

STATEMENTS RECEIVED

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## **West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting on Friday, 23 September 2022**

### **Statements received from the public**

1. David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside
2. Damien Valentine, Passengers of the 178 bus service
3. Brendon Taylor, Bristol Disability Equalities Forum and Ian Beckey Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign
4. Jordan Curran re buses
5. Cllr Denise Denis, Wells Bus User Group
6. Emilia Melville, West of England Shared Transport & Active Travel
7. Cllr Marley Bennett, Bristol City Council
8. Robbie Bentley re buses

## **1. David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside**

With the deepest bus service cuts anywhere in South west England .

We are very concerned that despite the bus driver shortages and recruitment campaign by First group plc and stagecoach group.

We are see the transfer of resources from secondary bus Network in Greater Bristol and Bath city region

The 178 has not been tendered

Radstock, Westfield, midsomer ,Norton paulton , Timbury ;marksbury keynsham Bristlington, Arnos vale Bristol Temple meads station ,Bristol bus and coach station.

and need to be urgently tendered.

82 Been tendered , Radstock, Westfield midsomer Norton, paulton Town services.

Services 20,Bath circular 11Bath to whiteway,12 in Bath to Bathampton have been tendered

.

22 bus service in Bath has .been tendered.

20 service has been tendered.

And Hct group contract in Bristol.

North Somerset and Gloucestershire.

52 53 54 55 505 ,506, 512, 511

Have been tendered

These 3 services were used by residents

In whitchurch village.

55 whitchurch Hengrove Dundry to Bristol Airport

55 whitchurch Airport to clevedon via Yatton.

53 clevedon town services.

515 stockwood, whitchurch Hengrove Hospital imperial park

516 Whitchurch,Hengrove,knowle

Services tendered.

505 long Ashton park and ride to Clifton Cotham and Southmead hospital bus station.

506 Bristol city centre Lawrence hill Easton Eastville Horfield.

But not tender key route

In South Bristol. 96 St Anne's park Bristlington knowle Hengrove. Add on to 36 .

Bristol city centre to st Anne's.

Y3 Bristol to yate. Via Winterbourne

Y4 Bristol bus and coach station Eastville park Stapleton Frenchay winterbourne Frampton cotterell to yate.

All routes which should have been tendered as along with 178 .

379 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads station Knowle Hengrove whitchurch pensford Clutton Farrington Gurney ,Paulton ,Welton ,westfield Peasdown st john Bath is a great service every 15 mins along the wells road .

But is not the same route .

178 Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton Timbury marksbury keynsham Bristlington Arnos vale Bristol Temple meads station Bristol bus and coach station

Needs tendering

379 Bath spa bus and coach station to Bristol bus station via peasdown st john Radstock ,midsomer Norton ,paulton wells Road, Clutton ,pensford, whitchurch Hengrove knowle Bristol Temple meads

Bristol bus and coach station

Good service should have started April 2023

As use up drivers.

As does the 349 Bristol bus and coach station Temple meads Arnos vale Bristlington keynsham which follows the 349 cost £ 700 00 and uses Drivers

That could have used on local services

Services 4 operating Odd Down park and ride to Bath city centre bus and coach station to Royal united hospital.

Replacement for services 42 .

Odd Down park and ride to the RUH

Via Twerton.

Royal united hospital would not fund the services from it car park money.

No tender

Services 3 Bus station To Bathford

Will not serv Elmhurst estate.

Cars BLOCKING the buses.

X2 tender services Yatton to Bristol bus and coach station.

Tender by North Somerset council.

126 wells bus and coach station to cheddar,Axbridge winscombe Banwell locking Weston bus and coach station.

Tendering by North Somerset council and Somerset county council.

D2 Bath to Frome via Midford, Norton st Phillips,Rode and Beckington.

Not tendered by Somerset county [council.is](http://council.is) west of England mayoral combined transport Authority not asked for money

Train services Bath spa to Frome .

But village with no Evening service.

Sunday services still operating.

2 hourly.

Services 20 Weston super mare bus and coach station Railway station,uphill hospital,Brean ,Barrow and Burnham on sea .

Sunday services not tendered Somerset county council and North Somerset council.

No Sunday bus service to Weston super mare hospital.

Train for Highbridge and Burnham on sea to Weston super mare railway station.

But no hospital link.

We to to promote bus railway tickets.

Freedom pass and plus bus tickets.

Where passenger will need to make bus rail journeys.

Bus tickets where they are on more operator Services

Bath rider

Avon rider

Weston super mare rider

Wiltshire Rambler.

Faresaver is looking at taking over services in the Bath area

Kevin and Yourself should meet them

A bus on the 22 Twerton to the university and 82 Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton town services.

CTC coaches may be interested in running 178 if it Tendered

By the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

But you need to talk to them

May a service Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton Timbury marksbury keynsham Bristlington park and ride connections to Bristol.

