

Public Document Pack
West of England Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny
Committee
Monday, 2 October 2023
10.30 am, 70 Redcliff Street

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS
10.30 am

	Item	Purpose	Lead	Pages
6	Items from the Public (Questions, Statements and Petitions)	<i>WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (written procedure)</i>		3 - 24

This page is intentionally left blank

Public Statements – Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2nd October 2023

Statement 1 from Cynthia Withyman

Does WECA plan to continue to support the ill-conceived Westlink service which has not delivered on its promise. Aside from driver shortages the service is fraught with problems; an app which is not user friendly, buses that are not suitable for elderly passengers, unreliability and lack of information about bus arrival times, cancellations and unavailability. Westlink buses are frequently observed empty or with only one passenger which cannot be economically or environmentally friendly.

Statement 2 from Brian Withyman

Will WECA consider adopting a similar strategy for bus services as recently introduced in the Manchester are called the "Bee Network". Parts of the region covered by WECA have poor or no bus service primarily because the bus operators are unwilling to provide them. Bringing regional bus services under local regulation will improve the service for the wider community and help us deliver environmental benefits by encouraging more bus use.

Statement 3 from Lin Hunt (submitted by Sheila Roberts)

Buses we would like to bring to your attention that the number 23 bus was taken out of service along Ashton drive on the 2nd of April 2023. We the people of Ashton Vale would like someone in authority to come to Langley crescent and walk the length of Ashton drive to Sainsbury and the 24 bus stop and walk back with shopping in all weather and to contend with the slopes from the driveways that are not even. We need to be able to get to the bank post office chemist doctors etc which we can only get to on a bus.

Statement 4 from David Redgewell

Over the last few months the secretary of state for Transport Mark Harper and Buses Minister Richard Holden has written to the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority Mayor Dan Norris and councillor Mike Bell and Hannah Young Transport Executive North Somerset Council about the need

To redirect money from the bus service improvement into important local support bus services by run by the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset Council.

Some of the deepest bus cuts has happened in Greater Bristol and Bath City region and into the counties of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire and Swindon.

With over 40 communities in the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset Council

Having no public bus services or public Transport service.

When buses are required to get people to work school, College, university health hospital, shopping and leisure and Tourism facilities.

Many communities are unable to make even the basic food shopping trips or to school and colleges or health care.

Passengers have attend meetings the bus conversion meetings with mayor Dan Norris on line meeting of Somerset bus partnership had 70 people from across Somerset but a lot of communities in Banes council North Somerset council and South Bristol attended.

Including councillors Parish and ward councillors Passenger and users groups.

There been youth protest and march with passengers group to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority offices

With councillors and user groups in including Ashton vale estate and oidbury court ,Downend ,Stapleton and Broomhill , Brislington Southmead

Olverton ,Tytherington Easton Eastville the Dings parts of South Bristol

Paulton midsomer Norton Westfield and Radstock.

Westbury on Trym Hortham Alverston Thornbury Tunley Timsbury Chew valley and Blagdon ,Cheddar Axbridge winscombe Banwell and locking all these communities have lost their bus service under the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvement plan area .

These communities who vote pay taxes have lost their their vital bus services some area do not even have a westlink Demand responsive bus service or local metro west railway Network train service or local ferry service.

Many local residents groups and Tenants association youth groups Bristol older people forum Bristol disability equalities forum have asked

Via mps Kerry McCarthy mp and Luke Hall if the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvement plan money could be reallocated to supported Bus services and to reconnect these communities to bus services and the public transport Network.

Many community groups and residents have been unable to attend big conversation meetings due to no public transport in area like the somer Valley

Or South Bristol Ashton vale or Oidbury court estate, Stapleton, Broomhill

Or Hortham parts of Bristlington.

But no daytime meeting or zoom or hybrid meeting are arranged.

By the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority or North Somerset council.

This has been requested by Bristol older people forum and Bristol disability equalities forum.

With mayor Dan Norris.

Also that the west of England mayoral combined Authority meeting are hybrid

And can be watched live on U Tube

Like Bristol city council, South Gloucestershire council North Somerset council and Banes .

We must make progress on the restoration of bus services in the Greater Bristol and Bath city region

Support bus services.

We also did not receive Bus service improvement plan plus funding in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Like Somerset council. £737079

Gloucestershire county council £884.079

Wiltshire Council £2115269

And Swindon Borough Council. £415 830
For 2024 ,2025

The important missing links

Are

Services 10, 11 Avonmouth Dock shirehampton Avonmouth to Westbury on Trym Southmead hospital bus station uwe bus station, Bristol parkway station Bradley stoke , Aztec west Hortham, Alverston ,Thornbury.

Service 36 Bristol city centre Bristol cabot circus st Anne's park Brislington Hungerford road knowle, Hengrove hospital imperial park Hartcliffe.

Service 1 1a Cribbs causeway bus and coach station Henbury westbury Clifton Down station, park street, Bristol city centre Bristol cabot circus Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington sandy park road shopping centre st Anne's park Brislington Bromhill,Hungerford road Bristlington village School Road St Anne's park Guilford Road Sandy park road Arnos vale.

This route would fill the gap in the network.

Former 5 47 bus route

Service 525

From yate North, Yate bus station, westerleight puckchurch Emerson green service should be extended to Downend Bromley Heath oidbury court Fishponds ,Broomhill,Stapleton, Eastville park Tesco St werburges St Paul's Bristol city centre or Tesco Eastville to terminate.

