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Scrutiny Review of Bus Services January 2010



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1. INTRODUCTION

We decided to carry out a review of the Bus Service in Telford & Wrekin because Members were aware of concerns raised by ward residents about various aspects of the service and wanted to review how the Council could support improvements to the service for the future.

The review had four main objectives:

- To address immediate and future issues of reliability and quality of provision, and to improve the bus services in Telford & Wrekin
- To review the Quality Bus Partnership between the Council and Arriva
- To identify the needs of Telford & Wrekin with regard to bus services and assess whether the current provision meets these needs
- To change perceptions of the bus services and increase bus patronage.

We have gathered information for this review from a number of sources, including:

- Meetings with, or gathering views in writing from, the Bus Users Group, Senior Citizens' Transport Action Group, the Disability Forum, the Young People's Forum and other young people, the Rural Transport Users' Group, Town and Parish Councils.
- Transport Officers at Telford & Wrekin Council
- Transport Officers at Shropshire Council
- Representatives of Arriva Midlands
- Representatives of National Express West Midlands
- Community Panel survey of bus users and non-bus users
- Legislation including the Local Transport Act, Telford & Wrekin's Local Transport Plan, Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Concessionary Travel Act 2007.

The review coincided with the Transport Review undertaken by the Council's commissioned consultant, Northgate Kendric Ash. The reviews have very different objectives: the scrutiny review focuses on the quality and reliability aspects of the bus service provided by Arriva Midlands as the major operator serving the borough, while the Transport Review focuses on best value improvements and cost efficiencies to be derived from Council owned assets and Council funded services across all wheeled transport. However, there are some areas of common interest which include how the Council communicates with Arriva and the subsidised routes and rural transport issues.

In reading this report, it should also be noted that the people involved in direct face-to-face consultation constitute a small number of overall bus users. The views expressed need to be set in the context of the total number of passengers who are satisfied with the bus service. As is typical with this type of study, people are more likely to come forward with complaints rather than compliments.

Section 2 of this report summarises the information that we have gathered as part of our review. We would like to thank all those people who have taken the time to meet with us. We have made a number of recommendations in Section 3 of the report which we believe will help improve the way the Council and Arriva Midlands can work together to meet the future bus transport needs of residents in the borough. These recommendations will be presented to the Council's Cabinet and to Arriva Midlands at a partnership meeting, and for those recommendations that are accepted by the Council, we will monitor the progress to implement them.

Scrutiny Lead Member

Councillor Roger Aveley

Other Members of Review Group:

Councillor Keith Austin

Councillor Bob Groom

Councillor Terry Kiernan

Councillor Clive Mason

Councillor Hilda Rhodes

Councillor Kuldip Sahota

Scrutiny Co-optee Lynda Baker-Oliver

Scrutiny Co-optee Dag Saunders

Scrutiny Co-optee Maurice Viney

Scrutiny Co-optee Mel Ward

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Telford & Wrekin Council became a unitary authority on 1st April 1998 when it took over the highway and transport functions from Shropshire County Council in the former Wrekin District Council area. Telford & Wrekin has a population of around 158,325 (2001 Census) covering some 112 square miles of which 73% is classified as rural in character. The majority of the population live in urban Telford.

Furthermore, Telford is one of the 29 new growth points announced by the Government in October 2006. For the Council, housing, employment and population growth are seen as vital stimulants to meet the ambitions for Telford, and public transport has a vital role to play in ensuring economic, social and environmental sustainability ambitions are met.

Nationally, buses account for over two thirds of all journeys made by public transport, connecting people to education, employment, leisure, goods and services, friends and family. High-quality bus services can provide an attractive alternative to the private car so buses can contribute to a wide range of local authority goals: tackling social exclusion, supporting a vibrant economy and helping with the fight against climate change.

This supports sub-priority 4 “Improving Access, Mobility and Public Transport” of the Council’s Priority Plan for “Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment”:

- Design and manage a transport network which supports sustainable economic growth and promotes sustainable travel
- Reduce social exclusion and optimise accessibility to local facilities including healthcare, education and employment in Telford Town Centre, Borough Town and the rural area
- Increase public satisfaction levels with public transport

In Telford & Wrekin, Arriva Midlands (known as Arriva in this report) is almost the sole commercial bus operator servicing the borough.

2.1 Regulation of Bus Services

Bus services were de-regulated and taken out of local authority control and into private ownership in 1985. Bus operators are now registered and licensed to operate individual routes and regulated by the Traffic Commissioners, completely outside local authority control. Nationally there are seven Traffic Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport who have responsibility in their area for (amongst other things) the registration of local bus services. Any operator meeting the Traffic Commissioner’s requirements can register to operate a route and run the service at their own risk.

Contractual redress for poor performance on commercial routes is done through the Traffic Commissioners. The Traffic Commissioners monitor performance and have powers of enforcement over operators for failure of service, including revoking registrations and licences and

imposing fines. However, these can be blunt instruments. Traffic Commissioners are able to set a fine on the whole company but not on an individual route and often this means that they are reluctant to use this power as it could prohibitively affect the viability of the business. Similarly, they can restrict the operator's licence but this would mean reduced services for passengers. In practice, the Traffic Commissioners are only likely to take remedial action in cases of very severe non-performance.

This is an important point. We found that there is still a prevailing perception amongst some members of the public that the bus services are within Council control when this is not the case.

The position is different on non-commercial routes which are subsidised and contracted out by the Council on a competitive tender basis and are currently operated in Telford & Wrekin by Arriva. Subsidised routes still have to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner, but the authority specifies the routes, times and service frequency, and has powers of sanction for breaches of contract terms.

A major concern for regular and infrequent passengers alike is the punctuality and reliability of services. The reason for poor punctuality may lie either with the bus operator, the local traffic authority (the Council), or a combination of the two. Operators have control over issues such as mechanical problems and staffing issues, but often poor traffic management which is the responsibility of the local traffic authority (such as badly coordinated road works) also contributes to poor performance. Therefore, partnership working is essential to ensuring that passengers have bus services that they can really depend on.

Most authorities manage network and route development/improvement through non-contractual partnership arrangements with operator/s. In Telford & Wrekin this is done through the Quality Bus Partnership which is described in the next section of this report. Under these voluntary arrangements, it is up to the operator to provide a reliable, affordable, high-quality service for passengers and up to the local authority to provide infrastructure such as bus lanes, traffic management, bus shelters and accessible kerbs, dependent on the availability of funding and priorities.

There is no "magic formula" for this, and one of the objectives of the Local Transport Act 2008 has been to try to provide local authorities with a wider range of options to help them meet local people's transport needs.

2.2 The Local Transport Act 2008

The Local Transport Act 2008 lays out various options for working arrangements between local authorities and bus operators:

2.2.1 Voluntary Partnership Agreements

These are voluntary agreements where local authorities and bus operators agree to work in partnership to improve bus services. The local transport authority undertakes to provide particular facilities such as to install new bus lanes, invest in bus shelters or to do other things of benefit to passengers, while the operator undertakes to provide services to a particular standard, to invest in new vehicles and to increase frequencies on particular routes. There are no contractual obligations on either side and effective voluntary partnerships usually depend on strong leadership.

2.2.2 Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS)

A Quality Partnership Scheme is very similar to a Voluntary Partnership Agreement except that the council providing the “facilities” and operators wishing to use those facilities must undertake to provide services to a particular “standard” specified in the scheme. A QPS may have slightly more robust standards than a voluntary agreement, but these are no more legally binding than the voluntary agreements.

In Telford & Wrekin, the **Quality Bus Partnership (QBP)** is the main mechanism for managing the Council’s relationship with Arriva. This fits somewhere between the Voluntary Partnership Agreement and the Quality Partnership Scheme. The QBP was formed in 1999 and enjoyed early success with the development of the Quality Bus Routes funded through the Urban and Rural Bus Challenge. Telford & Wrekin Council, Arriva Midlands and rail companies Wrexham & Shropshire railways, Arriva Midlands North and London Midland are all members of the QBP. There is a loose set of agreements relating to service standards and routes between each party, but these are not legally binding. Consultation with Arriva on the Local Transport Plan happens through the QBP as does the joint Data Quality Sharing agreement and specific consultation around the Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP) which was established as a requirement of the Local Transport Plan. Other lines of communication with Arriva are covered later in this report.

2.2.3 Quality Contract Schemes (QCS)

A QCS involves replacing the existing deregulated market with a system of contracts. Under a QCS, the local transport authority specifies the bus services that are to be provided in the area of the scheme, and invites tenders from operators to provide those services under contract. At face value this would appear to give local authorities more clout, but in practice could be prohibitively more expensive and onerous for local authorities to set up and operate and would only be worth considering in a multi-operator area. The QCS would be much less attractive to a commercial operator, and the risk to authorities with a sole incumbent operator is that if the work were to be tendered out, no bidders would come forward.

