

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Meeting 26th September 2019
Item 60: Q1 Performance Report, follow-up questions from minutes

BCP475: Increase the number of passenger journeys on buses (Passenger numbers down 5.3% when compared to the same period last year): the Members commented that the figures appeared to contradict what had previously been said i.e. that Bristol was ‘bucking the national trend’ with increased numbers of passengers. Members asked again about receiving the MetroBus passenger figures. Officers said that some of the information was commercial and therefore it was problematic to split the passenger data out for MetroBus only. A Member responded by saying that over £200 million of public money had been spent on MetroBus and the public therefore had a right to know if the money had been well spent. He said he doubted he was the only person asking about the figures and couldn’t understand why the information wasn’t being made available.

ACTION: Officers to continue to pursue this information.

BCP475

Metrobus services began in May 2018 with the m3 service, followed by the m2 in September 2018 and finally the m1 service in January 2019. These services are run on a commercial basis by First West of England as the main operator for m2 and m3 services, with Bristol Community Transport running the m1 service under contract to them. As with all other bus data from commercial operators we are unable to report passenger numbers for individual routes as these are subject to commercial restrictions.

However we are able to report overall figures for the combined routes as below.

Year ending March 2019 1,749,283
Q1 (Apr – June 2019) 930,265 passengers
Q2 (July – Sept 2019) 978,530 passengers
(Year to date Apr-Sept 2019 1,908,795)

A matter of clarification on the wider reporting of overall passenger numbers; there is no contradiction between the slight decline in numbers reported at q2 and the statement around Bristol “bucking the national trend” with increasing number of passengers. Press releases from First West of England relate to the wider area of their operations so include passenger journeys in the other West of England local authorities (B&NES, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset) from services running from bases outside of Bristol. We are only able to ask for bus passenger numbers relating to services in our own local authority area and these are reported through the performance indicators BCP474 and BCP475.

BCP474: Increase the number of single journeys on Park & Ride into Bristol: A Member commented on this indicator and said that in her view more people would use the Brislington Park and Ride Service if stopped a bit more frequently. She said she was concerned that stops were being decreased which would likely reduce its use further. Officers said they would look into this. **ACTION: Officers to see if it’s possible to look into the frequency of Brislington Park and Ride service bus stops**

BCP474

Park and Ride (P&R) services primarily operate to enable workers and visitors to a city to leave their cars in designated car parks around the periphery and then journey promptly into the centre using a fixed price “whole route” fare. This can help support wider agendas related to traffic volumes, congestion and air quality. Under current legislation (the Competition Act and the Transport Act 1985), local authorities may not compete with or hinder commercial services where there is public money supporting P&R and local bus services – particularly where there are multiple commercial operators as has been the case in Bristol in the past. P&R services may only make additional stops along their designated routes where there is no alternative commercial bus service. Unfortunately this means that Brislington Park and Ride is not able to stop before reaching Temple Meads as there are numerous other commercial bus services travelling along the same route, whereas the Portway Park and Ride is allowed to stop at local bus stops to provide connections from Shirehampton and Sea Mills as there are no other services operating along the Portway. A full range of services and the overlap with standard routes can be seen here or on the Travelwest.info under the “bus” section where there are a number of maps showing services and routes.