

Good evening.

Over the last few weeks many people have told me how worried they are about the future of buses in the rural areas – I share their concerns.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) has been around since 1980's, so there are a lot of data available on their success or failure rates. They can be very successful if they are in support of a regular bus service, especially in urban areas. But as a substitute for a regular bus, particularly in rural areas they don't work, and if they are introduced without accepting concessionary fares the outlook is very bleak.

Residents who don't drive, either for medical or financial reasons will find their lives blighted. The remaining residents will just start using their cars more – all the hard work to combat climate emergency will be undone.

Residents can not understand why all the council support for rural bus services has been removed, while retaining 100% in Bath, especially as Bath has only 43% of the total electorate!

If this change causes hardship then I can promise that in May the voters of North East Somerset will remember who is responsible.