The Act allows regions to undertake governance reviews and establish Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs) as a body to govern transport for a particular region/sub-region, and to allow for the establishment of Quality Contracts. A West Midlands Transport Governance Review is currently being led by Centro (the Passenger Transport Executive/Authority for the Metropolitan Area) on behalf of the whole West Midlands region and although the results of the review have not been finally published, prevailing opinion seems to be that it will not recommend any significant changes across the region. This does not preclude authorities working together to look at different governance arrangements in their area.

No authorities in the country have progressed setting up an Integrated Transport Authority yet except for Passenger Transport Authorities in Metropolitan Areas which became ITA's by default in February 2009 as part of the Local Transport Act. The creation of an ITA would not directly give the Council greater powers or control over Arriva (or other operators), and although it would allow Quality Contracts to be established where quality of bus fleet, frequencies etc. are specified, these take a long time to establish and would cost the authority more money rather than less. A Quality Contract may enable the Council to lay out the rules operators would need to abide by to run services along that route, but the operator would have the right to challenge the contract rules. As Arriva operates safe, efficient, compliant buses there would be no gain in pursuing a Quality Contract at this point.

2.3 Development of the Bus Network in Telford & Wrekin

The development of the bus network in Telford & Wrekin was originally part funded by national Urban and Rural Bus Challenge funding. Along with funding from the Local Transport Plan, this enabled Arriva and the Council to work together to develop a series of Quality Bus Routes across the borough. The combined funding covered the procurement of buses, improvements to the highway with bus only lanes and kerb improvements. This "kick-started" the Quality Bus Routes which Arriva took over as fully commercial routes once the market had been sufficiently developed. At this time the Council procured two buses for use on the 76 and 77 routes which are operated by Arriva.

The initial funding meant that the 3% p.a. decline in bus patronage during the 1990s was turned around to a 20% growth from 1999-2006 and the authority won national recognition as a Beacon authority for transport (the only authority to achieve two transport awards) and as a Centre of Excellence for local transport delivery. However, the end of the Urban and Rural Bus Challenge has resulted in a decline in the patronage growth trend in recent years reflecting the lack of investment in routes.

Funding for transport is now allocated nationally to local authorities to deliver Local Transport Plans. This is a statutory document which must be produced by each Local Transport Authority in England. It sets out

the transport policies and programmes of the Local Transport Authority (the Council) and the associated targets and performance indicators over a five-year period.

2.4 Local Transport Plan

Telford & Wrekin is now part way through delivery of its second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) which covers the period 2006-2011. In 2006, the Department for Transport rated the LTP2 as good. It sets out 5 key transport objectives, including improving accessibility to ensure people can reach the services they need, recognising that the ability of people to access places of work, education, health care, shopping, leisure and other opportunities has a real impact on peoples' quality of life.

There are 2 funding strands in the LTP which are for highways maintenance and integrated transport. These have funded improvements to public transport facilities in the borough such as bus only lanes in the town centre, rail station highway improvements, the new Wellington Bus Station, refreshing key quality bus routes in the borough, rolling out the Transportal terminals and providing low-floor accessible facilities at some bus stops. The funding allocations are confirmed in three year settlements and the current settlement period ends in March 2011. The next LTP will be written next year and submitted at the end of 2010. Funding is not allocated for the purchase of new buses as this would not be a sustainable, long-term benefit to the Council.

2.5 Current Bus Services

Bus services in the borough are made up of commercial and non-commercial routes. Arriva currently operates almost all the commercial routes in the borough. The Council funds non-commercial routes either as contracts which are tendered out for bidders to operate on behalf of the Council, or through its own in-house fleet management service which is provide a flexible mix of demand responsive and community buses. Under the Local Transport Act, the Council has a statutory duty to provide services where there is a social necessity but the route is not commercially viable. Across the 112 square miles of Telford and Wrekin, 73% is classified as rural in character. With the vast majority of the population living in the urban area of Telford, providing transport to fulfil the needs of the rural community poses a particular challenge. Services are provided in the following ways:

2.5.1 Commercial routes

Arriva Midlands operates the commercially viable routes, the Quality Bus Routes, as a private operator independent of the Council.

2.5.2 Subsidised routes

Non-commercially viable routes are subsidised by the Council and put out to competitive tender. Arriva currently operates all subsidised routes with the exception of the 701/02/03 school buses which are run by Elcocks. The cost of subsidised services for 2008/09 was £632,867,

including a £120,000 contribution from Children and Young People for the Elcocks service. The subsidised routes are:

- 822 Rodington/Roden
- 76/77 Coalbrookdale
- 66 Wellington to the Town Centre which becomes the 23 and splits for Oakengates
- 44 Madeley/Wellington/Leegomery - night time
- 33 Brookside/Muxton - night time and weekends
- 55 Wellington/Trench/Donnington – night time and weekends
- 11/22 Sutton Hill/Madeley - night time and weekends
- 519 Shrewsbury to Newport (Shropshire pay 36% of the subsidy)
- 341/342 Telford to Market Drayton - Telford & Wrekin Council pays Shropshire County Council 50% of the subsidy.

The commercial and subsidised routes are shown below.

both adults and children with various disabilities to schools and centres around Telford & Wrekin.

- In addition to these core operations other services are provided where access to conventional transport is not easily available in the form of Dial-a-Ride giving people in urban areas access to services such as doctors, dentists and shopping.
- Wrekin Connect serves outlying rural areas providing essential transport links, terminating at key centres such as Telford and Wellington, linking with main line bus services to other towns.
- Twister operates on demand for people living in two zones: Little Wenlock-Wrockwardine and Ercall Magna-Rodington-Waters Upton parishes, terminating at key centres in Telford and Wellington with connections to main bus routes.
- Local Community Buses also provide similar links to Asda, Morrison's, Wellington Baths and district centres such as Oakengates and Madeley.
- Vehicles are also used by youth groups and others affiliated to the council.

2.6 Performance Indicators

BV104: Satisfaction with Local Bus Services

Measured in the Place Survey and the Citizen's Survey

Target	09/10	10/11	11/12	Outturn	06/07	07/08	08/09
	62%	53%	63%		59%	61%	52%

Citizen's Panel Survey, April 2009: Bus Satisfaction

		Base	Gender		Age Group			Disability		Ethnicity		Community Cluster				
		All respondents	Male	Female	18-39	40-59	60+	No LTLI	LTLI	White British	BME (inc. White Other)	Newport	Wellington	Telford North	Telford Central	Telford South
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
To what extent do you agree or disagree that bus services within Telford & Wrekin meet your travel requirements?	Strongly agree	10	12	8	0	10	11	11	8	10	7	8	10	10	11	13
	Agree	50	51	48	42	49	50	49	53	48	61	54	46	52	53	27
	Neither	20	15	25	50	20	17	20	13	20	17	16	15	26	17	20
	Disagree	13	16	11	8	17	13	15	13	14	10	14	22	6	11	27
	Strongly disagree	5	5	5	0	4	5	4	9	5	2	8	6	3	6	0
	Don't know	2	2	3	0	0	3	2	5	3	2	0	1	3	2	13
<i>Base</i>		<i>282</i>	<i>152</i>	<i>129</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>157</i>	<i>199</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>15</i>

N177: Number of local bus passenger journeys

Target	08/09	09/10	10/11	Outturn	07/08	8 month 08/09	Predicted
	6,477,000	6,513,000	6,549,000		6,035,000	4,075,000	6,007,000

National Indicator BV104 (customer satisfaction) in 2007-08 showed that 59% were satisfied with local bus services overall, and 18% were dissatisfied. This figure for 2008-09 is being compiled and is within 0.3% of the average of Telford & Wrekin's family group of comparable authorities, ranking 4th in the group of 14 or 15 authorities.

As part of the review, a survey was conducted with the Community Panel. The results of this are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. In answer to the question "To what extent do you agree or disagree that bus services within Telford & Wrekin meet your travel requirements?" 10% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 20% neither agreed nor disagreed, 13% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed and 2% did not know.

Similarly, Arriva undertakes its own annual customer satisfaction survey. The 2008 survey showed that in the UK as a whole, 61% were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service and in Telford & Wrekin this figure was 59% which is inline with our own Community Panel Survey.