The issue for first group plc.

Is they are putting all their resources on the most profitable route with government funding and main line buses.

University and college services which make money but drop secondary social bus Network.

This is an issue need to be addressed through the enhanced quality partnership schemes west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Or with North Somerset council joining the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority with the lep .

A bus Franchise area needs to be established by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Dan Norris if a enhanced quality partnership does work for community.

Including the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council to improve bus and public transport interchanges and infrastructure.

Including repairs bus and coach stops and shelters and removing tagging

The metro mayor Dan Norris need to take over bus infrastructure bus coach stations and interchanges.

And precept to fund public transport like the west Midlands combined Authority

Mayor Andy streets

Greater Manchester combined transport Authority

Mayor Andy Burnham.

As special urgent west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council joint committee and west of England mayoral combined Authority committee meeting

are required on the bus service cuts by First group plc

And the winding of Hct group bus services.

Plus of west of scrutiny commission meeting.

From South west transport Network and Railfuture.

Firstly we would like to support the need for a mass transit light rail system.

For the Greater Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset.

We believe the system should be integrated with the local metro west railway Network bus rapid transit system bus and coach plus ferry services.

The route stations and stops should be fully accessible with platform fully accessible for wheelchair users.

Like the fully accessible system in Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester metro link and west Midlands metro stations.

A light rail system is required for the Greater Bristol and Bath city region.

We believe the the first line should be to South Bristol and Bristol Airport.

Which will not require much Tunneling as the are road wide enough for street running in South Bristol including the metro bus route that can be converted to a light rail system like the system in Edinburgh Scotland.

The other Route is Bristol bus and coach station to Bath via Bristol Temple meads station st Phillips marsh Arnos vale keynsham Salford/ Kelston Newbridge Weston and Bath spa bus and coach station.

This can use the North Somerset Railway through Bristlington to callington road then the A4 to Keynsham bypass Salford ,Newbridge ,Weston or Twerton on Avon,Bath spa,Bus and coach station.

and Bathford.

The mass transit system could use the Bitton railway from Bitton to Newbridge and Bath city centre.

Other routes to From Bristol city centre to North Bristol need evaluation.

And to East Bristol / kingswood.

Including Tunnels option .

But a lot of the system should be street running were possible like Greater Manchester and Greater Nottingham.

And the system needs to be fully intergrated with metro west.

Bristol Temple meads station to pill and Portishead and Ashton Gate station.

Bristol Temple meads station to Lawrence hill,Stapleton road , Ashley Down,Filton Abbey wood, Filton North and Henbury for cribs causeway.

Bristol Temple meads station Lawrence hill Stapleton road ,Ashley Down, Filton Abbey wood Bristol parkway station, yate charfield,cam and Dursey stonehouse Bristol road Gloucester central and Cheltenham spa



Bristol Temple meads station, keynsham, Oidfiled park, Bath spa Freshford ,Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon Trowbridge, Westbury warminster ,Frome

And possible new stations at st Anne's park and saltford.

We need a fully integrated mass transit system.

With through tickets and intergrated transport system.

With regards to update on the bus Network we are pleased that the mayor Is making progress.

With replacement bus services.

For services being cuts .

In the following areas.

Services 96 st Anne's park Bristlington knowle Hengrove whitchurch Hartcliffe.

Is to be run by Abus .

And services 22 Twerton to the university in Bath .

Service 82 Radstock, Westfield midsomer Norton, paulton

Libra travel.

511 in Bristol to Bedminster Euro Taxis.

52 Bishopsworth to Bristol city centre Transpora .

62 Thornbury, Berkley ,sharpness, Dursey may lane.

Connections for Bristol with first group Applegate coaches.

But the mayor still need very urgent action.

On services 178 Radstock, Westfield Midsomer Norton paulton, Timbury, marksbury keynsham Bristlington Arnos vale Bristol Temple meads station Bristol bus and coach station

The section between Midsomer Norton paulton ,Timbury ,marksbury, keynsham Bristlington.

With a new operator.

Services 5

Bristol city centre st Paul st werburgess Eastville park ,Stapleton ,Broomhill, Oidbury court, Downend.

Y4 Bristol bus and coach station Eastville park ,Stapleton, Frenchay winterbourne ,Frampton cotterell, Coalpit heath yate bus station.

These routes serve Hospitals with no replacement services at Frenchay.

Stapleton. And Glenside hospital uwe campus.

Services 47 Bristol bus and coach station st paul st werburges Eastville park Fishponds Road, Fishponds, oildbury court ,Emerson green ,Puckchurch and westerleight and yate not a replacement services.

Is not a replacement services

And with no evening or Sunday service.

Other services need replacement are services 12 in Bath spa bus and coach station to Bathampton.

Services 11 Bath spa bus and coach station to Haycombe.

