

STATEMENTS RECEIVED FOR THIS COMMITTEE ARE
ATTACHED

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Agenda Item 6

West of England Combined Authority Committee meeting on 16 June 2023

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Statement 1

C. Ball

I write to you as a mother to teenagers, hospital worker and environmentally aware resident of the small village of Tunley outside Bath. In our area, we have just had the much needed 179 and 768 bus services removed and other communities have also recently lost their local bus services. The consequences for a huge variety of local people are massive and far reaching. I understand that you have the power to fix this situation- please help by funding regular and reliable buses again through our village and other small villages surrounding Bath.

Your action would enable local people to get to and from school and work and help meet their health and social needs. If services were provided at sensible and useful times for school runs and working hours the buses would be regularly used and supported and many cars would be taken off the roads. So many villagers don't want to drive into and around Bath but need a regular, affordable and reliable alternative that can get them to where they need to go by the time they need to be there. The westlink service cannot be relied on to get us to school and work in good time and the roads leading to Bath are just not safe for cycling so there is no other option but car travel for my family and many families like mine for the foreseeable future. Other residents without alternative transport are now finding themselves completely cut off and isolated.

By fixing our public transport situation in this way you can help to protect our fragile environment by getting more cars off the road, support the economy of Bath and prevent massive long term negative health, social and other consequences for many local people. Your actions would help the villages around Bath to not only survive but to thrive and flourish.

Statement 2

John Walford

I am most disappointed that the bus service linking our village of Tunley to Bath has now finished.

I am of course well accustomed to statements from local and national politicians espousing the benefits of using public transport, but then cutting off such vital links for elderly, infirm

or young residents of small villages whilst pointing the finger at each other and blaming one another for not providing finance!

May I create a scenario for you, Imagine that you are 72 years old (as I am), that you live in the village of Tunley, that you do not have your own transport, and you have an appointment at 10:30 am at the Royal United Hospital for a 3 monthly cancer check up, how will you get there on time using public transport? (bearing in mind that this new 'green bus' may be booked for a specific time, but its arrival time at (for instance the Park and Ride) depends on who else is picked up after you, and where they are located.

Is it too much to hope that instead of what appears to me to be political point scoring, local and national politicians actually work together to provide a comprehensive public transport service that actually satisfies the need of tax payers..

Statement 3

Annie Watson

Please reinstate the 768 & 179 Rural bus services - I am writing to beg you to reconsider supporting the above services.

These services provide an essential, reliable and dependable transport link into Bath and therefore beyond, to hospitals, schools, rail links etc. By cutting these, you have inadvertently isolated our entire communities. We are not served by Westlink, getting a DRT bus is proving impossible, unreliable and completely inefficient.

By cutting these services, you have created isolation, anxiety and more private vehicle traffic. Which is short-sighted to say the least.

Please don't continue to blame other parties, stand up and make a difference. We would love to support your (costly) free Birthday Bus pass initiative, but that's impossible without a bus!

Statement 4

Cate Le Grice-Mack

As a former representative of bus users within B&NES, and member of Travelwatch SW board, I am dismayed at the decision to reduce the rural bus services and experiment with a dial a ride system serving rural communities. These communities have seen a gradual drainage of facilities from banks and post offices, shops and medical facilities, and access to education.

Sustainable, reliable transport is vital for rural dwellers not only to access these facilities for themselves, but also to ensure that urban-based services are accessible to their customers.

The previous B&NES strategy recognised that an interlinking network of public transport options, enabling the very high percentage of rural dwellers to access urban facilities and employment, is vital for a sustainable, low carbon-generating system.

Why is dial-a ride unsuitable? We know from past experiments that

1. it is very expensive
2. It is only accessible for those with a very flexible timetable
3. Internet connections are poor in many of our rural areas, and many of the potential passengers do not have access to internet connections even if they do exist.

For regular journeys to work and education, dial a ride is useless: as shown by the fact that approximately 70% of the peak traffic within our urban areas is generated in the rural hinterland.

As a consequence we are aware as a resident community of the growth in private car use to transport pupils and workers.

If the Authority is truly seeking a climate-respecting transport system it will review the current split of funds with the local authorities, and enable more regular and predictable routes to feed from rural to urban throughout the Authority's area.

Statement 5

John Ager, Chair, Limpley Stoke and Freshford Transport Link

Freshford 94 bus service - I am writing to you on behalf of Limpley Stoke and Freshford Transport Link to request your support for retaining the no 94 Bus service. It is an invaluable service for those residents who do not drive and for whom public transport is either unavailable or inappropriate. It provides links for Freshford and Limpley Stoke to both Bath and Trowbridge.

Link offers a fill in service with volunteer drivers for those residents who need transport to hospitals, doctors' surgeries, shops and supermarkets. We cover essential medical appointments and the bus covers visits to shops and supermarkets. The 94 bus passes through the centre of the village (unlike the train station which is a steep walk away). Most of our journeys are to Beckington and Frome for which there is no public transport.

The loss of the 94 Bus service will place a heavy additional, if not insurmountable, burden on our efforts and I would be grateful for your support in retaining this important rural service.

Statement 6

Damien Valentine

The loss of the 179 and the 768 bus services are a huge blow for the communities they served. Whilst the 522 does cover some of those villages, the journey time has gone from 20 minutes to 75. Well over an hour. And when you factor in the return trip, passengers are looking at three hours of bus time to reach their closest city. While neither service could be

considered a commercial route, they were used. In recent months there was a very noticeable uptake as well, where even previously quiet times of day were getting busy and would often be standing room only. These are clearly well used and necessary buses, that the WestLink DRT is struggling to match demand for. The 768 should be reinstated as it was, it complimented the 179 nicely and covered a zig zag route across the area, linking communities that would otherwise have long and inconvenient journeys.

As for the 179, to give it long term viability, consider the idea of operating it between Bath and Wells, serving the villages in between. Tunley, Camerton, Timsbury, Farmborough, High Littleton and Hallatrow.

- Connects two popular cities with a much faster route (around an hour compared to nearly two)
- the now retired James Freeman of First Bus believed the route would become a commercial service after a year or two and not require additional support once it was up and running
- Different enough from the withdrawn 179 route that it should meet BSIP guidelines as new something new and innovative
- keeps Tunley, Camerton, Timsbury, Farmborough, High Littleton and Hallatrow connected with a fast service to Bath
- opens up Wells to residents of these communities, good for shopping, jobs and social activities
- the idea is extremely popular with 179 passengers when discussed with them

The full proposal, updated to reflect the current bus situation and the research conducted was included with this statement.

Statement 7

Kim Hicks, Member of the South Bristol Wrong Road Group

It is understood that Transport authorities need to prepare a workable document to be known as the Local Transport Plan. This will “develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within an area.

The “South East Bristol Low Carbon Orbital Corridor” was in the JLTP4 although is not currently an active plan in any way. It is understood that there is no longer the funding to install the route and there was virtually no support for it in the last consultation-there has not even been a feasibility study on the route through/on Whitchurch Lane. It also goes against so many recent emergency announcements.

Local people are extremely concerned that it will **substantially increase the levels of traffic, AND pollution** on a residential road that is next to a junior school with 600+ pupils. The route would also **destroy parts of our unreplaceable, valuable Green Belt.**

Leaving the route in the plan just causes *unnecessary stress* and *anguish* for 1000's of people. Local people have already had this hanging over them, for a number of years now. It is also worth noting that responding to the JLTP4 consultation, **over a third of all responses** were against the idea of the proposed route. Bearing in mind that the consultation went out to approx. 1.5 million people in the Authority area. The Authority was quite clearly informed the people did not want to have our Green Belt destroyed OR considerable amounts of additional traffic on a totally unsuitable residential road. The idea of the route, "South East Bristol Low Carbon Orbital Corridor", IS NOT safe or efficient and the impact of it would go against the various emergencies etc e.g. environmental and ecological. It is also unaffordable. It is cruel, on local residents, to keep the unaffordable, ill thought through, polluting route, that will destroy our precious Green Belt in the plan. This is especially so because here is virtually no support, need or money for it!

We hope that you are truly listening to your residents and hearing what they say.

Statement 8

Martin Robinson

The loss of this bus service from Midsomer Norton to Bath for the residents of the large villages covered by these routes is a major blow. The usage figures of the 179 services of 14,959 passengers per week speaks volumes. Whilst it can be understood, and possibly accepted, that some small hamlets might have to forgo a bus service, it is illogical for major villages, with a proven usage rate, to find themselves deprived of a bus service to and from Bath.

The proposed 50 / 50 split is a significant proposal with considerable merit, I trust the combined authorities will work together in ensuring the return of the 179 bus service.