2.7 Transport Review

The scrutiny review coincided with the Transport Review undertaken by the Council's appointed service review partners Northgate Kendric Ash. The terms of reference for the Transport Review are to recommend service efficiency improvements and value for money savings that could be made from Council funded/run provision, largely around integrated transport, adult and children's social care, schools transport, community transport, bus subsidies, transport information and management of transport. The scope of the review did not include a qualitative analysis of the commercial service operated by Arriva Midlands which is the main focus of the scrutiny review.

The two reviews are therefore not in conflict. The recommendations of the Transport Review will take time to implement, and the scrutiny Members will be consulted on the development and implementation of recommendations so that evidence gathered as part of the scrutiny review will be fed in as actions are progressed.

3. KEY ISSUES

As part of the review, we consulted a number of bus user groups to explore their views of the bus service. These included:

- The Bus Users Group
- The Senior Citizens' Transport Action Group
- The Disability Forum
- The Young People's Forum, and wider work through the Active Involvement Service
- The Rural Transport Users' Group
- Town and Parish Councils

Additionally, we conducted a Community Panel survey of bus users and non-users to get a broader view of public opinion from a wider sample.

Inevitably with this type of review, there were some common themes that emerged, but there was also a large amount of anecdotal evidence put forward about individual experiences which could be "one-off" occurrences affecting a particular passenger at a particular time, and not symptomatic of a wider spread issue. It should also be borne in mind that the user groups consulted may represent bus users with specific needs and interests, and these need to be set in the wider context of the Community Panel survey as representing a wider cross-section of the bus user community.

3.1 Reliability and Punctuality

Reliability and punctuality were issues raised by all groups consulted, with comments about buses not sticking to timetables, running early or late and missing out parts of routes. The 55 route was adversely disrupted by road works during 2008 and this is reflected in the comments we received.

There are 2 national indicators relating to reliability and punctuality which both show an improvement for 2008-09 compared to 2007-08.

N178: Bus services running on time (non-frequent services on-time)

07/08	08/09
76% average	80.5% average

N178b Bus Services running on time – excess waiting

07/08	08/09
1.72 min average	1.04 min average

Comments of Consultees

- Changes to services are not publicised so people cannot rely on the service e.g. No. 55, Trench.

- Scheduled buses were noted as missing from routes 55, 22, 33 in July 2008
- There were various issues of unreliability with 66, 55, 44, 481 routes and overcrowding in the morning
- A Member had received many complaints about the 55 from residents.
- The last 55 bus did not arrive one day and a Member had to take a taxi home.
- The 55 to the hospital is not reliable.
- 55 route still poor and missing parts of the route. (Lilleshall & Donnington)
- 55 misses out part of the route. (Lawley & Overdale)
- The 55 is not a good or reliable bus route.
- There have been problems with the 44 and 55 routes, especially with the road works caused by the gas works.
- The 44 is an excellent service although there can be long waits in the town centre. A through route to the hospital is needed.
- Buses don't run to timetable - run late and leave early and people can miss connections. (Lawley & Overdale)
- Services do not always stick to the published timetable or can be taken off altogether. There is often a problem with the 33 on a Saturday at 5.30pm. Problems are exacerbated by road works.
- A bus was missed at 7.04pm on 14/03/09 from Ainsdale Drive because it left 4 minutes ahead of the scheduled timetable.
- The 99 service is bad when the route is not congested
- A 22 from Sutton Hill running 10 minutes late changed route when the bus following caught it up.
- Drivers unhelpful and timetables are not kept to
- The 481 constantly fails to call in at Lamb Corner, Wrockwardine Wood leaving passengers waiting. There have been problems with this service for several years despite letters of complaint to Arriva.
- The 33 & 44 are very good, the 481 is faster and reliable.
- The 44 is an excellent service (although there can be long waits in the town centre)
- The 44 bus from the Town Centre does not always stop at the railway station
- The Donnington bus is usually very punctual
- No notification of bus stop closure during road-works
- Buses leave stops early
- Buses pull into and depart from the wrong bays at the bus station without an announcement being made.

Community Panel Survey Results:

The overall results of the Community Panel survey on punctuality showed generally good levels of satisfaction.

- "How do you rate the punctuality of the buses in general?"

Very good	30%
Good	46%

Neither good nor poor	17%
Poor	4%
Very poor	3%
Base	273

- “In an average week, how often, if any, do buses run late?”

Never	5%
Almost never	27%
Sometimes	39%
Most of the time	7%
All of the time	1%
Don't know	21%
Base	270

- “What is the average length of time you have to wait for the delayed bus?”

Less than 5 minutes	26%
5-10 minutes	49%
10-20 minutes	19%
20-30 minutes	5%
30 minutes - 1 hour	1%
Base	193

Comments from Arriva

During 2008 services overall were not as reliable as they could have been. Arriva failed to operate 1% of their mileage which although a low percentage, is a large number of journeys given the number of frequency of bus routes in Telford. Arriva shares the same aims as the Council and Councillors for the local bus services – to move people around as efficiently and cheaply as possible, and there is a joint responsibility to do this.

There are a number of factors that contributed to the poor reliability and they are not all within the control of Arriva. For example, there were an inordinate amount of road works by utilities companies in Telford during 2008-09 which have disrupted services. Route 55 was particularly disrupted by road works which meant the buses could not adhere to the usual frequency.

Arriva feels that the Council is very poor at providing them with advance notification of road works which makes it difficult for Arriva to plan in advance to mitigate disruption. The utility companies must inform the Council of their work, but the Council rarely passes this information on. Other authorities are much better at providing advance notification. As an example, the traffic lights on route 55 were meant to be in operation for only part of the day, but this was not enforced by the Council so the lights operated all day and led to more delays than necessary. Arriva was also given 3 separate dates when the road works would be finished which made planning for resuming normal

service difficult. Arriva acknowledged that there had been a bad patch with the 55 but all the issues had been resolved and the service is now running well.

Reliability was also affected by an acute driver shortage mid-year in 2008. Some temporary drivers were brought in from other areas to cover the shortage where possible. Drivers work on 1 week notice, but it takes 8 weeks to train new drivers. This situation has now stabilised and there are no staffing or recruitment problems in the current climate so the workforce is expected to be much more stable in the coming year.

In 9 out of 10 cases non-arrival of a bus is due to breakdown, and in these cases buses are not taken off a route to replace the broken vehicle but are replaced by buses standing in the bus station to minimise further disruption.

There are problems with vandalism in some areas, including vandalism of bus stops but also towards and on buses e.g. bricks thrown through bus windows. For example in March 2009, there were 2 instances of bricks thrown through bus windows in Woodside, one resulting in the hospitalisation of the driver. This meant these buses were not available on that day, and that we were a driver short for a period of time. Vandalism is not tolerated on buses, and by the end of the year, all vehicles will be equipped with CCTV, but there needs to be a better level of management of vandalism in the urban areas of Telford.

3.2 Routes and route planning

There were various issues raised about routes and route planning by people interviewed. The scope of the review did not by any means include a detailed analysis of gaps or potential markets for services, but does provide a snap shot of public opinion as to where the people interviewed would like to see more or different services.

Arriva is currently undertaking a route review and developing proposals for a new network which will come into force in Spring 2010. As a commercial operator, there is an imperative for Arriva to review the routes as a commercial exercise, although as some of the routes are subsidised, the Council has some influence over those routes. 80% of services that Arriva run are commercial services in the more urban areas with the highest passenger numbers and the most frequent journeys. The remaining 20% are rural services, mostly supported by Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Councils. Arriva will look for assistance to provide services to rural areas where the population is insufficient to sustain the service.

The issue with the subsidised services is that they try to do everything for everybody which means that passengers on the current routes can take a very long time to get to their destination. Historically, the subsidised routes have been tendered out to replace like with like, but

a more strategic approach is now being taken with the development of a Subsidised Bus strategy. The idea is to straighten routes out (the 66/76 and 77 for example) so that they can be developed and taken over as commercially viable routes, and to make sure the west of Telford as a population growth point is serviced. Performance indicators for proximity to bus routes need to be met, and where the Council is unable to provide a subsidised route it works with parish councils to run community buses using the Council's fleet during downtime.

The comments and information gathered during the course of this review will be presented to officers in Transport and to Arriva to feed into Arriva's route review and the development of the business case for the Council's demand responsive services for rural areas.

Summary of comments:

- There is a perception of a lack of regular through-services to the hospital and the railway station especially from changes to the 55 service. In fact the 44 runs every 10 minutes to the hospital and all the Quality Bus Routes call at Telford Central.
- There is a lack of services in rural areas.
- There is a need for more Sunday and later services.
- There is a need for a more joined-up approach between regeneration, planning and transport so that the transport infrastructure is properly integrated into new developments, especially developing a Quality Bus Route on the west of Telford where housing growth is happening.

