

Statement from David Redgewell - South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside

Corporate PDS Panel – 27th May 2020

Dear Councillors,

We are concerned about social distancing regulations within Bath and North East Somerset on the public transport network.

With government guidance to local authorities, Transport operators and passenger groups - we are concerned about the lack of social distancing notices on bus shelter and stops. There is no clear social distancing marking on pavements.

Key locations: Bath city centre, Dorchester Street, Keynsham Town centre, Midsomer Norton Town centre, Radstock Town centre, Whitchurch, Pensford, Farrington Gurney, Saltford, Paulton and Peasdown St John.

Realtime information displays need to explain timetables and social distancing guidance and the wearing of face masks and CONTACTLESS payments on buses.

Buses are only allowed to carry 10 people on a single decker and 20 people on a double decker bus. 10% of existing capacity.

Clear destinations need to be displayed and provide information on the front when the bus is full for passengers - DISABLED ACCESS is protected.

We also need to make sure there is provision made for extra buses to layover in Bath city centre, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton.

Extra pavement widening and cycle lanes need to be provided in Keynsham, Peasdown St John, Radstock and Midsomer Norton.

Some bus stops and shelters may need to be relocated for social distancing.

Extra bus stop cleaning is required.

Hand gels are required at key interchanges and public toilets need to be reopened in the district and the block at Avon Street Coach Station.

WECA Mayoral Transport Authority and Bristol City Council are looking at social distancing on bus infrastructure in Bristol city centre and across the city - similar plans are required in South Gloucestershire in Kingswood, Staple Hill, Downend, Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury. This is in addition to the bus stations at Cribbs Causeway, UWE, across Weston Super Mare and North Somerset.

At present all bus services are funded by the Department for Transport Covid19 bus operators grant at £17 million per week in England. This grant is funded by WECA Mayoral Transport Authority and North Somerset Council to operators - Wiltshire and Somerset County Councils are also funding DfT services.

On service provision there is a need to improve the following bus services:

Evening and Sunday services

19 - Between Bath Spa bus and coach station, Weston, Kelston, Bitton, Cadbury Heath, Kingswood, UWE, Bristol Parkway station and Cribbs Causeway bus station. Via RUH back entrance, and Nightingale Hospital.

179 - Bath to Midsomer Norton via Timsbury and Marksbury.

And access to south Bristol hospital at Hengrove by providing connections

At Brislington and Knowle to route 96

The Brislington to Hengrove hospital service requires a weekend and evening service.

On Railway services social distancing is required on trains with just 45 passengers allowed on a 3-car train and 60 on an intercity train - social distancing on trains and station is important. Notices and signs need to be in place at Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa and Freshford.

Enforcement of social distancing is required by transport staff, including marshalling at key interchanges by support from the British Transport Police and the Avon and Somerset Police.

We must also note the deaths of 61 public transport network staff who have died on the frontline including 2 local bus drivers.

Key public transport workers are members of RMT, TSSA, Aslef and the Unite union.

Please bring this statement to the attention of the councillors on the Corporate Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet.

Kind regards

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.