Statement 9

Cllr David Orme, Chairman Dunkerton & Tunley Parish Council

Supported Bus Services Along the Cam Valley in BANES - The cancellation of rural BANES bus services has caused disruption to peoples' lives. The extent of that impact along the Cam Valley can be inferred from the figures provided by BANES showing patronage of the now terminated 179 service:

Service	Route	Tender Options	Passengers taken		
			2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
179	Midsomer Norton - Bath	Mon – Sat Daytime	7,807	6,535	14,959

In the light of the Authority's strategic intent to secure a "modal shift" towards bus use, we find it is beyond parody that a decision has been taken to deprive the Cam Valley residents of this service when it was subject – clearly – to fast growing post-COVID patronage.

What seems to have been missed in the analysis is the recognition that this was not a "rural" bus service at all. It did not serve a few small hamlets scattered loosely around the south of the city. It was, in fact, a major transport service along the Cam Valley: arguably, with the 768 service it created an arterial transport triangle with the A37 and the A367. It punched well above its "rural" weight.

We try to rationalise why the service has been lost, so as a Parish Council we can prepare for the losing battle of explaining such a perverse, strategically incoherent decision to our residents. We can find only 2 points to explain (not excuse or support) it:

1. Given the poor construction, poor communication and poor management of the Authority's public(sic) consultation into Supported Bus Services, we do not believe that there could ever have been a credible articulation of "The Need" for the 179 service along the Cam Valley. It is too late, and would be of only academic interest, to ask whether the result of the consultation echoed the growth tabulated above? And, if so, why the service was lost? We will save the Authority's blushes.

2. Management of supported bus services has always been empirical. Particularly, in the assessment of which services deserve support, we have seen over the years a woeful articulation of Value for Money. The 3 clearly distinct measures of Value – to the operator, to the Authority and to the residents – have been mixed up, transposed and conflated to suit the political need like a card sharp's game of Find the Lady. The calculation of cost per passenger mile is important but it is a very poor, supposedly over-arching, measure of Value.

We won't get this right together until we secure another "modal shift" - away from bean-counting costs to start assessing the true strategic and social Value of bus services.

In this sense, whilst the 179 might have been unprofitable (of low Value to the operator) it was a service showing growing post-COVID patronage along the Cam Valley (therefore of high Value to the Authority in pursuance of its strategic Net Zero target.) It was of particularly high Value to the residents because, unlike city dwellers in Bath who have seen their supported services generously retained, if they missed a 179 pick-up they couldn't hop on another service 20 minutes later from the same stop to meet their "Need."

We hope and can only trust that the Authority's members will work together urgently to secure the Mayor's proposed 50/50 funding solution to the reinstatement of the 179 and 768 services along the Cam Valley.

Statement 10

Marilyn Gardener

Just what rights has Dan Norris got that he feels squandering 8 million pounds on birthday treats of free bus journeys is a good idea.

Worst idea he has ever had, and makes a nonsense of the whole lack of bus services. Have we been asked what we think of his hair brained schemes. We have completely lost our bus service in Tunley. He has all these silly ideas, but no sensible ones.

I cannot make the meeting due to health reasons.

Statement 11

Rowena

I write to protest against the withdrawal of the 94 bus which serves Freshford and provides a lifeline for the elderly and non car - owners in the village, a number whom have reduced mobility. My question to the Authority committee is how can the Mayor and the West of England Combined Authority justify the withdrawal of this regular bus service for village communities and yet decide to allow bus users throughout the Metropolitan area a free month of travel on the anniversary of their birthday? Central Government has provided funds for travel and surely the remit should be to give as many the Authority residents as possible the opportunity of being able to use public transport, not reduce that opportunity for village residents. Wiltshire is already providing a major share of the monies to support the 94 service. To enable our elderly residents to be able to get to and from Bath, the taxi fare in each direction is £25.00 and one lady who has lived in the village for over 50 years has told me she believes she will have to move home without the lifeline of the bus and the independence it gives her. The proposed Westlink service depends on travellers being internet/ smart phone literate and for most elderly villagers, very understandably, this will be beyond their skills.

I urge Dan Norris and the Authority's Committee to rethink their approach and provide the funding to enable our bus service to survive.

Statement 12

Rob Wood

No 94 bus route serving Freshford - I write to protest in the strongest possible terms against the withdrawal of the 94 bus which serves Freshford and provides a lifeline for the elderly and non car - owners in the village, a number whom have reduced mobility. My question to the Authority's committee is how can the Mayor and the West of England Combined Authority justify the withdrawal of this regular bus service for village communities and yet decide to allow bus users throughout the Metropolitan area a free month of travel on the anniversary of their birthday? Central Government has provided funds for travel and surely the remit should be to give as many the Authority residents as possible the opportunity of being able to use public transport, not reduce that opportunity for village residents. Wiltshire is already providing a major share of the monies to support the 94 service. To enable our elderly residents to be able to get to and from Bath, the taxi fare in each direction is £25.00 and one lady who has lived in the village for over 50 years has told me

she believes she will have to move home without the lifeline of the bus and the independence it gives her. The proposed Westlink service depends on travellers being internet/ smart phone literate and for most elderly villagers, very understandably, this will be beyond their skills.

I urge Dan Norris and the Authority's Committee to rethink their approach and provide the funding to enable our bus service to survive.

Statement 13

Susan Brice

I am personally devastated that my local rural bus service No 94 is likely to be withdrawn shortly. I have used this service for over 30 years & rural buses should be encouraged to prevent car use & get people to work, schools & shops etc. People like me will drive rather than rely on erratic Westlink services which are not a practical solution.

I am supported by Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg MP who has made representations on my behalf to Banes Council & the Authority. In the Somerset Guardian on May 31st 2023 Sir Jacob writes about the cut to rural bus services & describes the Mayor's plans as ludicrous & hare brained schemes.

The Metro Mayor has been allocated a £57million pound fund from central government for improving public transport. He has been told recently by the government's transport minister that these funds can be used to support regular rural bus services.

In response to this I ask for some help from this fund for Bus 94. These buses are funded via Council & central government so the fund should be allocated to support local transport & not make life more difficult for the public.

Statement 14

Mary and Richard Croston

As residents of Freshford, Bath, we are writing to you in response to the imminent cessation of the 94 bus service.

This service is of great importance to the residents of Freshford, and particularly of Sharpstone, which is some distance from the railway station. If the service ceases to exist, many people who are unable to drive will not be able to leave the village, and this is not an acceptable situation.

We strongly urge you to consider village residents and the impact that not having a daily bus service will make to our lives, and that you will continue to run this important service.

Statement 15

Patricia Putt

There is nothing democratic about the withdrawing of the 94 service which runs from Trowbridge to Bath. Freshford is going to be hardest hit and also upper Limply Stoke . There was no consultation (expression of interest) as outlined in the rules on Gov. Uk to run a new ODS . According to .Gov Uk these services are to run in rural areas where bus services do not meet local demand . The 94 is used predominantly by older people . In Freshford and beyond to Bath the service is used at all times of the day.

Many elderly people only want to go for 2 hours being not strong enough to hang around longer . Some stronger folk go in for longer to get to other parts of Bath . An on demand service would take more than the 30 minutes to the centre of Bath . Would mean that older local Freshford people would become more isolated . Some go on the bus simply to socialise with other locals travelling from one end of the village to another or The village shop so that they don't have to carry groceries or for the chat on the way to Bath . Here they learn about what is happening locally and as a newcomer it was a brilliant way of finding stuff out.

There would be far more cars (link drivers included) travelling into Bath . I would have to drive to a commitment in Pultenay st Bath twice weekly. Also to the leisure centre which takes in my annual membership . Other than food I spend money in Bath shops , opticians, clothes , shoes , restaurants , cinemas theatre matinees . I am unable to walk up to the main road for another service and indeed I know that the D1 through Winsley is often full . So no thanks to an OD S that drops one to a connecting service . I know several widows who use the bus who are unable to drive .

According to Government reports the ODS is supposed to offer greater flexibility and to provide a better service and to get closer to service users homes. We don't need that here. The bus stops at several places in the village and it is well known that the drivers will pick up or drop off en route . And still it gets to town in 30 minutes only being late if there is a road traffic problem .

There was also supposed to be both written and online information about how a OD S would run . There has been no written info here. Monkton Coombe residents I spoke with last Friday do not seem to know anything is afoot.

The mayoral service seems to think that this can be implemented to our village in a short space of time with no consultation and unlike the government recommendations it feels able to withdraw a well used service. The bus itself is fairly new and I think complies with the clean air regulation for Bath. Money spent on upgrading , what a waste.

I am writing this statement for myself and the bus full of people that travelled last Friday none of whom have access to email. I feel that the proposed ODS is discrimination against older people in particular who are unable to go to meetings or use email . Unable to book a service by email or through an app . Who often can't book in advance and need to know on the day that they can get to town in a hurry .

