

Statement to B&NES Cabinet meeting on Thursday 9th March

I am making this statement on behalf of the Sustainable Transport subgroup of the Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group.

Firstly we wanted to thank you for continuing to support the weekly meeting between our group and Transport officers in B&NES & WECA: this has been invaluable for us in being able to feedback local issues, influence some aspects of DRT delivery, and know that we are passing on accurate information to people in the Chew Valley via our “Bus Transition in the Chew Valley” Facebook group.

Thank you too for your positive feedback to our report ‘Making a case for the 672’ which was created from granular research into the needs of people who are reliant users of the 672, featuring the unique voices of 33 people in the Chew Valley .

We also believe now is a moment of opportunity to create a modal shift from cars to buses, as a primary transport choice in this large rural area.

This is a bold vision, but wholly in line with B&NES own desire to decarbonise transport. With 29% of all emissions in B&NES coming from public transport, and the Chew Valley being a large geographical area, this is a huge and *necessary* challenge.

Whilst our group is happy to gather and share evidence from ‘Early Adopters’ of DRT we believe there is larger project in need of B&NES’s co-ordination.

We ask the council to work with local communities to amplify good news stories of DRT and public transport generally, and to reach into schools, groups and businesses in B&NES to support its use. The House of Lords ‘In our hands’ report clarified that 32% of action on climate change before 2035 must be *private* individuals making changes to their *daily* habits, but an understanding of behavioural change shows the importance of practical and psychological capability, motivation and opportunity.

A combination of DRT, more frequent main corridor routes and the 672 provides opportunity in the Chew Valley, but there is work to be done and time needed to unlock the motivation to change.

The speed of change will be influenced by

- An individual’s attitude to change, and past experiences of managing change
- How well the DRT service works in practice and how many ‘good news’ of bad news’ stories they hear

- Their motivation from a range of factors: cost, convenience, belief in the need for change
- The narratives and behaviour of their peers and those leading schools, businesses and organisations
- The weight of evidence that something is going to bring more positives than negatives to their lives

The post of School Travel Plan Officer was not filled after Alasdair Yule left B&NES in 2021, and as a result the Mode Shift Stars Scheme has stalled in some local schools. Teachers need support in encouraging lower carbon transport options. Young people need education and inspiration to enable them to make good choices that will last a life-time. Parish Councils need to be convinced of the value of this modal shift and to have the tools to communicate clear messages and win hearts and minds to alternative transport choices.

We know DRT is the responsibility of WECA, but the broader decarbonisation agenda is of vital importance to B&NES, so please, work with us on this, clarify who is tasked with transport decarbonisation education and let's take this forward.

Jackie Head

On behalf of CVAF C&NE(ST)WG

8/3/2023