

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

MINUTES OF COMMUNITIES, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Monday, 19th September, 2016

Present:- **Councillors** John Bull, Brian Simmons, Peter Turner, Alan Hale, Neil Butters and Ian Gilchrist

Apologies for absence: Councillors: Bob Goodman

94 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

95 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

96 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Jonathan Carr sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Lin Patterson.

Councillor Michael Norton sent his apologies and was substituted by Councillor Les Kew.

Councillor Bob Goodman sent his apologies.

97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

98 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

99 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

David Redgewell – South West Transport Network made a statement regarding public transport cuts, budgets and devolution. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Councillor Patterson asked if Mr Redgewell if he could ask First Bus a question, what would it be. Mr Redgewell said that he would ask if there are enough resources coming from Bath and North East Somerset Council to fund the bus service network.

Miss Amanda Wise made a statement about the recently withdrawn 379 service to Bristol. She stated that the reason given for withdrawing the service was underuse yet in her experience the bus was well used. She appealed for special consideration for the 379 service from Paulton. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Cyril Mitchard made a statement about his concerns regarding the changes to the service and timetable in Paulton. He referred to the many closures of services in villages over the past few years (such as Post Offices) which makes the bus service all the more important. He stated that people are encouraged to use public transport but they cannot use what isn't there. He asked for the early morning, evening and Sunday bus to Bristol be restored.

Ms Terrie Stocker made a statement about the loss of the 379 service from Paulton to Bristol. She said she would like to see the facts and figures behind the decision to withdraw the service. She mentioned that the loss of service will have an effect on jobs for some people. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Mike Roberts made a statement about the rerouting of the U1 service in Upper Oldfield Park. He added that he had asked to meet a First Bus representative on the site but had not heard back from them. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Ms Tracey Harding – FAVBUG (Frome and Villages Bus User Group) made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. She explained the effect of the loss of the evening service. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Mr Adam Boyden made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. He asked that the service be retained and that the possibility of match funding be explored. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Linda Oliver - made a statement about the local 267 Frome to Bath bus service. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.*

Councillor Liz Hardman – made a statement regarding the changes to service in Paulton. She presented a petition to James Freeman – First Bus or 800 signatures

Susan Charles – Warm Water Inclusive Swimming and Exercise (WWISE) made a statement updating the Panel on the warm water pool at the Leisure Centre. She informed Panel members that GLL are looking at WWISE suggestions and a formal report will follow. Following a question from Councillor Patterson, Susan Charles reported that she did not have a date for this report and asked that the issue be moved on by the Cabinet member. *A copy of the statement is appended to the agenda for this meeting and can be found on the Panel's Minute Book*

Susan Charles – Access Bath Group – made a statement regarding the disabled parking bays at Keynsham Leisure Centre which she explained are not appropriate as they are either on a slope or on a busy road. She asked that the Panel look at the plans and make safer parking facility.

Councillor Hale explained that there has been public consultation on this and that the local members had been shown images. Councillor Simmons further explained that the application is going to Committee and most things mentioned here have been included. He mentioned that there is a consultation event in the Community Space in a few weeks.

Supplementary Information

100 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

101 DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

Samantha Jones, Inclusive Communities Manager introduced the report and gave an update on what has been happening since May and what is planned.

The officer explained that the Police and Crime Commissioner funds Community Safety but that she has now been asked to model a 10% reduction and 20% reduction in the grant. The Youth Offending Team have been asked to do the same. The officer explained that she will write to them and ask them not to make the reduction or the service may not be viable any longer.

Regarding Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) – there have been 4 referrals in 15 months and two are going to full DHRs and each costs £10,000 minimum. The officer asked that serious consideration be given to this as there is no budget for DHRs and there will be a knock on effect if funding is reduced on other services around Hate Crime, Night time Economy and Rape Crisis.

The officer updated the Panel on a new group Domestic Abuse Partnership which has had an injection of Council resource. She explained that on 2nd November there is a Safeguarding Review Day where they will map out how to stop the cycle of Domestic Abuse of all types.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Bull commented that this all seems a lot more co-ordinated than previously. Regarding domestic abuse funding, the officer confirmed that yes domestic abuse services would lose out if grants are reduced.

Councillor Butters asked about abusers being able to question victims in court. The officer explained that she could not give a professional opinion on legal aid but that

the statistic is that domestic abuse happens approximately 37 times before the case goes to court. She explained that 'buddies' are provided to victims when they attend court. She further explained that at Bath Courts, evidence cannot be given remotely.

Councillor Hale talked about anti-social behaviour and explained that the anti-social behaviour officer in Curo covers a very large area.

Councillor Simmons asked if housing officers have had training regarding DHRs. The officer explained that yes they have had training and they sit on the Panel – the objective of the Panel is to ask if a death could have been predicted or prevented.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and asked for a report back in 6 months. It was mentioned that colleagues from Southside could be invited to help give a picture of the court system.