Specific points raised:

Hospital and rail station services

- Loss of the 55 service to the hospital
- Services to the hospital. Changes to the 55 service have made travel to the hospital much more difficult for residents of Hadley, Trench, Donnington and beyond
- Very poor service to PRH with passengers having to catch two buses
- Lack of a direct service between Shifnal and Newport to PRH
- A more frequent 55 service when attending appointments at the hospital
- Reconsider bus access to PRH
- Direct routes to PRH
- A direct bus service to both PRH and RSH
- The 55 does not always stop at the railway station
- The 55 Sunday service should run at least every hour

Sunday and evening services

- There is no bus service after 11.00pm for people going out or working late shifts in the town centre
- There are not enough Sunday services

- Perhaps a need for a later bus service after 10.45 to serve shift workers
- More buses on Sundays and bank holidays
- More early morning/late evening buses
- 33 route not fully served in the evenings or on Sundays
- The 66 does not start early enough
- Insufficient Sunday service from Priorslee

Rural services

- In the longer-term, bus routes need to be planned to service new residential developments and demographic changes
- Problem for college & university students who live in rural areas have problems accessing transport, and there are inflexible hours.
- Rural areas lack bus services
- Rodington is not very well served by bus services but the recent introduction of the New Twister Bus has gone some way to solving some of the problems.
- Rodington Parish Council recently made representations to have the 519 service diverted from Haughton Cross Roads through Somerwood to Sunningdale, and to then take the 822 service route back up to Roden to continue its journey on its original Route. This would provide a passenger catchment of Drury Lane, Somerwood, Rodington Heath and Rodington Village, with only an additional extra less than 2 route miles. This suggestion was rejected by Arriva on the basis that the lane used by the 822 was too narrow and it would cause passengers from Roden to have to walk to the corner of the lane rather than have a direct service. The population of the Rodington far exceeds that of Roden so we think this suggestion needs further investigation
- WR69 service to start at 10.43 instead of 11.43 at New Works
- WR69 to stop at Wrekin Retail Park (Wellington) for all runs or at a minimum on a Tuesday or a Friday.
- Twister service from Little Wenlock to call at Wrekin Retail Park
- Service to and from Ironbridge is too limited
- Poor service from Dothill
- No buses to Halesfield
- Not enough buses from Horsehay to Telford Town Centre
- A service from Leegomery to Donnington
- Earlier buses and connections to Much Wenlock

Route planning and infrastructure

- We need to look at providing routes on the west of Telford, greener buses etc. This will contribute to the Council's climate change agenda.
- We need to invest in public transport in order to ensure sustainable transport is the key to accessing the new town centre and ensure that there is a high quality bus station in a key location in the new town centre.

- We need to develop a quality bus route in the west of Telford to serve Lawley and Lightmoor and improve access to Ironbridge and the World heritage site
- Bus routes need to be planned alongside the Town Centre and Borough Town developments
- There are issues around transport planning and housing developments in Telford & Wrekin that need to be addressed. Old estates such as Sutton Hill are not suited to bus provision as residents have to walk to the ring road around the estate to get to a bus stop. New developments also seem to be designed around cul-de-sacs leading off a central spine road, for example in Lawley, which makes bus routes less easily accessible for residents
- The Sutton Hill service only runs anti-clockwise so people cannot get to the surgery. Residents have been told by Arriva that they will not change this as it would be too dangerous for people crossing the road to get to the bus stop on the opposite side
- Lack of a direct service from Sutton Hill to Telford Town Centre
- With the new Lawley Square in development and suggestions about bringing in a bus link to Lawley from Horeshay & Lightmoor we have yet to see hard evidence of a terminus being incorporated into the plan. We need more joined up thinking from planning, regeneration etc. to get the infrastructure correct from the offset.
- Lack of services between residential areas and main industrial areas.

Cross border services

- Poor service from Rodington to Telford and Shrewsbury. Problem for Rodington/Roden residents wishing to travel to Shrewsbury. Most people drive to the Park and Ride, but many elderly residents cannot drive. The only Bus Service is the 519 from Roden, a walk of 1.5 + miles along country lanes. The first bus of the day, the 822 to Telford is at 1103 and takes an hour to arrive at Telford. If the 0910 service starting from Roden was extended to start from Rodington then this would provide an additional service. No services from the village in the evenings either by the Twister or the 822 service.
- Cross-boundary co-operation to provide a service to Shrewsbury is needed.
- More direct services from Wellington, Services to Shrewsbury and Newport are very difficult, and more timetables should be available in Wellington
- More regular Newport-Shrewsbury service
- Regular service from Wellington to Shrewsbury

Other

- There is no service to the crematorium in Priorslee
- 44 is a good service but some have been taken off
- Residents have to catch 2 buses to get into Wellington from the Dawley Bank area when the bus travels down the adjacent West

Centre Way where no residents live, but this happens to be the quickest route

- Trench is well served but some areas of Ketley only have 2 buses a day
- The 33 should go to Brookside on Sundays so that the 11 is not crowded
- Have the 33 go through Brookside on a Sunday
- No direct route from Leegomery to Hadley
- Better service for West Street, St Georges as it finishes at 2pm
- Better services from Dawley
- Better services to Edgmond
- Later buses back to Newport when AFC Telford are playing at home

Community Panel Survey Results

The Community Panel Survey asked several questions about the kind of journeys that passengers make and the convenience of the routes.

The overwhelming majority of bus journeys made by Community Panel members are for leisure purposes with relatively small numbers using the bus on a regular basis.

- What journeys do you make on the bus?

For leisure	90%
To work	17%
To college	3% (the survey audience was over age 18)

Base

- How often do you use the bus?

Daily	4%
Several times a week	13%
Less than once a week	12%
Less than once a month	17%
Not in the last 12 months	55%
Base	617

Most journeys (77%) were made on weekdays off-peak, most regular journeys (83%) were on a direct route with most (58%) having a service at intervals of 20 minutes or less. In response to the question "Does the bus timetable coincide with when you want / need to travel?" 80% relied yes.

In response to the question for non-bus users "Why did you stop using the bus service?" out of 203 people who gave a reason, 57 said because the journey time is too slow, 28 said their required route is not available, 31 said there is a lack of a direct service and 57 said that alternative forms of transport are more convenient.

3.3 Condition of the Vehicles

The review found that the condition and cleanliness of vehicles was an issue for bus users, and that there is a perception that the fleet in Telford & Wrekin is older than in other areas.

Some typical comments made to the Members were:

- The bus fleet in Telford & Wrekin seems to be older than in other areas
- The 33 is one of the main routes through Donnington but uses very old vehicles
- Cleanliness and litter is a problem on some buses particularly after school runs. Examples of chewing gum and an orange on seats were given
- It was noted that there are no litter bins on the buses
- Cleanliness is generally poor with a lot of litter on the buses

It was however acknowledged that litter on buses is not only a matter for Arriva, but one of wider public responsibility for keeping the buses clean and the culture of litter dropping is largely to blame. It was acknowledged that the turnaround of buses makes cleaning difficult, and that drivers cannot watch passengers as they need to concentrate on the road, and not all parts of the bus are visible in the driver's mirror.

Community Panel Survey Results

In reply to the question in the Community Panel Survey "If you could improve one thing about the bus service, what would it be?" 21 people out of 252 cited cleaner buses and in better repair.

In terms of comfort and cleanliness of the buses, the results of the Community Panel Survey showed that the majority of respondents rated each as good as follows:

- "How do you rate the overall comfort of the buses?"

Very good	7%
Good	45%
Neither good nor poor	32%
Poor	13%
Very poor	2%
Don't know	1%
Base	273
- "How do you rate the overall cleanliness of the buses?"

Very good	6%
Good	40%
Poor	16%
Very poor	6%
Don't know	1%
Base	270

Comments from Arriva

Arriva undertakes annual surveys of passengers and the main issues that come out of this are punctuality and reliability. The quality of buses does not appear to be a high priority for customers, based on these surveys. Older vehicles can be as reliable, or more reliable, than new models, so the age of the vehicles being used in Telford is not an issue. The average age of Arriva fleets in the Midlands is 7.5 years, and the majority of the Telford fleet are 6 years old. The normal lifespan of a bus is 15 years.

The buses are cleaned externally and internally each night, however, as they are out for at least 10 hours each day they do become dirty again during the day. A deep clean is carried out every 6 months. Maintaining cleanliness inside the vehicles also relies on passengers, and the worst times are after the school runs. A trial is being run with a cleaner in depots doing a sweep-out after school runs.

During the 15 year life of a vehicle the seats will be replaced about 3 times, and will always be replaced if they are worn or damaged as it is an offence for the vehicle to be on the road with a damaged seat.

