

Appendix C – Policy Review and Alignment

1. Purpose

This appendix provides the detailed policy and strategy context for the Public and Community Transport Full Business Case. It demonstrates how the preferred programme supports relevant national, regional and local objectives relating to:

- integrated and accessible transport;
- reliable and affordable public transport;
- rural connectivity;
- economic growth and housing development;
- independence, prevention and community participation;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities reform;
- Adult Social Care transformation;
- decarbonisation and improved air quality;
- improved use of data and technology; and
- stronger local and regional transport governance.

The policy framework supports the strategic direction of the programme. It does not, by itself, establish the financial or operational case for individual interventions. Those matters are addressed through the Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases.

2. Summary of policy alignment

Policy or strategy	Level	Principal relevance to the programme
Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport	National	Supports joined-up, accessible and user-focused transport, integrated information and ticketing, partnership working, data and technology, and closer alignment between transport and development
National bus reform and policy direction	National	Supports stronger local leadership of bus networks, improved service coordination, network stability and consideration of the most appropriate local delivery model
Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance	National	Supports wellbeing, independence, prevention, access to services and participation in community life
National SEND and Alternative Provision reform	National	Supports earlier intervention, mainstream inclusion, local provision, preparation for adulthood and reduced reliance on distant specialist placements
Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan	Regional	Supports strategic connectivity, economic growth, decarbonisation and stronger links between places across the wider region
Emerging regional collaboration and governance	Regional	May support future coordination of investment, strategic planning and transport delivery across a wider geography
Dorset Council Plan	Local	Aligns transport with affordable housing, economic growth, communities and the climate and nature response

Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan 2026–2041	Local	Provides the principal statutory transport strategy for Dorset and BCP, including accessibility, prosperity, health, safety, resilience and decarbonisation
Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2026–2031	Local	Provides the initial delivery framework for schemes, investment priorities and monitoring
Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan	Local	Supports improved bus coverage, frequency, reliability, information, fares, integration and vehicle standards
Enhanced Partnership	Local	Provides the current partnership framework for Dorset Council and bus operators
Dorset Local Plan	Local	Supports the integration of sustainable transport with housing growth and development planning
Economic Growth Strategy 2025–2040 and Energising Dorset's Economy	Local	Recognises transport as an enabler of employment, skills, productivity and investment
Age Friendly Dorset	Local	Supports accessible transport, independence, social connection and access to services
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy	Local	Supports modal shift, reduced emissions, improved air quality and transition to cleaner transport
Dorset SEND Reform Plan and Implementation Plan	Local	Provides Dorset-specific direction on mainstream inclusion, local sufficiency, preparation for adulthood and future SEND demand
Adult Social Care transformation and Day Opportunities work	Local	Supports prevention, independence, community-based services and more flexible access to activities
Parking review	Local	Provides an aligned mechanism for managing travel demand and supporting realistic alternatives to private car use

3. National transport policy

3.1 Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport

The Department for Transport published Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport in April 2026. It establishes a long-term vision for transport in England that is safe, reliable, affordable and accessible. The strategy is based on three principles:

- putting people at the heart of transport
- using transport to create better-connected places
- working in partnership with local leaders and transport experts

Its priorities include:

- simplifying payments and information
 - providing dependable and safe journeys
 - making travel accessible and affordable
 - creating healthier communities
 - empowering local leaders

- improving transport decision-making and appraisal

Relevance to the preferred programme

The preferred programme directly supports this policy direction through:

- better coordination between public, community and specialist transport;
- stronger links between bus, rail, community transport and active travel;
- improved transport information and journey planning;
- consideration of shared booking and digital coordination;
- improved accessibility and affordability;
- stronger alignment between transport and housing development;
- locally informed service planning; and
- partnership working between Dorset Council, operators, providers and communities.

The programme's emphasis on a connected transport system reflects the strategy's focus on complete journeys rather than individual modes or services.

3.2 National bus reform and policy direction

National bus policy supports stronger local leadership, improved network planning and more reliable and coordinated services. The policy direction is relevant to Dorset because the county's network combines:

- commercially operated services;
- council-supported services;
- the council's Core Route Network;
- community transport;
- education and social care transport; and
- potential future flexible transport services.

The preferred programme is intended to work alongside Dorset's existing Enhanced Partnership arrangements. It does not prejudice the outcome of any separate work to assess alternative bus delivery models.