It was **RESOLVED** that a report be brought back to the Panel in 6 months.

102 'GETTING FROM A TO B' - STRATEGIC REVIEW OF TRANSPORT

The Chair introduced James Freeman and Andrew Sherrington – Managing Director and General Manager (Bath) of First Bus. James Freeman explained that he is glad to be at the meeting and while he does not enjoy listening to all of the issues in the public statements, it is important to hear them. He gave a presentation to the Panel which covered the following:

- Introduction to First West of England
- The environment in which we trade
- Cranmore Estate
- Route 178 Chandag
- Route 379
- Route 38 Keynsham
- Route U1 Upper Oldfield Park
- Routes 6/7 Fairfield Park and Larkhall

He also made the following points:

- He stated that the strength of feeling and petition regarding the 379 service is noted and he has been looking at possible options with colleagues in B&NES. He stated that he hopes it might be possible to put on a couple of peak hour facilities.
- Regarding the 38 Keynsham – there was a meeting a few weeks ago and the result of the strength of feeling at the meeting is that an experiment is taking place for the Park Estate and use of this evening service has been encouraging. Mr Freeman explained that this shows that public feeling can be responded to.
- Regarding the U1 Upper Oldfield Park, Mr Freeman explained that he is happy to meet representatives on the site but for now the bus has to operate as per the registration.

- Regarding the 267, Mr Freeman explained that First have been consulted as operators and that it would be his intention to run an evening service on a commercial basis on Friday and Saturdays if revenue support were to be withdrawn.

In conclusion Mr Freeman explained that in his position, he has to adjust services to the circumstances which prevail. He added that he is happy to meet with people regarding bus services.

Andy Strong – Team Manager Public Transport gave a verbal update on the recent bus service changes. He explained that the Council has agreed a limited peak hour replacement for bus service 379 funded initially by developer contributions. For this to be sustainable in the longer term, the fares revenue would need to cover the operating costs. His team had received a substantial amount of correspondence about the recent changes to First's commercial bus services and an issue raised in virtually all of them was the lack of consultation by First with their customers and residents about their proposals. The officer reported that he is keen to work with First and other bus operators to improve the process of reviewing and changing the bus route network. On a positive note, there had been an increase in the total number of bus passenger journeys across all operators in B&NES in 2015-16 for the third successive year. The annual total was 13.4 million, up 3% from the previous year. Of that total, 28% of journeys were made by holders of concessionary passes – a slight decline probably attributable to the national increase in the eligible age.

He explained that the Bus Services Bill is going through parliament and people should consider taking general issues to local MPs to raise in Parliament.

Regarding the 267 he explained that B&NES consulted Somerset County Council as the neighbouring transport authority and it was up to them to engage with parishes within their area.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Hale asked when timetables will be published. The officer replied that roadside information can be updated and operators are relied on to produce timetables for their commercial services. James Freeman added that First timetables will be published in September. He added that the 177 is registered now and the timetable can be published as soon as possible.

Councillor Gilchrist asked why First consulted Oldfield Park Councillors but not Widcombe Councillors. Mr Freeman apologised for the error.

Councillor Patterson spoke about the 6/7 service. She stated that she believes the survey was not conducted properly and asked that this be reviewed.

There was some discussion on the 177 (379 replacement). Councillor Bull suggested the time of 5.30pm. Mr Freeman explained that the current times are registered but that it is not impossible to change this over time. Councillor Bull agreed that they would meet to discuss this after an 8 week trial.

Councillor Moss referred to the decline in use of concessionary bus passes, he asked how this could be promoted. Mr Freeman explained that bus use in the area is on the increase.

Councillor Liz Hardman thanked First Bus for listening and for putting on the 177 in Paulton and added that new homes are being built in Paulton and the service may need to be expanded at some point. Mr Freeman acknowledged this point. He further explained that there is a big difference between peak and off peak services and that a new bus has to be bought for an extra peak time service.

Councillor Patterson stated that residents have also been signing a petition regarding the 6/7 service.

Councillor Butters stated that First Bus are in a difficult position. He thanked all of the speakers. He mentioned that there is a local bus forum. Regarding the U1 he stated that he is puzzled as to why the students do not use the Lower Bristol Road Bus Stop. He asked how the numbers of concessionary travellers could be raised. James Freeman explained that there are underlying reasons for the decline in numbers – principally, the move in the date for state pension age is moving. He added that when petrol prices go down, numbers of people using buses dropped. Regarding the U1 he explained that there is no easy answer as students will not travel at all if the service is not provided. There is also a competing operator, He stated that he is happy to meet with local people.

