

Ruth Ross
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Via email enquiries@shropshire-chamber.co.uk /
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Date: Friday 24 July 2026

Dear Ruth

Re: Beyond the Fare Cap: How Can Bus Services Better Support Employment?

Thank you for your letter and for setting out the Chamber's perspective regarding bus services in Shropshire.

I welcome the Government's recent announcement that the £2 bus fare cap will return. Affordable fares can play an important role in encouraging greater bus use, helping people access employment, education, training, healthcare and other essential services, whilst also supporting local economies and reducing transport barriers.

Shropshire Council fully recognises the importance of a reliable and accessible public transport network. As set out in our Bus Service Improvement Plan, we believe public transport is essential for inclusive economic growth and for connecting communities to opportunities in employment, education, health, housing and leisure. Our vision remains to create a modern, accessible, reliable and integrated transport network that supports economic prosperity, reduces social isolation and enables people to reach jobs, training and services across the county.

Unfortunately, reductions in Government revenue support, coupled with increasing operating costs, are forcing the Council to make some very difficult decisions about which services we can continue to support and which we cannot. As part of the recent review of supported bus services, we faced a situation where maintaining all services in their existing form would have required an additional £1.25 million of annual funding that is simply unavailable within current budgets. The choices being made are therefore driven by financial necessity rather than a lack of commitment to public transport.

For this reason, Heather Kidd and I recently wrote jointly to the new Prime Minister to ask the Government to look again at the funding Shropshire receives for public transport. In that letter we highlighted the particular challenges faced by large rural counties and called for a fairer funding settlement that properly recognises the additional costs of serving dispersed communities. We argued that if rural authorities are to deliver the Government's ambitions for economic growth, social mobility, environmental sustainability and integrated transport, they must be provided with the resources necessary to do so.



Despite these challenges, we remain committed to improving public transport wherever possible and to delivering the ambitions set out in our Bus Service Improvement Plan. We also recognise that successful public transport networks depend on strong partnerships between councils, operators, businesses and local communities. To that end, we would always welcome further conversations with the Chamber of Commerce and other partners about how best to support and strengthen public transport services in Shropshire. Working together, we can continue to make the case for investment and explore opportunities that help connect people with jobs, training and economic opportunity across the county.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Rob Wilson

Cabinet Member for Transport and Regeneration
Shropshire Council