Statement 16

Gordon Wadsworth

Reinstatement of Bus 179 in the N E Somerset area of Bath - I urge you to use the new government directive to provide financial support for the much used and needed 179 bus route which is a vital link for many, many elderly people, school children and work people to continue to live their normal lives. This service is not just a bus service it is a lifeline for many and incredible it's taken away from us, this action is hurting so many.

As our once MP you must know and understand the issues of this area so please, please look again and provide some support now you have the money.

Statement 17

Ann Forbes

Urgent Appeal to Maintain the 94 Bus Service: Bath - Trowbridge – Bath. I am writing to bring to your attention the critical importance of maintaining the bus service that connects our village, Freshford, to Bath and Trowbridge and surrounding areas. As an active member of our community, I am deeply concerned about the potential cessation of this vital service and its negative impact on our residents.

Accessibility and Mobility: The bus service serves as a lifeline for many residents, particularly the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and those without personal vehicles. By ensuring their access to reliable and affordable transportation, we guarantee their ability to meet their daily needs, such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social interactions. Cutting off this service would severely hamper their mobility, leading to isolation and reduced quality of life.

Economic Vitality: A vibrant public transportation network is crucial for the economic prosperity of any community. Our village relies heavily on commuters traveling to the town for work, education, and various services. By maintaining the bus service, we enable residents to reach employment opportunities, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities in the local towns / city. Additionally, it promotes tourism and benefits local businesses by facilitating the inflow of visitors into our village.

Environmental Considerations: With growing concerns about climate change and carbon emissions, it is imperative to encourage sustainable modes of transportation. By providing an efficient and convenient bus service, we can reduce the number of private vehicles on the road, resulting in decreased traffic congestion and improved air quality. This contributes to our collective effort to combat climate change and create a cleaner and greener future for our village.

Social Equity and Inclusion: Public transportation plays a vital role in fostering social equity and inclusion. It ensures that all members of our community, regardless of their

socioeconomic status, have equal access to essential services and opportunities. Many individuals and families rely on the bus service as their primary means of transportation, and by discontinuing it, we risk deepening existing social disparities and creating further divisions within our community.

Safety and Well-being: Maintaining the bus service is crucial for the safety and well-being of our residents. Public transportation offers a secure and reliable mode of travel, especially during adverse weather conditions or when individuals are unable to drive due to various reasons. By providing a safe alternative, we reduce the likelihood of accidents, enhance road safety, and promote peace of mind for our community members.

In light of these significant considerations, I urge you to reconsider any plans to terminate this bus service. I understand that budgetary constraints and other factors may influence decision-making, but I implore you to explore alternative options such as optimizing routes, adjusting schedules, or seeking additional funding sources to ensure the continuity of this essential service.

Statement 18

Lucilla Shirley

Bus service 94 between Bath and Trowbridge

- I am writing as a regular user of the number 94 to plead for the retention of this service.
- This service is a rural route between Bath and Trowbridge, passing through several villages where there is no other public transport
- It is used by residents who have no other means of transport
- For those who do have cars, it is a preferable option as it cuts down pollution
- It passes through the centre of Freshford village, where I live, which is spread-out and hilly, therefore perfect for people with walking difficulties
- It provides an invaluable means of reaching shops and other facilities not available in the village
- It is an important link with the friends and family of village residents, who can find rural life isolating and bad for mental health
- So PLEASE reconsider axing this important local asset

Statement 19

Terry Harris

The loss of the route 82 community bus service - Someone invaluable has been lost, and the pain is especially being felt among the elderly, vulnerable and disabled passengers of the recently lost 82 community bus route. The 82 provided a distinct service that cannot be replicated by either the newly-introduced DRT service or Dial-a-Ride. This has left them with options that are clearly unsuitable to their needs, and potentially leaving proud independent living people housebound and cut off from society. I'm extremely concerned about the negative effects it's having on their mental health and general state of well-being.

Demand Responsive Transport relies on the use of a mobile app and requires you to pre-arrange your journey, neither of which are suitable for a older generation that grew up in an era well before the age of the internet, and has little to no experience of matters pertaining to Information Technology. DRT's only pick up and drop off at designated bus stops along the mainroad, and do not cater for anyone living a considerable distance away in a housing estate. This is what made the 82 ideal and fit for purpose.

While it could be argued that Dial-a-Ride could plug that gap, there are considerable differences that come to light. Everyone on this planet has the right to live out their life with dignity. The 82 served people of all age demographics, and thus didn't infringe on this most important of human rights. There is also that most important angle of inclusivity, feeling part of a wider community to consider. Another major issue that arises, is that Dial-a-Ride doesn't accept free concessionary bus passes, and comes to them personally at considerable expense.

Unnecessary devastation and suffering has been visited on their lives, it has hit those the greatest that require our care and protection from such cutbacks to essential lifeline services. I implore you to take action on their behalf.

Statement 20

Steve Reade

Chair, committee, I am addressing you today regarding agenda item 11, specifically the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding, covered in para 2.2.1 to 2.2.4

It is extremely pleasing to see that our region has been allocated six million, six hundred and forty four thousand pounds from the national pot of 343 million pounds by this government, we would obviously have liked more. This money has the ability to make a significant impact on our net zero goal. I hope the authority will ensure that the money if allocated across the whole region and benefit the rural areas as well as the urban ones.

I note there are significant stages to be gone through to ensure the money is received and spent wisely. I would ask that the Combined authority works closely with the local authorities to ensure the stages are met in a timely fashion.

I note in the previous agenda item that the EV Charging Infrastructure project has been delayed by 4 months. Our residents are crying out for some form of acceptable on street charging.

Statement 21

Janet Stevens

The need to get our 82 Bus back - I would like to point out to all concerned just what hardship, it's causing for lots of people, from taking these much needed bus service off .

I am in my 88th year with mobility problems . Worked hard , paid all my taxes , still paying them today . I am just one of many like myself living in sheltered housing, that relied on our No 82 bus , for shopping , Drs , chemists, and getting out to my up with people . Now us elderly probably voted to put you our councillors and MAYOR, in power to help us keep our independence not take it away like you have done . Also the children relied on this service for taking them to and from school . Also Mums with young children . Mr Mayor , please do the right thing , and turn this injustice around . We know you have the money to do to . Let us Elderly people try to keep doing things for ourselves . Not everyone have families to do it for them .

Statement 22

John and Wendy Fletcher

No. 94 Bus Trowbridge to Bath - We live in Limpley Stoke and were shocked to hear of plans to cancel the No. 94 bus serving our village. For many local residents, especially those with no other means of transport, this service is a 'lifeline' on which they rely.

Do those deciding on the fate of this service realise the devastating effect its removal will have on the community? It seems almost cruel to deny ourselves and our neighbours (especially the elderly, the frail and the vulnerable) this means of connecting with nearby places and facilities.

We strongly urge those responsible to reconsider this proposal.

Statement 23

Debbie and Steve Ashcroft

We are writing to you to express our concern for the potential loss of our local bus service.

The Number 94 bus connects Trowbridge and Bath via Wingfield, Westwood, Freshford, Limpley Stoke and Monkton Combe.

We have heard recently that funding has been withdrawn from this service by Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES). This is a bus which has shared funding between Wiltshire council and BANES.

The funding has been withdrawn as the government have forced BANES council to develop a scheme called West Link. Almost all the 94 bus route is outside that covered by the West Link service zones so the withdrawal of funding potentially means the loss of this vital link for those communities.

This is a bus service well used by many in the community and particularly connects older people with the local communities and facilities along the route. The service also provides transport for school children to and from King Edwards school. It is similarly used for people for going to their place of work.

There is no other bus in the area that connects these villages.

This has happened without consultation with those who actually use this bus. We had not been informed of the planned changes and have not been given the opportunity to discuss the suitability and efficacy of what is being proposed.

We are most concerned about our older people who use this bus service. West Link does not serve the majority or appear to be simple to access and we have been told it will deposit people at the Park and Ride which will mean another bus journey to reach Bath. This is very challenging if you have limited mobility, are not used to using the internet or getting connecting buses (which is true of many of the older users of the service).

There is, rightly, a general drive to encourage use of public transport rather than cars for environmental reasons but this change runs contrary to that objective. The school children will have to be taken and collected by car. Many will not have access to bus service and, of those that do, many elderly people will struggle with the difficulty / complexity of using the service and there is a potential here for people to become even more isolated.

We earnestly request you to provide the support to save our bus.

Statement 24

Jane Baddeley

Statement about changes and loss of 94 bus service

This is an important service for people in Freshford. The changes do not make it at all easy for people to, for example, go into Bath and carry shopping home. You are doubtless aware that bus services are hugely important for environmental reasons and social reasons.

It is very difficult to park in Bath and it will also have an impact on Bath retail if people stop going there for special purchases.