Service 622 Cribbs causeway bus station to Olverton Alverston Thornbury Tytherington and yate bus and coach station and chipping Sodbury

Service 505 Southmead hospital bus station Horfield Downs Clifton Down Hotwell Ashton gate and long Ashton park and ride.

This service should be extended to Ashton vale estate.

Service 126 needs to run from

Wells bus and coach station to Easton

Westbury sub Mendip Draycott Cheddar Axbridge winscombe, Banwell,Hutton

locking via weston super mare Hospital, and weston super mare bus and coach station

Service 414 ,424 Frome Cork Street coach station

to Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton.

Service 522 Bristol bus and coach station, Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington keynsham marksbury, Timsbury ,Paulton midsomer Norton Tesco rerouting to Timsbury and Tunley, Bath spa bus and coach station Transport interchange.

We must make progress on the bus service improvement plan and support bus services via the Department for transport funding allocation and the

Transport levy from Bristol city council South Gloucestershire county council Banes council and North Somerset council.

Theses communities have had over 6 months with no public transport Network service.

Westlink Demand responsive bus services.

Has been failing to operate in number of service within the area target of one hour .

At present the Westlink bus service do not operate to railway station at Filton Abbey wood station Patchway station Bristol parkway railway station or Aztec west cribbs causeway bus station Southmead hospital bus station uwe bus and coach station.

To make connections with buses metro bus service and main line bus services.

And South zone to Bristlington park and ride site, Bristol Temple meads station Oidbury court estate, Broomhill Stapleton village, Easton and the Dings

Whilst Municipalation or Franchising may be a way forward but will take 5 years to organise buying bus Depots buses in the West of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council area .

Buying assets from stagecoach west and First group plc west of England buses part of First Group plc Wales and West.

With North Somerset council joining the combined Authority and Precept powers for the mayor Dan Norris.

Working with Somerset council Wiltshire Council Swindon and Gloucestershire County council on cross boundary services.

In the meantime we need to restore the bus Network so all communities have access to the bus network for work school College university health shopping and leisure and Tourism facilities.

On the Bristol bus and coach station to Arnos vale ,Bristlington ,keynsham saltford, Newbridge, Weston Bath spa bus and coach station Transport interchange .

We welcome the bus lanes cycling provision bus lanes along the A4

24 hours if First Group plc west of England buses and Rapt Bath bus company operate bus through the night from Bristol Airport to Bishopsworth South Bristol Hengrove Bristlington keynsham Saltford ,Newbridge ,Weston Bath spa Railway station interchange.

Bristol bus and coach station, Bristol Temple meads station, Arnos vale Bristlington ,keynsham, saltford Newbridge, Weston, Bath spa bus and coach station railway interchange X39 39 349 24 hour service.

Similar to x94 Gloucester Transport hub to Cheltenham spa promenade. 24 hour service.

Whilst we do not support the Bristlington bypass we do support the

North Somerset railway line being used for a mass transit light rail system

From Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads station St Philips, causeway Arnos vale, Bristlington, keynsham saltford Newbridge Weston Bath spa bus and coach station interchange And route via Hengrove and whitchurch estate to Hartcliffe and Bristol Airport.

But first of a bus route with a cycleway from Tramway Road to Callington road.

With good Bus stops and interchanges along the A4 at Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale, Bristlington village Keynsham Bypass interchange with links to keynsham Town centre and Railway station, Broadmead roundabout Saltford Town centre

Saltford railway station, Corston, Newton st loe, Newbridge and weston and Bath spa bus and coach station.

Railway interchange.

On mass transit light rail system We support progress on the on the Network study going forward.

Between Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington keynsham saltford Newbridge Weston Bath spa bus and coach station Railway interchange.

Bristol Bus and coach station and Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington ,Hengrove hospital imperial park, Hartcliffe, Bristol Airport.

Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads station Lawrence hill Station st George Staples Hill ,Mangotsfield ,Warmley Bitton , Kelson,Weston Bath Corridor.

Bristol city centre,montpellier railway station to North Bristol.

We welcome the proposal to move forward.

On metro west Railway Network

We need to progress with the

Bristol Temple meads station Bedminster, Parson street, and new station at Ashton Gate, pill and Portishead line.

And Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton Road Ashley Down ,Filton Abbey wood station Filton North and Henbury for cribbs causeway and Bristol zoo Including future proofing the Henbury loop line to Avonmouth Dock.

Bring back passengers services on theses routes.

And reopening Charfield and Stonehouse Bristol Road on the Bristol Temple meads station To Filton Abbey wood Bristol Parkway Yate cam and the Dursley, Gloucester central Cheltenham spa, Ashchurch for Tewkesbury ,Worcester Shrub Hill and Worcester, Forgate, Street.

We need to make progress on accessibility station at Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton Road, Parson street, Nalisea and Backwell.

Weston super mare lifts

Bridgwater.

Keynsham Oidfiled park Freshford Trowbridge

Cheltenham spa lifts

But we still have no access lifts working at Bristol parkway.

As a Regional railway interchange.

For First Group Great Western Railway Metro west railway trains First group plc Great Western Railway Cross country train Arriva Germany state Railway inter city trains services and bus services.

Stagecoach west and First group plc

West of England.

