Lewes and beyond – although expected to operate as a commercial service, this may require some kick-start funding.

Uckfield Bus Service Improvements Linking New Housing Developments:

Proposed new housing developments on the south-west fringe of Uckfield, including Ridgewood (700 dwellings) and nearby Horstedpond Farm (400 dwellings) will require attractive bus service provision due to concerns over accessibility and to minimise reliance on less sustainable travel modes. The new provision is expected to be funded through development contributions secured by the planning authority (Wealden District Council).

Subject to the details of bus access being agreed (including a proposed Ridgewood bus gate and a Horstedpond Farm transport hub), the bus service provision may be delivered through the proposed improved to Lewes-Uckfield bus service (linking beyond to Brighton) rather than by way of a new local Uckfield town bus service. A link directly to Brighton would likely be more popular as it would avoid the need for service users to change buses (and therefore also be more financially sustainable in the longer term).

## **HAILSHAM-POLEGATE-EASTBOURNE**

Reconfigured North Hailsham / Hellingly Bus Routes:

With the level of new housing growth in the North Hailsham / Hellingly area it is important to ensure improved bus service provision. This is expected to be achieved through development contributions secured by Wealden District Council and may include a new high quality bus interchange facility or full mobility hub (subject to site availability and appropriate bus access).

Bus routes serving Bexhill, Uckfield, Tunbridge Wells, Heathfield, Brighton, Lewes, Roebuck Park. Hailsham town centre, Polegate and Eastbourne would serve the new hub, significantly improving interchange opportunities. This though would also be dependent upon delivery of bus priority and bus lanes to counter the additional time incurred in diverting to the new interchange / mobility hub.

Night Bus Service linking Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne (subject to viability assessment).

## **HAILSHAM-LANGNEY-EASTBOURNE**

improved service frequency, in conjunction with new housing developments in the south and eastern areas of Hailsham and the need to reduce dependence on car travel. The new provision is expected to be funded through development contributions secured by the planning authority (Wealden District Council), which will also need to include highways measures to allow suitable routing of buses. The revised 1X would also be expected to serve a newly developed bus interchange / mobility hub in the North Hailsham area.

## **EASTBOURNE-BEXHILL-HASTINGS**

Improved access to Bexhill Hospital through splitting Service 98 into separate Hastings-Bexhill-Sidley and Bexhill-Ninfield-Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne services. The hospital is currently only served by irregular bus services.

Improved access to Eastbourne District General Hospital and Hastings Conquest Hospital, subject to agreement with the NHS hospital trust on funding. Stakeholders have raised concerns relating to

the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust's reconfiguration of medical services resulting in the delivery of some specialist services now being concentrated in one or other of the hospital sites instead of both. ESCC will work with the NHS Trust and bus operators to develop suitable solutions to address these access concerns, but with the understanding that funding for such services is unlikely to be available from ESCC or operator budgets.

North Bexhill Bus Service Improvements Linking New Housing Developments – service 98 will be re-routed through development west of Pebsham once a new bus gate, secured in conjunction with the planning authority (Rother District Council) is operational.

New development in north Bexhill, west of Combe Valley Way, once built, will be served by new bus links from contributions secured by the planning authority. It is envisaged these services will be provided as extensions to the Hastings / Eastbourne corridor services.

### **NEW UCKFIELD-HAILSHAM-EASTBOURNE KEY CORRIDOR**

The importance of the Uckfield-Hailsham-Eastbourne corridor has increased in recent years because of the increasing level of new housing provision in Uckfield and identified demand for faster public transport options between these towns. This aspiration is also included in the new East Sussex Local Transport Plan. We wish to improve the Monday to Saturday daytime bus frequency to two buses per hour, subject to funding availability, with one of the services operating as a limited stop route.

### **INTER-URBAN BUS ROUTES**

#### **Stagecoach services**

- Route 29: Hastings–Westfield–Northiam–Tenterden: continue to provide revenue support for enhanced Monday to Saturday daytime service and recently introduced evening and Sunday provision, with BSIP-funded promotional activity.
- Route 51: Eastbourne–Polegate–Hailsham–Heathfield–Mayfield–Tunbridge Wells: further promotional activity for the service, especially for the Heathfield-Tunbridge Wells segment, along with adjustments to service levels if necessary.
- Route 98: Hastings–Bexhill–Sidley–Ninfield–Herstmonceux–Hailsham–Eastbourne, one running Hastings-Sidley and the other Bexhill-Eastbourne (note there may be the opportunity for this to be implemented from September 2024 as part of a package of commercial service changes due to be introduced by Stagecoach). This will help to improve service punctuality on this long route and also aid in scheduling a better spacing with other services on the key corridors between Bexhill-Hastings and Hailsham-Eastbourne.
- Route 313: Rye–Playden–Peasmarsh–Beckley–Northiam: further efforts to improve coordination between buses and trains at Rye station, including bus speed improvements along the bus route.
- Route 1066: Hastings–Battle–Robertsbridge–Hurst Green–Hawkhurst–Wadhurst–Tunbridge Wells: significant levels of service promotional activity are planned for this key service.

#### **Compass Travel**

- Route 31A/31C: Cuckfield–Haywards Heath–Princess Royal Hospital–North Chailey–Newick–Maresfield–Uckfield to be improved with later evening journeys and new Sunday service provision. This will improve access to London-Brighton mainline rail services at Haywards Heath, the Princess Royal Hospital and the new Uckfield bus station mobility hub with its connections available to wide range of destinations.

- Route 122: Lewes–Barcombe: consider whether to replace this scheduled service with the demand responsive Flexibus service.
- Route 125: Lewes-Ringmer-Glynde-Firle-Alfriston-Polegate-Eastbourne: consider whether to replace this scheduled service with the demand responsive Flexibus service.

Sufficient ongoing BSIP revenue funding is essential to ensure the continuation of BSIP improved services, but also to further build on the base of improved bus services. Maintaining the enhanced bus network is a cornerstone to the BSIP strategy of building public confidence in stable service provision which can be relied upon for their travel needs. As with all service enhancements, we will also continue to review the performance of individual bus routes, including BSIP funded services, and make changes to address changing need and to reflect actual usage.

- Route 54: Eastbourne–Polegate-Hailsham–Uckfield: possible reconfiguration of the route to provide a faster and more direct service.
- Route 225: Crowborough-Rotherfield-Heathfield-Rushlake Green-Netherfield-Battle: consider whether to replace this scheduled service with the demand responsive Flexibus service, given low patronage on the scheduled service.
- Route 226: Mayfield-Rotherfield-Alderbrook-Crowborough: subject to the availability of BSIP and/or development contribution funding, ESCC will pursue the potential to increase the number of operating days of this service (currently it runs on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only).

## **TOWN BUS NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS**

### ***Eastbourne***

- Route 1,1A: Shinewater-Langney-Seaside-Eastbourne town centre-Old Town-Willingdon (route 1) or District General Hospital-Hamlands (route 1A): restore the previously commercial 10-minute Monday to Saturday daytime frequency to this key Eastbourne network service as soon as practicable.
- Loop: Eastbourne town centre-Seaside-Sovereign Centre-Langney-Winkney Farm-Hampden Park-Hamlands-District General Hospital-Eastbourne town centre: Delivery of the 2021 BSIP funded bus lanes in Eastbourne town centre and along Seaside, together with newly introduced traffic light priority at key controlled junctions, will offer the prospect of implementing frequency improvements to the Loop bus service.
- The Loop is one of the principal bus routes in the town, linking three of the biggest residential areas (Seaside, Langney and Hampden Park) with Eastbourne town centre, the District General Hospital, the town's main further education campus, most of the town's supermarkets, the Sovereign Leisure Centre and the sub regional Langney shopping centre.

Currently six buses are required to maintain the core Monday to Saturday 30-minute frequency. Each bus taking 90 minutes to operate a round trip. BSIP currently funds a supplementary 30-minute frequency between Eastbourne town centre, Seaside, Sovereign Centre and Langney shopping centre to provide a combined 15-minute frequency over this section of route (this requires an additional two buses).

It remains a BSIP aspiration to reconfigure the Loop service to provide a 20-minute Monday to Saturday daytime frequency, in each direction, throughout the whole length of route. To deliver this with the current number of vehicles and drivers would need the round-trip time to

reduce to 80 minutes instead of the current 90 minutes. This could be achieved if the various bus lane / bus priority measures along its route deliver in total can deliver a 5-minute journey time saving, in combination with a further 5-minute journey time saving by the section of route around Winkney Farm and The Hydneye being served instead by an enhanced service 8. Development work will be required to model potential journey time improvements.

- Route 8: Beachlands-Pevensey-Westtham-Langney-Winkney Farm-Sainsbury's Broadwater Way-District General Hospital-Eastbourne town centre: we hope to increase this service to half hourly on the section of route between Eastbourne town centre and Langney shopping centre, in conjunction with improvements to the Loop. Service 8 would then provide the sole service for Winkney Farm and The Hydneye, Monday to Saturday daytime, though The Hydneye would continue to be served by The Loop on evenings and Sundays as now.
- Route 5,5A: Sovereign Harbour-Sovereign Centre-Bridgemere-Eastbourne town centre - the introduction of a bus gate at Sovereign Harbour continues to be a BSIP ambition, which would enable the same vehicle resources to double the frequency of bus service to Sovereign Harbour North and Sovereign Harbour South.

### ***Bexhill***

- ESCC will continue to work with Bexhill Community Bus who provide four town bus routes without third party funding. In particular, this work will include promotion of these routes as part of an integrated wider bus network, including multi-operator fares and ticketing arrangements.

### ***Uckfield***

- Community bus routes 248 and 249 may be suitable for replacement by the demand responsive Flexibus service.

### ***Hastings***

- The provider of commercial bus services in Hastings, continues to raise concerns over the commercial viability of bus services in the town. This has led to a contraction of their commercial network and increased reliance on contracted service provision funded by ESCC and through the BSIP.
- Key to increasing bus use in Hastings is ensuring reliability of bus services. This particularly suffered through bus driving staff shortages, which have now been resolved by Stagecoach by increasing pay rates and through an intensive new driver recruitment and training programme. Traffic congestion is an increasing problem – particularly during the summer – and this is being addressed by proposals for new bus lanes (see separate section).
- Enhancements to the Hastings bus network will be difficult to achieve without the availability of longer-term revenue funding support, although new bus lanes will assist. The aspiration is to increase the frequency of services along the main Hollington-Silverhill-Hastings town centre corridor, as well as improving frequencies of some services which have been reduced since October 2022.

### ***Seaford and Newhaven***

- Future service improvements in the Seaford and Newhaven area are expected to centre on Brighton & Hove Coaster 12/12A/12X/N12 group of services, driven by the operator reinvesting into the service benefits from new bus lanes and other BSIP improvement measures. This would be expected to replace town service 145 in this part of Newhaven.

The remaining part of the 145 route (serving the Denton and South Heighton areas) would be reviewed, including the potential for it to be replaced by the demand responsive Flexibus service.

- The Seaford town community bus route 119 and service 120 are reliant upon volunteers working for community transport operator Cuckmere Buses or funding support from ESCC. We will consider options for amending these services and/or supplementing service in the area with DRT.

