

Below you will find the key themes mentioned during the Portishead Bus Surgery which took place on 28 March 2019 between 1100 and 1200

Present:

Chris Hanson—Head of Operations—First West of England
Alice Griffin—Senior Transport Planning Officer—North Somerset Council
Daniel Marley— Transport Planning Officer—North Somerset Council

Issue Raised: Drivers not familiar with 3 stop hop validity within Pill

Answer: There is no reason why these tickets shouldn't be issued in Pill as Pill is within the Bristol Zone and as such these tickets are valid—customer provided C Hanson with specific customer service information which C Hanson will follow up on.

Issue Raised: Customer has, on occasions, waited at Combe Road for Service X3a toward Bristol; got on the bus heading up Avon Way and has found that the buses then terminate on their return to Combe Road and go 'Out of Service'

Answer: Some journeys on an evening do the loop from Combe Road then terminate on their return to head back to the depot in Weston-super-Mare. As a result it is recommended that customers wishing to travel to Bristol on an evening should wait at the correct bus stop (outside HSBC) to ensure they are able to get to Bristol without an hassle

Issue Raised: Real Time Information System showing buses coming but then buses fail to arrive (brought up by a number of customers who attended)

Answer: Following a change to the Real Time system in January there have been some bugs which include the issue of buses showing on the screen that then do not arrive—this bug has been corrected. Daniel Marley told customers that the fix had recently gone into place but full checking was still going ahead to ensure that the checks had worked.

Issue Raised: The lack of evening journeys to Southern Portishead (including High Street, Bristol Road & Heron Gardens) (previously served by evening journeys on Service X4) (brought up by a number of customers who attended)

Answer: At the time of renewing the evening services C Hanson explained the rationale behind the removal of evening journeys on Service X4 which was made for commercial reasons to provide the part of Portishead with significantly greater customer journeys being made on an evening with an evening service. Due to low passenger numbers evening journeys on this section of the route simply did not sustain themselves. C Hanson explained that there are some reasonably minor changes taking place on 28 April which are designed to improve punctuality and reliability on all Excel services. Once this has been completed C Hanson committed to reviewing the Portishead service (with a possible consultation) in April 2020

Issue Raised: A number of customers raised concerns around the removal of buses from Marina/Village Quarter—they were also concerned about the lack of notification at those times where we have been unable to serve these roads. (this was brought up by a number of residents)

Answer: C Hanson, A Griffin and D Marley explained to the customers what the issues are with the roads through the Village Quarter. It was explained that buses have been unable to serve the roads that it has been a short notice decision and therefore no resource is available to put notices onto bus stops etc to warn customers of this. C Hanson explained that while First continue to work closely with North Somerset on these issues they will do so for at least the next 12 months—at which point a more final decision will be made on what the impact of the parking restrictions has been and whether there is any sustainable improvement to the ability to get through the Village Quarter without issue.

Issue Raised: A customer mentioned that there has still be ongoing issues with buses mounting kerbs in the Village Quarter which is a problem that has been brought to the attention of First West of England previously. Customer suggested the current vehicles used on Service X3 are too big for these roads and asked First to consider using smaller vehicles to act as a hub (or encourage another operator to do so)

Answer: C Hanson explained that in other areas (across the country) where these schemes have been trialled they have not generated sufficient revenue to enable these services to continue running. C Hanson also highlighted that the vehicles currently on the route have a smaller overall footprint than single deck. C Hanson pledged to continue running buses through here for a period of 12 months where results will be analysed and a final decision will be made.