

MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: George Wheeler

Date received by Chief Exec's Business Support:
ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk

To the Cabinet Member for: Transport, Cllr Drean

Question: You may remember that I criticised the performance of Plymouth's bus services at the council meeting on Monday. My hope however is that services will improve when the new services come into operation on 1st April. The Bus Partnership has proposed a package costing £117m to provide services for the three years from April 1st this year. The package relies to a major extent on a bid for £60m from the Government's National Bus Strategy budget. The National Bus Strategy budget was to be for £3billion to be spent over the 3 years but I read that the Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT) has aggregated the bids from the LTAs and they amount to total bids of £7billion for the £3b budget. I see today that the DfT wrote to LTAs on 11th January advising them that the £3b budget has been reduced to £1.4b (article attached). I understand that any changes to services still have to be notified to the Traffic Commissioner for approval, giving 42 days' notice before the changes can be implemented. This means that new timetables must be submitted by 17th February. Can you confirm that this is the case, please? And can you advise me of what plans the Bus Partnership has to cater for a much reduced package of support, which it appears is likely to be granted, please?

Answer:

The City Council have not yet been informed of the outcome of the Plymouth Bus Service Improvement Plan.

As advised in response to previous questions, and as set out in the Plymouth Bus Services Improvement Plan itself, the delivery of bus measures is dependent on the funding award from government. It therefore remains the case that it is not possible to advise when measures set out in the Plan will be introduced until that funding announcement is made. No service changes, linked to the Plan, are proposed for the 01 April 2022.

Whilst the Department for Transport had previously set a deadline of the 01 April 2022 for the creation of Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes, building on the ambitions set out in submitted Bus Service Improvement Plans, this is no longer the case. The City Council have not yet been advised of the new date by which an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme now needs to be created.

The City Council are aware that nationally the cumulative scale of bids to deliver Bus Service Improvement Plans exceeds the funding available and that the funding allocation of £3 Billion originally announced by government has been reduced. In the event that the full amount of funding sought for the Plymouth Bus Service Improvement Plan is not secured, the City Council, together with bus operators, will consider which of the measures in the Plan are prioritised for delivery first (subject to any funding conditions set by the Department of Transport on the final funding award).

The Plymouth Bus Services Improvement Plan is an ambitious plan to help boost bus patronage. The vision of the Plan, as well as the aspirations and the measures proposed within it, will remain the same, regardless of the initial funding award to Plymouth. This is because it was conceived within the context of delivering the wider sustainable growth objectives of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.

Signed: 09/02/2022

Date:



Written questions:

- must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer via the Chief Exec's Business Support
- will be replied to within 10 working days
- will be published on the last Friday of each month
- The completed form should be sent to ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk or by post to Chief Exec's Business Support, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