Services 20 in Bath circle .

126 wells bus and coach station to cheddar,Axbridge ,winscombe, Banwell locking ,Weston bus and coach station.

X2 Yatton to Bristol bus and coach station.

55 whitchurch to Bristol Airport

Bristol Airport to clevedon. 54

53 clevedon town service.

D2 Bath spa bus and coach station Midford, Norton st Phillips Rode and Beckington.

Evening service.

Frome to Bath spa has a railway service but needs intergrated ticketing on first group bus and trains .

As does yatton to Bristol Temple meads via Nalisea and Backwell parson street and Bedminster.

These routes still need discussion with local bus and coach operators.

Some have drivers .

Abus citistar Euro Taxis Applegate coach Barkers coaches centurion coaches Berkley coaches Transpora coachstyle Faresaver ctc coaches.

To see if any of these services can be operated.

Big lemon bus company of Brighton is looking to run bus services.

But need a western traffic commissioner Kevin Rooney area licence.

And bus Depot with pits and tools.

Before it can take over bus routes .

506 Bristol city centre to Lawrence hill Easton Eastville park Horfield Southmead hospital bus station.

505 Southmead hospital bus station to Clifton to long Ashton park and ride.

515 Stockwood ,whitchurch ,Hengrove hospital imperial park.

516 whitchurch park Hengrove hospital to knowle .

But we also need to understand why the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority has the following

Bus routes via the Gloucester Road to Bristol bus and coach station.

17 Keynsham,Warmley,Kingswood soundwell ,staple hill, Fishponds Eastville park ,Horfield ?Southmead hospital bus station Gloucester road to Bus and coach station.

Services Y6 chipping sodbury yate bus station to Frampton cotterell iron Acton winterbourne ,Hambroke ,Bristol parkway station little stoke ,Patchway cribbs causeway bus station,Filton, Southmead hospital ,bus and coach station then via Gloucester road to Bristol bus and coach station

When these bus drivers could change over at Southmead hospital bus station with cafes and restaurants.

Services 349 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale,Bristolington and keynsham.

Is duplicating the Bristolington park and ride bus service From Bristol city centre and Bristol Temple meads station to

Bristolington,

Run very empty

Costing Drivers and £ 700 000 .

In west of England mayoral combined transport Authority subsidies.

Services 36 Bristol city centre to st Anne's park could start from Broadmead shopping centre and still run to Bristolington and save drivers and a bus

But first group plc is run buses to it's new canteen in the city centre or the bus station.

We need to Network review services with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council with the bus operators and First group plc and stagecoach group.

With more passenger input through the bus forum and Bus service Advisory Board.

Which must include Transport Board members Sarah Warren from Banes ,steve Reade from South Gloucestershire council Don Alexander Bristol city council and Steve Hogg from North Somerset council and passenger group's as per Department for transport instructions in bus back better.

And North Somerset council to join with the lep the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

On tickets all tickets should be all operators tickets Bath rider

Bristol rider ,Weston super mare rider

Avon rider and Freedom pass bus and rail services.

And ferry services in Bristol harbour.

Which need investment in disabled access to ferries and wharf.

## **2. Damien Valentine – Passengers of the 178 Bus service**

Save the 178 bus!

We are here today to ask that the decision to cancel the 178 bus service is reconsidered, or that a suitable replacement service is introduced.

A new route, the 379 service, has been described as a partial replacement for the 178 service. For many users of the 178 route, this description is wholly inaccurate:

- (1) The 379 service will not travel through the villages of High Littleton, Timsbury, Farmborough, Marksbury or Burnett, leaving these villages with virtually no public transport options and many members of these communities will become isolated as a result.
- (2) The 379 service will not travel through Keynsham or Brislington. Many of the current users of the 178 service use this route to travel to Wellsway and St Brendan's schools - the proposed route would force these school children to travel into Bristol before catching a different service back to these schools, significantly increasing their journey time.

In addition to the issues with the proposed service, we question the necessity of the 379 service. This route will provide additional transport options to the villages of Temple Cloud and Clutton; villages which are fortunate enough to have a half-hourly bus service into Bristol, at the expense of any meaningful service to our villages.

Further to this, whilst the proposed route does allow people to travel from the towns of Midsomer Norton and Radstock to Bristol, it does not meet the travel needs of the majority of users of the 178 service; such as those who exit the bus in Keynsham and Brislington - a recent headcount on a morning route saw 24 people exit the bus at the stop outside St Brendan's school alone.

The cancellation of the 178 service will have devastating impacts to our communities. A petition has been created to save the 178 bus and this has been signed by over 1000 people. Many people have cited the loss of independence for the elderly and people with disabilities as their reason for signing, and many others have called out that they use this service to travel to school or work.

