

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES RECEIVED
FOR WECA AUDIT COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

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Statement 1 – Mr Dave Redgewell

Regards bus service contracts .

Public statement.

We are very concerned that following the cancellation of the last meeting we have still not seen an update on the public transport network funding for buses and audit of this very important public service delivery by the mayor for the west of England.

Especially as the metro mayor name is on a lot of the Greater Bristol and Bath bus network and the combined Transport authority appears on all bus stops and shelters within the city and county of Bristol south Gloucestershire county council and Bath and North east Somerset. and passengers information system on many buses .

Passengers information system.

Operators under the Travelwest company but we have seen no Audit of this company and its operations of passengers information on bus stops or interchanges. Realtime information or Paper timetables. which need upgrading.

The metro mayor Dan Norris and the combined authority are responsible to stakeholders passengers and the Department for transport require delivery of public transport bus services under the bus service improvements plan with the metro mayor Dan Norris combined transport authority and North Somerset council who are seeking to join the Authority.

As the Government is changing the grant being paid to bus operators with service level discussions with the combined Authority is this effect the delivery of Public bus services across the authority area and North Somerset council.

Their recent changes in buses in hardship for passengers in the remove of bus service on route 18 from Bristol uwe term times Bromley heath, Downend staple hill, Hillfields ,kingswood ,warmley North common ,oidland common willsbridge, keynsham saltford Newbridge Weston and Bath spa bus station.

Service 5 Downend oidbury court Fishponds Stapleton village Eastville park Stapleton village st Werburges st Pauls and Bristol city centre.

Loss of Evening and Sunday services.

Service 672 Bristol city centre to Bedminster and the chew valley.

Reductions in the 37 service between Bristol bus station and Bath spa bus station. Via Lawrence hill station, st George ,Hanham ,Bitton Kelson Weston, RuH back Bath bus station.

And loss of supported Evening service's

Between Bristol bus station and Yate bus station via Eastville, Fishponds and Downend on the Y2

and Evening service Bristol bus and coach station T2 via Gloucester road Bishopston Horfield, Filton, Patchway

Cribbs causeway bus station Aztex west

And Hortham, Rudge way ,Alverston and Thornbury.

Whilst we understand the change to covid 19 emergency bus operators grant in England from £27.3 to £226.5 million in England between September 2021 and April 2022 .

It is very important that as this Public transport network service that change in the supported bus service funding and Government grant reduction are clearly Audited.

As when the support bus network was managed by the local authorities in the city and county of Bristol Bath and North east Somerset council and south Gloucestershire council before April 2020 their was a complete scrutiny of the service by each bus service.

Public consultation and bus service tender awards at the cabinet of the local authorities. Whilst we would like to thank the Public transport team at west of of England combined authority for all the hard work and mayor Tim Bowles and especially Peter mann and his team at keeping Bus service operating . We would now like to see a proper Audit trail scrutiny and public consultation in line with the National bus strategy and west of England combined authority and North Somerset council bus improvements plan. Including bus advisor Board and public transport forums.

On Railway services

Metro west 1 a. Severn Beach Avonmouth dock Shirehampton sea mills Clifton down Redland montpellier Stapleton road ,Lawrence hill ,Bristol Temple meads ,Keynsham ,oidfield park Bath spa ,Freshford ,Avoncliffe,Bradford on Avon,Trowbridge,Westbury.

We were concerned about to learn from the Department for Transport that the Bristol Temple meads,keynsham,Oldfield

Park Bath spa Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge Westbury warminster Salisbury London Waterloo train service is being withdrawn by First group MTR south western railway. Is being withdrawn in December 2021 .

Again of their is no reference in to the loss of this service in Audit commission scrutiny or Board papers.

Their having been no passengers or stakeholders proposal of the loss of this service to Allow metro west 1a to operate.

This causing alot of concern to user groups. and passengers having been raised with Bristol city council and Bath and North east Somerset council.

Its has appeared in the First group MTR

South western railway Public consultation by the Department for Transport for 2022 December time table.

We are still concerned about the delivery date for Portway parkway station in shirehampton.

David Redgewell south west transport network and Railfuture Severnside.

Railfuture Severnside

On metro west 1a,.

WECA AUDIT COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTIONS & REPLIES

The following questions were submitted by the deadline (full details of questions and the replies are set out in the following pages):

Q1. Question from: Dave Redgewell

Subject: DfT Grant for bus service

With the ending of the covid bus operator CSSG in England of £27.3 million a month and with covid 19 bus operators recovery grant. Of £226.5 from October 2021 to April 2022.

With services reductions in the west of England mayoral Transport authority

What consultation has taken place

With the combined authority councils

Over this funding issue with the city and county of Bristol. and the Bristol mayor

South Gloucestershire council and Bath and North East Somerset.

North Somerset council.

And parish and town council to reduce service reductions and the funding issue as at the metro mayor has no tax raising powers at present. But local authorities do or a Grant request can be made to the Department for transport

On bus routes 18 Kingswood town centre Warmley North Common Oldland Common Keynsham town centre Saltford Newbridge Weston and Bath Spa bus station

Service 5 Downend Bromley Heath Oldbury Court Fishponds Stapleton village Eastville park Stapleton village St Werburghes St Pauls Bristol city centre.

672 Bristol city centre Bedminster and the Chew valley.

What is the level of Grant for the Department for transport and from the 3 local authorities have to commission bus service as at present the Department for transport are still funding bus operators with support from the west of England combined authority.

RESPONSE

The Audit Committee advise that this is not a matter for the Audit Committee and therefore your question has been referred to the next Joint meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Committee and West of England Joint Committee on 15 October 2021 for response.

QUESTION 2 -

Question from: Dave Redgewell

Subject: Auditing

As Bus service provision is one of the main functions of the mayor is to provide bus services through advance quality partnership and commission service in the supported bus network.

In south Gloucestershire the city and county of Bristol and Bath and North east Somerset.

Cross border service with North Somerset I have not seen any Audit work or recent reports on this mayoral function or on the role of Travelwest the public transport walking cycling information on behalf of metro Mayor West of England combined authority North Somerset council

We would welcome Audit of these important public transport services.

This is carried out in the Great Manchester mayor combined authority

Liverpool city region region mayoral transport authority.

The west Midlands combined mayoral transport authority.

But we have not seen a proper Audit report of west of England combined authority public transport or Transportation services.

RESPONSE

Since the Combined Authority took on the direct delivery of bus-based public transport functions in April 2020 the country has been gripped by the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to an unprecedented decline in public transport use. The Combined Authority has therefore been focused on maintaining bus services where possible, drawing on the emergency funding made available by the Government, and working with bus operators and Government officials to plan the recovery, which is only just beginning and will take some considerable time before pre-Covid passenger levels are reached. In recent months the Combined Authority has also been required to develop an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan for the next five plus years and is now preparing an Enhanced Partnership Plan to enable the region to secure funding from the Government's Bus Transformation Fund from April 2022. The situation has therefore been far from normal and consequently would not lend itself easily to an audit process. As the country emerges from the pandemic and the Combined Authority can properly establish its business-as-usual functions for public transport, a review of these in the context of the Plans and Strategies in place would be more appropriate.