We also need to retain Bookings offices

The metro west railway Network.

at Bristol Temple meads station Filton Abbey wood station, Bristol parkway yate Gloucester central Cheltenham spa.

Bristol Temple meads station Nalisea and Backwell, Yatton for clevedon worle parkway weston super mare Bridgwater and Taunton

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

We also have revenue risk without

Ticket machines at shirehampton Avonmouth Dock St Andrews Road seven Beach, Pilning, Patchway and Freshford.

When the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council is funding the local railway network.

On railway station and interchange designs like Bristol Portway park and ride whist we welcome the new bus interchange for North Bristol Severnside North Somerset bus network and Westlink Demand responsive bus services.

We would to see the portway parkway

Park and ride portacabin being replaced with a new terminal building with waiting room access toilets and changing places Ev chargers and catering Kiosks.

We need the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council to have an interchange design brief for Bus shelter to bus and coach stations railway stations and interchanges

Which are completely acceptable

Statement 5 from Mrs Bobby Oliver

On behalf of the Reclaim Our Buses campaign and Hubs Mobility Advice Service (West of England) I am very pleased to hear that Dan Norris has commissioned a report into bus franchising for WECA, to be published early next year. Could the Scrutiny committee ensure that this happens as soon as possible and that it does not just become a way of keeping us (the campaigners) at bay?

I would like to remind the committee that the bus system as it is does not provide any sort of transport equity, contribute to wellbeing or a carbon neutral future. There are still areas of WECA without any form of bus service, including inner city, and those that have been provided to plug the gaps are not well publicised. They do not operate in the evenings or at weekends. Many people are forced to have and use their own cars even if they don't want to, thus continuing the reliance on fossil fuels. A usable public transport system would really contribute to the aim of net zero carbon emissions.

The suggestion of a new board to be set up in the West of England, similar to Transport for London with the powers and resources to run an efficient and effective regional public transport service, is a really good one, as long as it integrates community transport and demand responsive services so that the region is 'joined up'. The Board should also include representation from all disability campaign groups to ensure that our needs and wishes are prioritised over profit for shareholders.

Statement 6 from Mr Rob Dixon

Bristol Rail Campaign (FoSBR) is concerned by both of the proposed options for longer term changes between Brislington and Totterdown, as outlined in this consultation.

These options involve converting some or all of the disused railway between Sandy Park Road and Callington Road into a public highway. This is an alignment which could potentially provide a high quality segregated route from the centre of Bristol for two of the mass transit corridors proposed in the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4) – Bristol to Bath, and Bristol to Airport.

The Bath Road is inferior as a mass transit route, as it would still carry local traffic. Conversion of streets into a rail-based mass transit system, which is the only way to get modal shift, would be far more expensive and disruptive.

The disused railway must be protected as a segregated route for a future mass transit system.

Bristol Rail Campaign is interested to know how WECA equates their commitment to mass transit with making it much harder to put this in place by converting Brislington railway to road and choosing Bath Road as a transit road, mixing with local traffic.

We need a rail-based mass transit system to enable the modal shift required for achieving net zero. Buses are and will insufficient.

We believe this proposal could spell the end of the idea of a mass transit system.

Statement 7 from Francis Bennett

My name is Francis, I am a doctor living and working in East Bristol. I am also a member of the healthcare organisation Medact, who's fundamental ethos is "health workers for health justice". It is clear to us as healthcare professionals that poor public transport in our city serves as a serious injustice to the health of all those who live here. We see the consequences of this every day, and I wanted to share with you some of our experiences.

Dr. Hattie Nicholas, a previous member of our group and doctor at the Bristol Children's Hospital told us, "On high pollution days in Bristol, there are 4 more cardiac arrests, 9 more admissions for stroke and 12 more children attending with asthma symptoms, of which 5 will have to stay in hospital, plus 4 more adults attending hospital with asthma. Living next to roads in inner city areas is more likely to produce symptoms". To this end she highlighted a 2019 report from the Docklands youth centre in St Paul's which stated that "47% of our young people suffer with asthma", compared with a national average of around 10%. This is absolutely shocking and should make all of us as adults here in this room deeply ashamed.

This year clean air day was on the 15th of June, and to mark it we joined members of Bristol Clean Air Alliance in Broadmead for a "climate clinic". We spent that day talking with members of the public about their experiences of air quality in Bristol, and what we need to do about it. Whilst people may have disagreed on topics such as the clean air zone, there was almost unanimous agreement on two things- just how bad the air quality and buses are in our city. A common response I heard was "I know air quality is terrible, I know I should use my car less, but how can I do that if I can't rely on the buses?".

If you haven't spoken to someone who relies on buses, then I urge you to. They are angry, they are depressed, and most people I spoke to have given up hope that things will ever get better. If they can, they use a car. If they can't, they continue to suffer- missing doctor's appointments, getting fired from work for being continually late, spending hours a day waiting for buses that never come. One absolutely heart breaking story I heard was from a man who said "This is the first time I've been to town in months. I live alone and being in town is often my only real connection to the outside world. but recently my bus route was cut and because of my mobility problems the only way I can get to town now is by taxi. I can't afford taxis".

We need you as our representatives to truly grasp just how important this is. I grew up in Bristol, and even as a kid I always knew to avoid taking buses if I could. 20 years later, little of any substance has changed. It is glaringly obvious that the current model is not working, and if you look at cities like London, and now Manchester, the solution is equally obvious. You have the power to shape what will happen next. I urge you to use that power to back public control of our buses.