One particularly sad story is that of a local resident who uses this service daily to visit her husband who is spending his final days in a care home. Another lady, who has special needs, has been asked by her employer to hand in her notice (after 30 years of loyal service) as she will be left with no means of travel to her workplace. Amongst these extremely sad stories are many stories of people who will no longer be able to visit shops, attend doctors appointments or meet with friends from nearby villages. There are also people who are left with no viable method of transport to their workplace during a cost of living crisis.

The 178 might not be the most profitable bus route in the area, but for those communities along its route, this is an absolutely vital service and must continue.

### **3. Brendon Taylor, Bristol Disability Equalities Forum and Ian Beckey Gloucestershire Catch the Bus Campaign**

Whist we welcome the investment in light rail/ mass transit system. for Great Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset council. area . Which need to be fully accessible and design for disabled passengers.

Like Manchester metro link and Glasgow trans clyde Network.

And Newcastle upon Tyne metro system which is fully accessible and has bus and ferry connections.

Which we welcome between Bristol and Bath and Bristol and Bristol city centre and South Bristol and Bristol Airport.

Bristol city centre and East Bristol.

We welcome the Investment in metro west Bristol Temple meads pill , Portishead line and a station at Ashton Gate in the future.

Bristol Temple meads station.

Lawrence Hill ,Stapleton road,Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood, Filton North for the Arena Henbury for cribbs causeway.

Bristol Temple meads station Filton Abbey wood Bristol parkway station yate charfield cam and Dursey stonehouse Bristol road and Gloucester central.

Bristol Temple meads station keynsham Salford Bath spa Freshford Avoncliff Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury warminster or Frome.

These station need to be fully accessible.

But the most important issue is the cutting of bus services across the city region .

With area of the city region being left without public bus service.

Services y4 Bristol city centre st Paul's, St werburges Eastville park, Stapleton Frenchay ,winterbourne, Frampton cotterell Coalpit heath yate bus station.

Park and ride.

5 Bristol bus and coach station st Pauls

St werburges Eastville park Stapleton Broomhill Fishponds oidbury court Downend.

This services pass heath facilities at Stapleton university of the west of England Glenside campus Fishponds oidbury court Downend.

The vassal centre.

A west of England centre for independence living.

All these sites plus the head injury unit require at a bus service.

The west of England mayoral combined transport Authority does not appear to arrange any replacement support bus services.

In this area .

Except the 47 Bristol bus and coach station st Pauls st werburges Eastville Fishponds Road services.

Oidbury court Downend Emerson green puckchurch westerleight and yate bus and coach station with no Evening and Sunday services.

Which does not operator the same route

And 626 Bus service wootton under edge iron Acton winterbourne Hambroke Frenchay, Stapleton ,Eastville park

Bristol city centre.

Other community cuts off our Midsomer Norton Paulton Timbury marksbury keynsham  
Bristolington Arnos vale Bristol Temple meads station Bristol bus and coach station.

178 needs a replacement services.

We understand the mayor talking to another operator.

Service x2 yatton to Bristol via cleverham Backwell and long Ashton, Ashton Gate. Hotwells.

Bristol bus and coach station.

We do have a Train services from

Yatton for clevedon Nalisea and Backwell parson street and Bedminster.

By first group Great western railway.

But services 55 whitchurch Hengrove Dundry and Bristol Airport.

54 Bristol Airport, Yatton station clevedon.

Clevedon town services.

126 Wells bus and coach station Draycott, cheddar, Axbridge, winscombe Banwell locking

Weston bus and coach station

Services withdrawn.

D2 Bath bus and coach station Midford Norton st Phillips, Rode Beckington and Frome .

With the loss of the Evening service.

But with a train services.

Frome to Bath spa station.

But with no intergrated journeys bus and railway tickets other than plus bus .

We are concerned to see with a shortage of Drivers

We appear to have the following

Routes in operation with west of England mayoral combined transport Authority money.

Services 17 keynsham town centre kingswood staple hill Fishponds Eastville park Horfield  
Southmead hospital bus station.

Now operating to Gloucester Road .

And Bristol bus and coach station.

For Driver change over

Instead of kingswood.

Services Y6 chipping sodbury yate bus station Coalpit heath,winterbourne Frampton cotterell,Bradley stoke , Bristol parkway, little stoke cribbs causeway bus Patchway and Filton and Southmead hospital bus station then Gloucester Road and Bristol bus station.

But again why are these buses changing over at the bus station

For drivers and use of canteen.

Southmead hospital bus station.

Hospital has toilets and cafes .

Which stagecoach group use

Services 349 and Bristlington park and ride service.

Duplicate bus routes along the A4 .

From Bristol city centre/Bus station Arnos vale Bristlington .

The 349 should be merger with Bristlington park and ride and save

Drivers and £ 700 000 of subsidies.

Services 36 Bristol city centre to st Anne's park could start for Broadmead shopping centre and still run to Bristlington and save a bus .