Bus services are also important for people to get to things such as hospital appointments.

At all costs I think the 94 bus service should be maintained

Statement 25

Penny Jones

I very much hope someone can help keep our 94 bus service which runs between Bath-Trowbridge, through the villages of Limpley Stoke and Freshford two-hourly, weekdays only as the very useful Saturday service was stopped a few years ago. When my husband is no longer able to drive in the near future and with my own reduced mobility (I'm 79), we will be marooned with only the railway station, over half a mile away and our village community shop, Galleries, to sustain us. Access to doctors, dentists, pharmacies, supermarkets, shops, etc. will be by taxi. Many of my fellow Freshfordians work in Bath, Bradford and Trowbridge, school children, tourists and walkers will all have to drive or be driven to work/school/college/medical appointments and face the nightmare of finding somewhere

to park. A lot of young families have moved here so that their children can attend the excellent Primary School; when they reach Secondary level their parents will have to take them to school each day, adding hugely to road traffic. Presumably any attempt to cut emissions from cars has been abandoned here.

I come from Oxford and was used to a half hour gap between buses into the City. When we moved here in the 1990s we had a bus and a rail service, 2 Post Offices, a Doctors' Surgery, 2 village shops, a mobile library and these are all slowly but inexorably being withdrawn, with a huge impact on our daily lives, particularly the elderly. I think the Council and Government should be considering **improving** local public transport to include a regular service to Bradford as well as Trowbridge and Bath. All these places would certainly benefit from increased footfall and the use of cafes, shops, cinemas, theatres, museums etc. and all for the cost of a couple of buses and drivers. The frequent in-city bus services could be reduced to the half hour timetable. I very much hope you will reconsider keeping our No. 94 bus on the road for us

Statement 26

Caroline Deakin

94 Bus - I would like to add my name to all those who are concerned about the prospect of our bus being terminated. There is no viable alternative. The Demand Responsive Transport system (DRT) is doomed to failure. We will be left with a very expensive (£57mn) system which is not fit for purpose and no bus.

There has been no consultation and no trials to see if it works. It doesn't! I would suggest someone from the Authority should visit Freshford. The WESTlink posters dotted around the village have a QR code. Sadly it can't be scanned as there's no signal. And that is just the beginning of the problem. I would love to hear what happens when people try to work out how to get to Bath or Trowbridge and how long the journey would take using the DRT system.

Yesterday I heard that Central Government has recanted and has told Dan Norris, the Metro Mayor and leader of the Authority that some of the £57mn grant can now be used to support existing buses. This was mentioned in a bulletin dated 8th June from Kevin Guy leader of BANES.

I sincerely hope that our excellent and reliable bus can be saved. It's not fair on Libra Travel, a small, family run company which was awarded a 5 year contract about a year ago. In good faith the owner bought new buses to comply with the clean air zone in Bath. He has already lost 2 routes, one from Midsummer Norton which carried on average 300 passengers a day.

Statement 27

Trevor Quartermaine

I have been informed that the Life line Bus Service No. 94 is going to be cancelled due to a cash grab by the Bristol/ West of England Mayor. There are many older ladies that cannot drive, who rely on the Bus for shopping, and social events in Bath, and Trowbridge.

I also believe that this action will increase the traffic congestion in Bath, which is exactly the opposite of the Cities plan.

Once again bottom line accounting is destroying the quality of life for rural area.

Statement 28

Mary Jane Bateman-Wang

94 Bus - As a local Freshford resident I am writing re intended closure of this valuable service, & hope very much it will not go ahead.

For many it is a lifeline for connecting with services during the week as needed, meeting others in daily life - well being on all fronts.

Local services lost results in increased isolation of people, decreased active mobility, & further challenges in daily life as voluntary support is stretched further than is often a viable option.

Please would you respectfully consider longer term consequences of such intended closures.'

Statement 29

Roberta Oliver

I am reading this statement as a concerned resident. I also work for the Hubs Mobility Advice Service covering the West Country which has given me particular insights into how our bus services are not working.

My role involves helping people with mobility difficulties who cannot (or can no longer) drive, to get out and about without a car. Travelling by bus is often the only option, however I have increasingly noticed that I don't have any travel options to advise people on, as many bus routes have been cut.

For example the other day I was working with someone who lives in Downend is a wheelchair user, and would like to access Bristol City Centre in the evenings for leisure activities. The bus which is accessible without having to travel up a steep hill, has been axed as it was not profitable. Community transport only operates during the day, and wheelchair accessible taxis are not always available and are expensive on a regular basis. The only option is for family members to drive him into the city centre. This is not a sustainable green alternative.

Westlink demand response services was not meant to, and does not, replace the buses that existed in the areas it has been introduced. There are also many limitations to these services. They cannot cross zone boundaries, necessitating a change of bus which older and disabled people will struggle to manage. In addition, the people I work with do not necessarily use smartphones and so would rely on the phone number being available. Demand Responsive services can never provide the level of mobility that a timetabled service can provide.

The only way to minimise or avoid these issues is to have more public control in how services are delivered. In the interest of communities across the West of England I would strongly encourage this committee to consider formally investigating the option of franchising bus services.

Statement 30

Richard Blamey, Chairman of Friends of Freshford

No. 94 bus - I write as a resident of Freshford and as Chairman of Friends of Freshford - a community organisation to maintain the environment and facilities of the rural village. The BUS SERVICE is a critical part of the village fabric providing access to Trowbridge ,Bath and other communities along the route. A substantial number of elderly widows without cars see this as an important link to the outside world for shopping, meeting friends and medical apointments. Schoolchildren among others also use the bus daily. PLEASE ENSURE THE NO.94 IS MAINTAINED FOR YEARS TO COME.

Statement 31

John Pettit

94 Bus Bath/Freshford/Trowbridge - I understand that a decision has been made to cancel this service. This is a retrograde step for our communities as it links the villages on its route and provides an important transport link for the older generation who may not have the use of a car and will now be forced to use an expensive taxi or to walk to and from the stations at Freshford, Trowbridge and Bath Spa. Whilst Trowbridge and Bath Spa are accessible for people with mobility problems, Freshford has no wheelchair access to one platform and requires passengers to use the footbridge,which is a considerable deterrent.

The 94 bus terminates in the centres of Bath Spa and Trowbridge, a convenience which we all appreciated.

This decision does not take into account that it is a service provided by BANES and paid for from the council tax paying residents who are already impacted by the non stop rises to which they are subjected every year. The 94 bus is one of the very few visible signs that we are receiving a service for our council tax payments.

The Government are keen to foster the use of public transport. The removal of the 94 bus service is in direct contradiction to this policy.

Statement 32

Maria Carvalho, Reclaim Our Buses

I am here on behalf of the Reclaim Our Buses campaign, a broad coalition of residents from across the West of England campaigning for better bus services and for the public control of buses.

We are all aware that having a well functioning bus service is critical for a thriving society. People depend on these services to access education, employment, essential services, and connect with others. As a public health practitioner, I know how crucial a good functioning public transport system is for a healthy society. This is particularly important for elderly people, young people, people living with disabilities, and people who live in remote places. For example, in Winterbourne currently young people are facing difficulties accessing education after several bus cuts. Bus routes that people rely on have been heavily cut, and on existing routes, people are often waiting for buses that never show up. I'm sure these points are not new to you. We know that buses aren't functioning as they should, but we currently have very little control over this.

Under deregulation bus companies dictate prices, routes, and timetables. However there is a viable alternative which is widely supported. Yes, I'm going to mention the "F" word, franchising. Both Bristol City Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council have made formal statements in support of franchising. Speaking to community groups and leaders in South Gloucestershire we know there is wide support for this as well. Previously, South Gloucestershire council leaders have said they would be supportive of the matter being properly investigated. Recently, we have had many community groups and organisations across the West of England sign up to our call for public control of our bus services.

In summary, we're left in the dark as to why this has not been formally investigated. The current system is clearly failing us, it's the common sense solution to put the public back in the driving seat.

Just to recap on just a few of the advantages of franchising:

- Under franchising evidence shows around 50% of profits would be reinvested back into the service. Profits from popular routes could be used to subsidise less busy routes so all communities have a decent service
- Local authorities would set and enforce the timetable of buses across the West of England, so buses are far more reliable and buses could be joined up and integrated with other forms of transport stopping inconvenient long waits.
- Under franchising, operators would be working to a 5 or 10 year contract. That would stop them from cutting services year after year.
- Fares would be cheaper and consistent. We could even have our own equivalent of the "Oyster-card" and have prices capped across services.
- Region-wide standards of accessibility for disabled users could be introduced and standards could be set for emissions

Almost all of the other labour-led authorities have started the process of formally looking into franchising.

