

West of England Combined Authority

Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 March 2023

Questions received from the public

1. David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Bristol Disabilities Equalities Forum

Question 1

With many areas of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Not covered by Demand responsive bus services from 3rd April 2023 .

What progress is being made to develop

More Bus service improvement plan routes with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Bus operators such as First group plc

Stagecoach group big lemon buses.

Abus, citistar ,Euro coaches CTC coaches. Favesaver buses.

Across South North and East Bristol

and North east Somerset.

In way Somerset county council, Devon county council, Cornwall council and Oxfordshire council has developed new and revised bus services.

As long as theses routes are commercially viable in 2 years .

With the support of the Department for transport under their bus service improvement plans.

Can letters and advise please be published to stakeholder from the Department for transport to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority in the way that information is published by Somerset council.

Response from officers:

The WESTlink service will provide extensive coverage of the West of England area to many communities that do not have access to conventional bus services. Using the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, we have been able to tender two new services and support the increase in frequency of dozens of existing commercial services from 2 April 2023. A further round of fare incentives will come forward in the next few months to encourage additional bus passenger growth. Whilst the Bus Service Improvement Plan funding is time-limited we anticipate that bus use will continue to grow over that 2-year period, prompted by the fares and services investment along with a strong marketing and promotion campaign. However, whether 'pump-primed' services become commercially viable in the longer term is something we cannot currently predict.

Question 2

With the Transport levy Frozen by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority councils of Bristol city council, Banes and South Gloucestershire council.

Their is now very deep concerns about the ability of the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority to provide universal bus services and a public transport Network across Greater Bristol and Bath city region with North Somerset council area.

With the act of parliament setting up the west of England mayoral combined Authority putting a joint power on the Authority and the mayor Dan Norris to provide support bus services with the unity councils.

As First group plc and stagecoach group and other operators have made it clear that they can not provide a universal bus or Rail service without support from the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Even the train service from Bristol new Portway parkway station will require £2 million pounds of taxpayers subsidies to the First group plc, Great western railway

and the Department for transport for the Train service for 3 years

This will be paid from the Transforming cities fund but other bus and rail services will require the Transport levy.

What progress is the mayor Dan Norris making to talking to the councils in the way the mayor of Peterborough and cambridge has to keep his bus and rail Network operating savings 17 bus routes

in some of poorest and isolated communities in Greater Bristol and Bath city region so children can go to school and colleges to work shopping facilities Hospitals and leasure and Tourism facilities.

In Greater Bristol and Bath

These areas are not covered by Demand responsive bus services but need public transport.

Response from officers:

The West of England Combined Authority has secured over £500m of new capital funding from government to deliver a comprehensive programme of bus priority along multiple corridors, mainly focused on urban and inter-urban bus routes. The purpose of this investment is to improve journey time and service reliability, as well as reduce operating costs, to increase the attractiveness of bus use over the next few years. This investment programme sits alongside the other funding secured through the Bus Service Improvement Plan and together will help us deliver high quality bus services, making it easier for everyone to use the bus, improving local air quality and supporting our decarbonisation, health and well-being objectives.

End