It appears to be operating to Bristol city centre for a new staff canteen.

But theirs a canteen at Bristol bus and coach station

We are pleased the mayor Dan Norris saved the 96 St Anne's park, Bristlington knowle ,Hengrove,whitchurch.

511 Bedminster to Bristol service.

52 Bristol city centre to south Bristol.

We welcome discussion with the big lemon bus company.

And saving services.

516 Whitchurch,Hengrove.hospital knowle .

515 Stockwood,whitchurch Hengrove hospital imperial park.

505 Southmead hospital bus station to long Ashton park and ride via Clifton.

506 Bristol city centre Lawrence hill, Easton Eastville Horfield Southmead hospital.

But this company has no operators license in the western traffic commissioner office Kevin Rooney the commissioner .

The company also need a Depot with pits and tools.

In Bath Somerset.



We see the village of Bathampton to Bath city centre route cut

Services 11 Bath spa bus and coach station to Haycombe cemetery cut

Services 20 cut Bath circle.

Without replacement services.

Older people being unable to walk to alternative bus stops .

St Nicholas court ,Harbutts And centre of Bathampton around Halcombe close

Older people will struggle to catch the D2 on the main A36 to and from Bath bus and coach station.

Including crossing the trunk road A36 .

We need a replacement bus operator.

A small local company this need take over the road and west of England mayoral combined transport Authority

The mayor Dan Norris and councillor Sarah Warren Banes transport executive should talk to independent bus companies.

We welcome the mayor rescuing the following.

Services 22 Twerton to the university has been saved by Abus .

82 Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton town services.

By libra travelling

So were are keen to see the metro mayor Dan Norris and councilor Steve Hogg of North Somerset council tender and award as many bus routes as possible.

But with the mayor Dan Norris and North Somerset council bring in more small local bus operators.

We want see marketing.

And reductions in bus fares on all bus and coach services operated by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

With the Avon rider.

Bristol rider .

Bath rider .

Weston super mare rider .

Freedom pass on all local bus service's

And railway services first group Great western railway and cross country trains German state railway.

Including marketing campaign for railcard and coach cards .

We need to promote intergrated transport services and mobility as a service.

To all passenger including disabled passengers.

In the bus service improvements plan and enhanced quality partnership.

We need passenger forums more than once a year.

The bus service Advisory Board and passenger forum must include passengers group and the Transport board councillor s, Banes South Gloucestershire council, Bristol city council and North Somerset council.

Not just bus companies and west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council officers.

Finally we need Bristol ferry company ferries and Terminal to be made fully accessible.

And a services extension from.

Nathan to Bristol Temple meads and the city centre and Hotwells.

Inconjunction we welcome the work by the metro mayor Dan Norris and North Somerset councillor Steve Bridger.

On a mass transit system.

But top priority for for passenger is a bus rail coach and ferry Network.

And for west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council to protect bus service for communities for access to schools colleges university Hospitals shopping leasure and Tourism facilities.

Brandon Taylor for Bristol disability equilities forum .

#### **4. Jordan Curran - Buses**

Pre Covid the Frome to Bath bus corridor had at least 4 buses (5 during peak times) an hour on it during the day time. Bus service frequency has been reduced severely now to only 1 bus an hour during the day time.

From October 9, First Bus are posing significant service changes to their bus network across the West of England region. For the First Bus D2 this means the loss of the evening week day bus service and the Sunday service reducing to two hourly but additional loss of a few bus services during the day too. This will mean the last week day bus from Bath to Frome will be

1910 in the evening, and towards Bath 1755.

Frome is the 4 largest town in Somerset with a population of over 26,000 as of 2011, this is more likely to be closer to 30,000 with recent developments in the town. Frome and the surrounding villages see Bath as their go to place for work, shops, leisure, hospitality, hospitals and also education for many of their children and further education opportunities. The D2 is Frome's only evening and Sunday bus service.

I absolutely cannot stress enough the negative effect the loss of the weekday evening D2 service could have on this Frome to Bath bus corridor -

As I have used the D2 bus services for many years I have got to know a lot of the people who use the bus. I know many, many people who are facing prospects of losing their jobs, as their jobs are reliant on hospitality industries, leisure industries shift work or irregular hospital shift work. These people work in RUH, St Martins, Theatre Royal, Roman Baths, Bath University, retail, hospitality and for other companies. These people aren't able to drive and reliant on the bus to get to work. And these people are more likely to earn the minimum wage.

This will have an overall effect on Frome's employment status, hindering growth and limiting existing opportunities. Plus have a detrimental impact on the Bath and North East Council's economy as people will have to give up their jobs as no longer able to get to work.

