

Transport & Connectivity Policy Committee

Task and Finish



NAME OF GROUP: Supported Bus Services Priorities Task and Finish Group

1. Purpose of group	
Purpose of group	To review the bus network and to prioritise additional or enhanced bus services in line with the Corporate Strategy
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. There is a need to invest in supporting bus services, and there is a budget to do so from CAZ. Although the long-term quantum of this budget is unclear, other proposals such as the WPL may provide longer term funding. ii. It will be important to establish principles for prioritising investment as the need will inevitably outstrip the budget. iii. The WECA mayor recently held a citizen’s assembly on this topic which may provide some useful inputs. iv. This work needs to proceed at pace to be able to then allocate the budget, procure the services and fulfil the need to register services 70 days in advance of the agreed windows (September and April) v. A decision will be needed as to whether to provide this funding with prioritised proposals for WECA to then determine how best to fund it or whether to specify which services are to be funded in priority order. vi. There are likely to be pressures emerging on the overall WECA Levy budget over the coming years which may put further pressure on existing supported bus service budgets. A view will need to be taken as to how to manage this.
Scope	<p>Any TFG will need to be carefully scoped. As there is a pressing need to agree priorities for Supporting Bus Services the following may be a useful initial list if this is agreed as a TFG but is not exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Current methods for prioritisation – Bristol and WECA (especially considering the recent WECA Citizens assembly on this subject) b. Current state of play – currently supported services, recently lost services, Westlink/WESTlocal, Community Transport provision. Up to date performance information will be useful. c. The social/economic/geographic/equalities drivers. d. Investment approaches that need to be considered – optimising current routes, reinstating lost routes or pump priming new ones; how to support the roll out of Liveable Neighbourhoods. e. Inputs from other parties, such as WECA and any advice from operators as to how their insights may support the process. f. Budget options – current budgets are limited especially in time; do we want more services or longer contracts? g. A timetable considering the need to invest the budget asap.

2. Member involvement	
Chair of the Working Group	Councillor Tim Rippington
Members of the Working Group	The Whips have been asked for membership; however it is hoped that the Members of the Transport & Connectivity Policy Committee will be invited to be members of the Task & Finish sessions.
3. Officer support	
Lead Directorate Officer(s)	Alex Hearn, Director: Economy of Place Adam Crowther, Head of City Transport Pete Woodhouse, Transport Strategy Manager Helen Wigginton, Transport Delivery Manager
Policy Committee team lead officer	Sam Wilcock, Policy Committee Officer
List of possible internal and external contributors	WECA First Bus & other providers Local Councillors BCC Transport team
4. Timing / meeting arrangements	
How long is the group's work expected to take?	The latest date a decision can be taken to register a service is the 20 th January 2025. However, to ensure registration in time and appropriate time for tenders to be agreed and awarded working with the Combined Authority, it is recommended that a decision be reached in principle before the Christmas period. Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee to approve TFG 12th September 2024 • Proposals for tendering to be agreed by 31st October 2024 • Committee to approve spending the allocated funding and delegation for determining which proposals to fund December 5th 2024 • Agreement on which services to support by 20th December 2024 – tender return date TBC • Services registered no later than 20th January 2025 • Services begin April 2025
Meeting format	Informal group sessions will take place in private and will be held either remotely or in person at City Hall. It is proposed that there will be a minimum of 6 session sessions lasting up to 1.5 hours each. Any formal group sessions to be held in person at City Hall.
Ways of working	Members will work collaboratively, to constructively examine available evidence. The group will seek to achieve consensus in developing any views/potential recommendations for further action.
5. Conclusions/recommendations	
	Decision-making/pathway for recommendations