Statement 8 from WESTACT, Reclaim our Buses Campaign coalition

We were pleased to see reports of Dan Norris meeting with other metro mayors and discussing their experiences of bus franchising. We were also glad to hear that Dan Norris has commissioned a new report on bus franchising.

- Our [petition](#) now has nearly 2400 signatures backed by over 20 community organisations including the Bristol Disability Equality Forum and Unite who represents bus drivers
- Over 150 people emailed Dan Norris asking him to begin the formal process of investigating franchising at the next WECA committee meeting
- Young people have also joined this call and have demonstrated in support of public control
- All 3 unitary authorities are in favour of franchising

We understand that this report will be a strategic level document, rather than a formal investigation of bus franchising which would give WECA access to operator commercial data that would enable a fully informed decision to be made. As such, we would like to see the outcome of the strategic document before the end of this year, so that the next step of a full commercial assessment of the business case for bus franchising can be taken.

We can not know the costs, feasibility, benefits, and limitations of introducing franchising in the West of England before a formal investigation is carried out. That is because operator commercial data is needed to make these calculations. Operators only release their data when the franchising process begins and new statutory powers are given to WECA. Assessing franchising has a particular legal meaning, detailed in the Bus Services Act 2017, Transport Act 2000, and Government papers. Before it can take place, the devolved authority must release a “Notice of Intent to Prepare a Franchising Assessment.” This is in accordance with s.123C Transport Act 2000.

Progress toward this formal investigation must continue at a fast pace, so that it can take place ahead of the next general election, which is expected in late 2024. This would put the West of England in a good position to act on any policy or legislative changes that arise from the general election, and to continue making progress within the current legislative environment.

Why franchising

- Enables fully integrated tickets
- Enables cross-subsidy (i.e. network based system)
- Costs of investigation keep going down - Manchester £20m, West Yorkshire £5-7m, South Yorkshire estimated £5m.
- Complementary to public ownership, if this were to become legal following the general election
- Will provide results quicker than public ownership, as this would require new legislation, even if it does become policy after the general election

Franchising actually makes public ownership more likely to succeed:

- You end the deregulated market to protect a municipally owned bus company from on street competition (e.g., the reopening of the ‘bus wars’ seen after deregulation).
- You legalise cross-subsidy which would make it easier to plan a comprehensive bus network.
- You legalise integrated tickets (e.g., hopper fare) which existing municipal bus companies like [Reading have been prevented from doing under an Enhanced Partnership](#).
- You can hand a public operator the contract directly through the same legislation that allows the operator of last resort on the railways.

In summary, bus franchising will deliver a better regulated service in terms of efficiencies and maintaining essential bus routes, it’s cost effective in the long run, it supports and doesn’t get in

the way of public ownership, and the costs of investigating the process formally continue to decrease. As the investigation takes up to a year, this should be started as soon as possible. We struggle to understand why WECA is not starting the formal process of investigating franchising. Part of this process would include investigating the different options for funding the introduction of franchising. There are options available for funding, this shouldn't in itself be a barrier for beginning the formal investigation. We also can't know how much it will cost in the West of England until we have conducted a formal investigation and developed a business case.

Best wishes,

WESTACT, Reclaim Our Buses Campaign

Statement 9 from Mandy Parry

In recent months several local bus services across the city of Bristol, crucial to the communities they served, have been lost.

A prime example of this is the 52 bus, serving Bishopsworth, Highridge, Withywood and Hartcliffe. It's been run by numerous operators throughout the years, and it's often been at risk, having to be rescued time and again. But it sadly ran for the last time on Friday 1st September. The number 52 bus linked the city centre, Asda, Bedminster, the Crematorium, and the Imperial Shopping Centre. Initially, when the South Bristol Community Hospital opened, it also served the hospital, but this crucial destination stopped some time ago. I can't make sense of how this was allowed to happen.

Highridge, Withywood and Harcliffe are some of the most deprived areas in the country, let alone in Bristol. There is no viable alternative bus that is near enough for many residents, including the elderly and disabled, to access the amenities mentioned, and of course many of these residents do not have access to private vehicles. A new initiative, The Youth Zone is due to open next year opposite the Imperial Shopping Centre and young residents from the area covered by the 52 bus will not be able to access this service. At a time when we are being informed that we must rely less on cars and use public transport, walk or cycle, it really does seem incredible that bus services in the very areas that rely on them the most are being slashed without any consultation. Slashed because it would appear simply because they cannot be run at a profit.

The Department for Transport states that:

"Local Authorities have a statutory duty to consider whether...a service is deemed to be socially necessary. WECA receives £1.1 million annually to subsidise socially necessary bus services."

I don't believe anybody could reasonably argue that any of the bus services removed from operation in Bristol in recent years are not socially necessary, and as far as I am aware, this has not been tested by any impact assessments or meaningful public consultations being carried out prior to those services ending.

The local communities of Bristol who have been left high and dry without their treasured bus services deserve much, much better.

WECA must do better for them and for future generations of bus users.

Statement 10 from Robbie Bentley

The biggest issue in Greater Bristol and into North Somerset South Gloucestershire county council area and Bath and North East Somerset.

Is the lack of public transport services to our community with disabilities and older people.