Relevance to the preferred programme

The relevant programme components include:

- strengthening the Core Route Network;
- improving service frequency and reliability;
- better integration between supported and commercial services;
- coordination with rail and community transport;
- improved passenger information;
- better use of performance and demand data;
- longer-term service and contract planning; and
- consideration of the most appropriate future delivery arrangements.

Any decision concerning bus franchising or another alternative statutory model would require the relevant assessment, governance and decision-making process. It should not be treated as having been approved through this FBC unless expressly included in the Cabinet recommendations.

Transport accessibility and inclusive mobility

National transport policy places increasing emphasis on making transport accessible and usable for a wide range of passengers. Accessibility includes more than physical access to vehicles. It also includes:

- accessible information;
- confidence in using services;
- affordability;

- safe walking and wheeling routes to stops and interchanges;
- suitable waiting facilities;
- reliability;
- staff awareness;
- journey support; and
- the ability to complete a journey between different transport modes.

Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme supports inclusive mobility through:

- improving the accessibility of mainstream services;
- supporting Independent Travel Training;
- improving passenger and journey information;
- retaining specialist transport where required;
- strengthening community transport;
- considering first- and last-mile barriers;
- supporting accessible vehicles and facilities; and
- involving users in service design and evaluation.

The programme recognises that mainstream, shared or community transport will not be suitable for every person or journey. Individual needs, accessibility, safeguarding and statutory responsibilities will remain central to transport decisions.

4. Adult Social Care policy

4.1 Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 provides the principal statutory framework for Adult Social Care in England. It places duties on local authorities relating to wellbeing, prevention and the assessment and meeting of eligible needs.

Transport can support Care Act outcomes by enabling people to:

- access services and support;
- participate in work, education or training;
- maintain family and personal relationships;
- take part in community life;
- access recreation and leisure;
- remain independent; and
- avoid or delay escalation to more intensive support.

Relevance to the preferred programme.

- The preferred programme supports these objectives by seeking to: “improve access to community-based day opportunities”;
- expand the range of transport options available;
- strengthen community transport;
- improve coordination between transport and Adult Social Care;
- make better use of existing vehicles and capacity;
- reduce dependence on bespoke transport where a suitable alternative exists; and
- retain specialist support where this remains necessary.

- Transport should therefore be treated as an enabler of Adult Social Care outcomes and service transformation, rather than solely as a journey-provision function.

4.2 Prevention and independence

Adult Social Care policy places emphasis on prevention, independence and support delivered within communities. For the transport programme, this creates a need to consider:

- whether transport enables access to preventative activities;
- whether current arrangements restrict choice or independence;
- whether service locations and transport planning are aligned;
- whether community and mainstream transport can safely support a wider range of journeys;
- whether Personal Travel Budgets or personalised approaches would be appropriate; and
- whether specialist transport remains proportionate to the individual's needs.

The programme should not assume that all Adult Social Care transport can be transferred to mainstream or community services. Suitability will depend on individual support needs, available services, journey timing, accessibility and safeguarding considerations.

4.3 Adult Social Care service transformation

The emerging direction of Adult Social Care services in Dorset includes greater use of community-based and locality-based opportunities. Relevance to the preferred programme. Transport arrangements will need to support:

- more varied destinations;
- more flexible attendance patterns;
- access to local community activity;
- personalised outcomes;
- family and carer involvement;
- changes in day opportunity provision; and
- different journey times from those associated with traditional day-centre transport.

This creates a dependency between Adult Social Care service redesign and transport planning. Changes to either system should not be developed in isolation.

5 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy

5.1 National SEND reform

The national direction of SEND reform places greater emphasis on:

- earlier identification and intervention;
- strengthened mainstream inclusion;
- clearer ordinarily available provision;
- greater local capacity;
- reduced reliance on distant and high-cost specialist placements;
- improved collaboration between education, health and care;

- preparation for adulthood; and
- sustainable use of public resources.

The detailed form and implementation of national reform remains subject to policy and legislative development. The transport FBC should therefore distinguish between confirmed Dorset plans and assumptions that remain dependent on future national decisions.

Relevance to the preferred programme

Potential long-term transport implications include:

- more children and young people attending provision closer to home;
- shorter average journey distances;
- changes in the profile of specialist transport demand;
- increased importance of public transport accessibility;
- increased demand for independent travel support;
- greater focus on post-16 journeys;
- increased need to coordinate education placement and transport planning; and
- continued specialist transport requirements for children and young people with complex needs.

