



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

**Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough**

Ruth Ross
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Our ref: OV/LP/24.07

Dear Ruth

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

Thank you for your letter regarding the important role that bus services play in supporting employment, education and economic growth across Telford and Wrekin.

As a Council, we have consistently prioritised investment in local bus services and wider transport connectivity to help ensure that people can access employment, training and education opportunities across the borough. We introduced a £2 fare across our Travel Telford routes in 2022 and recently extended this to all bus routes that start and end in the borough. As you would expect, we very much welcome the Government's decision to reinstate the £2 bus fare cap and recognise the positive impact that affordable public transport can have on residents, businesses and the wider economy.

Our fare cap has complemented other investments, including new and improved bus shelters, enhanced passenger information, digital journey planning tools and the continued growth of services such as Bus on Demand.

Public transport is a critical enabler of economic participation. Telford's major employment areas are distributed across the borough, and reliable, affordable transport is essential in connecting residents with opportunities. Through our Bus Service Improvement Plan and wider transport initiatives, we have focused on improving accessibility, affordability and connectivity for both residents and employers.

A key example of this is our successful Service 100 route, which provides a direct connection between residential areas and the borough's largest employment areas, including Stafford Park, Halesfield and Hortonwood. The service operates from 5:00am until 11:00pm, seven days a week, specifically reflecting the shift patterns and operational requirements of major employers. With around 12,000 passenger trips a month, this service has demonstrated the value of aligning transport provision with local economic needs and has helped improve access to employment for many residents who may otherwise face transport barriers.

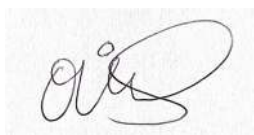


We share the Chamber's view that close collaboration between local authorities; transport operators and the business community is essential to delivering services that meet both current and future needs. While there is always more that can be done, we have already undertaken engagement with businesses (and residents) in developing and refining local transport services, and employer feedback has been instrumental in shaping some of the improvements delivered to date, including the development of employment-focused routes and service enhancements.

Looking ahead, the Council is preparing to launch consultation on its new Local Transport Plan. This will provide an important opportunity for residents, businesses and stakeholders to help shape future transport policy, investment priorities and service provision. We are particularly keen to ensure that the plan reflects the needs of employers, addresses barriers to workforce participation and supports the borough's continued economic growth.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and Chamber members to discuss these matters further. Such discussion would help us better understand any specific areas of concern, opportunities for service enhancement and emerging transport challenges facing local businesses. We are committed to working in partnership to ensure that our transport network continues to support both our communities and our economy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ollie Vickers', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Cllr Ollie Vickers
Cabinet Member for Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity
Councillor for Donnington