This preventing people getting to school College work hospital food shopping and leisure facilities.

We have had request from local residents working with local communities and councillor Marley Bennett Has written to Transpora

To extend service 25 From Bristol city centre st Paul st werburges Eastville park Stapleton, Broomhill, Fishponds oidbury court,Bromley Heath and Downend.

Councillor Mark Bradshaw have ask in Ashton vale

For service 505 Southmead hospital bus station Horfield Downs Clifton Hotwells Ashton vale Long Ashton park and ride to be extended to Ashton vale.

In the Bristlington area

Councillor Tim Rippington has ask

For Bristol city centre Broadmead shopping centre, oid market, Barton hill st Anne's park

Extention to Brislington

Hungerford road knowle,Hengrove hospital, imperial park Hartcliffe.

Service 36 .

Service 1 Cribbs causeway bus station Henbury westbury Clifton Down station park street Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington sandy park road ,st Anne's park Guilford Road Broomhill Brislington Trading estate Hungerford road Bristlington village School Road Bristlington, st Anne's park sandy park Road as a 1 a

In the North of Bristol we are looking for service 10 ,11 Avonmouth and shirehampton Lawrence weston and westbury on Trym Southmead hospital bus station to extend to uwe bus station Bristol Parkway station Bradley stoke Aztec west Hortham Alverston Thornbury.

622 cribbs causeway bus station to Olverton,Alverston, Thornbury Tytherington and yate bus and coach station

In south Bristol

We need the restoration of services

672 Chew valley to South Bristol and Bristol city centre

Service 52 Bishopsworth South Bristol hospital Bedminster Redcliffe Bristol city centre

Both these service have just been cut

So need a review and a new route these communities are left without a bus service

Local councillors have raised this issue.

Disablity and oider people are cut off .

Service 522 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington keynsham marksbury Timsbury, Paulton, midsomer, Norton Tesco Tunley Bath spa bus and coach station

Service 82 Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton local services.

We would welcome Councillor liz Harman trying to Extended the service

424 414 from Frome Cork Street coach station to Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton extension round the estates in Radstock Westfield midsomer Norton paulton.

126 Wells bus and coach station

Westbury sub Mendip Draycott Cheddar Axbridge winscombe Banwell and locking Hutton and weston super mare

For the Hospital and weston super mare Town centre shops and college.

Theses are vital network bus service that have cut some of poorest and excluded communities in Greater Bristol and Bath city region

And we make progress using the Bus service improvement plans money as

Suggest by Richard Holden mp

The buses minster and Mark Harper MP secretary of state for Transport.

To replace support bus services.

And money through the Transport levy from Bristol city council South Gloucestershire county council, Banes and North Somerset council.

Plus money from North Somerset council and Somerset council to replace the Bus service 126 From Weston super mare bus and coach station to locking Hutton, Banwell, winscombe Axbridge cheddar, Westbury sub Mendip Draycott Easton and Wells bus and coach station.

We also need to see a clear interchange need for an interchange policy.

For the very welcomed bus interchange

But the Terminal building need replacing with a waiting room, accessible toilets changing Terminal building changing places and Kiosks.

We also need investment in Bath spa bus and coach station and railway station.

Booking office emergency disabled lifts

Booking office restoration and stair well canopy and clock Tower seating and cleaning of the bus and coach station

Improvement to the Public toilets and reopening of Travel centre with information point provide by the different bus operators and visit west.

This needs a discussion with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council

Banes and the west of England bus operators association

Mr Alan Peters of Abus.

On the Bath spa bus and coach station to weston Newbridge Newton st loe saltford keynsham, Bristlington village Arnos vale, Bristol Temple meads station Bristol city centre.

We support the use of the route as a Bus Corridor Between Bristol and Bath

With bus lanes cycle facilities

New bus interchange at Bristol Temple meads Arnos vale, Bristlington keynsham, saltford, Newbridge Weston Bath spa bus and coach station interchange.

New bus rail Interchange in keynsham.

On the bypass and interchange in Bristlington village and at saltford railway station proposed.

We do not support the proposed Bristlington bypass along the North Somerset railway corridor But the to be used as a mass transit bus and cycling corridor. Future light rail system

We support the work on light rail system for the Greater Bristol city Region.

And a fully accessible ferry service

In Bristol Harbour.

The need to progress full access station and planning permission for the Henbury loop line from Henbury to Filton North, Filton Abbey wood, Ashley Down station, Bristol Stapleton road Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Temple meads station.

Route to Progress

And Bristol Temple meads station Bedminster ,Parson street ,Ashton vale Pill and Portishead .

With all station being fully accessible

And the retaining of Booking office at Bristol parkway yate Gloucester central Cheltenham spa Bristol Temple meads station keynsham ,Oidfiled park accessible footbridge Bath spa Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury warminster Salisbury Frome

Nalisea and Backwell new disability access Yatton for clevedon worle parkway weston super mare lifts and Bridgwater.

We welcome brand of public transport services but not a £4 million pounds

When stickers can go forward like Manchester Beeline Buses trams and trains network.

We need bus services and cheaper fares for disability people

Youth fares carers scheme.

We must restore a bus network in the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvement plan area as a top priority

The west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council which need to be a full member of the Authority.

Need fund a fully integrated transport Network and set up an equities Depot

Robbie Bentley Bristol disability equities forum.