Arriva has just introduced 5 new vehicles on the Wolverhampton-Telford-Shrewsbury route and is planning to introduce a number of additional new vehicles in the near future. Investment in new stock is difficult in the current economic climate. Any future investment in new vehicles will need to be thoroughly researched and justified, and Arriva would hope to see similar investment from the local authority in relation to the roadside infrastructure, bus priority measures etc. to ensure the network review is a success.

Views of an alternative operator about the vehicle life-cycle

As part of the review, we met representatives from National Express West Midlands to get the views of another operator on a number of issues. From their point of view, the average life cycle of a bus (to make a profit) is 12-15 years and the average target age for buses is 8 years. In their experience, the public is more concerned about cleanliness and security than the age of a bus. National Express West Midlands currently has only 100 out of 1700 buses left that are at the end of their life span and these are all about to be decommissioned and replaced. During the life of a bus, engine parts, chassis and furniture can be replaced to upgrade the bus. All 2000/01 buses have undergone a complete upgrade over the last 2 years.

3.4 Accessibility

As part of the review Members met with groups of bus users including the elderly and people with mobility issues who may have particular needs in relation to accessing public transport.

A key problem for elderly, disabled and people with mobility issues is getting onto buses with steps. Between 70-80% of the fleet is now low floor, but there are still some old buses with steps in use. Problems

usually occur when a bus breaks down and the older vehicles with high steps are used as replacement buses. Members heard reports of old buses being used on the 11, 22, 23, 24, 25, 33, 76, 77 and 99 routes. Of these, the 76 and 77 are fully subsidised and Council owned, and the 11, 22 and 33 are partially subsidised at night times and weekends.

The following issues for elderly people, people with push chairs and people with disabilities or mobility issues were raised:

- Space allocated for push-chairs and wheelchairs is often fully occupied by push-chairs, making the bus inaccessible for other push-chair or wheelchair users further down the route. There was anecdotal evidence about a wheelchair user being left at a bus stop because the allocated space was occupied by push-chairs, and another incident of a bus driving past a stop where a wheelchair user was waiting, possibly because it was already full of buggies.
- High steps are difficult for disabled people, parents with push-chairs, elderly and less mobile people.
- Drivers sometimes pull off before elderly and less able passengers are seated.
- There was a lack of clarity about whether mobility scooters are allowed on the buses, and it was suggested that there should be clear instructions about this on the buses.
- Overcrowded buses (such as school and college buses) can be a deterrent to disabled people
- There is an issue with high kerbs in Donnington which means some people cannot get onto the pavement
- There was a mixed view about the helpfulness of drivers towards disabled people
- Stops are not announced for blind people, the timetable is only available in print and there is often no room for guide dogs on the old buses
- There is no pick-up/drop-off point at the bus station for blue badge holders

Community Panel Survey

- Of 280 respondents, 10% travelled often or sometimes with a buggy
- Of the 29 respondent who travel with a buggy, 58% found it easy or very easy to get on the bus with a buggy
- Out of 30 respondents who travel with a buggy, 80% had often or occasionally not been able to get on the bus because of lack of space for the buggy
- There were 52 out of 272 respondents with a disability or mobility issue, or with care responsibility for someone with a disability of mobility issue.
- Of these 52 respondents, 66% thought low steps would make travel easier, 11% said a bus stop nearer to home would make travel easier, 18% wanted more help from the driver to get on and off and 23% wanted dedicated seats near the door.

Government legislation requires bus operators to have 50% low floor, accessible buses by 2010 and all buses to be fully compliant by 2016.

Comments from Arriva

Arriva has already exceeded this requirement. 70% of the fleet is low-floor and this will increase to 80% by the end of 2009 and to nearly 100% by the end of 2010, well ahead of national targets. This is ahead of national government targets. Accessible vehicles are used as much as possible, with step vehicles filling in where necessary e.g. if other vehicles are temporarily out of action.

As parents with children are the 3rd biggest market for Arriva, they are concerned with their needs as passengers. However, this must be balanced with the needs of other passengers. Drivers are trained to ask passengers to fold up buggies to make way for wheelchair users, but this relies on the goodwill of the public. It can be frustrating if parents refuse to collapse their pushchairs and drivers must ask wheelchair users to wait for the next bus. The able elderly are the largest market, and they can experience difficulty in getting through the wheelchair and pushchairs at the front of the vehicles to the seats. Drivers should not move off before passengers are seated, but they may do so if it takes a long time for the passenger to sit down, as waiting would delay the timetable.

On the subsidised routes, the Council will get quotes from bidders for low-floor / new buses, but there is an issue with resources as newer stock carries a cost and there has been no budget for this.

We have not made a specific recommendation about accessibility as this is down to investment in new vehicles and Arriva is already ahead of government targets for introducing compliant buses. There may be additional training that could be undertaken with drivers to make them more aware of the issues for older, less mobile and disabled people so that additional care of their needs is taken.

3.5 Customer service and customer complaints

The review found 2 issues relating to customer service:

- Bus drivers' attitudes
- Arriva's customer complaints procedure

3.5.1 Bus Drivers

There were mixed views about bus drivers' helpfulness with both positive and negative comments. Most of the negative comments were about drivers not being helpful towards less able bus users by finding them space on the bus, drivers pulling off from stops before less able people are seated and some comments about general levels of courtesy. Some typical comments received were:

- Scrutiny Members had received complaints from ward residents about driver attitudes
- Members of the Disability Forum had experienced drivers pulling off too quickly before they were seated which could cause falls
- The Disability Forum commented that some drivers are very helpful but some are not helpful at all
- Some bus drivers are surly and unhelpful
- We need patient and courteous drivers
- We need bus drivers to be more polite
- Drivers do not drive smoothly
- A blind passenger had tried asking drivers to tell her when the bus had arrived at her stop, but if she is travelling more than a couple of stops the drivers tend to forget.

There were equally some positive comments:

- (Some) bus drivers are polite
- The politeness and helpfulness of fleet bus drivers was commented on very favourably by Little Wenlock Parish Council
- It is not drivers but the design of buggies and the attitude of the public that creates problems.

Community Panel Survey Results

The Community Panel survey showed quite favourable opinions about drivers.

- “To what extent do you agree or disagree:
Bus drivers are generally considerate of passenger safety and comfort?”

Strongly agree	18%
Agree	50%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	1%
Base	278

- “To what extent do you agree or disagree:
Bus drivers are generally friendly and helpful?”

Strongly agree	21%
Agree	47%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know	1%
Base	277

Comments from Arriva

There are 1500 drivers on the fleet and there may be some who do not do the job properly but if they are found out, it is taken very seriously

and the issue addressed as poor driver attitudes or behaviour gives Arriva a poor reputation.

With regard to helping wheelchair users onto buses, all the driver can do is ask people occupying the space to move or to fold up their buggies, but it is up to the passengers to co-operate and if they refuse then there is nothing more that the driver can do. This can be difficult when there is no other space available.

National Express West Midlands made a similar point. Their drivers are trained to ask people with buggies to fold them up to get on or they may have to wait for the next bus. Drivers will ask people to move to enable wheelchair users to get on, but it is up to the public as to whether they move.

Suggestion for Arriva resulting from the review

Although not included as a recommendation in this report, witnesses interviewed suggested that Arriva consider prioritising wheelchair users for the disabled space over people with buggies which can be folded up, and encouraging drivers to make this a priority.

3.5.2 Customer complaints procedure

There was some speculation about Arriva's response to complaints, how thoroughly complaints are investigated, and the perception that a common response by Arriva is to deny the legitimacy of complaints. An example was given about a complaint about the non-arrival of a bus which Arriva had denied.

We did do an assessment of a sample number of complaints to draw any conclusions about the level of complaints and how they are dealt with, but did gather some anecdotal and written evidence of specific complaints which were not considered to have been satisfactorily managed.

The Senior Citizen's Transport Action Group provided a file documenting the progress of a number of complaints about the bus service and bus stations which had been variously addressed to Arriva, Telford & Wrekin Council, Telford & Wrekin PCT and to national government.

The group considered Arriva's response to the complaints unsatisfactory. There are often long delays, initial letters of complaint had not been replied to and follow-up letters had provoked letters of denial from Arriva about having received the original complaint. If pursued, complaints then appear to be dispersed to various staff at Arriva to deal with. One resident had received 3 separate replies to one complaint. One complaint had been escalated to the Commercial Manager in the West Midlands, who replied by referring the complaint back to the complaints department. When decisions are taken, they do not seem to be applied consistently across the whole organisation.