We encourage the committee to prioritise this issue as soon as possible and take the necessary steps to hold a vote to release a "Notice Of Intent To Prepare An Assessment Of Bus Franchising Scheme" at the next Authority committee meeting- this would allow a detailed assessment of franchising to begin. Until this is done, we are not in a position to say that franchising is not the right option for the West of England, particularly when evidence elsewhere points to contrary. Many other places have begun looking into franchising including Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Cambridgeshire, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Midlands. Why do these areas deserve to have a london-style bus service and we don't?

We are not the first to be campaigning on this issue, but hope to be the last. We are happy to meet with any of the committee members to go through any of these points in more detail and to get a better understanding of some of the barriers in taking the common sense next step of formally investigating franchising in the West of England. There's a real opportunity to kick start this process before the next election. Let's not be left behind.

Statement 33

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network Railfuture Severnside

We welcome the reset in the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council.

We need to work together to create a transport Authority for The Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset council area.

The first priority is to transfer staff from Bristol city council and Banes council and south Gloucestershire council to be able to operate the services the voters taxpayers and passenger expect from a Regional transport Authority including North Somerset council becoming a member with a Devolution deal.

With buses service cuts being top of stakeholders passenger and community agenda .

With working Class parts of Bristol and Bath rural market towns taking the hit .

I have visited communities without bus services in North east Somerset council

In Tunley, Timsbury ,Paulton, Radstock midsomer Norton, writhlington

Loss of service 82 has hit the community very hard .

With 90 year old pensioners left without an public bus services in Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton and Paulton.

179 Bath spa bus and coach station.

Tunley Timbury Paulton ,Midsomer Norton.

768 Bath spa bus and coach station Tunley Timbury Paulton Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton Radstock writhlington.

Alan Peters of Abus and citistar proposed a replacement bus services

But with a reduced timetable and buses to Banes and west of England mayoral combined transport Authority but no action was taken .

Bus service 672 being withdrawn.

And the community of the chew valley and Blagdon and South Bristol are worried about the bus service being withdrawn by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority North Somerset council Bristol city council in July 2023 .

This will effect commuters going to work school college, health appointments and food shopping.

I have visited Ashton vale who are cut off from the shops in Southville and Bedminster and Bristol city centre.

With the loss of Bus service 23.

An alternative here was to include was to include Westlink to service to Ashton vale.

And extended the 505 Southmead hospital bus station Horfield ,Clifton Downs to Ashton gate and long Ashton park and ride to Ashton vale in a loop back to the park and ride and give the estate a bus service to link to service 24 to Bristol city centre, Broadmead shopping centre, Stapleton road station Horfield and Bristol southmead hospital bus station.

96 Corridor from st Anne's park Bristlington knowle Hengrove hospital whitchurch estate Hartcliffe and to long Ashton park and ride.

The service could be a super loop

From Bristol city centre to st Anne's park Bristlington knowle Hengrove hospital whitchurch estate Hengrove Hartcliffe to long Ashton park and ride.

Again we have working class areas without bus services.

Other area cut off from the public transport Network are .

Service 547 yate bus station to westerleight puckchurch Emerson green Downend oidbury court Fishponds Broomhill Stapleton Eastville park st Paul's st werburges Bristol city centre.

Oidbury court estate and west of England centre for disabled living have no bus service.

There is no replacement service

Other than the under used 525 Yate North yate station and yate bus station to Westerleight puckchurch Emerson green this service should extend to Bromley heath Downend oidbury court Fishponds Broomhill Stapleton Eastville park st werburges and st Paul's Bristol city centre.

Or at least to Tesco Eastville to meet service 24 and 25 to Bristol city centre.

Or Southmead hospital bus station.

The westlink zone could extend from winterbourne to Downend,oidbury court Fishponds, Broomhill Stapleton Eastville park and Tesco Eastgate centre.

And on the 506 route section to Eastville Easton the Dings st Phillips and Bristol Temple meads station.

I visited North Bristol where the loss of

The service 10, 11 Avonmouth Dock and shirehampton to Lawrence Weston Westbury Southmead hospital bus station to uwe bus and coach station.

And Bristol parkway station and Aztec west Hortham Alverston and Thornbury

Has caused real hardship.

As has service 622 cribs causeway bus station to Bristol zoo, lower Almondbury Olverton ,Alverston ,Thornbury Tytherington yate bus station and chipping sodbury.

84 85 Wotton under edge to charfield

Wickwar, chipping sodbury, yate bus station , Yate Railway station and yate park and ride is reprieved. For 3 months

Following South Gloucestershire council councillors chris Wilmore and councillor matt Palmer working with Gloucestershire county council Philip Robinson Excutive member for public transport and the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Mayor Dan Norris.

In the North the westlink zone needs to extend from Hortham and winterbourne.

To Bristol parkway station Patchway station Filton Abbey wood station.

Azect west cribs causeway bus stations and Southmead Hospital bus station.

In Noth Somerset council area we have

Service being restored x10 between Cribbs causeway bus station Portishead and clevedon.

X5 is due to be connected

Between Portishead,Clevedon and worle and Weston super mare bus and coach station.

In September via yatton and congesbury

Service 126 between Weston super mare bus and coach station and locking Road Banwell,winscombe, Axbridge, Cheddar Draycott,Westbury sub mendip and wells bus and coach stations

In September North Somerset council and somerset council in partnership.

Linked to westlink Demand responsive buses service Network.

In Bristol the Harbour ferry service is looking at Extension to st Anne's.

From Bristol city centre Temple meads railway station.

National Express coaches are also reviewing their cross country Network from Weston super mare bus and coach station interchange Bristol bus and coach stations and Bath spa bus and coach station to the rest South west

Midlands the North and Scotland.

Western gateway transport Board and Peninsula transport Board.

Have a region bus and coach study .

But we need to see more communities reconnected to the public transport Network

But the mayor Dan Norris ask for a Network review west travel.

To reconnect communities but this appear to have turned into a long term plan by consults rather a urgent review of the Bus train coach and Ferry Network in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority

With Both Mark HARPER mp secretary of state for Transport and Gloucestershire mp and local Transport buses and coach minister taking a interest in bus service improvement plan for the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

And questions in the house of commons by kerry McCartney mp and Luke hall mp on bus service cuts in the City region.

With mps for the cotswolds and Stroud on cross border services.

84 85

Into wotton under edge from yate bus station railway station and park and ride

Thornbury charfield wotton under edge cam and Dursey and Dursey may lane bus station.
60

62 Thornbury to Berkley, sharpness, cam and Dursey station, Cam Dursey may lane bus station .

Whilst the main line city region bus Network is improved between 7 am and 7 pm Monday to Friday's across the city region Banes council South Gloucestershire council city and county of Bristol and North Somerset council.

But their is an urgent need to look at Saturday and Sunday bus services on the main line Network with First group plc.

West of England buses.

With the 11 million pounds frequentice deal with North Somerset council

And with stagecoach west Network in North and East Bristol.

Especially around Southmead hospital bus station with the NHS North Bristol Trust .

On Fares we need to work these through with first group plc and stagecoach group west.

But paying for staff costs is important

For Drivers inspectors managers and

Mechanics filters bus presentation staff .

Youth council has been pushing for lower fares across the City region.

Bristol Bath and Weston super mare.

Following Somerset bus service improvement plan bring in youth fares .

Care leavers fares .

We welcome fare proposal including the principal of the Birthday card.

But in view of Bristol youth council and the city region young people including Bath and North east Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset council area .

We need fare consultation.

But the top priority of passenger is to restore a universal bus coach ferry and railway Network.

We must put bus back back line with the west of England buses strategy.

On publicity and roadside information.

For bus and coach services interchanges facilities.

We need a urgent review of passenger information and putting up passenger information.

It took month to get bus timetable on bus and coach stops across South Gloucestershire council Banes Bristol city council and North Somerset council area .

And passenger information maps are still not changed at Bristol parkway station and Bristol Temple meads station.

We need all bus and coach shelters and interchanges facilities under the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council jointy under control of one Authority.

The present system does not work for voters Taxpayers and passengers.

Bus stops need to be under one transport Authority control

We still have realtime information displays for railway not working at Bath spa bus and coach station

Bus information displays not working in kingswood town centre.

The west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council and mayor Dan Norris.

Needs to build a working relationship with the Department for transport and the secretary of state for transport Mark HARPER mp Richard Holden mp local transport and bus and coach minister and Hue merriman mp railway minister

Jesse Norman mp and Baroness vere of Norberton .

In the way Andy Burnham mayor Greater Manchester Steve Rotherham mayor of liverpool city region and Andy street west Midlands mayor .

On our City region and western gateway transport Board plans bus coach ferry and rail services and future mass transit.

We need proper bus and public transport Network forum as part of the bus service improvement plan.

Railway ferry coach service improvement and mass transit.