### **Lewes**

The planning authority are expected to secure contributions from new developments in the Lewes town centre area which will provide for improved town centre bus connectivity and new high quality bus waiting facilities.

### **Crowborough**

Subject to funding from new housing development contributions, bus services serving the town will be improved. This to include Wealdlink Community Transport services, in particular route 226 for which we aspire to increase the days this service runs (currently 3 days a week service).

### **Rye, Battle and Heathfield**

These towns are unable to sustain bespoke local bus services (apart from the Rye town route 326 provided by Rye & District Community Transport) and are unlikely to be able to do so in future, as there no major changes in land use planned (e.g. major housing developments). Improvements to longer distance bus routes serving these towns, along with the demand responsive Flexibus service, are therefore regarded as the most appropriate way of also addressing local transport needs.

## **NEW GATWICK AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY**

Gatwick Airport in West Sussex is located 12 miles from the East Sussex border. There are no direct rail connections to Gatwick Airport from much of East Sussex, and currently no bus/coach services linking any part of the county with this major transport hub and employment opportunity. Therefore, with the only option for most passengers / employees to travel to the airport is by private car / taxi, or by indirect public transport provision, investment in high quality bus services would transform access opportunities.

This gap in bus service provision is of significant concern as it reduces the potential for sustainable travel options for passengers and limits airport employment opportunities for East Sussex residents. This situation will also discourage airport employees from choosing to live in the county, thereby reducing the economic benefits deriving to East Sussex from the airport.

Gatwick Airport Limited's (GAL) Surface Access Commitment, relating to the proposed second runway, proposes they fund a new 2 hourly bus service (hourly at peak times) linking Uckfield and Forest Row with the airport (via East Grinstead in West Sussex). ESCC is pressing GAL for a significantly improved Surface Access Commitment serving East Sussex. This to include:

- A more comprehensive new hourly bus service linking Gatwick Airport, East Grinstead, Forest Row and Uckfield, primarily funded by GAL. ESCC will work with GAL to possibly replace the existing ESCC funded bus service 261 which parallels the route between East Grinstead, Forest Row and Uckfield (possibly by way of diverting ESCC's current funding for service 261 as a contribution to the enhanced service, subject to existing school transport movements being catered for). ESCC would hope these changes will become financially self-sustaining.



- The extension of GAL's proposed new bus route between Gatwick Airport and Uckfield to Hellingly/Hailsham. Hellingly and Hailsham, along with Uckfield, are areas of significant new housing growth in East Sussex. Provision of a fast hourly bus service from these areas to Gatwick Airport would be expected to offer considerable economic benefits and contribute to modal shift. Again, we would expect this new service provision to be primarily funded by GAL and ESCC would hope it would become financially self-sustaining.
- An hourly bus service linking Gatwick Airport and Crowborough, which is within commuting distance of the airport but requiring a circuitous rail journey by changing at East Croydon. This will need to be funded by GAL and ESCC would hope it would become financially self-sustaining.
- ESCC's aspiration for future demand responsive transport provision would offer the potential for interchange with these new Gatwick Airport bus services, thereby offering greater accessibility from a wider geographical area. We will work with GAL to develop these opportunities.

### ***Flexibus***

From 2026 onwards, we will continue to improve our Flexibus service and develop it in response to growing demand. We will increase resources when needed so that it can play a larger role in the overall public transport network, carrying more passengers and reducing the subsidy required per passenger trip. If demand requires it, we will look to expand the service from the current 8 vehicles. We will consider replacing fixed-route services with the Flexibus service, where it is more economically advantageous to do so and while also maintaining or improving access for passengers to key destinations. Some examples where we may make this change are included in this section of the BSIP.

**We see Flexibus as a fundamental part of the public transport network** for at least the next 5-10 years, providing access for rural residents to employment, education, services and leisure opportunities – as well as supporting the visitor economy. Over time it is possible that changes in car ownership and land use patterns lead to increased demand for public transport in rural areas and therefore to increasing commercial viability for scheduled / fixed route services. Until then, demand responsive services are likely to remain vital.

## **4.3 ON STREET PRIORITY FOR SPEED AND RELIABILITY**

We will continue constructing on-street bus lanes and reconstructing junctions at focused locations which will have a significant impact on bus running times and punctuality. This will include monitoring bus speeds to inform decisions on where to prioritise investment.

Through 2025-2029 ESCC will work with district councils to develop plans to introduce town-centre bus-priority measures and active travel streets and zones. This may include proposals to redirect other motorised traffic to other routes or to exclude private vehicles from certain streets.

The following bus priority proposals have been progressed to initial design (see appendix) and costings estimate stage.

### **Eastbourne**

1. Seaside roundabout
2. Kings Drive
3. Sovereign Harbour
4. Lottbridge Drove and Lottbridge Roundabout
5. Willingdon Drove

### **Seaford**

6. Station Approach

### **Peacehaven**

7. South Coast Road, Dell Park
8. South Coast Road, Telscombe Cliffs (east of)

### **Newhaven**

9. Drove Road

### **Hastings**

10. Seafront
11. South Terrace

## **4.4 FARES AND TICKETING**

2025-2029: As commercial conditions allow and within the limits of competition law, ESCC and bus operators, working together in our Enhanced Partnership, will look to reduce fares in real terms, to ensure bus travel continues to be affordable for as many residents and visitors as possible.

We will consider new multi-operator ticketing products, which may include season tickets, flexible season tickets and carnet-style multi-trip tickets, and new products aimed at visitors and tourists. ESCC has expressed interest in participating in Project Coral as this national tap on / tap off initiative is developed and are keen to be included as early adopters.

We will look to extend the availability of PlusBus, for example at Hailsham station, where it is commercially viable, in keeping with the general approach of PlusBus across the country. We will participate in any industry-wide initiatives to make PlusBus products available at both ends of journey, so that passengers could buy a PlusBus ticket on the bus on their way to the station at the start of their trip.

In the longer term: ESCC is keen to participate in any regional or sub-regional ticketing integration initiatives. This might include Mobility as a Service (MaaS) deployment, alongside rail or micro-mobility offerings, or extending tap-on/tap-off fare capping (as Brighton & Hove already offer this and Stagecoach are developing plans to introduce this). ESCC actively monitors MaaS developments in neighbouring areas, including the Solent Future Transport Zone and is alert to opportunities for extensions to or parallel implementation in East Sussex.

## **4.5 PASSENGER EXPERIENCE**

In the period 2025-29, we propose to enhance the passenger experience in the following ways:

### **Mobility hubs**

We will carry out site identification, initial feasibility and concept design work for new mobility hubs in Lewes and other towns and villages. Where funding is available, we will look to build new hubs during 2025-29.

### **Bus stops**

We are developing a pipeline of bus stop improvement works across a significant number of bus stops, to be implemented as funding allows. This includes new hard standing for waiting passengers, raised bus boarding kerbs, bus stop clearways and improved information provision (including real time)

### **Other infrastructure**

We will engage with relevant partner organisations and consider taking ownership and control of all bus shelters across the County. This would improve the current situation, where shelters are owned and maintained by district, parish and town councils, and allow for consistency of provision and coordinated investment in improvements over time.

## **4.6 FLEET**

2025-29: ESCC – with bus operators and other partners as appropriate – will explore options for funding and, as soon as finances allow, take forward investment in zero emission vehicle purchase and depot adaptation. Our shared aim, across ESCC and operators, is to transition to a zero-emission fleet as quickly and effectively as possible, especially as electric battery ranges increase, which will help with electrifying longer routes. We were disappointed not to be successful with our bid in December 2023 for Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) funding and we have reviewed feedback to ensure that future applications take full account of learning from the process.

## **4.7 LONGER TERM TRANSFORMATION**

2025-2029: the shared mission of ESCC and the bus operators remains to ensure that East Sussex residents and visitors enjoy the highest possible quality bus services that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice, reduce congestion and make a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation. If patronage continues to grow, we are optimistic that we will be able to work towards an increasingly commercial network, where public support is focused on areas where it remains especially difficult to operate commercially-viable services due to structural features – especially in our more sparsely populated rural areas.

We therefore have longer term aspirations to develop our fixed route / scheduled and Flexibus network so that all services meet the following service standards by 2029 (subject to commercial viability or revenue funding):

**Table 4-1 - Longer term bus service improvement aspirations**

Type	Area Operated Rural / Urban	Days of operation	Minimum hours of operation	Minimum frequency (bph = buses per hour)
Conventional (Fixed route & timetable)	Urban	7	M-Sa 0600-2330 Su 0730-2230	4bph
Conventional (Fixed route & timetable)	Suburban	7	M-Sa 0630-2300 Su 0800-2230	3bph
Conventional (Fixed route & timetable)	Inter-urban	7	M-Sa 0600-2330 Su 0730-2230	2bph
Conventional + Semi-Flexible	Rural	6	M-F 0730-1900 Sa 0830-1830	1bph
Conventional + Semi-Flexible	Community rural (	3	0930-1400	2 buses per day
Flexible	DDRT (93% coverage of East Sussex)	7	M-F 0700-2200 Sa 0800-1800 Su 0900-1700	Core Buses 10 buses + taxi 6 buses + taxi 5 buses + taxi

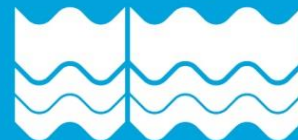
We will review existing DRT services with a view to converting some (back) to fixed route / scheduled services, where increases in demand justify this, and will look to extend the DDRT network where this is the most cost-effective way of providing key shared transport provision.

We see Flexibus as a fundamental part of the public transport network for at least the next 5-10 years. This we expect to expect to offer wider access for rural residents to employment, education, services and leisure opportunities – as well as supporting the visitor economy.

## 4.8 LONGER TERM NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

2029 and beyond: ESCC supports plans for high-quality mass transit on the Sussex Coast. High-quality mass transit on the Sussex Coast. WSCC supports Transport for the South East and Brighton and Hove City Council's indicative plans to develop a high-quality mass transit system along the South Coast, and how to best integrate all public transport across the city, including using strategic mobility hubs to intercept car trips heading into the city. Details are to be finalised, but the typology of the city lends itself strongly to Bus Rapid Transit. At this stage, extending in East Sussex appears to be more technically feasible than West Sussex and additionally there are proposals for improved mass transit infrastructure and services Eastbourne and Hastings.

Additionally, Transport for the South East has considered further Mass Transit packages which could benefit parts of East Sussex, close to neighbouring authorities of West Sussex (London to Sussex Coast Mass Transit) and Kent (Kent, Medway, and East Sussex Mass Transit) which ESCC is supportive of, particularly as these assume conventional bus services in the area of the corridors also experience general improvements in journey times, frequencies, and service quality.



# 5

## **TARGETS, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING**

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## 5 TARGETS, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING

Our key targets are the same as those originally set out in our 2021 BSIP, as they are still appropriate for buses in East Sussex. Moreover, a new periodic monitoring report requirement on BSIP progress is expected to be specified by DfT in 2024, and we are continuing to refine our approach to measuring bus connectivity and access through the network. This is especially important and complex for Flexibus services. As a result, we have not at this point defined new performance metrics or new targets against existing performance metrics at this stage.