Frome has a younger population which is ultimately more reliant on buses compared to the national average, as stated in the Frome Town Profile 2016. I know many of the users of the evening service, many live in the villages between Frome and Bath such as Beckington, Norton St Philip and B&NES villages of Hinton Charterhouse and Midford. These villages have absolutely no alternative available as a result of the cuts. Many of the D2 evening users use the D2 as a safe option in order to get home, many being young females or those with additional needs.

I myself, due to a medical condition, will never be able to drive and the D2 is the only way I can hold down my job in Shepton Mallet (use the D2 and 174 First Bus to get to work). I work nights, so am completely ultimately dependant on the D2, and I must stress - I am not alone, many, many people's livelihoods are ultimately at stake with their employment. Some of these people have mouths to feed and must provide, and Frome has faced a difficult job market in recent years with many looking to larger places such as Bath for employment.

The social need of this service is massively important, connecting friends, family and communities. My best friend Seb lives in Brislington - And I go via Bath on the D2 to get there, and I have no idea how we're going to see each other as a result of these changes. There is not a reasonable alternative and this is going to affect both mine, and many others in Frome's mental health incredibly negatively, just after a time when Covid-19 massively

effected the mental health with isolation all over the world.

Some have promoted the train as a reasonable alternative for the D2, especially in the evenings - I am telling you now, the train is not an alternative for the D2 bus service, especially in the evenings. As it stands, Frome station is in an awkward location at the eastern edge of town, with a lack of infrastructure to connect it even with eastern developments such as Edmund park - with some facing walks up of to two miles from a dark unlit station, along dark unlit paths such as Willow Vale. There have also been several attacks at night over the last year in Frome and it's not safe to walk home late at night across Frome. There is no bus from the train station and Frome a lot of Frome taxi companies have gone out of business post Covid and the ones that remain don't operate late the evening. Frome station has, quite frankly, stagnated growth and not seen many improvements in the timetable for many years, at present the average is roughly a direct train every 2/3 hours between Bristol/Weymouth. Fares remain high, with a return to Bath well over £10, and the train which is meant to arrive at 43 minutes past midnight is usually prone to cancellations, delays and last minute alterations - the replacement is usually a 2 hour rail replacement bus via a long, convoluted route via Avoncliff - Meaning that some users may not arrive into Frome until gone 2 o'clock in the morning. The train does not serve any of the villages along the D2 route. As a local resident, knowing local people, I know that the train arriving at 43 minutes past minute is also under threat in the GWR December timetable change.

By having no weekday evening D2 bus service will significantly affect bus patronage in the afternoon and early evening journeys as people won't travel as they can't come back. Losing the weekday evening service will be the start of spiral of decline on the D2. I wouldn't be surprised if the D2 Sunday service is withdrawn in the future as less people start to use the D2.

My take is that the D2 is being made unattractive as possible to deter growth and people using the service, in order for First Group to promote the train - Recent developments such as routing via Rode mean a longer time for the average commuter, and most likely will result in less passenger numbers, meaning that a complete D2 service withdrawal could be on the cards - And First Group have showed general disinterest in running evening D2 bus services due to a shortage of drivers. We must have commitment and find a reliable bus operator to operate this vital Frome to Bath bus service along this corridor in the evenings, until more sustainable balancing is found.

Additionally, more environmentally sustainable travel is being encouraged but at the same time the bus network is being slashed. In Somerset, 45% of Co2 comes from transport emissions and rural areas have an even greater contribution to Co2. Now is the time we should be building a better bus network not facing severe bus cuts.

I urge the West of England Combined Authority to work with Somerset County Council and find a cost effective solution that also works for regular bus users to the weekday evening D2 bus service as like many I'm genuinely going to lose my job as a result of the bus service cut.

## 5. Cllr Denise Denis, Wells Bus User Group

To West of England Combined Authority:

Wells Bus User Group collected at least 900 signatures on paper petitions, in the campaign to save the 126 service. 850 of those were sent in a recorded (signed for) posting to **Doug Claringbold** on 16 August, and a further 200 were sent to Mike Rigby at Somerset Council on 12/9/2022. It has been devastating for all those who live along the route, and who use the bus to learn that First Bus has confirmed it is axing the 126.

We need the future of this route to be assured by the Councils involved and wish to inform West of England Combined Authority of the groups of people who must have a service and that need priority.

Our concerns are for the many people who use the 126 for getting to work, from villages to Wells, for the students who live in those villages and attend the Blue School, Strode College, and Weston College, for the group of 12 women with learning disabilities who commute from Draycott to Wells for work experience at the Good Earth, for the elderly and disabled who have to attend hospital appointments.

- and this does not include the non-car users who will be isolated for shopping, and social contact with other people and organisations.

Our plea is that there can be joined up thinking between N Somerset and Somerset Councils, Somerset Bus Partnership and all stakeholders.

