

Statement 9 - Bus 178 WECA Committee Statement 23rd Sept 2022

I'm not going to tell you how important bus services are in the rural areas, because a lot of people, especially on the 178 route, have told you and in any case you already knew.

I know that the mayor is trying to find alternatives for routes where existing bus companies have pulled out, and that is very laudable. I hope that an existing local company can be found, and there are several, who already have the right licences, knowledge of the area, the vehicles, and the depots to store and service the buses and coaches and most importantly the staff. But unless they are offered contracts of at least a year it won't be viable for most of them to take the routes on. If contracts end up being offered to "Out of area" companies who don't have the necessary infrastructure, all that will happen is they will poach staff, etc. from the existing local companies. If that is the case our local bus and coach companies may well end up going out of business, with the result that we'll end up back in the same fine mess we are in now.

So please make it possible for reliable, long term replacement providers to be found, and maybe we can have a virtuous circle where the public trust the service and use it, rather than the existing vicious circle where we don't trust the services and use our cars instead.