These targets were however set on the assumption that we would be able to implement all the schemes in the 2021 BSIP fully in the period up to 2025. Although we are making progress towards achieving the patronage target – as set out in Chapters 2 and 3, we need to delay the target date, to take account of the limited funding we have had available up to this point (approximately half of the amount we thought would be necessary). Achieving these targets in full depends on future funding availability, both capital and revenue funding, and will be impacted by factors outside ESCC's and operators' control, such as increasing general traffic levels creating additional congestion.

Achieving the targets for journey time, journey time variability, reliability and punctuality relies on the implementation of bus priority measures, which are currently at the design stage. These factors are also key in determining passenger satisfaction.

**Table 5-1 – Key Targets**

Area	Base 2019/20	Target for 2021/22	Target by 2028	Description
<b>Journey time</b>	Base	-2%	-2%	Overall journey time reduction of 2% on key journeys based on timetabled journey times, compared with 2019/20 baseline (reflecting improved bus speeds in a context of rising general traffic)
<b>Journey time variability (weekdays)</b>	By route/ location	80% (2022/23)	95%	95% of weekday bus trips to fall within 105% of the average weekday interpeak journey time
<b>Journey time variability (weekends)</b>	By route/ location	80% (2022/23)	95%	95% of weekend bus trips to fall within 105% of the average weekend (all-day) journey time
<b>Punctuality</b>	74%	79% (2020/21)	95%	All services to achieve 95% punctuality (according to Traffic Commissioner definitions), averaged across the year
<b>Reliability</b>	99.02%	98.03%	99.5%	To reduce lost miles (scheduled services not operated) to 0.5%
<b>Passenger numbers</b>	Base	Pre-Covid levels	+15%	To achieve a step change in bus patronage compared with the 2019/20 base
<b>Passenger satisfaction</b>	91% (2018/19)	92%	95%	To achieve a step change in passenger satisfaction, as reported in Transport Focus surveys

# 6

## OVERVIEW TABLE

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## 6 OVERVIEW TABLE

**Table 6-1 - BSIP Overview Table**

Name of Local Authority or Authorities	East Sussex County Council
Enhanced Partnership(s) and/or Franchising Scheme(s) covered by the BSIP	East Sussex Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication	March 2025
Web address (URL) of the published BSIP	<a href="http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/bus-service-improvement-plan/bus-service-improvement-plan-for-east-sussex-county-council">www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roads-transport/public/bus-service-improvement-plan/bus-service-improvement-plan-for-east-sussex-county-council</a>

**Table 6-2 - Improvements programme to 2025**

Scheme category	Title of scheme/measure	Budget/est. cost (£k)			of which BSIP funding (£k)		Total
		Revenue	Capital	Total	Revenue	Capital	
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Eastbourne Station Area	£0	£2,400,000	£2,400,000	£0	£2,400,000	£2,400,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Seaside corridor and Roundabout Eastbourne	£0	£3,010,095	£3,010,095	£0	£3,010,095	£3,010,095
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Newhaven Town Centre Ring Road: Virtual Bus Priority	£0	£1,410,000	£1,410,000	£0	£1,410,000	£1,410,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Newhaven Drove Road and Denton Roundabout	£0	£6,870,000	£6,870,000	£0	£6,870,000	£6,870,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	A259 Peacehaven to Saltdean	£0	£4,630,000	£4,630,000	£0	£4,630,000	£4,630,000
Bus Priority Infrastructure	Traffic Light Priority	£0	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£0	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
Other Infrastructure	Key Interchanges	£0	£574,341	£574,341	£0	£574,341	£574,341
Other Infrastructure	2 Mobility hubs	£0	£300,000	£300,000	£0	£300,000	£300,000
Other Infrastructure	Provision of QR codes at all stops	£0	£110,659	£110,659	£0	£110,659	£110,659
Other Infrastructure	Refurbishment and general improvement of bus shelters across the county	£0	£476,701	£476,701	£0	£476,701	£476,701
Other Infrastructure	Real Time Information – RTI signs	£0	£625,000	£625,000	£0	£625,000	£625,000
Bus Service Support	DDRT	£2,425,000	£55,324	£2,480,324	£2,425,000	£55,324	£2,480,324
EP Delivery: LTA Costs	ESCC Bus Back Better Team	£592,735	£0	£592,735	£592,735	£0	£592,735
EP Delivery: LTA Costs	Consultancy Support	£165,489	£0	£165,489	£165,489	£0	£165,489
Bus Service Support	Conventional Public Bus Service Enhancements	£10,697,165	£0	£10,697,165	£10,697,165	£0	£10,697,165
Fares Support	Reducing Fares	£2,334,560	£0	£2,334,560	£2,334,560	£0	£2,334,560
Fares Support	Setup and On-Going Costs for smart ticketing	£97,860	£15,675	£113,535	£97,860	£15,675	£113,535
Fares Support	Young Persons fare scheme - Extra Discount	£2,550,000	£0	£2,550,000	£2,550,000	£0	£2,550,000
Marketing	Promoting a general return to bus and the specific BSIP Schemes	£155,716	£0	£155,716	£155,716	£0	£155,716
Other	Enforcement of bus lanes by ANPR cameras	£0	£135,025	£135,025	£0	£135,025	£135,025
Other	Parking enforcement	£81,500	£0	£81,500	£81,500	£0	£81,500

**Table 6-3 - Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond**

<b>NBS objective</b>	<b>Title of scheme or proposal</b>	<b>Additional description (optional - 60 words max)</b>	<b>Estimated cost / order of cost (£)</b>	<b>Costing accuracy rating</b>
Service level and network coverage	Gatwick Airport Connectivity		£1m p.a.	Low
	Inter-urban bus routes		£5m p.a.	Low
	Town network improvements		£5m p.a.	Low
Bus priority	Bus lanes		£45m	Low
	Junction improvements		£25m	Low
Lower and simpler fares	Maintain fares lowered through BSIP		£3m	Low
Ticketing	Introduce new multi-operator products		£3m	Low
	Introduce tap on / tap off across all services (Project Coral)	Anticipated cost of part of scheme in East Sussex	£1m	Low
	Introduce Hailsham PlusBus product		£15k	Low
Waiting and interchange facilities	Lewes mobility hub		£5m	Low
	Bus stop upgrades		£8m	Low
	Take control of bus stops from district councils		-	Low
Bus fleet	Support operators in identifying and securing funding for zero emission buses and charging / fuelling infrastructure		£80m	Low
Accessibility and inclusion	Improve walking and wheeling routes to bus stops		£5m	Low
Longer term network transformation	Sussex Coast mass transit	Anticipated cost of part of scheme in East Sussex	£200m	Low
	London-Sussex Coast mass transit	Anticipated cost of part of scheme in East Sussex	£100m	Low
	Kent, Medway & East Sussex mass transit	Anticipated cost of part of scheme in East Sussex	£10m	Low

#### **BUS OPERATOR SUPPORT**

Bus operators have been closely involved in the development of this update to the BSIP through the established mechanism of the EP and through individual contact to discuss issues which are service-specific and/or commercially confidential.

The EP Board will ultimately approve the 2024 BSIP Update and will be the formal expression of support which all our BSIP initiatives have enjoyed from the outset.

## 6.1 PUBLIC FACING SUMMARY

As part of our ongoing refinement of our BSIP we will update this document and prepare a concise, public facing summary.

DRAFT



# APPENDIX A

## Appendix A – Current Supported Bus Services

**Appendix Table 1 – Supported Bus Services**

Type	Operator	Service	Route	CT	Operating period
FP	Autocar	256	Wadhurst-Lamberhurst-Bells Yew Green-Tun Wells		Mon-Fri
FP	Autocar	354	Wadhurst Rail Link		Mon-Fri peaks
FP	Stagecoach	3/5/5A	Meads-Eastbourne; Eastbourne-Sovereign Harbour		Mon-Sat eve
FP	Stagecoach	6	Eastbourne-Langney		Mon-Sat daytime & eve
RG	Stagecoach	7/27/347	Hastings-Ashford Way/Millward Rd/Linton Rd/Pett		Mon-Sat
FP	Stagecoach	8	Eastbourne-Beachlands		Mon-Sat daytime & eve
FP	Brighton & Hove	14	Newhaven-North Peacehaven-Brighton		Mon-Sat
FP	Stagecoach	1X	Roebuck Park-Eastbourne		Mon-Sat eve & Sun daytime
FP	Stagecoach	20/22	Ore-Hollington/Mayfield Farm		Sun eve
FP	Stagecoach	21	Ore-Conquest Hospital		Sun early am & mid eve
FP	Stagecoach	23	Hastings-Conquest Hosp		Mon-Fri peaks
FP	Stagecoach	23	Hastings-Conquest Hosp		Sun daytime
FP	Stagecoach	28	Hastings-Conquest Hosp		Mon-Sat mid eve
FP	Brighton & Hove	29	Uckfield-Tunbridge Wells		Mon-Sat
FP	Stagecoach	31	Hastings-Harley Shute route extension		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
FP	Stagecoach	51	Hailsham-Tunbridge Wells		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
FP	Stagecoach	54/98	Uckfield-Eastbourne; Eastbourne- Bexhill		Mon-Sat eve & Sun daytime
FP	Brighton & Hove	28	Hailsham-Eastbourne		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	Stagecoach	73/74	Ark Helenswood/Ark William Parker school services		Schooldays
RG	Stagecoach	95	Hastings - Battle - Ninfield - Bexhill - Little Common		Mon-Sat
RG	Stagecoach	96/97	Bexhill local services		Mon-Sat
FP	Stagecoach	98	Bexhill-Hastings		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	Stagecoach	98	Eastbourne-Bexhill-Hastings		Mon-Sat eve
FP	Stagecoach	98	Bexhill-Hastings		Sun am
FP	Stagecoach	100/101	Rye-Icklesham/Fairlight-Hastings		Mon-Sat eve
RG	Stagecoach	1066	Hastings-Tunbridge Wells		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
FP	Compass	119/120/126	Seaford local services; Seaford Academy service		Mon-Sat
FP	Compass	121/123	Newick-Lewes; Lewes-Newhaven		Daily daytime
FP	Compass	123/145	Lewes-Newhaven; Newhaven town service		Mon-Sat daytime
RG	Compass	125/126	Lewes-Eastbourne; Seaford-Alfriston; Alfriston-Ringmer		Mon-Fri daytime
FP	Compass	123/127	Lewes-Kingston school journey; Lewes town service		Mon-Sat
FP	Compass	121/122/128	Uckfield-Lewes; Lewes-Barcombe; Lewes town service		Mon-Sat daytime
RG	CTLA	129	Lewes Town Service		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	Brighton & Hove	28	Ringmer-Hailsham		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
FP	The Big Lemon	149	Scaynes Hill-Chailey School		Schooldays
FP	The Big Lemon	150	Withyham-Chailey School		Schooldays
FP	Compass	122/166	Lewes-Barcombe; Lewes-Haywards Heath		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	Compass	167/168	Lewes-Burgess Hill; Village rider		Mon-Fri peak & Wed
RG	North Wealden CT	224	Wadhurst-Town Row-Rotherfield-Crowborough	S22	Mon, Wed & Fri
RG	North Wealden CT	225	Crowborough-Heathfield-Battle	S22	Tue & Thu