The Group further said there had been a problem with Arriva not attending public meetings about the bus service. Arriva had been invited to residents meetings in Sutton Hill and Wrockwardine, but had not attended. Regular staff changes at Arriva appeared to have made the complaints process more difficult as there had been no continuity or named point of contact.

Arriva also has an on-line complaints procedure, and although we did not receive any feedback on this, one of the Members had been onto the site and felt it was not very user-friendly and it was not clear whether a record of what had been sent could be saved by the user.

Comments from Arriva

The Arriva annual customer survey is undertaken across the UK every October. The survey is conducted face-to-face on buses by an independent market research company. Around 19,000 customers are surveyed nationally, and the results are given on a depot by depot basis. The survey covers punctuality, reliability, driver attitudes, and some areas that lie within the remit of the local authority such as the standard and security of bus stops and the pathways leading to them – the “whole journey experience”.

The 2008 survey showed that in the UK as a whole, 61% were either satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service. In Telford & Wrekin, this figure was 59%. Although there is clearly room for improvement, these results do challenge the perception that all Arriva users are dissatisfied with the service.

Complaints are taken seriously and investigated. In 2008, 16 complaints were made about the service in Telford & Wrekin out of a passenger number of around 100,000. It is recognised that in addition to these complaints, there are likely to be other people who complain to friends, family, Councillors etc. but do not make a formal complaint. Complaints are monitored by way of monthly reports.

It is important that people making complaints are specific, giving the date, time and route of the bus, to enable Arriva to investigate the complaint adequately and provide a conclusive answer. CCTV footage can be checked as part of the investigation.

Arriva has recognised the need to standardise the complaints procedure and to have consistent systems in place. To achieve this, Arriva has opened two new call centres in Luton and Liverpool to handle complaints nationally within corporate guidelines. From 1st April complaints for Telford & Wrekin have been handled by the Luton call centre with a target four day response time.

Comments from Shropshire Council Transport Officers

As part of the review, we met Transport officers from Shropshire Council to find out more about their experience of Arriva as a local operator. Their view is that although the Council receives complaints

about bus services, there proportionately fewer about Arriva than there are about the other smaller operators. Generally, Arriva is able to provide a better service because unlike the smaller operators it has the support infrastructure that a major operator is able to provide.

The Council's role in complaints about the bus service

As outlined in section 2.1 of this report, bus services were de-regulated and taken into private ownership in 1985. Since then, bus operators have been the responsibility of the Traffic Commissioners and not the local authorities.

Essentially, the Council has no direct power over Arriva and there is no contractual mechanism for redress of performance on commercial routes. The Council can try to negotiate with Arriva and the national indicators for reliability (frequency) and punctuality (1 minute before and 4 minutes after) can help when making representations to them. By working in partnership with Arriva, the Council can indirectly support improvements to the network through improvements to the infrastructure such as bus shelters, bus stations, kerb improvements, bus lanes and traffic management.

Currently, the Council issues complaint forms to residents and sign-posts customers to the Traffic Commissioner. Complaints are submitted directly to Arriva so that the Council does not record or monitor complaints. It is made clear to the public that the Council only has powers of sanction on the subsidised routes and none at all on the commercial routes. Arriva ask for tickets to be submitted with complaints forms, and residents are made aware that they should also keep a copy of the ticket for their own records.

On the tendered routes, an industry standard contract is used which allows the Council to charge a set administration fee or stop a day's subsidy for breach of the contract for poor performance and this has been imposed occasionally.

3.6 Communication with Arriva

As previously noted, there is no contract in place between the Council and Arriva with the exception of the subsidised routes. We wanted to find out how the Council works in partnership with Arriva and whether anything could be done to improve the partnership.

The Council has several levels of engagement with Arriva:

- The Quality Bus Partnership
- Council organised groups
- Day-to day officer involvement

3.6.1 The Quality Bus Partnership

This is the main mechanism for formal consultation with Arriva over strategic partnership issues and is described in section 2.2.2 of this report. The Quality Bus Partnership has been extremely successful

since it was formed in 1999. The availability of government funding through Urban and Rural Bus challenges enabled the council and Arriva to work together to improve bus routes in the borough turning around a 3% p.a. decline in bus patronage during the 1990s to a 20% growth 1999-2006. The impetus of the QBP changed as the grant funding came to an end and there was no money to support joint working. But the QBP remains active. Arriva provided 5 new buses this year on the Wolverhampton-Telford-Shrewsbury route, and a number of additional new buses are anticipated in Telford in the near future. Transport officers said that discussions at the partnership meetings have contributed to the investment decisions.

Arriva has made the Council aware of the route review at the partnership meetings and have undergone consultation with various officers in Transport. We should be mindful of the fact that the review is a commercial exercise and that there is no obligation on Arriva's part to consult with or take account of the Council's views. It is important for the Council to have a good relationship with Arriva to be able to plan and balance the commercial routes with the subsidised routes, but it has to be accepted that Arriva is an independent commercial operator.

3.6.2 Council organised groups

The Council facilitates a number of groups where members of the public can meet to discuss issues relating to buses and public transport. These include the Bus User Group, the Rural Transport User Group, the Disability Forum and the Senior Citizen's Transport Action Group.

Arriva is invited to the quarterly Bus User Group meetings and a representative at depot level usually attends. The group has become a useful forum for raising issues and having a dialogue with Arriva, and is gathering momentum. Issues with Lamb Corner, the 55 service, the bus station and other infrastructure problems have started at the forum and have been successfully resolved. There had been an issue with the consistency of Arriva staff attending the Bus User Group due to staffing changes at Arriva, but according to Transport officers this is now improving. Arriva has tried to resolve the issue of stability with the appointment of a new General manager in June 2009 and of 2 Assistant Managers covering north Shropshire/Oswestry and Wellington.

We noted that there was not always consistency of communication between the various groups and Arriva staff, and no single point of contact between the groups and Arriva and we felt this would make communication more effective.

3.7 Bus Shelters - and Vandalism

We received a number of complaints from bus users, and from Arriva, about bus shelters being in poor condition or vandalised. The quality of roadside facilities – bus shelters, timetable information display,

pavements – are all part of the “whole journey experience”, and these need to be of a good standard to attract people onto the buses.

The local authority is responsible for maintaining and upgrading bus shelters and other roadside facilities. The problem is that there is no council budget allocated for this. Currently, Transport officers work with the Parish councils to upgrade and improve bus shelters using Parish council funding. There is much work being done to vandal-proof bus shelters, but more needs to be done. Funding is secured through LTP2 and this may address the maintenance issues.

Vandalism does not only affect bus shelters. There are serious incidents of vandalism on, and towards, the buses, such as bricks thrown through bus windows. In March 2009, we received evidence from Arriva of an incident, the second that week, of a brick being thrown through a bus window in Woodside resulting in the driver being hospitalised and the potential suspension of the service. Arriva does not tolerate vandalism on buses and by the end of the year all vehicles will be equipped with CCTV. Clearly, vandalism is part of a much bigger problem of anti-social behaviour which is outside the remit of this scrutiny report.

3.7 Concessionary Fares

In England, people over 60 or with a disability as stated by the Department for Transport are eligible for a concessionary bus card which entitles them to free travel between certain hours anywhere in England on local buses. The scheme is funded nationally for journeys made between 9.30am-11.00pm. Local authorities have discretion to extend the free hours of travel, but if they chose to do this then the local authority must subsidise all journeys made outside the nationally specified hours. In Telford & Wrekin, the concessionary travel time was extended from 9.30am to 9.00am in March 2009 at an annual estimated cost to the authority of around £170,000. Other options are available as part of the concessionary fare scheme.

Operators (including Arriva) re-charge a flat fare which is agreed with each transport authority annually and is based on an average fare formula.

3.8 Competition

There was speculation about the quality of the service provided by Arriva compared to services available from other operators in other local authority areas. Arriva is currently the sole operator in Telford & Wrekin, and there was a perception that if another operator could be attracted into the borough, the increased competition would stimulate improved service levels. This raises two questions: what is required to attract an alternative operator/s into the area, and would more operators make a difference to the service?

3.8.1 Attracting other operators into Telford & Wrekin

The sole operator situation in Telford and Wrekin is not unusual in similar sized towns outside a metropolitan area where the commercial market is too small and compact to sustain more than one operator.

The subsidised routes are put out to open tender through OJEU and can be offered to any bidder but in Telford & Wrekin, Arriva is usually the sole bidder. The problem with attracting a major operator into the borough is that the contracts tendered are too small in value to justify the necessary investment in a depot and staff that an alternative operator would need to make to move into the area.