The FBC should not assume that a reduction in the number or growth of Education, Health and Care Plans will lead to an equivalent reduction in specialist transport. Transport eligibility and suitability will continue to depend on individual circumstances, placement location, available transport and statutory requirements.

5.2 Preparation for adulthood

Preparation for adulthood covers outcomes relating to:

- employment;
- education and training;
- independent living;
- health;
- relationships;
- community inclusion; and
- participation.

Transport is a significant enabler of these outcomes. A young person may have access to an education, training, employment or volunteering opportunity but remain unable to participate if there is no suitable means of travel.

Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme supports preparation for adulthood by:

- developing Independent Travel Training;
- building travel confidence and journey-planning skills;
- considering transport during transition planning;
- strengthening mainstream public transport;
- improving access to post-16 education and employment;
- aligning transport with supported employment and volunteering opportunities; and
- engaging young people and families in transport decisions.

Independent Travel Training should be presented as both:

- an independence and life-skills intervention; and
- a potential demand-management measure for suitable learners.

Financial savings or cost avoidance should not be treated as its sole purpose.

6 Dorset SEND Reform Plan and Implementation Plan

Dorset's SEND Reform Plan seeks to establish a more inclusive, preventative and locally responsive system in which children and young people receive appropriate support within their local communities wherever possible.

The programme includes:

- Dorset's Expertise Offer;
- a stronger Universal Offer;
- collaboration between education settings;
- improved early identification and intervention;
- expansion of Inclusion Bases;
- reform of Alternative Provision;
- stronger co-production and participation;
- a refreshed SEND Sufficiency Strategy; and
- an integrated data dashboard.

The reform programme seeks to increase local capacity, reduce reliance on independent and out-of-area provision, improve preparation for adulthood and make better use of data in commissioning and sufficiency planning. The associated implementation arrangements identify

- specific workstreams;
- delivery leads;
- milestones;
- dependencies;
- risks;
- success measures; and
- evaluation activity.

6.1 Transport implications

The most relevant implications for the transport FBC are:

- planned expansion of local provision may reduce some journey distances;
- changes in placement patterns may affect route demand;
- demand for the most specialist transport may remain;
- post-16 pathways will create different journey purposes and patterns;
- Independent Travel Training can support preparation for adulthood;
- transport data should inform SEND sufficiency planning;
- placement and transport decisions should be better coordinated; and
- emerging SEND forecasts should inform transport sensitivity testing.

6.2 Relationship between the programmes

The Transport Programme should maintain active alignment with:

- the SEND Reform Programme;
- the SEND Sufficiency Strategy;
- Inclusion Base expansion;
- post-16 sufficiency work;
- preparation for adulthood;
- integrated SEND data development; and
- benefits-realisation arrangements.

This alignment is necessary to:

- maintain consistent demand assumptions;
- understand changes in placement patterns;
- identify suitable cohorts for Independent Travel Training;
- prevent duplicated activity;
- identify interdependencies;
- avoid double counting financial benefits; and
- ensure transport supports wider outcomes for children and young people.

Expected transport benefits arising from SEND reform should be treated cautiously. In the absence of demonstrated reductions in transport expenditure, potential effects should generally be presented as reduced future demand growth or cost avoidance rather than committed cashable savings.

7 Regional policy and collaboration

7.1 Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan

The Western Gateway strategic transport framework addresses connectivity, economic growth and decarbonisation across a wider regional geography.

Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme supports these ambitions through:

- better access to employment and skills;
- improved connections between Dorset's towns and wider transport networks;
- integration between bus and rail;
- support for strategic transport hubs;
- improved rural connectivity;
- stronger links between transport and planned development; and
- transition towards lower-emission transport.

The current FBC principally concerns transport within Dorset. Wider regional measures should be treated as related programmes or dependencies unless they are expressly included in the preferred intervention package.

7.2 Emerging regional governance

Changes in regional governance may affect the future planning, funding and delivery of transport.

Potential implications may include:

- new funding arrangements;
- stronger sub-regional prioritisation;
- coordination across authority boundaries;
- strategic investment planning;

- bus governance;
- integration with rail;
- shared data and ticketing; and
- alignment between transport and economic development.