Type	Operator	Service	Route	CT	Operating period
RG	North Wealden CT	226	Crowborough-Rotherfield-Mayfield local service	S22	Tue, Thu & Sat
RG	Compass	227	Five Ashes-Crowborough		Schooldays
FP	Compass	228/229	Crowborough-Tunbridge Wells		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	Brighton & Hove	29A	Heathfield-Lewes		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
RG	Compass	225/231	Rushlake Green-Heathfield; Etchingham-Heathfield		Mon-Sat daytime
RG	CTLA	246/248/249	Uckfield services; Fairwarp extension		Mon-Fri
FP	Compass	261	Uckfield-East Grinstead		Mon-Sat daytime
FP	The Big Lemon	266	Heathfield College school service		Schooldays
FP	The Big Lemon	267/268/269	Heathfield College school services		Schooldays
FP	Brighton & Hove	270	East Grinstead-Brighton		Mon-Sat eve
FP	Brighton & Hove	291	Crawley-Tunbridge Wells		Mon-Sat eve
RG	Stagecoach	304	Hastings - Claverham College		Schooldays
FP	Stagecoach	21/29/312/313	Hastings-Conquest Hosp/Northiam; Rye Services		Mon-Sat daytime & eve
FP	Stagecoach	29/312/313	Hastings-Conquest Hosp-Tenderden; Rye Services		Sun daytime
RG	Stagecoach	320	Ninfield – Steven's Crouch – Claverham College		Schooldays
RG	Compass	331	Uckfield-Hurst Green		Schooldays
RG	Stagecoach	349	Hastings - Hawkhurst Moor		Daily daytime & Mon-Sat eve
RG	Rambler	355	Netherfield – Claverham Community College –		Schooldays
RG	Rambler	356	Little Common – Hooe – Catsfield – Battle, Claverham College		Schooldays
RG	Rambler	360/361	Etchingham-Bexhill College; Peasmarsh-Bexhill College		Schooldays
RG	Rambler	381	Westfield-Northiam-Robertsbridge College		Schooldays
RG	Stagecoach	342/382	Northiam-Westfield; Westfield-Robertsbridge		Schooldays
RG	Rambler	383	Peasmarsh - Robertsbridge Community College		Schooldays
RG	Compass	468	Ditchling-Plumpton-Chailey School		Schooldays
FP	Brighton & Hove	492	Denton Corner - Seahaven Academy		Schooldays
FP	Brighton & Hove	494	Saltdean - Seahaven Academy		Schooldays
FP	Stagecoach	Loop	Eastbourne-Langney		Daily daytime
DM	Stagecoach	6	Langney-Westham-Polegate-Eastbourne		Sundays & BH
DM	Stagecoach	23	Hastings-Elphinstone Rd-Conquest Hospital		Mon-Sat
DM	Stagecoach	23B	Hastings-Filsham Valley-Hollington-Conquest Hosp		Mon-Fri
DM	Stagecoach	29	Northiam-Brede-Westfield-Conquest Hosp-Hastings		Mon-Sat
DM	Stagecoach	51	Heathfield-Mayfield-Rotherfield-Tun Wells		Mon-Sat eve peak
DM	Stagecoach	51	Heathfield-Mayfield-Rotherfield-Tun Wells		Schooldays pm
DM	Stagecoach	5,51,54A	Eastbourne-Polegate-Dittons Wood-Hailsham		Daily
DM	Stagecoach	54	Uckfield Town Service		Mon-Sat
DM	Stagecoach	101	Hastings-Fairlight-Winchelsea Beach-Rye		Sundays & BH
DM	Stagecoach	51	Cavendish Sch-Town Centre-Bridgemere		Schooldays
RG	Compass	318	Heathfield-Uckfield-Kings Academy Ringmer		Schooldays
DM	Stagecoach	28	Hastings-West Hill-Ore-Conquest Hospital		Sundays & BH
DM	Cuckmere Buses	48	Eastbourne-Deanland Wood		Tues & Thurs

Type	Operator	Service	Route	CT	Operating period
DM	Cuckmere Buses	40/42	Berwick-Seaford; Berwick-Hailsham	S22	Tues, Wed & Fri
DM	Battle CT	B67-79	Battle Area Community Bus	S22	Mon,Tue,Wed,Fri
DM	CTLA	150	Three towns service	S19	Mon-Fri
DM	CTLA	151	Seaford Dial a Ride	S19	Mon, Wed & Fri
DM	CTLA	152	Lewes Dial a Ride	S19	Wed, Thurs & Fri
DM	CTLA	153	Eastbourne Area Dial a Ride	S19	Tues, Fri
DM	Rye CT	156	Rye Dial a Ride	S19	Mon-Sat
FP	Hams	U4	Flimwell–Wadhurst (Uplands College)		Schooldays
FP	Hams	U5	Ticehurst-Wadhurst (Uplands College)		Schooldays
FP	Stagecoach	359	Ore-Hastings-Silverhill-St Richards College		Schooldays

Key to contract type:

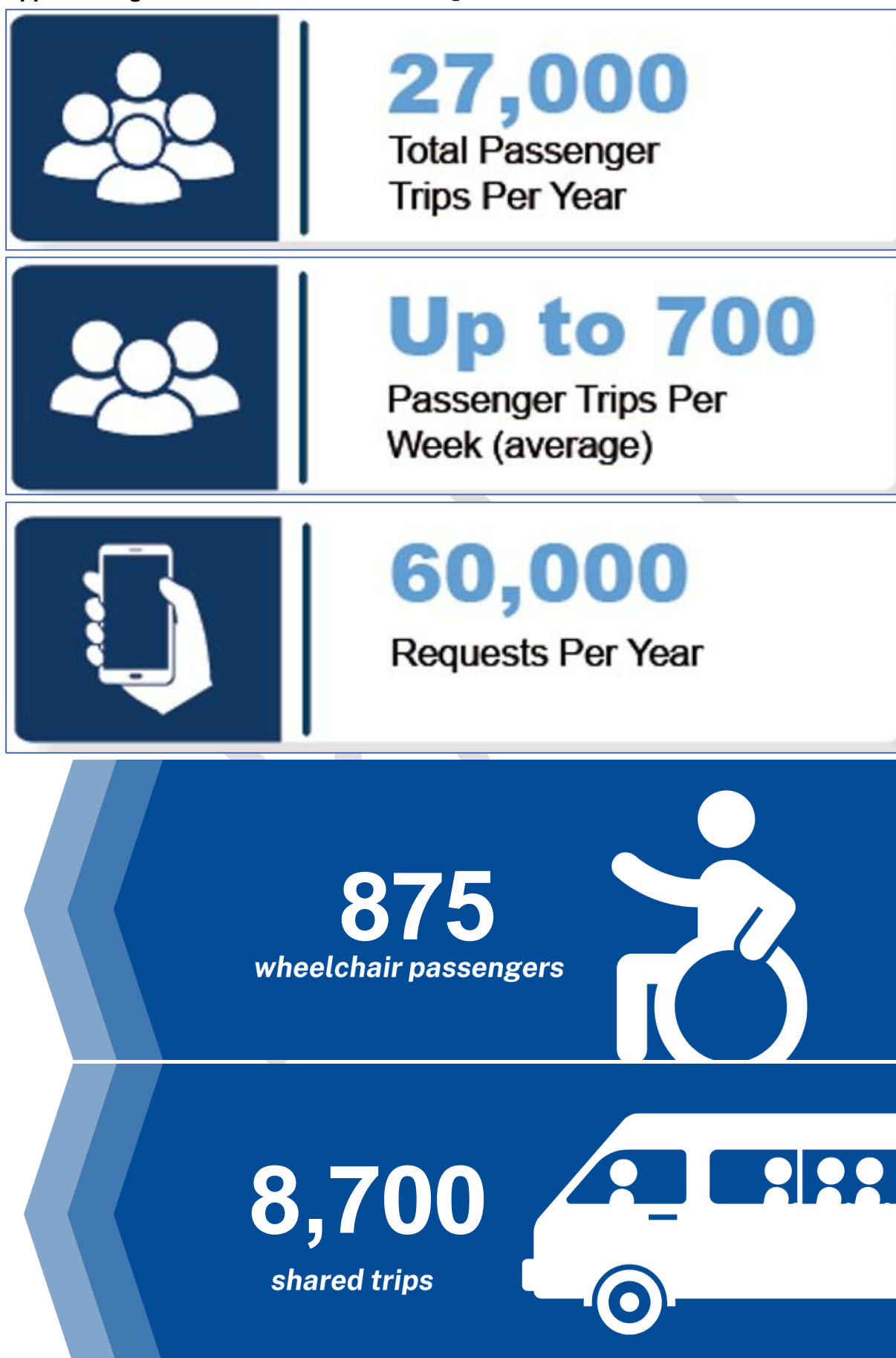
- FP - Fixed Price contract
- RG - Revenue Guarantee contract
- DM - DeMinimis contract