Brendon Taylor Bristol disability equities forum

Statement 11 from Rosa

We would like the west of England scrutiny commission to ask North Somerset council and the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris and North Somerset council Councillor Hannah young transport executive.

To restore urgent the 126 Bus service From Wells bus and coach station to Easton Westbury sub Mendip Draycott Cheddar Axbridge winscombe Banwell and locking via Hutton and weston super mare Hospital and weston super mare bus and coach station.

We were promised this service in discussion between North Somerset council and the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority

Bus service improvement plan

To start in October 2023

Their 2 bidder for the bus routes

Abus and big lemon

Plus first group plc Wales and West buses.

Young people older people and people can not travel to weston super mare For college hospital appointment shopping leisure facilities or catch buses and trains to Bristol city centre or university at uwe .

At the Wells bus and coach station end

Connection are made to Shepton mallet interchange Midsomer Norton Westfield Radstock Peasdown st john Bath spa bus and coach station.

173 172 174 buses

Or 376 To Chewton Mendip ,Farrington Gurney Clutton Pensford ,Whitchurch Hengrove ,Bristol Temple meads Bristol Bus and coach station

We would ask he urgently discussion and scrutiny of this bus service by the west of England scrutiny commission.

And discussion between Councillor Hannah young transport executive North Somerset council
Mayor Dan Norris and councillor Mike Bell North Somerset council and councillor Mike Rigby
Transport executive of Somerset council

This page is intentionally left blank

Questions and Answers – Overview and Scrutiny – 2 October 2023

Question 1 from Mr David Redgewell

In view of the big bus conversion meetings and passenger Group protest march against the ongoing cuts to bus service in some the Rural areas and working class estate area in the Greater Bristol and Bath city region area in South Gloucestershire Banes and North Somerset are left without bus services

In view of the request my secretary of state mark Harper MP and buses minster Richard Holden mp.

To Transfer money from the bus service improvement into support bus services similar the situation where money has been transferred by the mayor of west Midlands combined Transport Authority Andy street and mayor of west Yorkshire combined transport Authority mayor Tracy Brabin.

Where Bus service improvement plans money has been used with local authorities

Precept money in the West of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council Transport levy .

And with over 75 passengers and groups on line meeting many older people and disabled people and rural people can not travel to bus service meeting without public bus services in the Evening.

What progress is being made on restoring or rerouting bus services

In south Bristol.

505 Southmead hospital bus station to Ashton vale Long Ashton park and ride and long Ashton estate.

Service 5 47 being restored from Bristol city centre to St Paul's St werburges Eastville park Stapleton Broomhill Fishponds oidbury court Downend Bromley Heath Emerson green puckchurch westerleight yate bus station and yate North .

On Southmead hospital to Uwe Bus and coach station Bristol parkway railway station Bradley stoke ,Aztec west Hortham ,Alverston, Thornbury.

10 11 .

36, Bristol city centre st Anne's park Brislington Hungerford road knowle Hengrove hospital imperial park Hartcliffe.

Service 1, 1 a cribbs causeway Henbury westbury on Trym Clifton Down station Park street Bristol city centre Bristol cabot circus Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale, Bristlington sandy park,Wick Road Guildford Road Broomhill Brislington Trading estate Hungerford road Bristlington village School Road, Bristlington ,st Anne's park Wick Road, sandy park road shopping centre Bath Road circle .

Service 52 Bishopsworth South Bristol hospital and Bristol city centre.

Service 522 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington keynsham marksbury Timsbury Paulton midsomer Norton Tesco rerouting via Timsbury Tunley Bath spa park and ride and Bath spa bus and coach station.

Service 414, 424 Frome Cork Street to Radstock and midsomer Norton extended to Paulton to replace service 82 .

672 Chew valley south Bristol to the city centre.

Service 126 Wells bus and coach station to Draycott Cheddar Axbridge winscombe ,Banwell, Locking,weston super mare Hospital and weston super mare railway station and bus and coach station.

What progress is being made on replacing these bus services and making the westlink service operating to the contract and serving railway station and Bus interchange at Bristol Temple meads Eastgate centre Bristol parkway station Aztec west cribbs causeway bus station Patchway station Filton Abbey wood station uwe bus and coach station,Southmead hospital bus station.

In the south.

Long Ashton park and ride site

Bristolington park and ride.

Voters and Taxpayer of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council want to see progress on restoration of vital bus routes and services urgent.

Answer to question 1:

The Combined Authority has recently conducted a review of redirecting BSIP funding. We are aware that the change of guidance has impacted on other Transport Authorities nationally. As you highlight in your comments, one large Combined Authority has transferred a significant amount of their budget to funding supported services, for which DfT approval was required. It also required them to commit to using local funding to continue those services once BSIP funding ends.

In considering whether to redirect BSIP funding, the DfT has clearly stated that Local Transport Authorities need to consider; whether the routes under consideration for support would provide better value for money compared to previous plans; and whether the routes under consideration for support are likely to become sustainable in the longer term. Following a review, the option to redirect BSIP funding was disregarded as it would create financial risks for all partners across the region.

We continue to support bus routes that are not commercially viable, but that have the highest social need. We also continue to access which support provides the best value for taxpayers' money for the wider region. Unfortunately, we do not have a budget to continue to support those services that have previously been assessed as less value for money.