Because future governance arrangements remain subject to separate decisions, the FBC should avoid assuming a specific regional structure. The preferred programme should instead be capable of operating within current arrangements while remaining adaptable to future changes.

7.3 Cross-boundary travel

Residents travel beyond Dorset for employment, education, healthcare and other purposes. Rail and bus connections with neighbouring authority areas are therefore relevant to the effectiveness of Dorset's transport system.

The programme should consider:

- cross-boundary bus services;
- rail interchange;
- supported transport crossing authority boundaries;
- post-16 education journeys;
- healthcare journeys;
- community transport links; and
- information and ticketing across different operators or areas.

Specific cross-boundary interventions will require agreement with the relevant partners and should not be assumed to be within Dorset Council's unilateral control.

8 Dorset Council Plan

The programme supports the Council Plan priorities covering:

- affordable housing;
- growing the economy;
- communities for all; and
- responding to the climate and nature crisis.

8.1 Affordable housing

Housing growth needs to be supported by transport that provides realistic access to employment, education, healthcare, shops and community services.

The programme supports this through:

- stronger public transport connections;
- early consideration of bus access in development planning;
- bus-supportive layouts;
- bus stop and interchange infrastructure;
- developer contributions where appropriate;
- community and flexible transport connections; and
- reduced long-term dependence on private cars.

The Local Plan and planning application process will remain the principal mechanisms for determining the transport requirements of individual developments. The FBC provides a strategic transport framework rather than committing specific services to individual development sites.

8.2 Growing the economy

Reliable transport supports the economy by connecting people to:

- employment;
- education and skills;
- town centres;
- visitor destinations;
- healthcare;
- business locations; and
- wider regional transport networks.

The programme supports economic growth through improved accessibility, stronger inter-urban connections and a more reliable transport network.

8.3 Communities for all

Accessible transport supports community participation, independence and equality of access.

The programme is particularly relevant to:

- rural communities;
- older residents;
- disabled people;
- children and young people;
- households without access to a car;
- people on lower incomes;
- Adult Social Care users; and
- people who require additional support to travel.

The programme also recognises the role of voluntary organisations, community transport providers, town and parish councils, Transport Action Groups and local communities.

8.4 Climate and nature

The programme can support climate objectives through:

- increased public transport use;
- reduced car dependency;
- improved coordination and vehicle utilisation;
- reduced unnecessary or duplicated mileage;
- transition to lower-emission vehicles;
- improved integration with walking and cycling; and
- transport provision that supports sustainable development.

The carbon effect of individual interventions will depend on actual changes in patronage, vehicle mileage, occupancy, fleet type and travel behaviour. Carbon benefits should therefore be monitored rather than assumed.

9 Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan 2026–2041

The joint Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan provides the statutory framework for planning, managing and improving transport across the area.

The plan responds to:

- population and housing growth;
- changing travel patterns;
- climate impacts;
- technological change;
- accessibility;
- economic growth;

- health and wellbeing;
- safety; and
- network resilience.

The LTP reflects travel patterns that extend across administrative boundaries and seeks to balance rural, urban and coastal needs. Its objectives cover:

- safeguarding the climate and environment;
- improving health and wellbeing;
- creating accessible and prosperous places;
- enabling a safer transport network; and
- maintaining a resilient and fit-for-purpose transport network.

9.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme contributes to these objectives by:

- strengthening public transport;
- improving rural accessibility;
- supporting community transport;
- improving integration between modes;
- supporting accessible and affordable journeys;
- enabling safer and more independent travel;
- supporting modal shift;
- improving service resilience; and
- aligning transport with housing and economic growth.

The programme should be clearly linked to the relevant LTP policies, delivery priorities and performance measures in the final FBC.

9.2 Implementation Plan 2026–2031

The first LTP Implementation Plan covers the period 2026–2031 and provides a delivery framework based on funding, readiness and prioritisation. It is the first of three five-year implementation plans. The transport programme should align with the Implementation Plan by:

- identifying deliverable early actions;
- linking interventions to available and prospective funding;
- maintaining consistency with spatial priorities;
- coordinating with complementary walking, cycling and interchange proposals;
- feeding future schemes into the prioritisation process; and
- using compatible monitoring and reporting arrangements.

10 Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan sets the local direction for improving bus services.

Relevant priorities include:

- network coverage;
- frequency;
- reliability;
- journey times;
- passenger information;
- fares and ticketing;
- accessibility;
- interchange;

- vehicle standards; and
- partnership working.