Regarding the suggestion of charging higher fares to fund the 267, Mr Freeman commented that this has been tried before and it generally drives people away. He added that First Bus do operate a passenger forum.

Councillor Hardman asked if there has been consideration of the school children regarding the U1. Mr Freeman responded that vehicles will have to proceed with the conditions that prevail as in all areas.

Councillor Hale thanked Mr Freeman for the resolution in Keynsham. He proposed and **it was RESOLVED that:**

The Cabinet be asked to review the ending of the subsidy on the 267 and that serious consideration be given to looking at funding from other authorities/Town and Parish Councils.

Following the above debate, Martin Shields Divisional Director - Environmental Services gave a presentation on 'Getting from A to B – Strategic Transport Review' which covered the following:

- Outline of briefing
- Overview
- Review – Community Transport
- Edge Solutions Review
- Review – Home to School travel
- Review of current position

- Review – Internal fleet
- Next Steps

The officer explained that this had been to Cabinet today and is a work in progress.

Panel members made the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Simmons asked if he could have some input when vehicles are changed as he has many years' experience.

Councillor Hale spoke about the lack of traffic in school holidays and asked if we could look at an American style bus system. The officer explained that the Council transports a lot of children in taxis and that maybe there is an opportunity to merge journeys and that this is all part of the review.

The officer explained that the Council meets entitlements to transport services and personal travel plans for adults and children. He explained that sometimes, people do not use the bus pass provided to them.

The Chair thanked the officer and asked for an update in 6 months.

103 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

There were no Cabinet Members present.

104 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the workplan with the following additions:

- Update on Domestic Abuse – March 2017
- Update on Strategic Transport Review – March 2017

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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David Redgewell statement to CTE Panel – 19th September 2016

Whilst we welcome the Devolution deal the issues about transport powers are a concern on how it will be possible to operate and franchise a bus network that does not cover the four unitary authorities in terms of a franchise or a quality partnership where buses operate between UWE - Portishead and Clevedon would be outside the agreement. Similarly bus services through Hotwells, Clevedon and Weston would have to operate under the permit system under the Buses Bill or would require a separate quality partnership covering North Somerset by the new combined authority to cover North Somerset either as an advanced quality partnership or an enhanced quality partnership. It would also require a different agreement for a multi-journey, multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing scheme and North Somerset would still require referral to the Traffic Commissioner for services whereas the Metro-Mayor would have full control over the bus services through contracts or partnerships. Of course this would also apply to a Planning or Transport Commissioner.

On rail it would be very difficult to arrange improvements to services without the full Portishead line being in the deal and the line from Gloucester to Weston-Super-Mare. This would make station improvements very difficult or to seek rail powers for Metro-West with the franchise and Network Rail. Access for All programmes could be carried out at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Patchway, Pilning, Filton and Parson Street but would leave the situation of station improvements in North Somerset outside the power of the combined authority. This would affect bus/rail interchange improvements at Weston-Super-Mare and Nailsea and Backwell and also electrification of the line between Bristol to Taunton.

If a new rail authority is set up as part of the combined authority, then while improvements would take place at Bath, Keynsham and Temple Meads, Filton, Patchway and the Henbury loop North Somerset would remain outside the combined authority area and rail investment programmes would still have to be agreed with the DFT. Similarly, decisions on housing and planning matters on South Bristol expansion or Weston-Super-Mare, Clevedon or Portishead and the MetroBus extensions to Clevedon and Weston would again be outside the control of any planning, transport authority commissioner or Metro-Mayor. Delivering a new interchange at Weston would be more difficult.

Currently, the Bristol Port and airport remain outside of the combined authority which makes improving public transport to Bristol airport and reopening the Henbury loop very difficult as the port is in three authorities - Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

Bus Service Reductions from 4th September 2016

Passenger groups are concerned about the following loss of services :-

- 2 Stockwood - City Centre (no night buses)

- 17A Keynsham - Southmead via Hillfields and Cadbury Heath (now retained from November 2016)
- 37 Bristol - Bitton - Bath (no service to Bitton or RUH) now planned to be restored to its original route from November 2016)
- 38 Bristol - Keynsham - Bath (Sundays and evenings
48/49 No night buses beyond Downend and Staple Hill
- 51 Bristol - Knowle - Whitchurch
- 178 Bristol - Radstock via Keynsham (no estate service evenings and Sundays)
- 173 Radstock - Chillcompton (no Sunday service)
- 207 Thornbury - Berkeley (loss of service)

Whilst we are pleased to see some services retained from September and November we are still concerned about the level of services in Kingswood and Keynsham along the routes of the 17A (now 19B) and 38/178 around the Keynsham estates with no evening and Sunday services after 9pm and a limited service around the Chandag Estate, together with the 6 & 7 around Larkhall, Bath.