WESTlink was not intended to be for a replacement for local subsidised bus services cut by our local councils, the services were instead intended to take people to main line routes to increase the overall use of buses. As the service has been operating for several months, we will now be taking the opportunity to review how WESTlink operates, in response to data collected to date and feedback from users. This will include:

- Potential changes to how the service operates
- Changes to the zones to improve efficiencies
- Improve linkages with the wider bus network
- A wider promotional campaign

The detail of this will be worked up in partnership with stakeholders over the Autumn.

The Combined Authority are also exercising their right to issue contract deductions where there has been an avoidable failure to meet the terms of the contract.

Question 2 from Mr David Redgewell

What progress is being made on planning a light rail system for the Greater Bristol and Bath city region

With the light rail Route Bristol city centre to Bristol Temple meads station Arnos vale Bristlington Callington road corridor Keynsham saltford Newbridge Weston Bath spa bus and coach station.

Using the North Somerset railway line

Which Could be used as a bus service rapid transit route and walking cycle route First.

Link Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads station st Philips marsh ,Arnos vale, Bristlington Callington road corridor Hengrove park whitchurch estate Hengrove hospital imperial park Hartcliffe Bristol Airport.

Bristol city centre to to Bristol Temple meads station Lawrence Hill Fishponds Staple Hill ,Kingswood ,Cadbury Heath

Oidland Common Bitton Kelson Weston Bath spa bus and coach station.

Bristol city centre to North Bristol link

To the Henbury loop line and cribbs causeway shopping centre.

This system need segregated tracks

And stations With interchange with local ferry service's bus services

And metro west Railway services.

Some of the network with need to be in

Cut and cover tunnels and flyovers

Like the midland metro in Birmingham and the west Midlands and The Tyne and Wear metro in Newcastle upon Tyne.

With the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council as joint transport Authorities progress this project.

Answer to question 2:

Progress relating to the Future 4 West proposals looking at the feasibility of providing a mass transit system for each of the four corridors in the region is subject to the committee report being provided at the October Joint Committee.

A separate consultation, running from 21st August to the 1st October, has been undertaken for improvements to bus, walking and cycling improvements on the A4 Bristol to Bath corridor, as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) package of transport improvements in the region.

Question 3 from Sue Mullins:

What assessment has been undertaken of the impact of the removal of unprofitable bus routes e.g.52, 23/24, 672 etc. on the local communities, bearing in mind the authorities statutory duty to consider whether those communities still retain access to key amenities, jobs, training, health treatment, education and to avoid isolation where individuals do not have access to personal vehicles without a bus service in place.

Answer to question 3:

Buses are a complicated funding jigsaw and can be split several ways.

1. Commercial buses. These are run by a private operator to make a profit like service 23/24. The bus operators can amend or withdraw services by giving notice to the Traffic Commission. Bus operators do not need to assess or consult before making changes to their own routes.

2. Supported bus services are buses that don't make a profit but where there is a social need. Rules also say they can't compete with commercial services. They are paid for by money raised by local councils through council tax. Councils then pay a sum of money of their choosing known as the transport levy to the West of England Combined Authority to buy these services. Earlier this year local Councils decided on a real term cut to such expenditure at a time when bus costs for fuel and staff are going up. We are still seeing the consequences of this feeding through.

3. Finally there is the Bus Service Improvement Plan money where the second highest amount of government funding in the country was secured. It needs to be for new and innovative services and until very recently specifically could not be spent on maintaining council-supported services. Work is continuing to identify potential flexibility within the budget and how we can prioritise any flexibility to ensure that it meets the aims of the BSIP. Any new supported routes would need provide better value for money compared to previous plans within the BSIP and would need to become sustainable in the longer term.

Question 4 from Sue Mullins:

Westlink is the new hybrid bus service to counter rural isolation.

The South Bristol Community Hospital and the Imperial Shopping centre are both within the zone. Knowle is also in the zone as is the rural area south of Bristol.

My own home in Bishopsworth is not in the zone and I am now unable to get to the Imperial Shopping or the SBCH by public transport since the loss of the 52 bus service.

Why then are Bishopsworth, Highridge, Withywood and Hartcliffe, (particularly Bishopsworth and Highridge which now have no bus service) not in the South Zone when buses picking up South of Bristol will mostly have to travel through those areas to reach both the Imperial Shopping and SBCH.

Answer to question 4:

WESTlink is not a replacement for local subsidised bus services cut by our local councils, the services were instead intended to take people to main line routes to increase the overall use of buses. As the service has been operating for a number of months, we will now be taking the opportunity to review how WESTlink operates, in response to data collected to date and feedback from users. This will include:

- Potential changes to how the service operates
- Changes to the zones to improve efficiencies
- Improve linkages with the wider bus network
- A wider promotional campaign

The detail of this will be worked up in partnership with stakeholders over the Autumn.

Community transport does provide an alternative transport in South Bristol, CATT Community transport serves Bishopsworth and facilitate trips to SBCH as well as Imperial Park shopping Centre. If you do not have success with CATT due to the high demand, the Sprint may offer Door-to-Door transport in your area.

Also serving the area is The Big Lemon. They provide door to door services, regular daily trips and group transport.

We would advise that you call them in the first instance, and they would be able to confirm with you, by reference to your address and available services what they can do for you.

Question 5 from Mandy Parry:

WECA say on their website that it is 'bringing partners together to improve transport across the region, to provide sustainable, long-term solutions to help people move around the region more easily, reducing congestion and improving the environment we live in.'

