

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.