The larger budget for buses and public transport in BANES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire is alarming. Whilst we welcome the bid for sustainable money from Government the loss of bus service support money is of great concern especially on the Bristol - Radstock corridor through Brislington and Whitchurch.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network, TSSA and Director of Bus Users (UK)
Martin Cinamond (South West Transport Network)
Nigel Bray (Railfuture Severnside)
Jenny Raggett (TFGBA)
John Hassell Bus Users UK

I wish to address the panel on the question of the recently withdrawn 379 bus service to Bristol, already sorely missed by its many loyal regulars, because it delivered to our community, **and beyond**, both the route and timetable suited to its passenger needs.

Reasons advanced by First for its withdrawal include:

Underuse: On my own authority I can state **NOT** so, as there was often standing room only. Less busy perhaps away from peak times and holidays, but I've yet to use a service which ***isn't***.

Duplication of the route by 376: True for ***part*** of the route, but unable to think of a route which is **NOT!** (Bath to Peasedown most readily comes to mind and Keynsham-Brislington to Bristol).

I moved to Paulton to reduce my daily commute. Travel to Filton via Bath often took 2 hours each way and cost £200 a month. And allowed for no work - life balance at all.

From Paulton I save £40 a month, and thanks to 379, reduced my travel time by up to an hour a day.

Now, to my options courtesy of 'First':

1. The 178 – less reliable and takes longer (even discounting the Chandag Estate) and seen mainly as another service for Keynsham and Brislington; possibly why **the timetable suits no one in our community**.

2. Or an hour's bus to Bath for train as already mentioned, which completely negates my reason for moving!

'First' say passengers will in time benefit from ***their*** changes.

So, how is the lady at Radstock benefited who now has to get up at 4.00 a.m. and doesn't get home till 7? If she can't change her working hours then her job is under threat.

Or the lady who from her late nursing shift at Southmead, is forced to wait nearly an hour in a fast emptying station, and feeling vulnerable with only drunks for company?

Or the older residents whose weekly social visits to Broadwalk are at an end, and who feel cut off because the 178 doesn't serve ***their*** needs?

And what of the Hallatrow regulars now catching the 376 as I often am? Part of our walk to nearest bus stop is along 500 yards of busy main road with no path. Cold comfort indeed when one of us becomes a statistic for walking along what should be part of our bus route!

I should like to conclude with an appeal for Mr Freeman's especial consideration. When working for Reading buses Mr Freeman was instrumental, commendably, in delivering record levels of passenger growth and **customer satisfaction**.

Then on becoming MD for 'First Bristol' Mr Freeman stated in his press release: "I relish the thought of working with everyone in the team to make the bus services in ***Bristol***, Bath, Wells and **surrounding areas** the very best they can be".

No disrespect intended Mr Freeman, but to many of us in one of those “surrounding areas” these laudable objectives have now patently failed.

Because finally I cannot of course assure the growth rate of new passengers resulting from reinstatement of the 379, though I am confident of a solid and loyal passenger base to build on - more than many services can boast. Above all, I can most certainly guarantee unprecedented customer satisfaction; and with it, the gratitude and approbation of an entire community.

Thank you for your time today.

WWISE Network presentation on 19th Sept 2016 to

Community, Transport & Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel

There has been overwhelming support from the Council Committees over the last few weeks regarding this facility and we have been reliably informed that GLL are looking at our suggestions seriously and there will be a formal report to follow.

We would ask that, if the Cabinet Member responsible for this subject is still unavailable, that it could be handed to his superior.

Thank you

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Mrs Terrie Stocker- Statement regarding the loss of the 379 bus service

Monday 19th September

Good evening.

I live in Paulton and work as a nurse specialist in the BRI. For the past 2 years I have travelled to work on the well used 379 bus, so was shocked and angry when Firstbus decided to withdraw this service.

First say they undertook a full review of the service including consulting bus users. I neither any of my fellow commuters were asked their views or even aware that this was happening. I have asked First twice for details of this review, I am still waiting Mr Freeman. They say the 379 is underused, I find that surprising as when I get on at 6 or 7.30 in a morning I am regularly joined by up to 6 people just at my stop. The evening buses are just as busy. I understand First is a commercial company but fail to see how these routes are not commercially viable.

Prior to the 4th September, the combined 379/178 route provided 27 bus journeys into Bristol on a weekday, we now have 15. On a Saturday there were 25, we now have 13. On Sundays and BH we had 5, now we have none. This is despite First announcing in their 'Bus services are changing' leaflet that the 178 would provide 4 journeys either way on Sundays or BH (page 14, if you are interested Mr Freeman). Interestingly I can go to Bath on a Sunday as there are 2 different buses going there. Why can't one of those go to Bristol instead?

Being the kind and caring company they are, First have suggested other options for us to get to Bristol every day. Some of these are frankly unworkable in the real world, considerably increase journey times and require me to walk roads with no

pavements and very little lighting, not something any of us would want to do especially in the winter months.