The mayor Dan Norris and councillor Hannah young Transport executive member to hold meet the passenger session at bus and coach stations and interchanges buses in town and Town centres village halls .

We must talk to passengers about bus services and the public transport Network

The Department for transport expects consultation about bus service and the public transport Network .

We need to look at the public consultation for the public transport Network in Greater Manchester combined transport Authority west Midlands combined transport Authority

Devon Cornwall Somerset council and Cornwall council.

On Railway.

Metro west railway.

We welcome the new railway service by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council and mayor Dan Norris.

And western gateway transport Board.

The Bristol Temple meads to Gloucester central and Worcester Forgate street.

Via Filton Abbey wood Bristol parkway yate charfield new station cam and Dursey stonehouse Bristol road new station Gloucester central Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester shrub hill and Worcester Forgate street.

Bristol Temple meads to keynsham oidfiled park Bath spa Freshford Avoncliff Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury Dilton marsh warminster and Salisbury 2 extra service to Southampton central. and Frome .

Taunton Bridgwater Highbridge and Burnham on sea, Weston super mare, Weston millon Worle parkway yatton for clevedon Nalsea and Backwell Bedminster and parson street Bristol Temple meads ,Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton road ,Montpellier Redland ,Clifton Down ,sea mills shirehampton Portway parkway new station Avonmouth Dock, st Andrew road and Severn Beach.

And the reopening of the Bristol Temple meads pill and Portishead line

Future station Ashton Gate .

Bristol Temple meads station to Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton road, Ashley Down ,Filton Abbey wood Filton North YTL Arena and Exhibition centre .and Henbury for cribbs causeway and Bristol zoo

More work needs to be done on bus rail interchanges especially at Ashley Down station with bus stops shelters and realtime information systems and bus link improvement to evening services

And Sunday services to and from Southmead hospital bus station

On route 25 and 17 and to Eastville.

To towards Fishponds Kingswood and keynsham.

And 25 to st werburges and st Pauls.

At Portway parkway bus services towards Severnside Lawrence weston

And Henbury .

Filton Abbey wood also need bus connection and information looked at .

Clifton Down station.

But all station needs bus coach and onward travel plans.

Henbury loop station at Henbury for cribbs causeway bus station and Bristol zoo urgently need planning permission.

Filton North station need a bus and Taxis interchanges planning as does Filton Abbey wood.

On Disabled access the following stations need to be accessible Bridgwater Weston super mare lifts Nalsea and Backwell lifts. Bedminster and Parson street.

Lawrence hill Stapleton road st Andrew's road Keynsham Bridge oidfiled park Trowbridge.

Cheltenham spa.

We need to make a fully accessible metro west railway Network.

But we need also to control cost on the Network on Bristol Temple meads pill and Portishead.

Bristol Temple meads to Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood Filton North and Henbury loop line. Henbury station

We need to again look at local fare

Integration of first group bus and rail touch cards and a combined Network.

Fares are being raised as big issue by the youth council and commuters on metro west railway Network.

We need a working class affordable railway the west Midlands combined transport Authority and Midland connect are looking at this issue.

We must thank malcolm Parsons for his work in west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council , western gateway transport Board for his teams work on metro west.

Interchanges facilities and bus and coach stations need management plans.

We must make the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council Transport Authority work for taxpayers voters and passenger.

We need North Somerset council with local Enterprise partnership to be a fully Member with a new Devolution deal.

With the Department for transport and leveling up and precepting powers for public transport for the mayor of the west of England Dan Norris.

We ask that with a new approach all council work together in Banes South Gloucestershire council Bristol and North Somerset council to make Devolution work for passenger and with western gateway transport Board and Peninsula transport Board.

We work closely with The Department for transport secretary of state for transport mark HARPER mp the government minister at the Department for transport.

Michael Gove secretary of state for leveling up and mark Rowley mp .

Local government

Please make the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council work for passengers stakeholders and communities.

Please play nice and work together. As we want an Authority that works .

Statement 34

Brendon Taylor, South Gloucestershire Disability Network and Bristol disability Equalities Network

As a wheelchair users I am very keen that the metro west railway Network is made fully accessible.

With good interchanges with bus and coach and ferry services.

Whilst Ashley Down Filton Abbey Filton North for Arena Exhibition station and Henbury for cribs causeway .

All these stations including Ashley Down will be fully accessible.

As with Portway parkway and Pill and Portishead and new station at Ashton Gate.

But Bedminster parson street on the Portishead line and Weston super mare line are not fully accessible.

St Andrew road and Bristol Stapleton road and Bristol Lawrence hill are not fully available to passengers with reduced mobility.

Keynsham, oidfiled park, Freshford Trowbridge and Cheltenham spa

Nalisea and Backwell and Weston super in North Somerset .

All these station need lifts and ramps

Are not fully accessible and requires diversity impact assessments.

We ask Bristol city council mayor Malvin Rees and councillor Don Alexander transport executive to work with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council to make the metro west railway Network fully accessible.

Including interchanges facilities with ferrys bus and coaches plus Taxis services

Along with western gateway transport Board .

Statement 35

Martin Garrett and Gavin Smith, Transport for Greater Bristol

It is essential that plans for the new railway station at Ashley Down link it into Bristol's bus network, in order to work towards integrated public transport in the city.

At least two bus routes pass the junction of Muller Road with Station Lane but the stops are some distance away along *different streets*. Two of those separate routes terminate at Southmead Hospital, which is a regional medical centre. The new Ashley Down station will be the nearest railhead approaching from the South, but this opportunity to promote an integrated and legible transport interchange seems to be overlooked. Instead any potential outpatient, visitor, or hospital employee would have to juggle with different bus timetables and different bus stops, when it would be so much easier to bring both routes to one stop closer to the station.

This can be achieved by expending the aims of the bus-lane and bus-stop reorganisation currently occurring along Muller Rd adjacent at Ralph Rd.

This failure to grasp easy opportunities is not unusual in our region. Further up the line, Filton Abbey Wood station, in South Gloucestershire territory, continues to have no bus services at all, even though it has more local train services than Parkway. A bus interchange

could easily be achieved by routing buses through the station carpark, by-passing the congested junction of Filton Avenue with the Avon Ring Road A4174.

Statement 36

Alex Goswell

I am a concerned resident of Freshford. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed removal of funding for the number 94 bus service from Trowbridge to Bath.

The 94 bus service plays a vital role in our community, serving as a lifeline for many residents, including my daughter who relies on it for her daily commute to and from school. Moreover, this countryside bus service is not only essential for students but also for local residents who depend on it to access both Trowbridge and Bath for various purposes such as work, medical appointments, shopping, and other essential activities.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that this bus service holds personal significance to me and my family. When we made the decision to purchase our house just six months ago, the proximity of the bus stop right outside our home and the availability of a reliable bus service played a role in our choice. The accessibility provided by the bus service has been invaluable, allowing my daughter to safely and conveniently commute to and from school. Removing funding for this service would not only disrupt our daily routines but also negatively impact the value we saw in our home when we made the purchase.

Removing funding for this bus service would have a significant negative impact on our community. It would result in increased isolation for those who rely on public transportation, limiting their access to essential services and opportunities. It would also have adverse effects on our environment, as more individuals may resort to private vehicles, leading to additional traffic congestion and increased carbon emissions.

I understand that local councils face budgetary challenges and tough decisions need to be made. However, I urge you to consider the wider implications of removing funding for the bus service. Rather than entirely eliminating it, I propose exploring alternative solutions, such as reducing the frequency during low-demand hours or collaborating with other stakeholders to secure additional funding sources.

Preserving this bus service is crucial for maintaining the connectivity and accessibility of our community. It serves as a lifeline for many individuals, including vulnerable populations who rely on public transportation as their primary means of mobility.

I kindly request that you thoroughly review the potential consequences of this funding cut and consider alternative measures to preserve the 94 bus service. I would appreciate if you could provide me with information on any public consultations or meetings where concerned residents like myself can voice our opinions and contribute to finding a sustainable solution.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. I believe that by working together, we can find a solution that serves the best interests of our community and ensures the continued availability of a reliable bus service for all residents.

I look forward to your response and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Statement 37

Lesley Mackenzie

I write to object to the cancellation of the 94 bus which services nearby villages to where I live in Limpley Stoke.

I know many elderly members of the community, along with school children and people getting to work who will be left high and dry without transport in these rural communities. Whatever happened to levelling up? Rural communities have been very hard hit in recent years by successive cuts and changes. Limpley Stoke has lost its post office, its shop and its doctors' surgery in Freshford. There are older people on Crowe Hill who will be unable to access the D1 running on the B3108 as they cannot walk that far. This leaves them completely cut off. They could also take the 94 to the Galleries Shop in Freshford as well as into Bath. It was a lifeline and you have severed it.

