

## Bus Advisory Board

### Public Questions – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Question** (submitted by)

**Melanie Goodchild**

Now that the council has more influence over bus routes since the recent legislative change within the Buses Bill, Oct 1st Are there any plans to reinstate a more regular circular bus that will pass close to Fullands Court, TA1 3DF? Could the council please consider reinstating this service, even with a less regular timetable of say hourly?

**Question**

**Lee Flether**

"At an Extraordinary Meeting of Wiltshire Council on devolution on Thursday 9 January 2025 where the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of Wiltshire joining Somerset and Dorset councils to move forward with a new Heart of Wessex Mayoral Combined Authority, Wiltshire Council Leader Richard Clewer publicly backed Bus Franchising for the Heart of Wessex area, saying that "Bus Franchising is a potential significant strength for us, and to have more control over buses would make a great deal of sense."

Richard Clewer was also quoted by the BBC on Friday 10 January 2025 regarding the potential for Heart of Wessex Bus Franchising as "We could see a revolution in bus provision in rural south west England"

The hope and expectation now is that Richard Clewer's comments will prompt similar statements from the leaders of Somerset and Dorset Councils, along with the recently Heart of Wessex committed Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, backing Bus Franchising for the Heart of Wessex area. Therefore, in recognition of this growing momentum towards the introduction of Bus Franchising in our areas, we have put together a Heart of Wessex Bus Franchising Team that so far has 25 representatives from right across the proposed Heart of Wessex area, drawn from passengers, bus user and advocacy groups, stakeholders, businesses, Town and Parish Councils, along with experts with experience in Bus Franchising who are working together to devise and put forward highly credible Bus Franchising proposals for the Heart of Wessex area, with more joining every day.

Therefore, please will Somerset Council, bus operators in Somerset, and other interested members of the Bus Advisory Board agree to meet with the Heart of Wessex Bus Franchising Team at the earliest opportunity to begin work on a shared vision for how to take Heart of Wessex Bus Franchising forward, for the benefit of all concerned?"

**Question**

**Linda Snelling**

Given that it is recognised that Somerset needs to see growth & investment in its public services to build a strong backbone in sustainable transport in its bid to reduce emissions congestion and reduce private car use, I would like to ask buses of Somerset the number of PVR used in today's service running, compared to 2023..

- because it is noted that each time we have seen a network change there seems to be a decrease in fleet can this be confirmed? and if so how does this fit with the need of residents in Somerset?

Given we are heading toward April another network change will we see further reductions and what is being done by buses of Somerset to mitigate service decline?

I also want to raise the unreliability of buses of Somerset across the whole network, with the latest disruption of service 22 being raised in the House of Commons ... given most announcements are classed as operational issues I would like to know what proportion of this disruption is down to engineering breakdowns or faults? And what is down to staffing issues.. And what is being done to rectify this situation! Because it is impacting bus use!

And finally to ask why Yeovil depot does not have the spare bus as promised given its distance from Taunton and Weymouth - because it as a result it means that breakdowns and faults are greatly impacting the south of the county services again affecting people livelihoods and damaging the confidence in travelling by bus.