# APPENDIX B

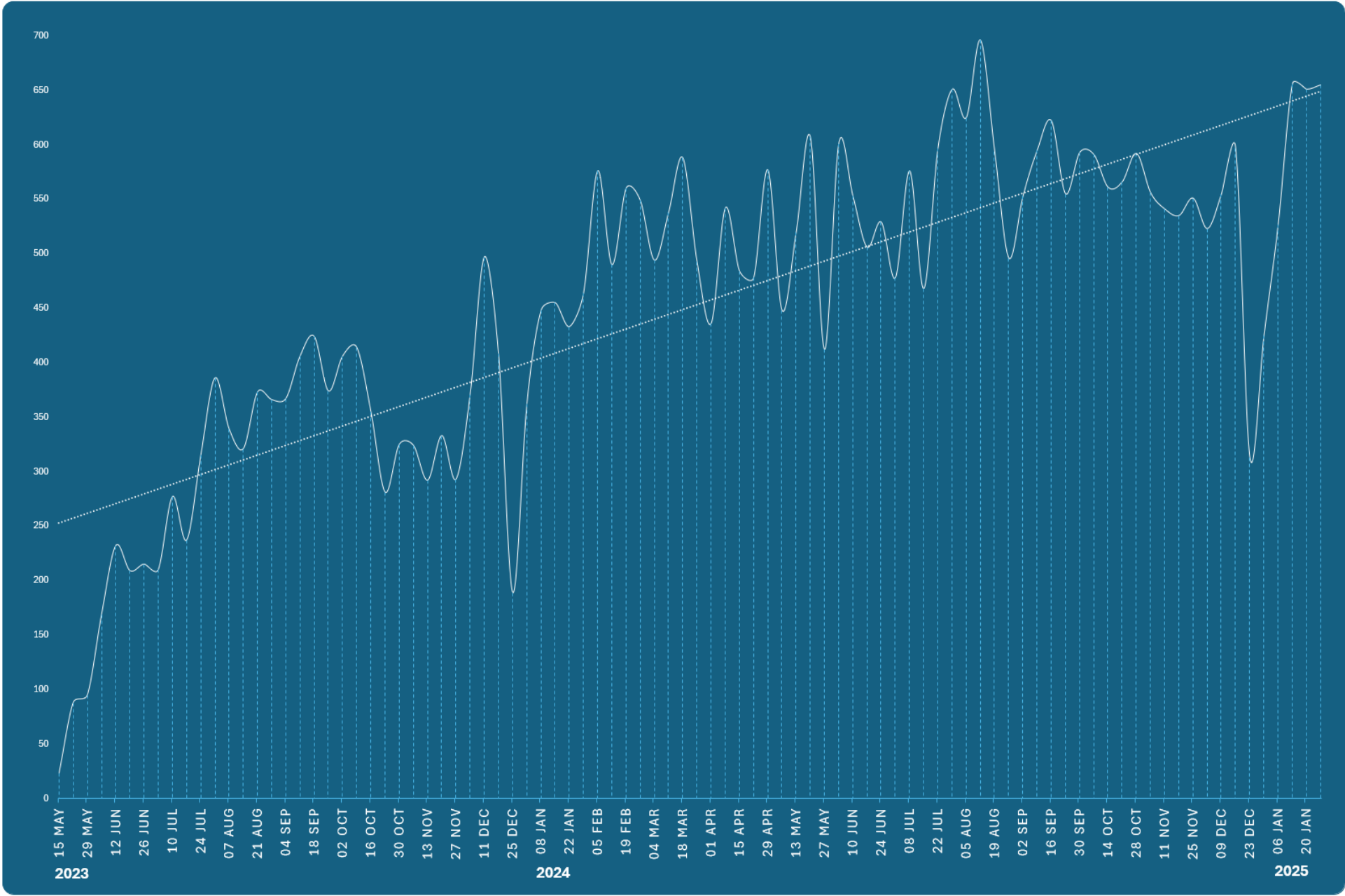
## Appendix B – Flexibus Summary Data

Appendix Figure 2– Flexibus Overview Passenger Data

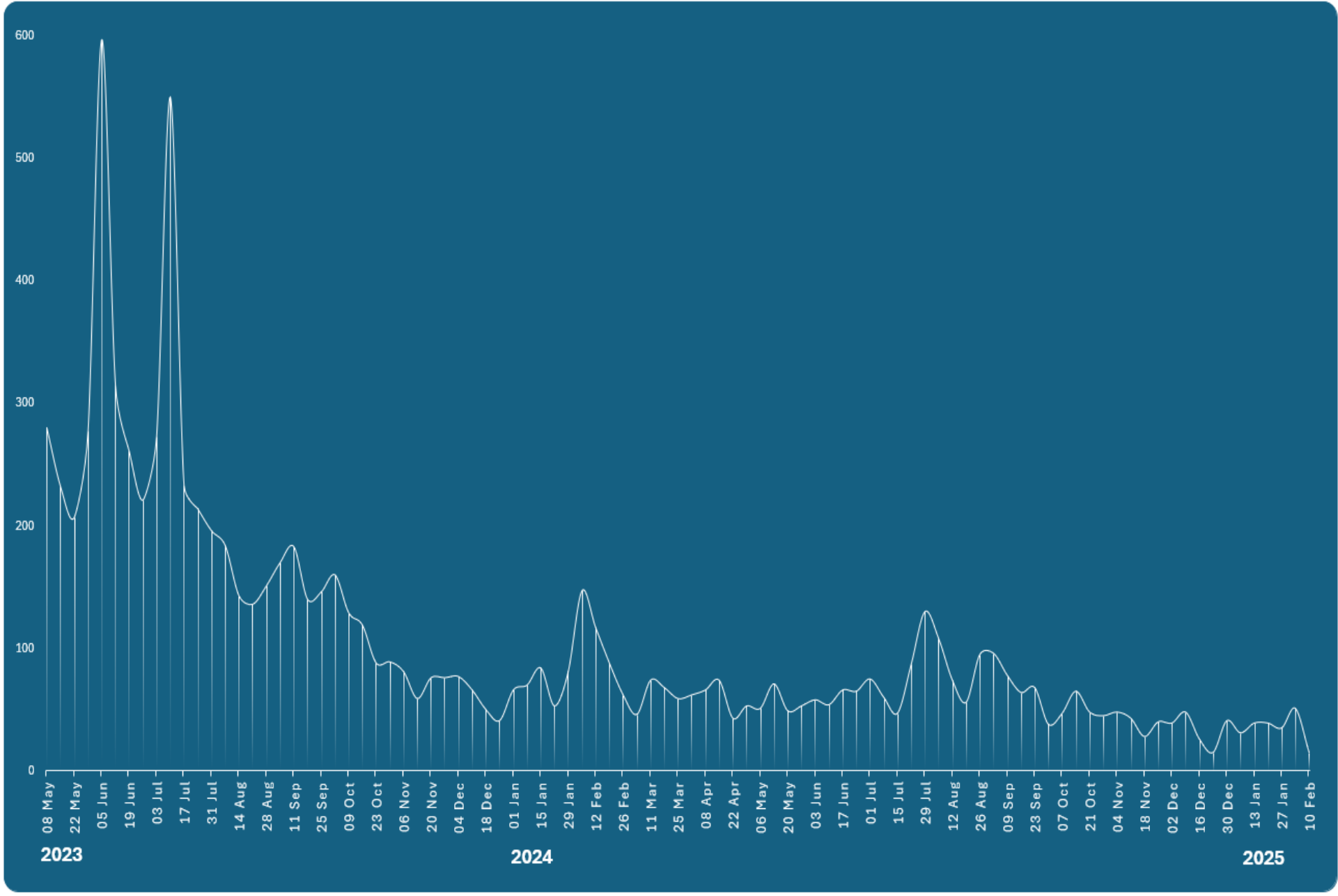




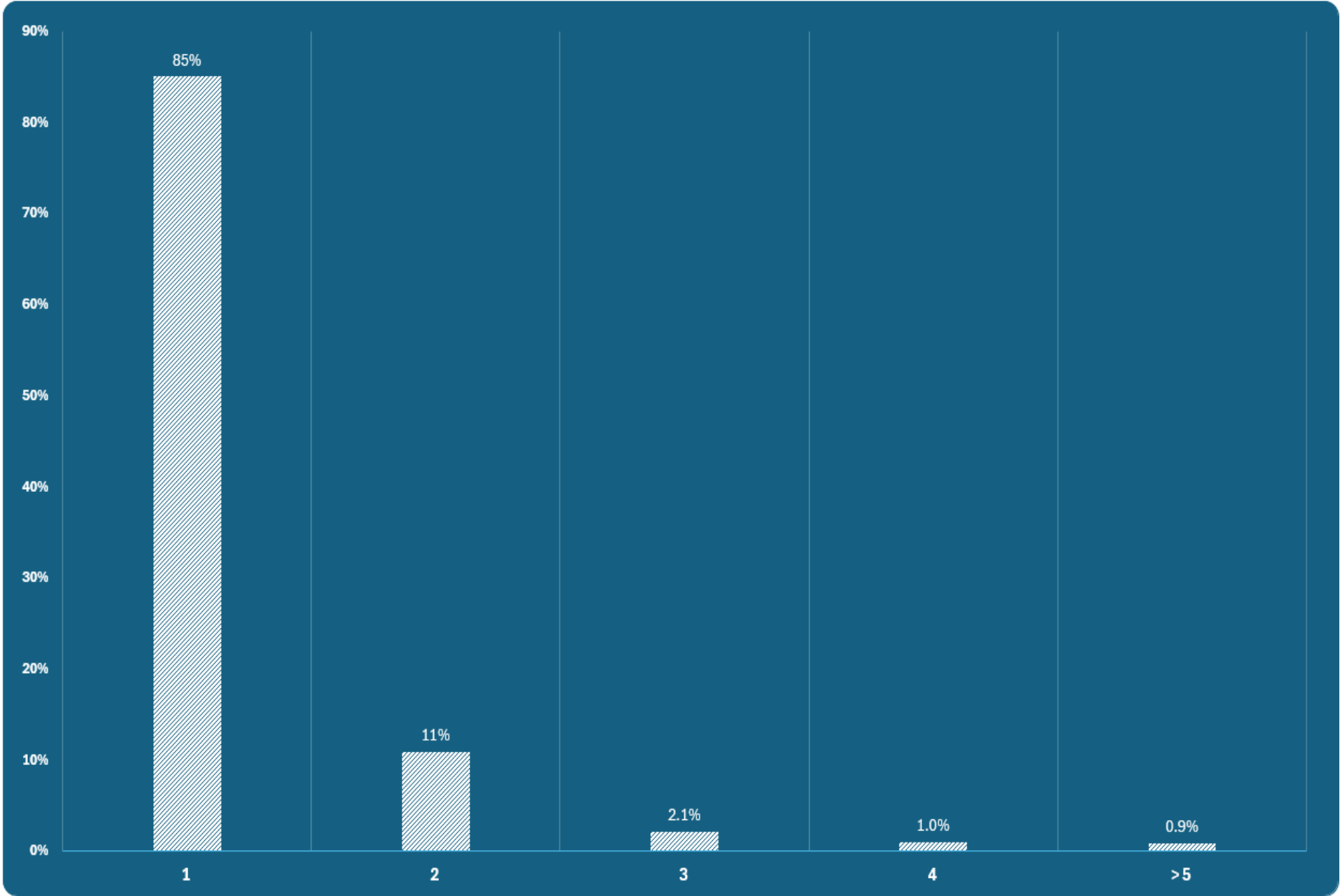
Appendix Figure 3–Passenger trips per week



