

QUESTIONS – AUDIT COMMITTEE – 2 MARCH 2023

Question 1 - Mr Dave Redgewell

What discussion have taken place with stakeholders about the spending of the bus service improvement plan money on 7 million pounds of Department for Transport taxpayers' money on commissioning bus frequentation on main bus corridor in Greater Bristol, Banbury South Gloucestershire and North Somerset with First Group plc.

How were these services designed without passenger input through the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset Council bus service improvement Advisory Panel and Board meeting.

With Bus operators.

As the bus service improvement plan.

Say that the Authorities will provide Demand responsive bus services in Rural areas and 4 areas in Greater Bristol Severn Beach and Avonmouth Bristolington Keynsham and Totterdown.

Secondly and orbital bus services.

And main line bus services on transport corridors.

Response:

The enhanced services were developed through discussions with operators based on their feedback from bus users. Given the tight timescales from the appointment of operators for Westlink to service commencement, we wanted to ensure that the enhanced services were focussed on the corridors that supported Westlink. We will shortly commence work on a wider public transport network review and this will form the basis for stakeholders to input into longer term network design.

[response provided by Authority officers]

Question 2 – Mr Dave Redgewell

On Demand responsive bus services

In the Tendering process.

What due diligence was carried out

On bus service operators to run Demand responsive bus services .

And E-zec medical service and now its merger with ERS medical services Ambulance company.

Funded by Cairgorm Capital

Chief Executive Craig Smith of E-zec medical service.

We DRT and we Transport Solutions Coach Brokers .

In view of the fact the most Demand responsive bus services are run by bus and coach company like Stagecoach Group Arriva Click German State Railway.

And Go Ahead Group Go Coach and small operators like Pulham Coaches for Gloucestershire County Council.

With need for vehicles and agency drivers what action is being taken to Audit public money over the next 18 months from the Department for transport under the bus service improvement plan.

And how was a best value for money appraisal carry out on support bus services in terms the needs of passengers and the public equalities duty

and access to work ,Education,Health and shopping facilities.

Response:

The following processes were undertaken to appraise which supported bus services would continue from April 2023.

- A supported bus service survey to gather the views of existing passengers was undertaken in Autumn 2021
- All currently supported bus services were evaluated by CA and local authority (LA) officers using an evaluation framework based on the principles of the bus strategy
- An Equalities Impact Assessment identified the impacts of the loss of supported bus services on each of the protected characteristics and offered mitigation measures
- Analysis of passenger journeys
- Tender prices received
- Cost per passenger journey (existing contract prices and tendered prices)
- Feedback from local members, community groups and bus service operators

The committee paper presented 18th January 2023 (section 6.1) set out the process. The levy received from the three unitary authorities to provide support for socially necessary bus services unfortunately did not meet the funding required to procure like-for-like services operated across the region in 2022 due to significantly higher costs received in the tender returns. After evaluation of all services undertaken by CA and LA officers, difficult decisions needed to be made on which services would no longer be funded from April 2023.

[response provided by Authority officers]