Public transport should be extended not be cut for green issues alone. The report I read in the Chronicle implied this is as much a political wrangle as economic expediency. To be cutting a rural lifeline whilst the metro mayor is offering free transport on one's birthday makes everyone in local politics look as if they have their priorities completely at odds with each other. Do no harm should be your mantra. It appears this has been abandoned.

Statement 38

David and Evelyn Cox

DRT is not a substitute for a reliable bus service. No one can lose up to 2 hours a day (a potential hour on both legs of the journey) waiting for a ride to show up. DRT cannot be attractive for everyday commuting, for work, school, to catch a train or plane or for hospital visits.

Cancelling the 768 has meant there is no regular reliable public transportation for Englishcombe, Nailwell, Inglesbatch, Clandown, Priston and other villages.

Statement 39

Chris and Roland Birchby

We were very upset to learn that our rural bus service is at risk of being discontinued.

At the moment the number 94 runs between Trowbridge and Bath every two hours on weekdays. This enables many people, particularly the older inhabitants of Freshford, to have the independence

of visiting Bath or Trowbridge, carry out shopping and even enjoy a cup of coffee. This is vital for people's physical and mental health and even more important with the rising number of older people in our communities. We understand that there is an 'on demand' transport system but we cannot see how this would work for our village, with the present system people can plan their outings with the knowledge there is a consistent and reliable service.

We are fortunate that we are still able to drive. However we always catch the bus as are very aware of the number of cars using the roads with the resultant rise in air pollution and congestion. The future must be more public transport and not less. Without rural bus services many people will not be able to travel outside the village.

We understand the problem is with funding but also understand you have been told by the transport minister that you can have funds to support existing bus services.. We urge you to reconsider and ensure villages such as Freshford continue to have an essential bus service.

Statement 40

Christina Biggs, Rob Dixon and David Netherwood, FoSBR Bristol Metro Rail Campaign

FoSBR has been concerned for some time at a lack of interest in ensuring opportunities for bus - rail interchange at our local stations. This has come to a head with the new Ashley Down station.

Construction of the new Ashley Down station began in March 2023 and is progressing well. However no attempt has been made to integrate the station with local bus services. In fact Bristol City council have stated that the location of existing stops is adequate and no further action is required. We find this both remarkable and concerning.

The current set up is wholly inadequate. There are bus stops in the area, but they are too far away to provide a proper interchange. For example, there is only a northbound bus stop on Muller Road underneath the railway bridge with no apparent plans to install a southbound one. Similarly, on Shaldon Road there is only a northbound bus stop. We understand that Bristol City Council has even considered removing this!

These stops serve routes to Southmead Hospital, Lockleaze and Eastville. Southmead Hospital has significant problems with parking and congestion and is an important destination for people around the region. Lockleaze and Eastville are areas of significant deprivation, where car ownership is relatively low. This limits access to employment opportunities. Bus journeys to are often slow as a result of congestion and insufficient regularity whereas train journeys are rapid. Existing rail services already serve many employment areas, such as the City Centre, Severnside and Yate. Interchange at the few places where this is possible can allow journeys to other locations, such as at Bristol Parkway or UWE where MetroWest and local buses can enable journeys to Emerson's Green Science Park and Cribbs Causeway.

We have argued that better interchange between bus and train at Ashley Down station would enable easier and quicker journeys to Southmead Hospital from further afield, and better access to employment from local areas. It would also allow people to make a variety

of journeys by public transport that are currently difficult or unrealistic. At present the absence of a stop in one direction means there is a long gap between stops and a considerable walk is required up steep hills. This does not encourage people to travel by public transport.

Frustrated by a lack of response to our campaigns, we plan to submit a pre-application planning request to Bristol City Council planning department. Our intention is to show that interchange is possible and, we hope, to finally push the council into action. In this pre-app we have suggested locations for bus stops, included signage to point the way between trains and buses and suggested types of real-time information for both.

In other core cities such as Manchester, Nottingham or Leeds, we believe that bus-rail interchange would have been included in the design process for the new station. We don't think they would consider removing an existing local bus stop, making interchange harder. Nor do we think they would fail to add a bus adjacent to a station where one exists for travel in the opposite direction.

We urge the West of England Combined Authority to work closely with Bristol City Council to resolve this issue and set the precedent of fully integrating bus and rail services.

Statement 41

Robbie Bentley

I am a resident within the Ashley ward (Bristol, covering the areas of St. Paul's, St. Werburghs, Montpelier and St. Andrews.) I stood as an independent candidate for the ward in the local elections held in Bristol on May 6th, 2021.

It is my perspective that Local authority boundaries are little more than lines on a map in our region and is widely shared among the travelling Public. There are many bus services that cross over these lines, and which are run as commercial services with little or no public finance support outside of the previous relief grant subsidy.

I note the Government's recent announcement that funding secured through BSIP can indeed be used in support of services that are otherwise not viable to be operated on a commercial basis. It is unfortunate that no regulation currently exists to counter this and I am deeply concerned over how much power this absence gives Private operators to directly impact the personal lives of literally 10s of 000s of people. We must as transport planners and campaigners come together to decide how we can address this unjust and inequitable situation as it is leaving many vulnerable people isolated from essential services and further exacerbates already serious problems poor Public Transport creates. I also welcome the recent intervention by Luke Hall, MP for Thornbury & Yate, in the house earlier this week. It is clear that we must now take concrete action and I hope my Proposal for Solutions to a Greater Bristol Tram network focussing on the Northern Fringe running from Lyde Green to UWE Frenchay, Bristol Parkway & Henbury will be a useful contribution. While I am in the earliest stages of this, my preliminary assessment of the viability from a technical point of view is complete and positive.

I wish to make clear that we have a clear opportunity to make a strategically sound and long-term decision to create a world-class transport network but if we are to do this, we have to think on a much bigger scale than is currently the case. Too often in the past we have seen individual councils make decisions that are solely in their interests and do not have the realism or strategic insight that 'thinking big' offers to you and our region. I wish to make it clear that we might have missed out on getting even more substantial funding through Westminster because of this. Without that support we have untapped potential going to waste as it is estimated we are losing 100s of Millions in regional economy revenue to Congestion and insufficient Public Transport. Too many major employers are complaining of people arriving to work late and all of this could be alleviated by having a network fit for the needs of our region.

We all know that our region has some fantastic assets. I wish to add to these by giving us a world-class Public Transport that connects them to our homes, our workplaces and to each other. I welcome any questions in respect of my strategic vision for our region.

Statement 42

Jevon Smith for Somerset Catch the Bus Service Campaign

We are very concerned about the bus services being withdrawn by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and Banes council and mayor Dan Norris.

Due to a funding issue that has left community's without bus services.

To work school college hospital appointments basic food shopping and access to leisure facilities.

And very few westlink Demand responsive bus services in operation due to Driver shortages and very limited capacity.

The service in question with no replacements are

179 Bath spa bus and coach to Tunley Timbury Paulton,Midsomer Norton.

768 Bath spa bus and coach to Timbury Paulton,Midsomer Norton Westfield Radstock writhington .

82 Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton town service.

Soon to be withdrawn 672 Bristol city centre to south Bristol and the chew valle and Blagdon.

Bristol city council and North Somerset council.

172 Bath bus and coach station to peasdown st john , Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton Paulton and wells bus and coach station Evening journeys.

94 Bath spa bus and coach to Freshford and Bradford on Avon.

Theses need discussion with Somerset council and Wiltshire council

In South Bristol hardship is also cause to communities.

With the loss of the 96 St Anne's park Bristlington knowle Hengrove hospital Hartcliffe service.

And 23 Ashton vale Southville Bedminster Redcliffe Bristol city centre.

91 Bristol city centre Redcliffe Knowle Hengrove and Hartcliffe.

This has left a lot of communities without public transport.

With Pensioners having to use dial a ride in the somer valley.

Or expensive Taxis fares.

Is adding to the cost of living crisis.

For poor working class people and rural communities.

We would ask that The mayor Dan Norris who is in charge of public transport and can use bus service improvement plan money as we have been told by Richard Holden mp local transport and buses and coaches minister can be used on supported bus services.

That talks take place urgently with Banes council councillor sarha Warren and councilor Hannah young North Somerset council and councillor Don Alexander.

Bristol city council to find solutions to the bus service crisis in Bath and North east Somerset and South Bristol.

Theses concerns have been raised by community meeting in Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton.

South Bristol, Bristlington and the chew valley.

By Ashton vale residents groups

Greater Bedminster forum.

Bristol oider people forum.

Bristol and Somerset youth councils.

We also feel that the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council competition for communities to bid for bus services will allow middle class area to win bus services.

But poor communities without resources to put bids in disadvantaged.

Under the public equities duty on the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

What the Americans call poverty pimping using consultants to try to design bus service for the poorest communities with passenger and public engagement.