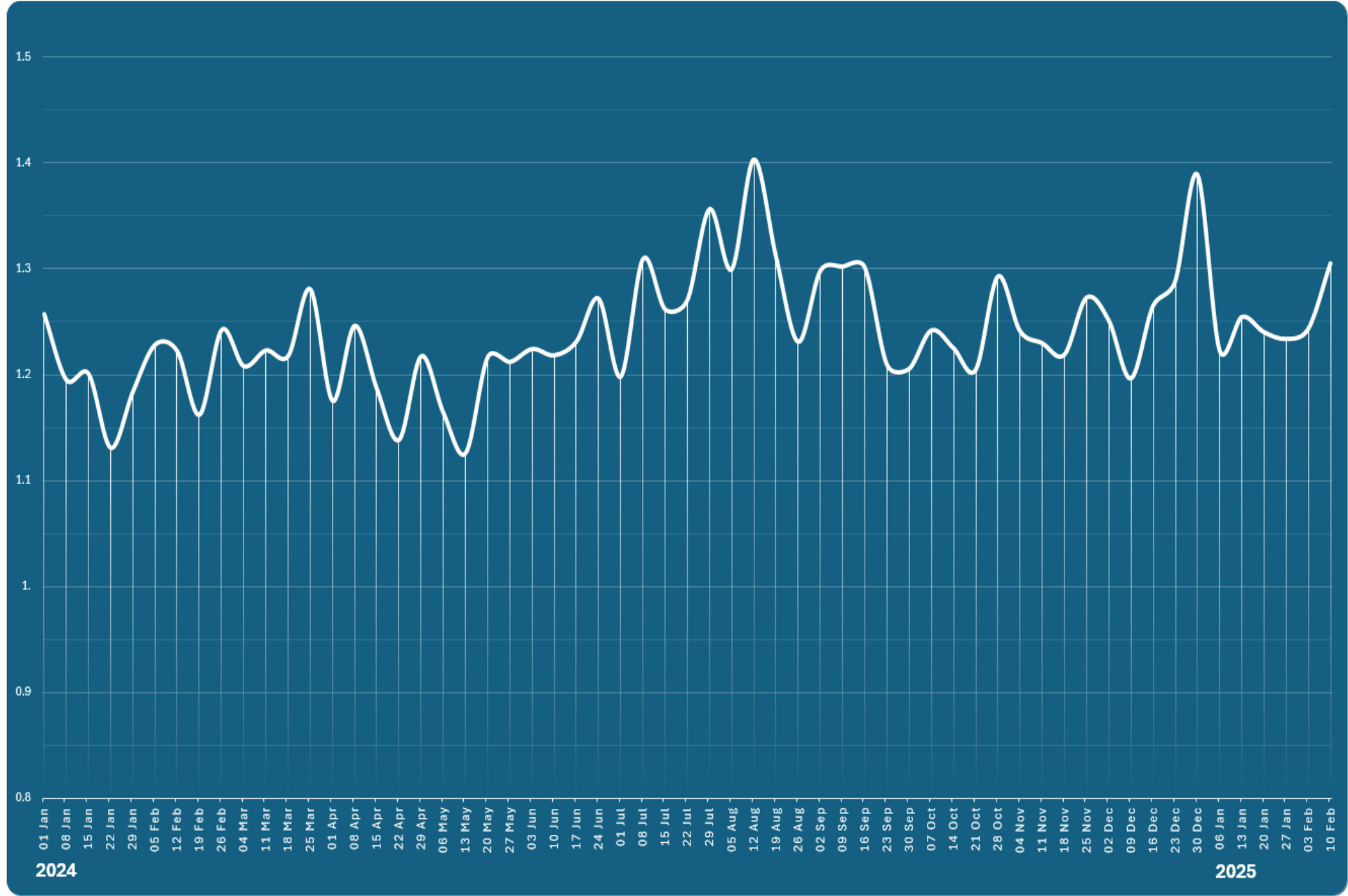
Appendix Figure 4 – Customer sign ups per week

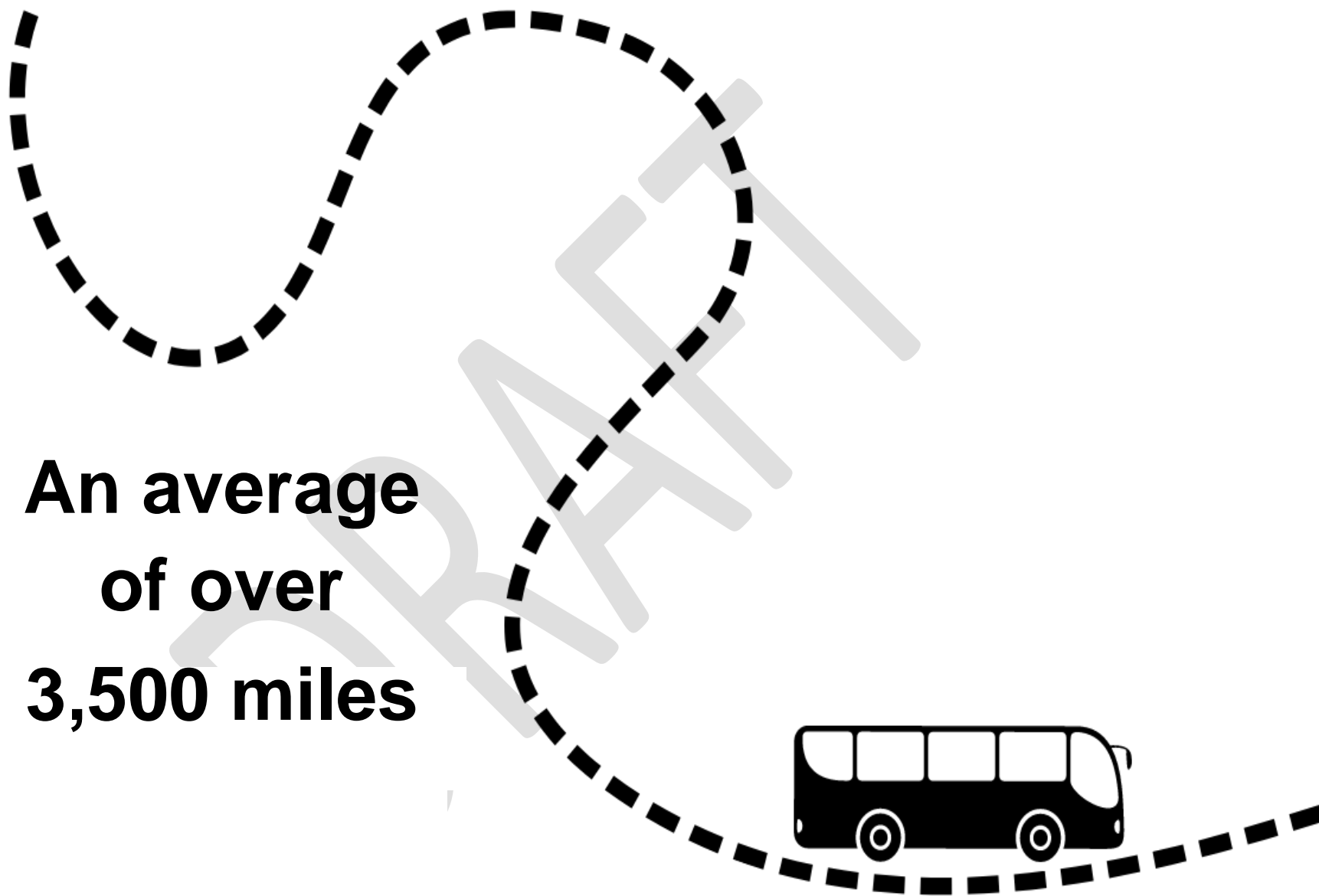


Appendix Figure 5 –Vehicle loadings (passengers)



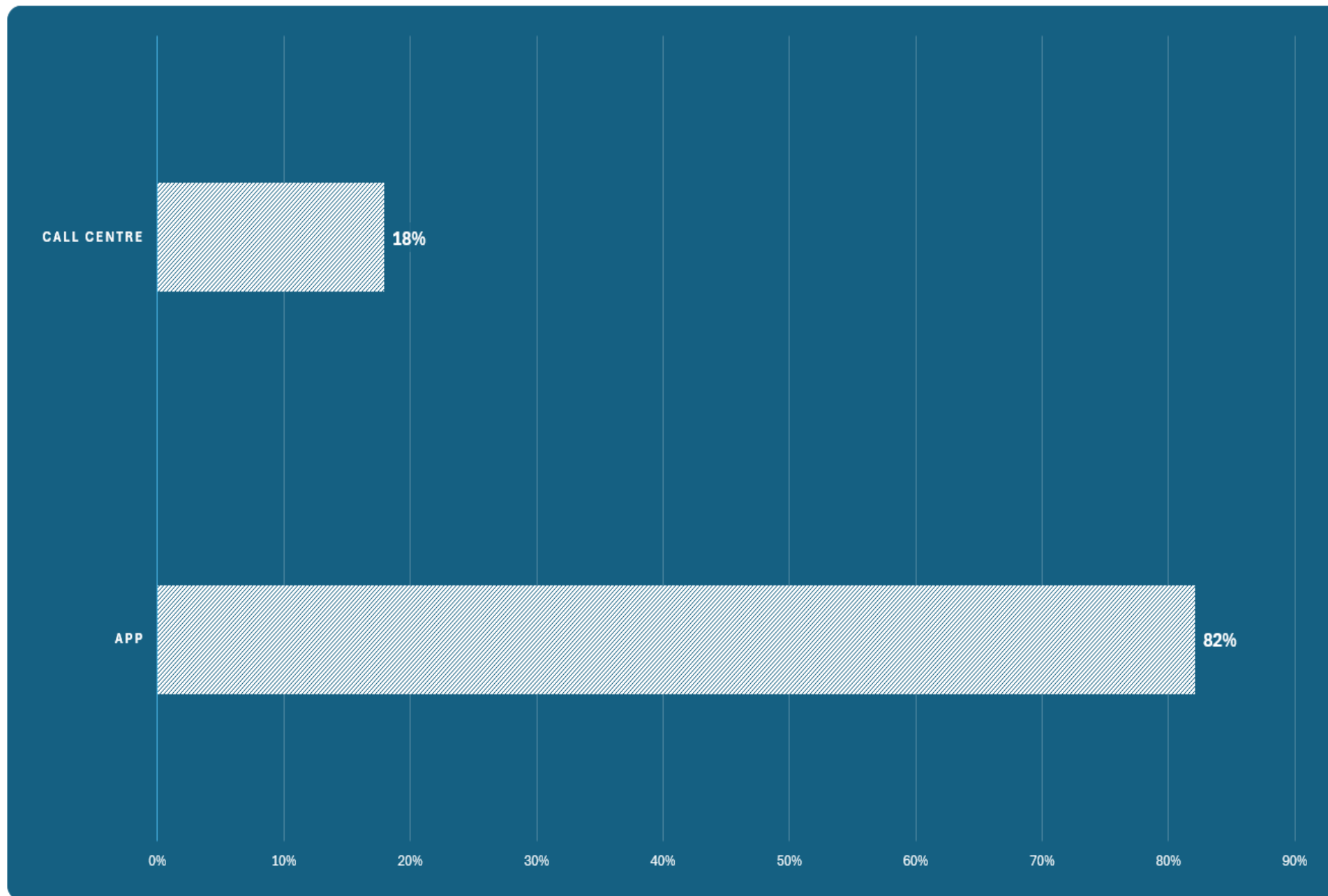
Appendix Figure 6 –Average Passenger Vehicle Loadings Per Week