We met representatives from National Express West Midlands (NEWM) to find out what the barriers are for outside operators to bidding for contracts in Telford & Wrekin. NEWM is always looking at areas where it can grow the market. The market in Telford (and similar towns such as Lichfield and Tamworth) has been looked at in detail, but there are challenges with the size of the market and being able to move into it quickly enough. From their point of view, there is better potential for more rapid growth in the West Midlands.

The problem is that the tender market comes out on a route-by-route basis and NEWM cannot submit a competitive price on such small contracts. The nearest NEWM depot is in Wolverhampton, 15-20 miles away, and operating in Telford would mean setting up a local depot to maintain and overnight buses and recruiting new staff. To make a tender economically viable for a new operator moving into the market, the council would need to offer a big enough package of work for a long enough period and with a long enough lead time. The lead time from award of contract to starting operation is around 9 months. The contract would need to be for a minimum of 30 buses and for at least 5 years to make the required investment in Telford a viable option for outside bidders. The total value of the subsidised routes in 2008/09 in Telford & Wrekin was £632,867 and this is contracted on a route-by-route basis, although they are all up for tender in October 2010.

The Transport Review looked at how to use tender processes to encourage bidders and competition. Transport officers felt that an option could be to advertise tenders at the same time as Shropshire Council to encourage other operators to tender for services in both authority areas, and the Park & Ride contract may provide an opportunity to do this, although a joint contract is unlikely as the timing of contracts will constrain this.

3.8.2 Multi-operator services

We met Transport officers from Shropshire Council to compare its experience as an authority with more than one operator. There are a number of commercial operators working in Shropshire, although Arriva is by far the biggest operator and predominantly covers the Shrewsbury Town area while the smaller operators tend to operate more rural

services. As commercial operators, the companies themselves determine the commercial network. In addition to the commercial and subsidised routes, there are 140 school buses virtually all of which are run by smaller independents, and Arriva is not involved with these.

We asked how Shropshire Council encourages more operators to bid for contracts to improve competition. Procurement (as in Telford & Wrekin) is undertaken using the OJEU framework and complies with EU regulations including advertising all tenders. Operators are made aware of new opportunities coming up in advance, and e-procurement and web based technology has digitised and simplified the process to encourage bids from smaller companies without a large infrastructure and back-office staff. Market building is done by visiting operator forums to help operators understand the opportunities better and to stimulate interest in new markets such as school routes, although there is a shrinking number of independent bidders. Telford & Wrekin has been using e-procurement for 12 months, although as mentioned previously, in the smaller market, this has not helped to bring forward new bidders.

In practice there are really only 3 or 4 operators able to meet the required standards, and Arriva is usually able to offer better value for money services derived from economies of scale such as newer and different types of buses, greener fuel technology and a better customer service infrastructure which smaller companies cannot provide. This is why the other operators tend to cover the rural areas such as Market Drayton and Ludlow, and it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to compete against Arriva for the Shrewsbury Town services.

Shropshire Council involves Arriva in strategic policy planning because they are the main operator in the area and the scale of operation gives Arriva the capacity to take risks that the smaller operators, who rely on subsidies, are unable to take. As noted in section 3.5.2 above, Shropshire Council had found that they receive proportionately fewer complaints about Arriva than about the other smaller operators and that generally Arriva is able to provide a better service because it has a bigger support infrastructure. On one exceptional occasion, there had been an issue when the Council withdrew a contract from an operator who then chose not to deregister the route, but continued to operate the route commercially which precluded another operator being contracted in because the route was still registered with the Traffic Commissioner. As the route was not commercially viable, the service was very poor and left passengers stranded but the Council was not able to contract an alternative operator in. The message is that although increased competition is generally regarded as good for the market, there are potential pitfalls that we need to be mindful of.

3.9 Views of Young People

We visited the Young People's Forum to find out what young people think about the bus service. The Active Involvement Service also

undertook a number of focus group sessions with young people in Charlton, Sutherland and Newport Schools as well as with the Young Carers' Forum and we would like to thank them for their assistance with this consultation.

The young people were asked to say what is good about the buses, what is bad about the buses, and what would convince them to use the buses more. The results of the consultation are shown in the table below. To a large extent they reflect many of the same benefits and issues as the adults we spoke to. There were differences though; the young people were the only group to mention the environmental advantages of buses compared to cars.

The affordability and cost of buses emerged as a big issue, and there were comments from some of the young people that they could not take advantage of bus passes because although they would save money in the long run, the initial outlay was too high. Supporting this view, the Active Involvement Service conducted a survey of 1407 young people in January and February 2009. The survey asked them what they would change in their schools, local area, the borough and nationally. Of the top 5 most popular changes, cheaper public transport featured second, selected by 64% of the young people. Flexi-student passes are available.

Fare setting is done by Arriva, and this is therefore difficult to make a recommendation about. Although this was not agreed as a recommendation for this report, the Council might want to consider exploring the viability of providing some form of discounted ticket, in addition to the flexi-student pass, targeted at young people with particular needs as part of the NEET Strategy.

Results of Consultation with the Young People

Group Surveyed	Good Points	Bad Points	What would convince you...?
CHARLTON SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better for the environment • Cheap fares • Handy, frequent service in general • Good source for employment • Enable young people to have independence and freedom • Smoking prohibited • Good variety of places to visit • Regularity • Some have seat belts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor bus shelters • Behaviour of other passengers • No refreshments available • Payment options • Long slow journeys with too many stops • Bad time keeping • Poor condition of buses. • Not cleaned or inspected regularly enough • Bad attitude from drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheaper fares • Cleaner buses • Buses driven more carefully • More facilities/entertainment on bus • A higher frequency of buses • More reliability • CCTV on buses • More concessionary fares • Good facilities on board (TV's)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful/friendly drivers 		
SUTHERLAND SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better for the environment • Good for social networking • No smoking/drinking alcohol • Cleanliness of seats • High frequency into town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low frequency at certain times • Not enough bus shelters • General lack of cleanliness/poor condition • No seat belts • Expensive • Bad attitude from the bus drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicer bus drivers • Seat belts • Improvements in general condition, cleanliness and entertainment (such as music) • A higher frequency of buses all the time and to more places in Telford • School bus service • Discounted/free fares
NEWPORT GIRLS' HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of bus stops • Frequency on weekdays • Good for social networking • General condition and cleanliness is good • Easily accessible for wheelchairs/pushchairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time keeping and reliability • Expensive • Drivers have bad attitude/unhelpful/smoke and are unable to control bad behaviour • Not enough bus shelters and frequency to rural areas • Infrequent on weekends and evenings • Not enough capacity at peak times • Poor general condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency to different areas (Market Drayton, Wolverhampton etc) • Cheaper fares/reintroduction of return fares • Nicer bus drivers • Better facilities (such as bins/luggage holders) • Improved general condition/cleanliness
YOUNG PEOPLE'S FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bus service in Telford and Wrekin is considered much better than in some places in the UK. • Environmentally more friendly than lots of car on the roads • Bus lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive fares • Drivers attitude and unhelpfulness • Not enough bus stops and frequency to rural areas • Infrequent on weekends and evenings • Journeys take too long with too many stops • Time keeping and reliability • Lack of cleanliness and poor condition of bus shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free travel for under 16 • More concessionary fares • More frequent, quicker routes, • Better time keeping • Nicer bus drivers • Better information for public • More bus lanes • Music on bus

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses incorrectly identified with where they are going • No seatbelts 	
YOUNG CARERS' FORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables you to travel from one place to another • Some services are regular • Some drivers are friendly if you are a frequent user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive fares, rising frequently • Concessions not available at certain times • Not enough bus stops and frequency to areas other than the town centre and evening/weekends • Bad timekeeping • Information/ timetables are hard to obtain • Poor condition of buses • Drivers attitude and unhelpfulness • Not enough pram/ disabled spaces • Other passengers are disrespectful • Buses too busy, too small • Poor condition of bus shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable service • More fast track routes • Cheaper bus fares/more concessions • School bus service • Better attitude from drivers • Heaters on buses • Bigger capacity buses • CCTV to aid prevention of ASB

3.10 Increasing bus patronage

It has been noted above that although the investment in bus services turned a 3% decline in passenger numbers to a 20% increase in patronage between 1999 and 2006, growth has slowed with a lack of investment in the buses.

Of the Community Panel survey, only 4% of 617 respondents use the bus on a daily basis, 13% use a bus several times a week, 12% less than once a week, 17% less than once a month and the majority, 55%, had not used a bus in the last 12 months denoting a falling off of usage. Regarding why people use buses, 80% use the bus for leisure purposes and 17% to get to work. (This was a multiple choice questions, so respondents could tick more than one box.)

As part of the Community Panel survey, we asked non-bus users why they do not use the buses, what would encourage them to use the buses and whether, if all their requirements were met, they would be prepared to try using the bus.

