

Statement to B&NES Council meeting: 20th November 2025**Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership – 1 of 3 – Jackie Head**

I am here, with two colleagues, on behalf of Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership, the group that is working with WECA and the Big Lemon to deliver two *WEST*locals: the X91 and 99.

As you will know the journey to getting these routes in place has been a long one, and now a little over a year since they began to run we are uncomfortably aware of the potential funding cliff edge of March 2026. Did you know that to continue to run, these routes have to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner by 22nd January? Just 2 months away..

On the 1st December officers and council members will be attending a meeting in WECA to argue the case for buses in B&NES. You will have lots of routes to think about, many communities lobbying you for support and we realise it will be hard to know how you judge one route above another, so this statement is to suggest some useful questions you might want to ask.

We would also like to ask Kevin Guy (as WECA Deputy Mayor and B&NES Council Leader, to arrange a meeting with ourselves and relevant transport colleagues in B&NES & WECA where these issues can be discussed in more detail.

We have 9 proposed selection criteria that we'd like to put forward

- 1. How long has this route been running and is this sufficient time to have tested its potential?**

Bus routes are normally given 3-5 year trials? The X91 was introduced in skeleton form in April 2024 and the 99 in September 2024, so they are in their infancy. Will you give us this opportunity to grow?

2. Given the length of time the route has been operating, has it developed demand at a reasonable rate?

The X91 began as a test one return journey from 3 villages before we applied for it to be a 3x a day 5 days a week service from September 2024 and a 4x a day 6 days a week service from September 2025. It has built its present cohort incredibly fast. It is growing month on month and now has 3x the amount of customers it had a year ago.

The 99 initially grew well and quickly built a cohort of 6th formers using it to access Chew Valley 6th form as well as others. In an effort to simplify the route and bring in new people we changed the route in September 2025 and are in the process of seeking a further change by April 2026 to make it even more fit for purpose. Already numbers have grown from September to October when this change was made. The Chew Valley had no fixed route services so gathering new passengers takes time, but our group is working hard to continue to build passenger numbers.

I'm now going to pass to my colleague, Elaine Workman