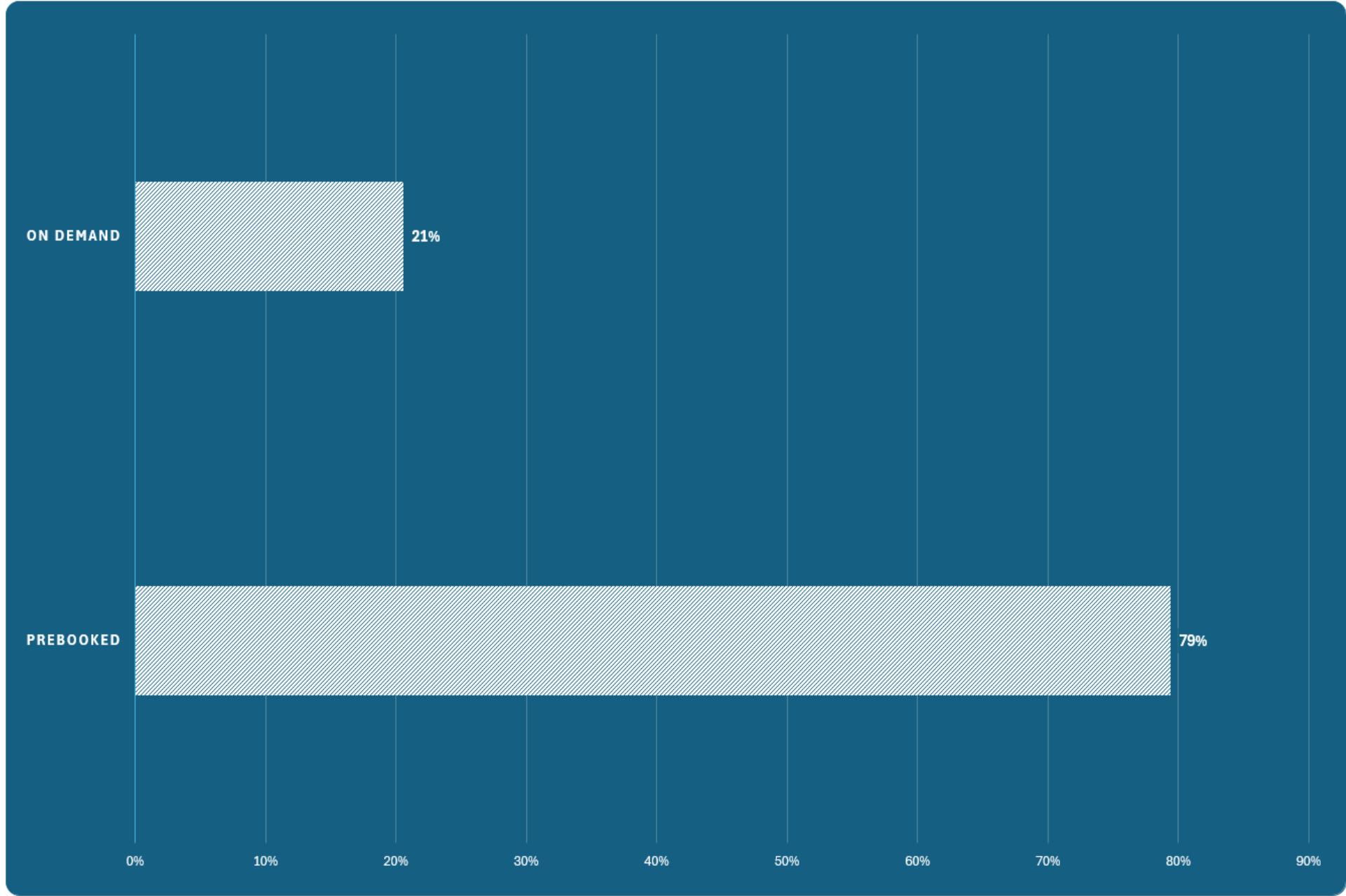




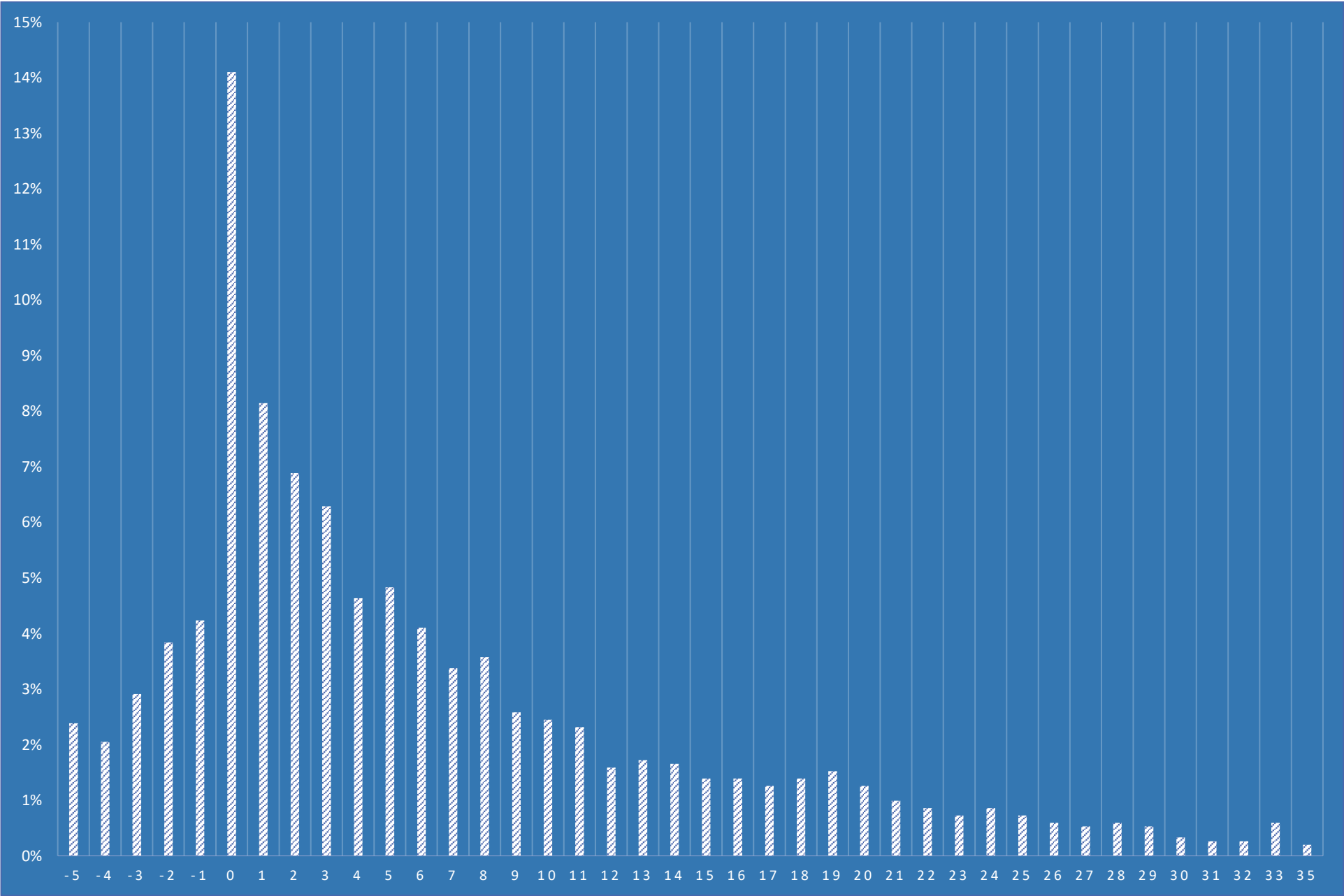
Appendix Figure 8 –Booking Data – App/Call Centre