Why then are bus routes then being cut across Bristol?

Answer to question 5:

The West of England Combined Authority has been investing in several transport projects across the region to improve wider connectivity. This includes:

Metrowest, which has seen rail service frequency increased on local train services, and the opening of Portway Park and Ride, and construction taking place of the new station at Ashley Down. Works on future phases to Portishead and Henbury lines is progressing.

Bus service enhancements to several services across the region, as part of the Bus Service improvement Plan (BISP) including the 'Birthday Buses' ticket offering of free bus travel during your birth month within the West of England.

The majority of bus services that operate in the West of England region are commercially operated by private bus companies. The bus operators can amend or withdraw services by giving notice to the Traffic Commission. Bus operators do not need to assess or consult before making changes to their own routes.

Supported buses are buses that don't make a profit but where there is a social need. Rules also say they can't compete with commercial services. These are paid for by money raised by local councils through council tax.

Question 6 from Mandy Parry:

What representations are being made by WECA to nationalise buses, so bus routes are based on need and not on profit?

Answer to question 6:

The Metro Mayor of the West of the West of England Combined authority has regular contact with ministers in Central Government, and alongside other combined authorities, has been asking for additional support and powers regarding bus services.

However, the combined authority also must operate within the current legal framework and powers provided to it by central government regarding how bus services operate. Bus services outside of London were de-regulated in 1985, meaning that private bus operators would operate bus services, if they can do so at a profit. Transport legislation to date has not supported local authorities from operating bus services directly.

Question 7 from Ian Quaife:

With the provision of Public transport hubs and provision for scooters and E Bikes E charging points more seats

Bristol city council has requested money to provide a new bus gate facilities at Portway park and ride bus and Rail interchange

so buses can Operator by first group plc to service 3 and 4 to cribs causeway bus station via Avonmouth Dock and or Lawrence weston.

stagecoach west bus service 10 11 being rerouted into via the bus rail Interchange.

Avonmouth and sevenside .

and bus services to Lawrence weston Westbury on Trym Southmead hospital bus station uwe bus station ,Bristol parkway station, Bradley stoke, Aztec west Hortham Alverston Thornbury.

West link to buses to Portishead.

Services 13 to Sea Mills Shirehampton Westbury on Trym Southmead hospital bus station Gloucester Road and Bristol BRI city centre .

Especially also with future metro west railway Network service over the Henbury loop line for the arena

What design brief is the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council

Working for Transport hubs for important transport interchanges for waiting room, accessible toilets cafe or Drinks machine so while we welcome the bus gate and interchange facilities we like to know when the portacabin terminal building is to be replaced.

(Bristol older people forum)

Answer to question 7:

The funding request and design work for the junction at Portway Park and Ride is being undertaken by Bristol City Council, with the facilities at the park and ride site also being under the management of Bristol City Council. The Combined Authority does not operate any facilities at any of the Park and Ride sites.

Question 8 from Ian Quaife:

In view of Deep hardships caused to older people and disabled people in the Bristol city Region with the withdrawn by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council of vital bus services

Due to the lack of the extra payments of the Transport levy by Bristol city council Banes South Gloucestershire county council and North Somerset council.

To restore vital bus service So older and disabled people can get to work shopping centre Heath care and hospital appointment and leisure facilities.

I view of the mayor Dan Norris Big conversion meetings on buses with the community that mainly still have bus services will the mayor Dan Norris and the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council meet with Bristol older people forum and Bristol disability equities forum via a daytime and Hybrid meeting.

Answer to question 8:

This is a question for the Mayor's Office and is not within the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide an answer.

Question 9 from John Isaacs:

What (if any) proposals are currently being proposed to re-connect Ashton Vale (and in particular Langley Crescent) to the bus network

Answer to question 9:

Buses are a complicated funding jigsaw and can be split several ways.

1. Commercial buses. These are run by a private operator to make a profit like service 23/24. The bus operators can amend or withdraw services by giving notice to the Traffic Commission. Bus operators do not need to assess or consult before making changes to their own routes.

2. Supported bus services are buses that don't make a profit but where there is a social need. Rules also say they can't compete with commercial services. They are paid for by money raised by local councils through council tax. Councils then pay a sum of money of their choosing known as the transport levy to the West of England Combined Authority to buy these services. Earlier this year local Councils decided on a real term cut to such expenditure at a time when bus costs for fuel and staff are going up. We are still seeing the consequences of this feeding through.

3. Finally there is the Bus Service Improvement Plan money where the second highest amount of government funding in the country was secured. It needs to be for new and innovative services and until very recently specifically could not be spent on maintaining council-supported services. Work is continuing to identify potential flexibility within the budget and how we can prioritise any flexibility to ensure that it meets the aims of the BSIP. Any new supported routes would need provide better value for money compared to previous plans within the BSIP and would need to become sustainable in the longer term.

Question 10 from John Isaacs:

Are any reviews being considered/ undertaken to establish the feasibility of re-routing the 24 bus service (in whole or part)to Langley Crescent now that access for double decker's can be provided via South Liberty Lane (since the removal of the railway bridge)?

Answer to question 10:

Service 24 is privately operated by First Bus who are able to amend or withdraw services by giving notice to the Traffic Commission. Bus operators do not need to review or consult before making changes to their own commercial routes.

This page is intentionally left blank