

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 21 November 2024

Liberal Democrat Group Motion on Bus Services

To be proposed by Councillor Fiona Gourley

Council notes that:

1. The £2 bus fare cap scheme was introduced in January 2023 to encourage people to use buses and to help tackle the cost-of-living crisis.
2. The government has recognised the need to continue capping bus fares but has decided to increase the cap to £3 in 2025.
3. This 50% increase in single adult fares is likely to disproportionately affect the least well-off, particularly in rural, isolated and disadvantaged communities.
4. The increase is likely to suppress bus patronage, lead more people to choose to drive, and put 'uneconomic' routes at risk of being cancelled.
5. The West of England Combined Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) includes specific funding streams dedicated to making bus fares more affordable. These BSIP-funded initiatives currently support local bus fare subsidies in the region and are already set to continue until March 2025. Additionally, the Mayor's "Birthday Bus" scheme, also funded through BSIP, will run until the end of 2025.

Council believes that:

6. Affordable bus services are essential to enable residents to get to work or access services, shops and schools.
7. Making bus travel the first choice for more residents is essential to reducing congestion, improving air quality, and tackling the climate crisis.
8. The government budget showed skewed priorities with only £151m allocated to the bus fare cap compared to £3bn support for cheaper motoring¹.

Council therefore:

9. Asks the Leader of Council to write to government ministers, sharing council's views and calling for the £2 bus fare cap to be restored.
10. Calls on the West of England Combined Authority Mayor to allocate Bus Service Improvement Plan funds towards maintaining the £2 fare cap across the West of England.
11. Calls on the West of England Combined Authority Mayor to urgently progress work towards bus service franchising in the region, as the only long-term

¹ [Source](#) and [source](#) (p7).

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

solution to securing essential bus routes, achieving greater fare structure control, and providing more stable, predictable service levels for residents across the network.

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