BANES has been happy to grant permission for numerous housing developments in the Paulton/Norton/Radstock area. There are no light industry jobs locally so the villages have effectively become a commuter belt. Around 500+ houses have been built on the old Purnell's factory site opposite my house, Bovis homes advertise 'great public transport links' for the site to both Bath and Bristol and even tell us they have contributed £450,000 to bus services. It is unclear exactly where this has gone.

As a result of the loss of the 379, many people have had to consider the sustainability of their current job, can no longer visit family or even get to college. I have had to change my working hours to accommodate the much longer and less frequent 178 service. This means I can only pick my children up from school once instead of twice a week now, and my working day has been extended considerably.

I and my fellow users of the 379 want to travel to work in the most environmentally, time efficient and cost effective way. I have heard that First is going to start an extra peak time service but have yet to see a timetable for this. Even if that is the case it is not enough to replace what we have lost.

Most of all Mr Freeman, I would like to remind you of Firsts company moto, which is 'Keeping Britain Moving', I would love to know what part of Britain this refers to as it certainly isn't the bit I live in.

**Statement to The Communities, Transport and Environment Policy
Development and Scrutiny Panel**

Monday 19th September 2016

Background

I represent the local residents of, and other stakeholders in, Upper Oldfield Park and set out below our objections to the re-routing of the U1 bus down Upper Oldfield Park.

1. From 4 September 2016, there have been buses timetabled, including double decker buses along the road, to run up to every 7-15 minutes up to 2.30am and then hourly for the rest of the night until 6.44am, the daily average number of buses being as many as **158** with a weekly average of more than **1000**.

2. From the limited correspondence received from First Group in response to complaints, it seems the U1 bus was rerouted down our road following the decision by First Group to use double decker buses and due to concerns these would not fit under the railway bridge on their previous route along Lower Oldfield Park.

Objections:

Our particular objections are as follows;

1. Road Safety

There is no pedestrian crossing on UOP and the rerouting of U1 along UOP simply adds to existing safety concerns. There is significant danger to pedestrians (especially to child pedestrians attending school with approximately 1,133 pupils), including vehicles having to drive into driveways to allow buses to pass. The increased traffic flows (150 buses per day) and resultant congestion increase the risk of accidents.

There are bad sightlines and minimal visibility for access to houses with U1 increasing the risk of accident.

There is considerable congestion along the road and at either ends particularly at the junction with Wells Road as buses seek to turn into UOP.

3. Congestion

Upper Oldfield Park is an unsuitable road, being especially narrow in places. It is very congested with traffic at busy times of day due to parents and visitors to the school, doctors' surgeries, dental surgeries, bed and breakfasts and hotels, the West Wing and soon to be Norland Nanny college, as well as the normal flow of traffic of local residents. Parking on the road is restricted to those with residents' permits or 2 hourly bays. Businesses have three permits each and the 2 hourly bays are used by patients and visitors, including parents picking up their children. There are already too few and it is submitted that reducing the provision of these in order better to accommodate the flow of buses where they are not needed would make the school, surgery and businesses unviable.

3. Consultation

There was no consultation with residents, businesses or other stakeholders affected which is bad commercial practice, unacceptable and unreasonable. Objections made to First Group by Bath and North East Somerset Council were ignored.

4. Local businesses and Quality of life of local residents in a Conservation Area

Upper Oldfield Park is in a Conservation Area. The volume of unnecessary buses generates more noise, vibration and pollution and reduces the ability to access houses. In the evenings, night time and at weekends Upper Oldfield Park is a quiet residential area with little traffic. Having buses running every 15 minutes up to 2.30am and then overnight is completely intrusive and unreasonable, disturbing residents and causing complaints from guest at B&Bs, thus impacting local businesses.

Objections and Support from other Stakeholders

1. Hayesfield School

We have received a Statement from Emma Yates Headteacher at Hayesfield School in support of our objections, voicing her concerns about pupil safety and congestion and stating:

“Whilst Hayesfield Girls' School is delighted that the ‘bendy buses’ will no longer be travelling up Brougham Hayes and over the railway bridge, we are concerned to learn that these will be replaced by double decker buses routed along Upper Oldfield Park.

Upper Oldfield Park is an already very busy road with bends that regularly cause pinch points for drivers travelling in opposite directions. To navigate double decker buses through this residential area will cause further difficulties and introduce further safety risks to pedestrians and particularly students of Hayesfield Girls’ School and Mixed Sixth Form. There will be a particular difficulty with congestion arising when coach parties leave or arrive at the School on Upper Oldfield Park for scheduled school trips, which are not infrequent.

Our preference would be for the buses to remain as ‘non-bendy buses’ and to be routed along the Lower Bristol Road only, which is a wider road.

