

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Cllr Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathan Drean

Question: How are YOU going to encourage greater use of buses when fares are set to raise? Although currently there is a hold on bus shelters being removed until after the election can you tell me if YOU think it's a good idea to remove bus shelters?

Response:

Decisions to increase fares are commercial decisions made by the bus operators. Fares have not increased across the city since 2019 but with suppressed patronage and reductions in Government funding as we start to come out of the pandemic, bus operators are left with little choice but to impose these increases. That said a weekly adult ticket will still cost only £20 for unlimited travel anywhere within the city and slightly beyond, which still represents excellent value for money for the regular traveller. Whilst it is disappointing that we were not successful with our BSIP submission whereby the top priority would have seen a significant reduction in fares, the Council will continue to work with our bus operators to provide a comprehensive, reliable and sustainable network, to ensure that buses once again become the mode of choice.

The decision to remove bus shelters in March 2020 was not taken lightly and those shelters, which are being removed, have been selected following a rigorous data led process, to minimise the impact on bus passengers. Engagement with the market has indicated that bus shelter providers would not be prepared to tender with our current number of shelters since market conditions have changed considerably in the last 20 years since the current contract was established. By reducing the number of shelters, this will reduce the burden on the new contractor in terms of cleaning and maintenance. In turn, this will ensure the Council has the best opportunity possible from the new contract to see high quality, well maintained, infrastructure, including environmental features such as living roofs and energy efficient lighting and power, and a financial net gain to the Council, all of which will benefit service users in the longer term. At the same time, this also recognises our ambitions to support bus patronage growth and reduce carbon emissions.

Signed:

Dated: 13/04/2022