Here below are just some of the emails we have received:

1 Thirteen women, aged from 32 to 55 years, live at Bradbury House in Draycott. These are women with disabilities, supported by staff who do their best to empower the residents to be as independent as possible. Some work in Wells, and travel to and from their place of work by bus; others catch the 126 to meet their families for weekends. Normal activities, made possible by a bus service. If staff provide transport, this both reduces the women's independence, and also raises the question of whether we in Somerset as a community are being responsible with resources when we know it is necessary to limit our use of fuel.

As a teacher, it was heart-warming to see pupils of the Blue School and Kings of Wessex at the meeting and to listen to their articulate explanations of how important the 126 service is to them. Some live without a responsible adult who can drive; others have parents/carers whose work makes it difficult to provide transport. The point was made forcibly that the 126 bus service enables the young people to also access a social life and facilities in Wells, without which they would be isolated in a village, for example, Rodney Stoke, with all the now clearly documented effects on their mental health and well-being.

Furthermore, as well as providing transport for school children, the bus is also a vital link for some university students, enabling them to attend Bath and Bristol universities. One young carer can only attend her course if there is a bus service.

Another important group are parents/carers with young children. Often a parent/carer, both a single parent/carer or one whose partner is working, are alone with a young child or children in a rural location. The 126 bus gives access to the leisure centre, exercise being vital in our war against obesity, to the cinema, to the cathedral, to the events in Wells, as well as to the shops and cafes. Moreover, a journey on a bus is an educational and social experience for the youngsters. This is particularly the case following the restrictions placed on families over the last two years with Covid 19 and the resulting lockdowns, with teachers concerned at the poor social skills young people are exhibiting.

Another often neglected user group are those who cannot drive due to cognitive difficulties. The Alzheimer's Society work to raise the awareness of the importance of maintaining independence and contact with friends and family. Without a driving licence, how will this be achieved?

It goes without saying that Wells is an important tourist destination. While First Bus identify low passenger numbers, perhaps the timings of the service could be looked at? Having read Somerset Bus Partnership's mission statement, I am confident that they will understand the vital importance of this particular service and will move to ensure that this remains part of Somerset's transport provision.

To First Bus- I am writing on behalf of the residents of Wells, to convey urgently our dismay on hearing the news today that the 126 service Wells to Weston super Mare will be axed in October,

This service is vitally needed by the residents living in the west side of Wells and the outlying villages. Its loss will remove the only means of public transport for non-car users, whilst having the negative effect of increasing car usage with the very detrimental effect on the environment, at a time when we are being asked to limit car journeys to reduce carbon emissions. The villages of Easton, Westbury Sub Mendip, Rodney Stoke and Draycott, on the route between Wells and Cheddar, are very dependent on the 126 for commuters, students and the elderly.

Weston Super Mare is a much-loved local tourist destination, and I can imagine that after today's news of an impending recession more people will be taking daytrips rather than booking holidays. The cost of petrol is soaring, and we need

to persuade people to take days out on a bus with super savers for families- surely there is no sense in cutting this service when it could be marketed as a real alternative and also help the local economies of Wells and Weston Super mare?

2 I 'm writing in conjunction with the plan to cancel the 126 , you cant possibly do this many rely on it for work school and my uncle relies on it for his appointment with mental health team that bus is essential to everyone in cheddar axebridge and surrounding area , it will be unholy to take this service away from vaunrable people, a lot more suicides will incur dye to preventing people from being able to live a day to day life

3 My child is about to enter Year 9 at The Blue School in Wells.

We live in Rodney Stoke and both of us parents work. My child has been using the 126 bus to get to and from school for the past two years because we don't qualify for school transport as she is not at her catchment school. We are one mile out of catchment for the Blue School in terms of school transport.

We appreciate that we do not qualify for free school transport. We have been paying for her to catch the 126 and are happy to continue to do so. However, the 126 bus is being withdrawn from service from 9th October.

Our dilemma is that after 9th October, neither she, nor the other child in our village who uses the bus for school will be able to get home after school until 5pm at the earliest when we finish work.

We are not happy for them to hang around in Wells for two hours particularly in the winter months.

We would like to ask if you could consider extending the school bus route from Wells to Rodney Stoke and Draycott - and we are happy to pay for this if necessary.

If you plan to find an alternative bus company/service to keep the 126 route running, we will continue to use the service bus as it offers more options to get home especially if there are after school clubs to attend. I fear that might not happen though.

I have campaigned as best as I can to keep the 126 running but it seems all our efforts are futile and the announcement by First Bus to withdraw the service has now been made public.

Our children are very upset about losing their independence in this way and I know there are many others whose jobs are at stake due to the loss of this service.

## **6. Emilia Melville for West of England Shared Transport and Active Travel**

To achieve net zero 2030 we need a rapid modal shift away from cars, in fact regional assessments indicate a 40% reduction in cars to 1990 levels. This requires an integrated, cheap, reliable public transport system.