We see no reason why these buses are routed through residential areas. Our students are able to walk the short distance from the main road to both the Brougham Hayes Campus and Upper Oldfield Park Campus.”

2. Number 18 Surgery

An additional statement has also been received from the doctors’ surgery:

“To First Bus and Banes Council

I am writing on behalf of the GP's at Number 18 Surgery.

We are extremely concerned about the increased congestion and safety of patients, residents and pupils in Upper Oldfield Park, since the introduction of the U1 bus service at the beginning of September.

Upper Oldfield Park is already a very busy residential road during the day, with only single lane traffic in parts.

We have noticed this week that the congestion has been building up with the addition of the U1 buses.

Some of our patients have had difficulty getting out of their cars and also crossing the road due to the increased traffic, especially with the large buses and we are concerned that there will be an accident.

We are also concerned that when we need to call an ambulance, in an emergency, to take patients to hospital, the added congestion will delay the ambulance from getting through. The ambulance service also use this route to cut through and gain access, quicker, to other roads in the area.

When this service is increased at the end of September, we will see this congestion increase again.

We are requesting that FirstBus rethink this route and move the bus stops to the lower Bristol road. This will only be a short walk for the students and will also encourage a healthier lifestyle.

We strongly request that you take notice of our request and the requests from Hayesfield school and the residents.

Yours sincerely

Helen Harris

(on behalf of the GP partners)

Helen Harris

Practice Manager

Number 18 Surgery

3. Other interested parties

Parents of pupils at Hayesfield Girls' School have expressed their concerns about the bus service and are in the process of preparing a statement through the PTA setting out their objections.

Conclusion

1. Current routing of U1 along UOP has a significant detrimental effect on:

Safety

Noise pollution (including vibrations)

Air pollution

Congestion

Access

Privacy

Visual amenity

Conservation Area.

2. Implications of re-routing U1 to Lower Bristol Road:

First Group: none if routed along Lower Bristol Road. (Financial if routed along LOP to replace proposed double decker buses).

Safety of pedestrians on UOP will be improved

Quality of life for residents will be improved.

Students: none

Equalities: none

Staffing: none

Economic: none

3. Accordingly, we request that the buses be re-routed away from UOP with immediate effect. As the U1 bus runs in a loop from Bath bus station via LOP and back to the bus station, the environmentally friendly thing to do is to walk to the bus station (10 mins) and abolish the unnecessary Lower Oldfield loop altogether. If a student pick up point in this vicinity is required then surely the right route is to stay on the main A36 Lower Bristol Road, and pick up at the Pines Way bus stop. Most students get on this service at the Holiday Inn in any event. We also note that a large number of students now reside elsewhere, having moved out of the Oldfield Park area.

4. We are concerned that our objections are acted upon without delay. With the start of the term for the university fast approaching we wish to avoid any upturn in the number of buses along our road and the purchase by students of season tickets.

5. Additionally, we request that the council immediately impose a bye-law restricting buses from access on the road (save for school coaches).

6. Without prejudice to our objections with the rerouting of U1 along UOP, we seek an unequivocal undertaking from First Group that buses on U1 will not be permitted to make unofficial stops along Upper Oldfield Park (a practice that has already occurred) and that bus drivers will be warned that anyone doing so will be disciplined. In addition to the inconvenience this causes to the flow of traffic and residents, we question the public liability consequences of such unauthorised acts. We also seek an undertaking that no bus stops will be implemented without adequate prior warning to local residents who may lodge objections.

7. The residents of the road are in the progress of compiling a petition and are expecting support from all stakeholders. This is not a matter that is likely simply to go away.

8. In recent years, there has been an explosion in the number of students in Bath, resulting in a number of difficulties concerning traffic flow. In addition, it seems our city is suffering from the 1980's legislation deregulating public transport and those seeking to exploit this. What we are looking for is a triumph of fairness and common sense over profit and the facilitation of student movement at the expense of residents of Bath. There is no necessity for a route along Upper Oldfield Park, the route does not service the road and yet the road is made to suffer for it.

Questions for First Group Plc

Mr M Roberts is registered to speak on our behalf at the panel meeting. In summary, we wish the following questions to be put to First Group:-

1. Will First Group now remove buses from Upper Oldfield Park on the grounds that this road is unsuitable and unsafe on the basis that running 150 double decker buses a day down a local residential street with the unacceptable safety risks, intrusion and disturbance that causes when there is no support at all from the local community and a perfectly viable alternative is available cannot be justified.

2. Why did they choose not to consult and ignore the advice of the council who raised a verbal objection to the proposal? This is an abuse of their powers under bus deregulation.