10.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The preferred programme supports the BSIP through:

- strengthening the Core Route Network;
- considering evening and weekend provision;
- improving rural connections;
- developing links with community and flexible transport;
- improving access to transport information;
- supporting integration between bus and rail;
- improving interchange;
- supporting lower-emission vehicles; and
- improving the evidence used in network planning.

The BSIP provides the service-improvement framework, while the FBC considers how public transport can operate as part of a wider system that also includes community and specialist transport.

11 Enhanced Partnership

The Enhanced Partnership provides the current formal framework for joint working between Dorset Council and local bus operators. It supports collaboration on matters such as:

- network planning;
- timetable coordination;
- service stability;
- passenger information;
- standards;
- performance; and
- BSIP delivery.

11.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The Enhanced Partnership is expected to remain the main bus governance and delivery mechanism during the initial programme period unless changed through a separate statutory process. The programme should use Enhanced Partnership arrangements to:

- engage operators in intervention design;
- coordinate supported and commercial services;
- improve integration between operators and modes;
- consider information and ticketing improvements;
- understand market capacity;
- identify infrastructure and fleet requirements; and
- monitor network performance.

The FBC should distinguish between measures Dorset Council can implement directly and those requiring operator agreement, contractual change or further funding.

12 Dorset Local Plan and development planning

The emerging Local Plan provides the strategic framework for housing, employment and other development.

Transport and development planning need to be coordinated to ensure that:

- development locations can be served effectively;
- street layouts allow bus access;

- walking and wheeling routes connect to public transport;
- bus stops and interchange facilities are accessible;
- public transport is available early enough to influence travel behaviour;
- developer contributions reflect transport impacts; and
- services remain viable beyond any initial funding period.

B.12.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme can support Local Plan delivery by:

- providing a clearer public and community transport network hierarchy;
- identifying the role of core routes and local feeder services;
- enabling earlier dialogue on service requirements;
- informing infrastructure priorities;
- improving evidence on rural accessibility; and
- linking development planning with network and service planning.

The FBC should not assume that developer contributions will provide permanent revenue funding. Any service supported through development funding will require an agreed transition and sustainability plan.

B.13 Economic Growth Strategy and Energising Dorset's Economy

Dorset's economic strategies seek to support investment, employment, skills, productivity and sustainable economic growth.

Transport affects economic participation by influencing:

- access to employment;
- access to education and training;
- labour-market catchments;
- access to town centres;
- visitor travel;
- access to key employment locations; and
- connections to national and regional transport networks.

B.13.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme supports these objectives through:

- more reliable public transport;
- improved inter-urban connectivity;
- stronger evening and weekend travel options;
- integration between bus and rail;
- improved access for people without a car;
- support for post-16 education and employment;
- improved links to local centres; and
- transport services that support planned growth.

Economic benefits should be linked to defined accessibility or service measures wherever possible, rather than described only in general terms.

B.14 Age Friendly Dorset

Age Friendly Dorset seeks to create inclusive communities that enable people to remain active, independent and connected as they age.

Transport is relevant because it enables:

- access to healthcare;
- shopping;
- social contact;
- community activities;
- leisure;
- volunteering; and
- wider support networks.

B.14.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme supports age-friendly outcomes through:

- maintaining and strengthening accessible mainstream transport;
- supporting community transport;
- improving passenger information;
- improving interchange and waiting facilities;
- considering users who cannot access digital-only information;
- reducing isolation;
- supporting concessionary passengers; and
- involving older residents in service evaluation.

Digital improvements should be accompanied by accessible non-digital alternatives, including telephone and printed information where appropriate.

B.15 Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy

The council's environmental strategy supports reduced emissions, improved air quality and transition towards a lower-carbon economy.

B.15.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The programme can contribute through:

- increased use of public and shared transport;
- reduced private car dependency;
- improved vehicle occupancy;
- reduced duplication and empty mileage;
- better integration with walking and cycling;
- lower-emission vehicles and fuels;
- charging or refuelling infrastructure; and
- closer alignment between transport and land-use planning.

The FBC should distinguish between:

- carbon benefits arising from mode shift;

- carbon benefits arising from more efficient transport operation; and
- carbon benefits arising from fleet replacement.

Each has different costs, dependencies and timescales.