Appendix Figure 9 –Booking Data – Pre-Booked / On Demand



Appendix Figure 10 – Punctuality Data

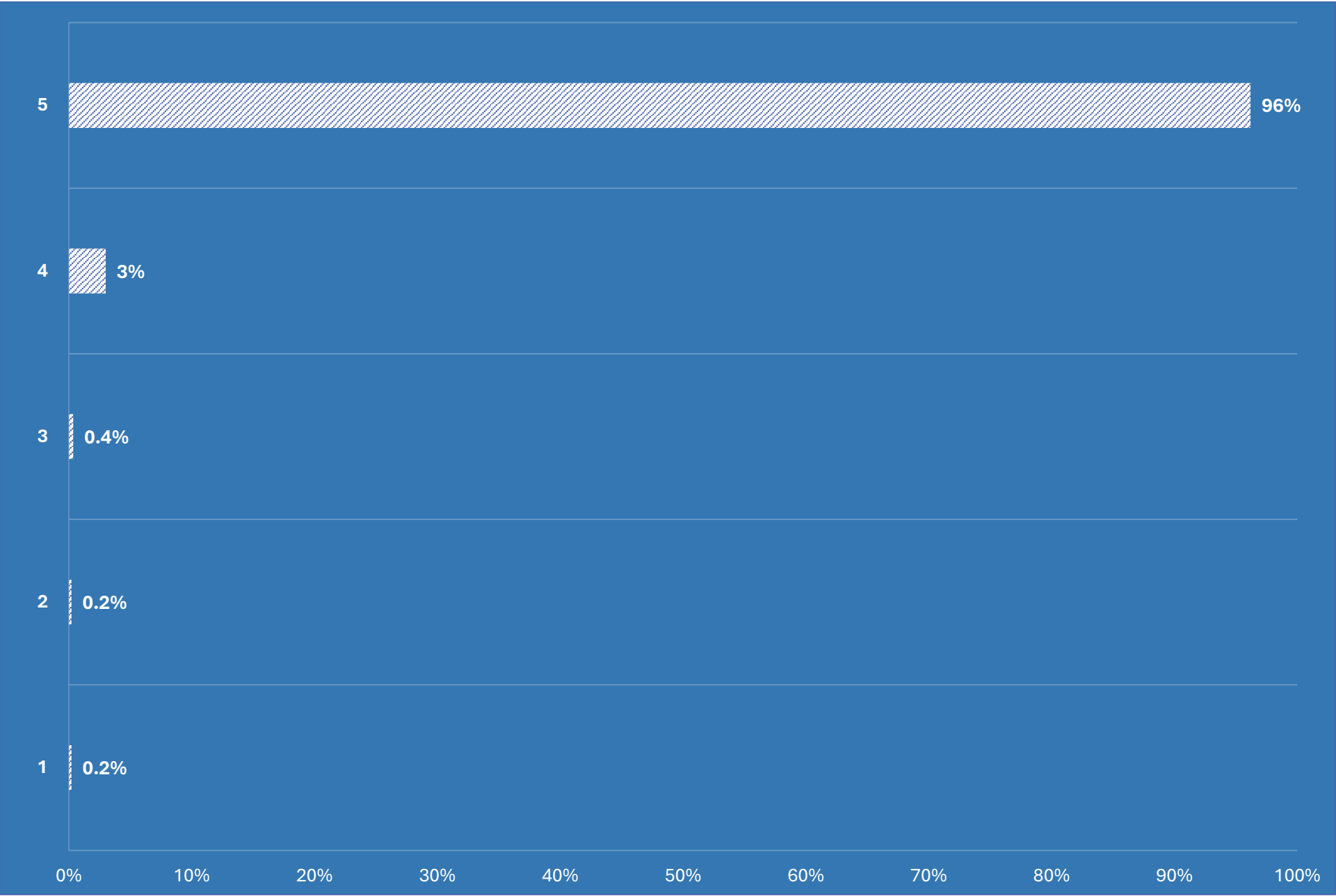


**Appendix Table 11 – Punctuality Data**

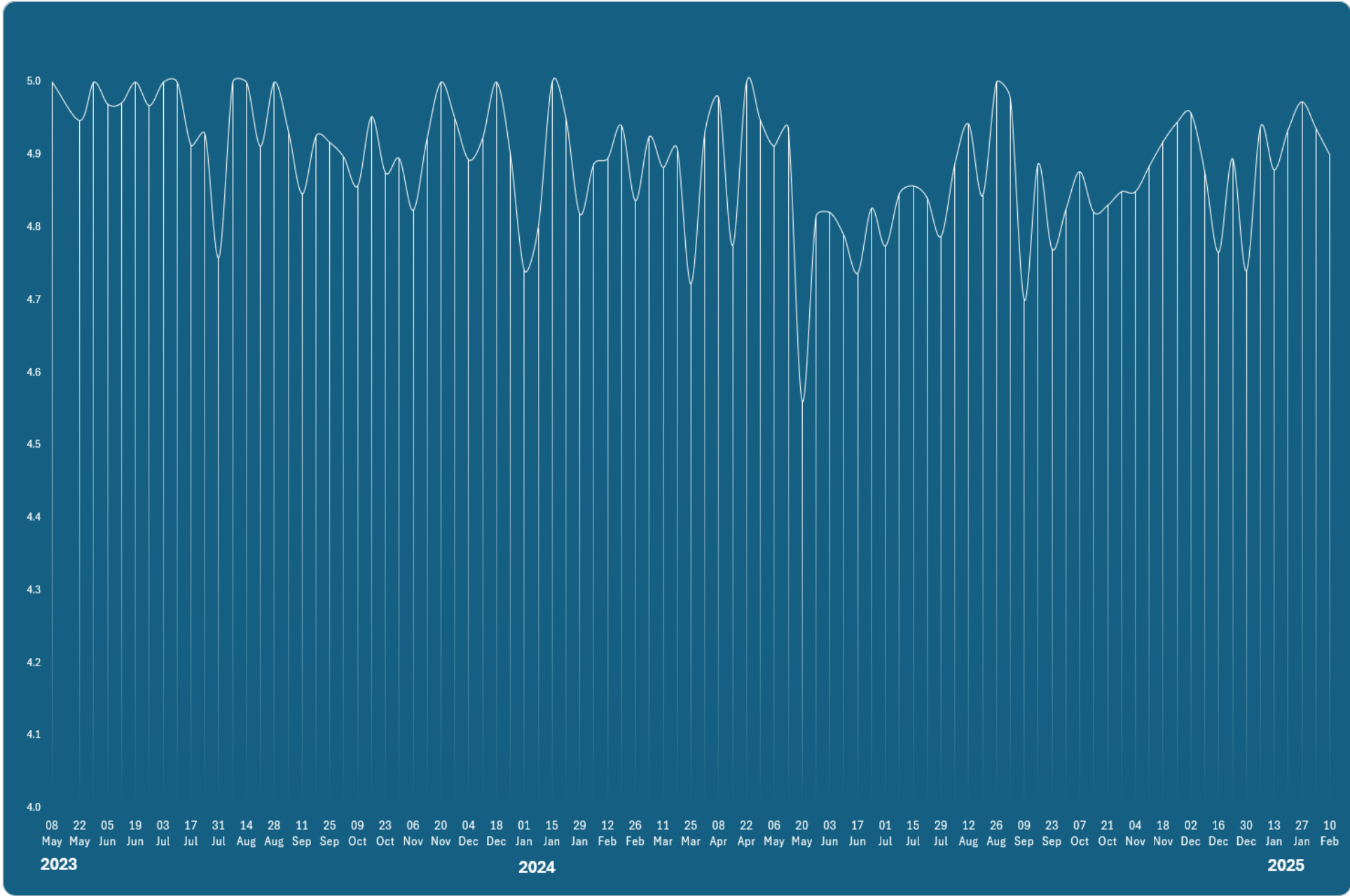
<b>On time</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Within 5 mins</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Within 10 mins</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Within 15 mins</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Within 20 mins</b>	<b>92%</b>

Note: Customers receive update notifications through the app letting them know when their vehicles will be arriving and updating them if there is a delay to their booking.

Appendix Figure 12 – Customer Satisfaction Rating by Score

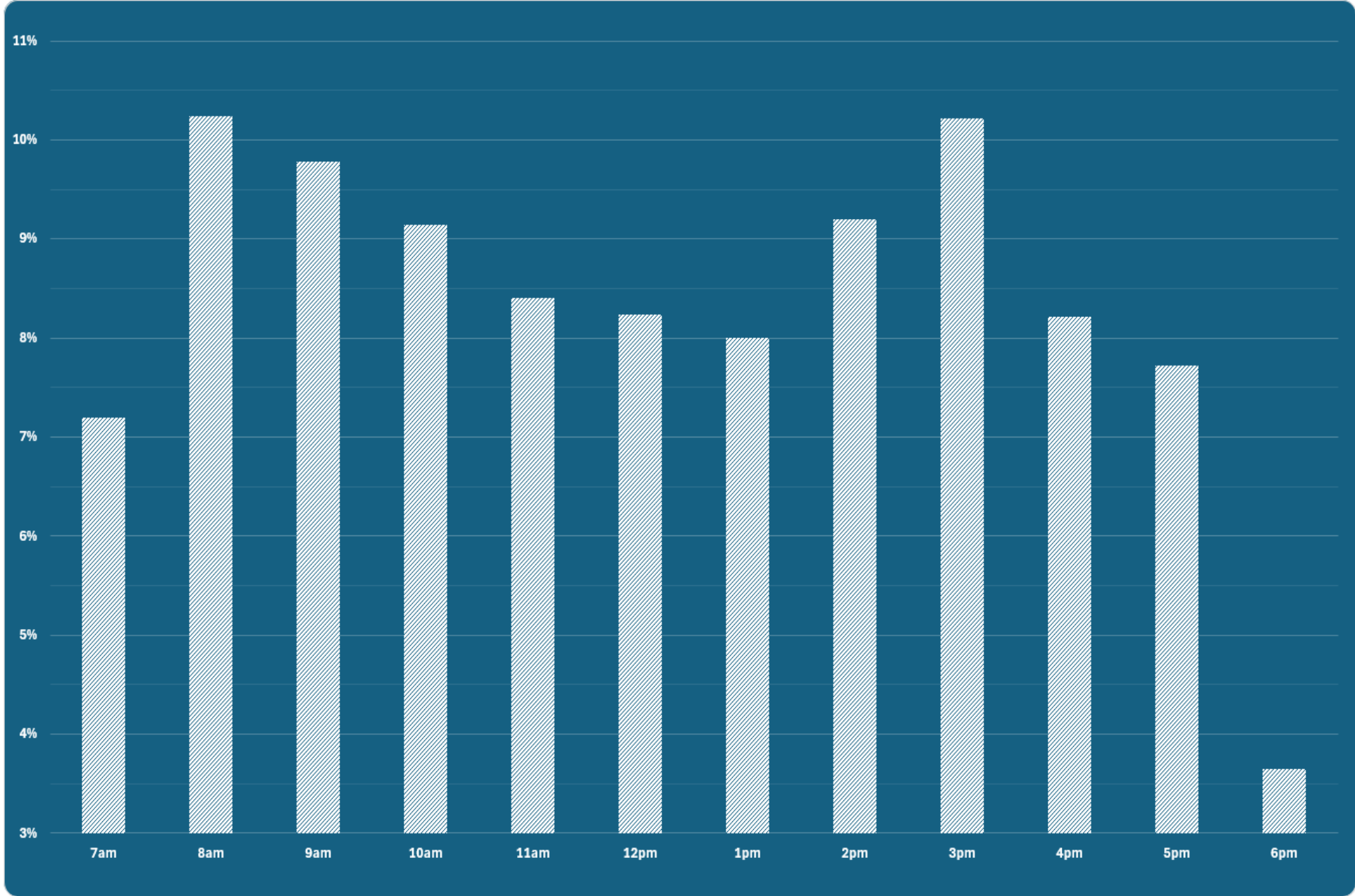


Appendix Figure 13 – Customer Satisfaction Rating – Weekly Averages

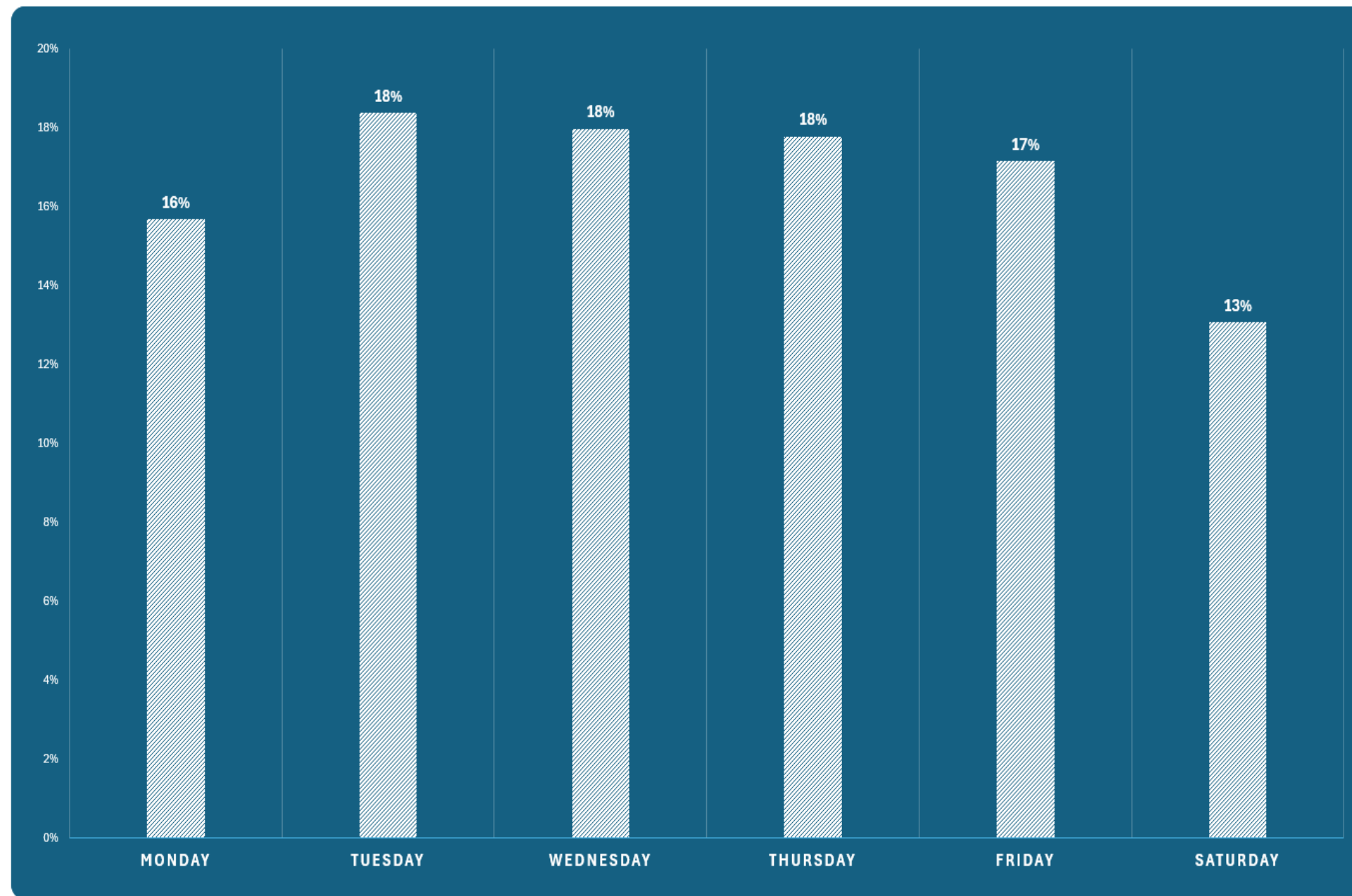




Appendix Figure 14 – Trip by Time



**Appendix Figure 15 – Trips by Day of Week**



**Appendix Figure 16 – Trip Mileage**