People need to be able to rely on public transport to be on time and not be cancelled. Buses or other mass transit need to connect with active travel modes, and get people to where they work and shop, and go out for leisure and education.

This means integrated ticketing across all modes of public transport (trains, buses of all operators, trams, e-scooters and e-bikes); capped daily fares; cheaper than car parking; as well as aligned timetables - or pulse based timetabling so that interconnections are well-timed and smooth, transitioning from local feeder routes to fast routes. Information needs to be clearly accessible for all users, on smartphones and for those who are not digitally connected. Real-time updates should follow state of the art information as exists in Dublin and Edinburgh.

This needs to be coordinated by our local authorities and operated as a public service to serve communities, and not only profitable routes. It is essential to make these changes and investments in the next 5 years, alongside changes that discourage car use, if we are to achieve net zero. As a green region we should be leading the way and not trailing behind other cities - with our retrograde, ailing public transport holding back jobs and education. As the regional governance body, the leadership for this visionary change needs to come from the West of England Combined Authority.

## **7. Cllr Marley Bennett, Bristol City Council - Buses**

The area of Stapleton, in my ward of Eastville, will lose all of its local bus connections as a result of First Bus' decision to withdraw both bus services that go through the area, the Number 5 and Y4. There have now been several well-attended meetings on the issue during which I have spoken to numerous residents who have serious concerns about the impact of this. This includes a number of people who do not own a car, some of whom are disabled and cannot walk to what would be their closest bus stop which is quite some distance away. They face being completely cut off as a result. I have also spoken with people who up till now have relied on these services to travel to Brandon Trust's Elm Tree Farm, which is a social enterprise for people with learning disabilities and autism, have said they would no longer be able to get there and access these crucial services.

This is further compounded by the collapse of Bristol Community Transport and the ending of their services, including the Dial-A-Ride service, meaning many residents who are unable to afford a taxi now have no low-cost transport options available to them.

This is not acceptable in the slightest and there is a clear strength of feeling that Stapleton needs a bus service, and a petition to save the Number 5 bus service has already attracted over 1,500 signatures - <https://www.change.org/p/keep-the-number-5-bus-route-in-bristol>.

Unfortunately, my request of First to run the new 47 service through Stapleton has been rejected as First said this was not possible, without explaining why.



I am grateful for Mayor Dan Norris' responses on the matter so far and I appreciate the difficulties created by the severe shortages of bus drivers. I am now appealing to the Combined Authority to work with First Bus and Bristol City Council to find a solution to this major issue, so Stapleton will have a bus service and residents there are able to get around.

I, and residents in Stapleton, will be very disappointed if it not possible to find a solution and some people will sadly face being stuck isolated at home if all bus services to Stapleton cease from October, as is currently proposed. If this does happen and there is nothing that can be done in the immediate term to preserve a bus service for Stapleton, we are requesting at the very least a cast-iron guarantee that these services will be restored as soon as possible, when enough drivers have been recruited and trained, and that West of England Combined Authority/First publish a timescale for this.

#### **8. Robbie Bentley – Buses**

I write with regard to the forthcoming amendments to be made to local buses in the St. Pauls area of Central Bristol (address provided below and not to be used as part of this message)

I stood as an independent Candidate in the Ashley Ward Election held on 6th May 2021 and among my pledges was a pledge to work with local transport planners and Bus Operators to improve local bus services. This came immediately prior to a decision taken at National level to cut Relief Grant Funding which immediately meant that the Number 5 route (operated by First) through the area I live in to a commuter service which meant that large numbers of carless people were cut off from amenities at Eastgate long used by people as the primary everyday retail shopping area for people and a focal point for the community.

We are now facing yet another example of unthinking and unaccountable decisions being taken by people who have no idea what impact withdrawal of bus services will have to this area, in an area where there is no more capacity for private car ownership either on or off-street.

We need more bus services in Ashley, not less.

I therefore wish to make proposals to make this happen and hope you will consider this statement in due consideration for your deliberations

1. If you look at services on the periphery of this area, they all operate at higher frequencies than the 5, yet serve less people in their areas of Transit.
2. The number 70 currently operates along Stokes Croft before Continuing to Cheltenham Road and Turning onto Cromwell Road, when there is no need for people in that area to have additional owing to the high frequencies of the 71, 73, 75 & 76 routes.
3. On the Northern edge we have Routes 17 & 24, along with the funded service 506 providing services along the length of the Muller Road Corridor.

4. There is a high instance in St. Pauls of students of both UWE & UoB as well as having the Bristol Centre of BIMM.

5. Replacing a service that runs at a half hourly frequency during the day with one that will run every hour runs contrary to the Climate Emergency declared by BCC and will cause further harm to people who have been isolated from community amenities and recreational locations.

I urge you to consider your options in an open and pragmatic manner.

End