B.16 Parking and wider demand management

Parking policy affects:

- travel behaviour;
- town-centre access;
- congestion;
- air quality;
- the use of public transport;
- park-and-ride viability; and
- the attractiveness of alternatives to private car use.

B.16.1 Relevance to the preferred programme

The transport programme complements the parking review by seeking to improve the availability and usability of alternative transport.

Changes to parking arrangements and public transport provision should be coordinated so that:

- alternatives are available before significant behaviour change is expected;
- impacts on different communities and users are understood;
- rural residents are not disproportionately disadvantaged;
- town-centre access is maintained;
- park-and-ride proposals are considered through a viable operating model; and
- transport and parking information is consistent.

Parking policy remains a related demand-management measure rather than a transport intervention being approved through this FBC, unless expressly included within the preferred programme.

B.17 Policy implications for the preferred programme

The main policy implications for the FBC are summarised below.

Policy theme	Implication for the preferred programme
Integrated transport	Public, community and specialist transport should be planned as connected parts of one system
People and accessibility	Services should be designed around complete journeys and the needs of users
Rural connectivity	Fixed-route, community and flexible transport should have clearly defined and complementary roles
Independence and prevention	Independent Travel Training, Personal Travel Budgets and accessible mainstream transport should support independence where appropriate
Specialist provision	Dedicated transport must remain available where required by need, safeguarding or statutory duty
Preparation for adulthood	Transport should support access to post-16 education, employment, training, volunteering and community participation

Local SEND provision	Transport planning should align with placement, Inclusion Base and sufficiency planning
Adult Social Care transformation	Transport should support more flexible, community-based day opportunities
Housing and development	Public transport requirements should be considered early and supported through appropriate infrastructure and funding
Stronger bus network	Core routes should provide the foundation for wider integration and rural feeder services
Rail integration	Bus and community transport should connect effectively with Dorset's rail network
Data and technology	Digital tools should support service integration, information, booking, planning and performance management
Community delivery	Community transport should be supported through sustainable funding, workforce, governance and technology arrangements
Decarbonisation	Fleet and operational changes should contribute to emissions reduction where affordable and deliverable
Local leadership	Dorset Council should provide clear system leadership while working through operators, partners and communities
Regional collaboration	The programme should remain adaptable to future regional funding and governance arrangements
Financial sustainability	Interventions should demonstrate affordability, value for money and a clear distinction between savings and cost avoidance

B.18 Policy dependencies and uncertainties

The preferred programme is affected by a number of policy dependencies and uncertainties:

- the detailed implementation and effect of national SEND reform;
- future bus governance and funding arrangements;
- Local Authority Bus Grant and other funding beyond confirmed periods;
- local and regional governance changes;
- implementation of the Local Plan;
- changes in Adult Social Care provision;
- local SEND sufficiency and placement decisions;
- operator and provider capacity;
- fleet decarbonisation funding;
- technology and data requirements; and
- future statutory or regulatory change.

These uncertainties reinforce the need for:

- phased implementation;
- scenario and sensitivity testing;
- regular programme review;
- clearly defined decision gateways;
- close alignment with related council programmes; and
- flexibility to adjust individual interventions as evidence develops.

B.19 Conclusion

The national, regional and local policy framework provides strong support for the preferred direction of a more integrated, accessible and sustainable transport system.

The most consistent policy themes are:

- transport planned around the needs of people and places;
- improved coordination between services and modes;
- reliable and affordable public transport;
- stronger local leadership and partnership working;
- improved rural accessibility;
- transport aligned with housing and economic growth;
- independence, prevention and preparation for adulthood;
- support delivered closer to home;
- improved use of data and technology;
- environmental sustainability; and
- resilient and financially sustainable delivery.

The preferred programme is consistent with these themes through its focus on:

1. reshaping demand and supporting independence;
2. integrating transport planning, commissioning, coordination and performance management; and
3. strengthening and diversifying public, community and flexible transport supply.

The policy framework establishes the strategic justification for the programme. The suitability, affordability and deliverability of the preferred interventions are considered in the main FBC.