Mrs Sarah Carney

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I'm Tracey Harding, a co-founder of FAVBUG, the Frome and Villages Bus User Group. I'd like to talk about the impact the loss of the 267 evening bus services would have and also about how short and limited was the consultation process.

The 267 service provided by First is an excellent service. It operates from 6am to midnight (Monday to Saturday) with a limited service on Sundays.

The loss of the First 267 evening bus services would have a devastating effect on people who rely on them, whether to get them home after work (many regularly have to work late or on shift work), to visit patients in the RUH, to attend evening education, to go late night shopping or to have nights out in Bath.

Over a course of three evenings last week FAVBUG conducted a poll of 267 bus users on the Bath to Frome 21:10 evening bus.

60% of them were using the bus for nights out in Bath, 20% were commuters working late, 10% were college students, 5% hospital visitors and 5% were tourists.

Many regularly commute to Bath as they have evening jobs and said without this evening 267 bus service they'd be forced to give up those jobs.

For those on a night out in Bath, no evening 267 bus would mean no more nights out.

For students it'd mean no more evening classes.

We feel that this consultation warrants more time. The 267 bus consultation took place over a single month whereas Somerset and Wiltshire allowed a 3 months. It took place during the Summer holiday period. And it was primarily an online exercise disenfranchising those 267 bus users who have no access to the internet

Frome Town Council wasn't told about it, nor were the parish councils served by the

267. No notices were posted along the route nor on the 267.

It therefore should come as no surprise that in our survey last week of evening 267 bus passengers, nobody had seen any BaNES notices about the consultation.

So in conclusion, the evening 267 bus service brings a lot of income and workers to Bath. It ensures the rural villages and the market town of Frome are not isolated from their nearest urban centre.

Hence for Frome and the villages as well as for Bath, this evening 267 service is a vital service.

My name is Adam Boyden and I am a Mendip District Councillor for College ward in Frome, which is served by the 267 bus route. I am concerned that losing the 267 evening bus service would affect people in Frome and the villages to the north, and have worked with the Frome and Villages Bus User Group and other councillors to encourage residents and councillors to respond to the consultation.

Firstly I would like to thank your Council for supporting a service that connects people largely living in Somerset with places they need to get to, largely in Bath, particularly since Somerset County Council stopped supporting it in 2011.

Secondly I would like to make the case for you to retain the subsidy. Your budgets are under pressure, so why should B&NES continue to subsidise the service?

Well, one reason is that the evening service helps the B&NES economy, by bringing Somerset residents into Bath to spend money into the evening, and it makes bus travel in the day more attractive overall in the first place, as they can stay late and return on the same ticket. The subsidy costs B&NES £19,000 a year and £1.89 per passenger trip. Bath Tourism estimates that the average day visitor to Bath spends £34 per day. There are many residents, and tourists staying in B&Bs and hotels along the route, who visit Bath by bus for the day. The 267 evening service has 10,084 passenger trips a year, and 71% of passengers (on that evening in February) got the bus for 'leisure or entertainment' trips – passengers on this service could therefore be generating over £243,000 for the Bath economy. So cutting the service could have an economic impact on Bath.

Another reason is environmental, in that the 267 evening service brings people into Bath (and earlier in the day) without adding to car travel and congestion, air pollution in Air Quality Management Areas, carbon emissions, or parking problems in residential streets. Your council is considering investing heavily in further Park and Ride capacity to reduce traffic in the city centre, including at Odd Down on the 267 route. Cutting the 267 could therefore increase traffic and the council's costs of mitigating its effects, in other budgets.

A third reason is the social impact of cutting the evening service, which would mostly affect the people who rely on the bus, who do not have a car, and are more likely to be women, older people over 60 and younger people under 20, and those on lower incomes. Lower paid workers in pubs and restaurants who rely on the 267 to get home would be cut off. Retaining the service would therefore help protect the more vulnerable groups of people. Ending the service would also increase the 'rural isolation' of villages around Bath who would have no public transport to or from Bath at all in the evenings. Frome

does have a railway station but the train is more expensive, and is unlikely to be a viable option for villagers. Frome and the main three villages are expanding further with new housing development, because they are close to Bath and are served by bus routes. So I fully support the responses to the consultation from Frome Town Council, Beckington and Rode Parish Councils, who ask B&NES to continue the service.

Overall, cutting the 267 evening buses may have an economic impact on Bath's economy, it would go against the council's own strategy of reducing car travel, could affect traffic and air quality, and increase the need and costs related to Park & Ride sites. It would have a social impact on people who rely on the bus, and increase the 'rural isolation' in local villages. These impacts costs and benefits need to be assessed further.

Thirdly, although these are clear reasons for B&NES to support the service alone, I hope your council will talk to Somerset, Mendip and the parish councils to help retain this important service, through 'match funding' if necessary. Frome Town Council are considering this very issue on Wednesday, and I and others will report back.

