

Mr Richard Holden MP
Department for Transport
Sent via email:
richard.holden.mp@parliament.uk

**Correspondence - Joint letter sent via email
from B&NES and Wiltshire Council**

Date: 20th July 2023

Dear Richard Holden MP

I recently wrote to you to say how pleased we were to hear that unused BSIP funding could be spent on continuing vital supported bus services within the West of England. You will therefore understand my dismay that rather than immediately using this funding to save our supported bus services – a lifeline for many of our communities - our transport authority, WECA, is insisting on a 7-month review process, which will leave many of our communities without any bus service until April 2024. Clearly a comprehensive review of public transport in the West of England is much needed, however we simply cannot leave our communities isolated until that review concludes.

The following services are due to stop operations in the coming weeks, which will further isolate our communities, leaving many particularly vulnerable people, without any means by which to access vital services:

- 672 service in the Chew Valley scheduled to end at the end of July
- 94 Trowbridge – Bath service, due at the end of August (which your colleague Michelle Donelan MP recently wrote to us about)

Communities in B&NES have already lost in excess of 50% of their bus routes despite an increased contribution towards supported bus services by B&NES.


Allowing more services to fall while a review is undertaken leaves our communities in crisis: children cannot get to school, elderly people in some of our villages have lost their only connection to social activities, medical appointments and shops; and access to employment has been made impossible.

Our repeated requests to the Mayor to address this emergency, including providing the Combined Authority with a fully detailed rural transport proposal which we developed, have been met with inaction and delay.

We therefore feel that we have no other option but to seek your assistance in impressing upon the Mayor the importance of retaining all existing services whilst this

very worthwhile review takes place, and of reinstating recently lost services that are a lifeline to our communities.

Kind regards



Councillor Sarah Warren
Deputy Leader with responsibility
for Climate and Sustainable Travel
Bath and North East Somerset Council

Councillor Caroline Thomas
Cabinet Member for
Transport, Street Scene & Flooding
Wiltshire Council