B.20 Source documents and final checks

Before publication, the following should be checked and listed with their correct approved titles, dates and document links:

- *Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport*, Department for Transport, April 2026; [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)
- current national bus reform policy and legislation;
- Care Act 2014 and current statutory guidance;
- current national SEND and Alternative Provision reform documents;
- Dorset SEND Reform Plan and Implementation Plan;
- Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan and Strategic Investment Plan;
- Dorset Council Plan;
- Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan 2026–2041;
- Dorset and BCP Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2026–2031;
- Dorset Bus Service Improvement Plan;
- Dorset Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme;
- Dorset Local Plan or emerging Local Plan;
- Economic Growth Strategy 2025–2040;
- Energising Dorset's Economy programme documentation;
- Age Friendly Dorset documentation;
- Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy;
- Adult Social Care and Day Opportunities strategy documentation; and

- the current parking review documentation.

Policy / Document	Date	Relevance to the FBC	Link
Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport (DfT)	2026	Sets out the Government's long-term vision for a joined-up, user-focused transport system, emphasising integration, accessibility, use of data and partnership with local authorities. Provides a clear national framework for integrated transport models.	Better Connected Strategy [gov.uk]
The Government's Vision for Buses (DfT)	2026 (updated)	Establishes expectations for reliable, inclusive and affordable bus services, with stronger local authority leadership and integrated service delivery. Directly supports improvements to bus networks within this FBC.	Vision for Buses [gov.uk]
National Bus Strategy – Bus Back Better (DfT)	2021	Emphasises the need to reverse decline in bus usage, improve service quality and develop Bus Service	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better [mcl-transport.co.uk]

		Improvement Plans (BSIPs), supporting investment in core routes and integrated local systems.	
Local Transport Plan Guidance (DfT)	2026	Provides statutory and policy guidance on developing LTPs, including requirements for evidence-based planning, integration and delivery aligned to national priorities.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-plans [gov.uk]
Transport Act 2000	2000	Establishes the statutory duty for local authorities to prepare Local Transport Plans and promote safe, integrated, efficient transport systems. Forms the legislative basis for the LTP.	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/38 [legislation.gov.uk]
Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act	2026	Introduces reforms with a focus on inclusion, early intervention and local provision ("local child, local school"), supporting reduced reliance on specialist placements, more localised	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2026/21/contents/enacted

		services and a corresponding reduction in demand for long-distance transport over time.	
SEND Code of Practice (0–25 years)	2014 (updated 2024)	Provides statutory guidance on supporting children and young people with SEND, including joint commissioning, integration and transport implications linked to access to education.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25 [gov.uk]
Children and Families Act (SEND framework)	2014	Introduces Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), creating duties on councils to ensure integrated support across education, health and care, including access arrangements.	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6
Care Act 2014	2014	Establishes duties on local authorities to promote wellbeing, independence and prevention. Requires councils to consider transport as part of enabling access to care and support services	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23 [legislation.gov.uk]

		where needs are identified.	
Care Act Statutory Guidance	2016 (ongoing)	Reinforces the need to support independence and ensure access to services, including consideration of transport arrangements as part of meeting eligible needs.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets [gov.uk]
Dorset Economic Growth Strategy 2025–2040	2025	Provides long-term framework for growth, highlighting the importance of transport connectivity and access to labour markets.	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-s-economic-growth-strategy-2025-to-2040
Dorset Council Plan 2024-2029	2024	Establishes Council priorities, including climate action, strong communities and economic growth, all of which rely on improved transport provision.	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-council-plan-2024-to-2029
Natural Environment , Climate and Ecology Strategy	2024	Sets out commitments to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment, reinforcing the need for modal shift and sustainable transport solutions.	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/natural-environment-climate-ecology-strategy-2023-25-refresh

Local Transport Plan 2026–2041 (Dorset & BCP)	2026	Provides the statutory long-term transport strategy, promoting a vision-led, integrated and sustainable transport system that underpins this FBC.	(Final publication link to be inserted)
Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan	2023	Regional strategy focusing on improving connectivity, supporting economic growth and enabling investment across the Western Gateway region.	https://westerngatewaystp.com
Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan	2024	Identifies infrastructure and transport investment priorities to support regional growth and productivity, including enhanced connectivity and mobility.	https://westerngatewaystp.com
Age Friendly Dorset	2023	Supports inclusive communities by ensuring older residents can remain active and connected, highlighting the importance of accessible and reliable	https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/age-friendly-dorset

		transport services.	
Dorset Council Parking Review	2025	Internal review that highlights links between parking and transport. Supports demand management and mode shift objectives aligned with this FBC.	(Internal document / link pending publication)