Thank you,
Adam Boyden
Mendip District Councillor, Frome College ward

My name is Linda Oliver and I am both a Mendip District Councillor and a Somerset County Councillor, and represent a number of villages, which will be impacted by further cuts to the 267 bus services.

Adam Boyden has outlined three good reasons for continuing your support for this bus services, the economic benefit for businesses in Bath, the positive environmental impact of reducing the need to travel by private car, and the social harm of removing a service upon which a small, but needy, user group rely on.

You have also heard from Tracey Harding, who asks that affected councils be given the chance to fully consider the implications of this before any decisions are made. Tracey points out that the parish councils have not been included in the consultation, and I can confirm that neither have local district and county councillors, or indeed Mendip District Council. So we have not really had enough time to fully consider the issue.

I have spoken to Tracy Aarons, Deputy Chief Executive of Mendip District Council and she has asked Anna Blackburn in the planning policy team to consider the implications, but this will take time.

3 of 16 primary villages within Mendip are affected by the 267-bus service, namely Beckington, Rode and Norton St Philip.

As such, according to the Local Plan, they should not be subject to any cuts in their public transport service. Moreover due to their close proximity to Bath these three villages are extremely popular targets for housing developers, and as a result all three are significantly over performing in their completions and consents granted for new housing.

Cuts to bus services at a time of such disproportionate growth in housing numbers does not seem appropriate.

Equally important is the positive impact this housing growth could have on the financial viability of the bus service. The Mendip planning policy team will be able to provide data on this housing growth to assist you in your decision-making.

In the meantime I would recommend that the neighbouring authorities of BANES and Somerset liaise and agree a way forward where sufficient funding is made available to continue the service in the short-term. This short -term fix would provide the time to: -

1. Organise a more comprehensive consultation.
2. Carry out a more detailed survey of users.
3. Do a full cost/benefit analysis.
4. Approach local parish councils for potential funding support.
5. And Develop a plan to advertise and promote the service.

What I can promise is that in Adam Boyden and myself you have two very active councillors who will work hard to get the support of their respective local councils if the survey of local users shows it to be justifiable.

Thank you

19th September 2016

Speech to Committee

Chair

Thank you for allowing me to speak before this committee. I am the B&NES Councillor for Paulton and on behalf of the residents of Paulton, Radstock and surrounding areas, I'd like to present this petition of signatures to you.

This petition, only in place for a few weeks, represents the strength of feeling felt by bus users regarding the changes to the First Bus time table in our area of Paulton, Radstock and Midsomer Norton.

The biggest change has been scrapping the fast commuter bus to Bristol which was half hourly and replacing it with an hourly, slower service which doesn't stop in the centre of Bristol, but goes straight to the bus station. The other big change is that there is no direct service from Paulton to Bristol on a Sunday.

Many residents felt that these changes were publicised in August when people were on holiday, with no opportunity to give feedback on the effects of these changes. One resident said "We feel incredibly let down by the proposed changes and the manner in which they have been delivered. A pointless 3 week warning period"

First Bus have replaced the 379 with the 178, but it is slower and doesn't stop in central Bristol. First Bus has also introduced a new service to Bath, the 172 which I believe is very successful.

However, Chair, I'd like you, the panel and Mr Freeman to be aware of the consequences of some of these changes particularly to the 379 which are having on the lives of my residents.

"The 379 just about got me to work on time for 9am. The 178 collects us 5 minutes later, is a longer route, with more traffic and fewer bus lanes, so no way will it make it into Bristol for 9am."

"I am now faced with an extra 10-15 minutes walk from Temple Mead to my office. The new route of the 178 at 7.40 never makes it on time."

"Many residents like me working at Southmead Hospital cannot catch the 178 bus to get to work on time, especially on the return journey home and have to catch the 376, which goes on the A37. We then have to get from the A37 to Paulton. Luckily some weeks I can get my husband to pick me up, otherwise I have to walk the two and a half miles from the A37 at Farrington Gurney to Paulton. Some of this route is without a pavement."

Some residents are concerned that Paulton's 379 is being sacrificed to another bus route the 376 which goes from Bristol to Wells. "It's an over investment in the 376 to Wells which in part shares some of the 379 route so taking customers away from each other."

"I know of people whose job will be at a stake as they cannot get to work on time. Houses have been sold in Paulton based on the good transport links to Bristol, which have now ceased"

These are just a flavour of the emails and letters I have receive, outlining the effects of these bus changes on our residents.

I greatly appreciate the Managing Director of First Bus being present and I hope having heard my representations and those of oter fesidents, he will reconsider some of the changes that have been made.Paulton desperately needs a “fast bus”, the new 177, at peak times in the morning to get commuters into work before 9am and again in the evening two buses to take commuters home

Thank you for your attention in this matter

Liz Hardman