Abus and citistar have made proposals to operator a service on 179 768 a combined service and service 82

Radstock,Westfield ,midsomer Norton paulton town service.

We hope the mayor and Banes council are looking at theses proposals.

126 Wells bus and coach station Westbury sub mendip Draycott cheddar Axbridge
winscombe Banwell locking Weston bus and coach station

Need a through service.

And the Portishead Clevedon Weston super mare bus and coach stations needs to operate via yatton station and congesbury.

And the mayor Dan Norris and Councillor Hannah young will visit the communities that have or about to loose their bus service to find positive way forward.

On bus stop maintenance and cleaning and passenger information this service has been very poor with no timetable or interchanges information for months and oider people do not carry smart phones to use bus timetables or catch trains .

The bus and coach shelters should be removed from Banes council Bristol city council and South Gloucestershire county council and will North Somerset council put under the control of the combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

On fare we welcome cheap fares but we need youth fares free travel for care leavers as well as Birthday card schemes but the most important issue to communities is a universal public transport bus coach westlink Demand responsive bus railway and ferry services.

We welcome the Bristol city centre to Temple meads station and st Anne's

New proposed ferry service.

And improvement on metro west at keynsham oidfiled park Bath spa and Freshford stations

We look forward to the mayor Dan Norris working with Banes council South Gloucestershire council and North Somerset council and the secretary of state for transport mark HARPER mp to restore the bus Network under the bus service improvement plan

Looking forward to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council

Having a universal public transport Network.

We need to urgently restore bus service cuts to rural and working class communities.

Public transport will be a major issue in local and the General election to passengers

With North Somerset council and local Enterprises partnership becoming a full member of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority in a Devolution deal

With precepting powers.

Statement 43

Teresa Moriarty

94 Bus - I object in the strongest possible way to the closure of this vital service. It is essential for many of us. The city of Bath does not want more cars coming in to park. The train is more difficult and less accessible for many local residents. Please do not deny us this vital service.

Statement 44

Mrs P Turner

94 Bus - I am very concerned about this local bus. I am an 80 year old with walking difficulties and use this bus frequently. It is my only access out of my village (Freshford) and without it I will not be able to get to Bath (six miles away) for all aspects of my life. I will become isolated and very lonely. I know I am not the only person with these problems, many of the users of this bus are in the same position. I understand there is a sort of phone for a bus but this will not be of any use to villagers in this area.

Please look into this matter and help the people who live in rural areas and pay a lot in rates to help with transport but will not be getting transport to still be able to get on with their lives

Statement 45

Cllr Tim Kent, Hengrove and Whitchurch Park Ward

I write to encourage urgency in finding solutions for communities left with no, or limited bus services, following the swathe of cuts to supported bus services in April.

As I am sure the committee recalls many residents of Whitchurch wrote in to support the 516 bus service and call for it to be saved at the January meeting.

Now it is June and still no solution has been found for the South Whitchurch community which has been left with no bus service.

Following the updated guidance from government about the use of the BSIP money I urge the mayor and West of England Combined Authority to reinstate an hourly 516 bus service so that residents left stranded once again have public transport options.

I know the Mayor is attempting to encourage greater bus usage but free travel in birthday months and other such gimmicks are pointless when you have no actual access to bus services.

I hope that this body can show that it is able to act at speed as a Transport Authority and aid my residents that have been left stranded with no service.

Statement 46

John Adler, Chairman, Freshford Parish Council

94 Bus Service - Freshford Parish Council requests that the West of England Combined Authority reinstate funding for the 94 bus service as a matter of urgency, to ensure that this service continues to run and supports the most vulnerable in our communities.

Whilst Freshford Parish Council has just been verbally informed by Libra, who operate the 94 bus service, that Wiltshire have agreed to provide 100% of the required funding, we cannot verify the accuracy of that statement.

Historically B&NES have provided part funding for the 94 bus service which runs from Trowbridge to Bath, visiting villages along the route and providing a critical cross-border public transport link.

The 94 bus is largely used by those who do not drive for shopping, health and social purposes and also children for their school run.

The Authority took on the part funding of the 94 bus, and in the words of Dan Norris, provided “a small contribution” last year.

It would seem that this funding has been forgotten about as no decision can be found on its removal, but it has not been continued.

The West of England Combined Authority has stated that they “understand how important it is for people not to feel isolated”.

The loss of the 94 bus service will cause people to actually be isolated as the 94 bus is an essential service, and there are no alternatives.

The DRT scheme does not operate cross border so is not able to provide any form of replacement service.

Much is being said by all bodies involved that the loss of funding, and therefore the 94 bus, is the fault of the other bodies.

The West of England Combined Authority is the authority in control of the public transport strategy, contracts, and the funds that it receives from local authorities and central Government for an area including B&NES.

Therefore, it would seem that the West of England Combined Authority are able to decide whether or not to allocate funds for a specific service.

The loss of the 94 bus service would have a critical impact on the lives of the most vulnerable in our community, and other communities along the route.

The West of England Combined Authority are strongly requested to continue providing the “small contribution” for the 94 bus service to continue to provide an essential service.

Should the 94 bus service, or similar, not continue at its current level of service, it will have a devastating impact on the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents and demonstrate a wilful lack of concern for rural communities.

Freshford Parish Council asks that the West of England Combined Authority, B&NES and Wiltshire Council work together to find a solution to this problem.

Statement 47

Jackie Head, on behalf of the Sustainable Transport Subgroup, Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group

As you will be aware I am part of the Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group and in particular the Sustainable Transport subgroup. We have been working since 2021 to get improved public transport services in the ultra rural area of the Chew Valley.

In a survey carried out in 2021 we identified a desire and need for public transport that was reliable, frequent and that connected people between the villages of the Chew Valley and to the main transport corridors. Since January 2021 we have been meeting with a range of stakeholders from B&NES & the Authority, initially with the officers who planned the roll out of WESTlink and now with the team responsible for monitoring the contract. We have also had meetings with Via and weDRT and now have a methodology in place for asking questions and receiving feedback via a shared action register.

Many of the issues we have raised (such as problems with accessibility) have been addressed and have brought about service improvements, but some areas seem to be hard to get action on. In March we brought together a team of Early Adopters who live, work or travel in the Chew Valley : volunteers willing to swap out present journeys on the 672 or via car for WESTlink journeys, who were willing to accept teething problems and to feed back their experiences. They complete an online form after every attempted or completed journey.

As well as sending brief summaries each week, we carried out an in depth study of the data once the Early Adopter journeys passed 100 attempts. This evidence-based report ('How is WESTlink doing so far?') has been sent to the Mayor and the Leader of B&NES as well as to other interested parties and was discussed in a meeting yesterday with representatives sent from the mayor's office and from B&NES, a mixture of councillors and officers. We are very grateful that our report is being given serious consideration and its findings are being fed into the 3 month review of the service.

We have, as you know, always been allies in the roll out of WESTlink but have also always questioned if it would be sufficient to meet the clear public transport need and desire in the Chew Valley.

Many of the findings of the report are extremely positive; with a few outliers the majority of people who take a ride on WESTlink are positive about this experience in relation to key indicators such as finding it easy to book, it arriving and delivering in a timely manner and

the friendliness of drivers. This is all to the good. It is clearly being used for a range of purposes all vital in rural areas where individual villages may lack essential services.

But WESTlink has a problem in our area: our clear evidence base shows that it is failing to deliver on the most vital and time-sensitive journeys and people are being forced back on to using the 672 in into cars to ensure they get to to work, to childcare, to education and to medical appointments. The 672, as you know, was extended by B&NES funding until the end of July but as we now approach that cliff edge **we urge the Mayor and other decision makers in the West of England Combined Authority to continue this vital spinal route using the Local Transport Fund and waving the need for a full tendering process, given that Eurotaxi are offering an excellent and reliable service, until Xmas this year.**

This would allow time for WESTlink to bed in, and for a recruitment of the minimum additional 18 drivers needed to bring the fleet up to full capacity. We cannot wait for a consideration of new tenders for fixed routes to roll out in April we need this service now and we don't believe the money should come from the already overstretched resources of B&NES, where a decision to fund the 672 would amount to a decision to cut key services such as libraries or critical care.

We want WESTlink to work, and we fear without this the 672 service, it will fail in our area. As our report shows only 62% of travellers got to make the journeys they needed.

We urge you to think of the Chew Valley as a pilot, you have a clear evidence based opportunity to make this decision, and what we make work here will present golden opportunities to roll out in other rural areas. We are Early Adopters; critical friends who will work hard (as we have been doing for 2 years) to not let this opportunity for wide scale decarbonisation of transport in a rural area pass by. You do not have this evidence base in any other area of the role out; take a creative and bold decision and keep the 672 going until Xmas.

End

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