The results showed that, unsurprisingly, of the 203 respondents who had not used the bus for 12 months, the most popular reasons for stopping were that the journey time is too slow (57) and that alternative transport is more convenient (57). The same 2 reasons were top of the list of respondents who had never used the bus service, at 60 and 59 respectively out of 207.

In answer to the question “What would encourage you to use the bus service?” the top 5 answers of 364 respondents were:

- Availability of direct service to required destination 48
- Services available at the required time 38
- Quicker journey times 34
- Cheaper prices 32
- More reliable service 23

In answer to the question “If all your requirements were met by the bus service, would you try using the buses?” 46% of 388 respondents said they would try to use the bus service, 35% said they would continue to use the car or other methods of transport and 19% did not know.

This points to the perennial problem of attracting new users onto the buses. Growing the market by supporting younger passengers, and looking at employment growth areas could be potential markets to consider.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The review was an unusual one for scrutiny in that it was focussed on a service that is provided almost entirely by an independent, private company outside the Council's authority. Under current legislation, Scrutiny has no powers of scrutiny over private transport operators. Scrutiny can request a meeting with an operator, but there is no obligation on the operator to attend, nor to take any Scrutiny reports or recommendations into account. In undertaking this review, we are therefore mindful of this and would like to thank Arriva for allowing us the opportunity to discuss some of the issues which had been brought to the Scrutiny Members' attention. We would welcome the further opportunity to discuss the findings of the review, and hope that some of the observations and suggestions will be useful.

The Scrutiny review was undertaken because of the number of issues that ward residents had raised with elected Members about the bus services. This in itself implies a lack of public understanding about the powers of the Council over Arriva. We were concerned as the review progressed that some members of the public persist in thinking that the Council is still responsible for bus services when this is not the case. The risk in undertaking the scrutiny review was that it could raise unrealistic expectations about what scrutiny could achieve and we hope that this report will help allay any lingering misapprehensions. Although the Council is committed to working in partnership with Arriva, in practice it has no influence over the company other than on the tendered and subsidised routes.

The recommendations in this report therefore focus on the Council's role in developing the bus network, and how it can work with Arriva to deliver more reliable, more frequent and more affordable services to more residents.

Whereas Arriva provides the actual fleet service, the Council has a responsibility for developing and improving the infrastructure within which the service operates, such as bus only lanes, traffic management, improvements to timetable display information, bus stations, bus shelters and accessible kerbs. These improvements are dependent on resources and are voluntary rather than statutory obligations. We have made the following recommendations to support this aim:

- 1. To introduce a system of cleansing of bus shelters by TWS.**
- 2. To allocate a budget for erecting, maintaining and repairing bus shelters, potentially as a match funding scheme with the Parish Councils. (This is also a recommendation in the Transport Review.)**
- 3. Senior Transport officers to be informed by Highways officers as soon as possible about planned road maintenance and other road works affecting bus services so that advance warning can be given to Arriva and the public and arrangements can be made to minimise disruption and inconvenience.**

- 4. To strengthen the Quality Bus Partnership by developing the relationship at Chief Executive / Head Office level to get better buy-in**
- 5. To incorporate a suitable area for the Bus Station as part of the new Town Centre Development Plan, including a dropping-off and picking-up area.**

The review was predominantly about issues of reliability, punctuality and quality of service on the commercial network which are within the remit of Arriva, although also touched on the Integrated Transport service and subsidised routes funded by the Council, which are also within the scope of the Transport Review. We would like the findings of this review to inform both Arriva's work and to inform the development of strategies arising from the Transport Review. We have therefore made the following recommendations:

- 6. The Bus Services Scrutiny Review Group members to present the findings of the review to Arriva Senior Management. This will feed into Arriva's route review, and provide further feedback to Arriva from customers which may be useful in planning service.**
- 7. The Bus Services Scrutiny Review Group members to be consulted on the development of the Subsidised Bus Policy and the business case for demand responsive rural transport. These are being developed by Northgate Kendric Ash as part of the Transport Review. The evidence gathered during the scrutiny review will be fed into this process.**
- 8. To develop a comprehensive bus access policy in conjunction with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust as part of the World Heritage Access strategy to ensure sustainable transport links the museum sites. The Council needs to improve links into the Gorge but the museum should fund transport around the museum sites.**

We understand that, along with all local authorities, the Council will need to cut spending over the coming years and will have some tough budget decisions to take. But we would urge the Council to consider transport not just as a direct cost but as an enabler to unlocking many social and economic problems in the area. Public transport is integral to meeting the economic and social aspirations for Telford & Wrekin as well as delivering the Council's climate change agenda. We need to take a more strategic approach to transport; it needs to be planned to provide access to the new town centre development, the new Sport and Learning Community facilities and linked to the residential growth points in the borough - and there needs to be a funding commitment to drive change from the top.

Without investment national core indicators are in jeopardy. N177, the national indicator for the number of bus passenger journeys in the local area is below target. Experience has shown that investment in quality bus routes, bus lanes and the roadside infrastructure will increase passenger numbers and help to address this failing indicator. BV104, satisfaction with local bus services as

measured in the Place survey, has also been identified as a high risk performance indicator and will impact on future Comprehensive Area Assessments. We have made the following recommendations to support these aims:

- 9. The Council to review the transport budget in proportion to projected population growth and declining patronage. The wider social, economic and environmental benefits of investment in bus services should be taken into account.**
- 10. Senior Transport officers to be involved at the early planning stage of development projects so that transport is planned and budgeted for in a strategic way.**
- 11. To review the cost implications of removing time restrictions on concessionary travel with a view to offering unlimited free travel throughout the borough to all concessionary pass holders. This should be done when the current extension from 9.30am to 9.00am has been operating for 12 months.**

We were concerned to make sure that in contracting out the tendered routes that the Council continues to strive to make sure that Telford & Wrekin has the best value for money services available. To support this, we have made the following recommendations:

- 12. To explore the opportunity to advertise tenders at the same time as neighbouring authorities to encourage operators to tender for services at the same time. Explore the opportunity to do this with Shropshire Council for the Park & Ride contract due to be renewed in October 2010.**
- 13. The Council to ensure that as many operators as possible are aware of OJEU contracts for bus services.**

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are summarised in the table below. We have assigned a priority level to each of the recommendations, and given an indication of the cost.

It is not possible to provide detailed costings for the recommendations within this report without a considerable amount of additional work being undertaken by both scrutiny and finance officers. However, the recommendations have been placed into one of three categories as follows:-

- Low cost indicates that the recommendation could be funded from within existing resources, although not necessarily in the current year.
- Medium cost indicates that the recommendation is anticipated to cost up to £10,000 which is not currently budgeted.
- High cost indicates that the recommendation is expected to cost more than £10,000 which is not currently budgeted.

Recommendation	Indication of cost	Priority level
<p><u>Recommendation 1</u> To introduce a system of cleansing of bus shelters by TWS</p>	LOW/MEDIUM	8
<p><u>Recommendation 2</u> To allocate a budget for erecting, maintaining and repairing bus shelters, potentially as a match funding scheme with the Parish Councils. (This is also a recommendation in the Transport Review.)</p>	HIGH	9
<p><u>Recommendation 3</u> Senior Transport officers to be informed by Highways officers as soon as possible about planned road maintenance and other road works affecting bus services so that advance warning can be given to Arriva and the public and arrangements can be made to minimise disruption and inconvenience.</p>	LOW	5
<p><u>Recommendation 4</u> To strengthen the Quality Bus Partnership by developing the relationship at Chief Executive / Head Office level to get better buy-in</p>	LOW	11
<p><u>Recommendation 5</u> To incorporate a suitable area for the Bus</p>	HIGH	10

Station as part of the new Town Centre Development Plan, including a dropping-off and picking-up area.		
<u>Recommendation 6</u> The Bus Services Scrutiny Review Group members to present the findings of the review to Arriva Senior Management. This will feed into Arriva's route review, and provide further feedback to Arriva from customers which may be useful in planning service.	LOW	6
<u>Recommendation 7</u> The Bus Services Scrutiny Review Group members to be consulted on the development of the Subsidised Bus Policy and the business case for demand responsive rural transport. These are being developed by Northgate Kendric Ash as part of the Transport Review. The evidence gathered during the scrutiny review will be fed into this process.	LOW	7
<u>Recommendation 8</u> To develop a comprehensive bus access policy in conjunction with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust as part of the World Heritage Access strategy to ensure sustainable transport links the museum sites. The Council needs to improve links into the Gorge but the museum should fund transport around the museum sites.	LOW	12
<u>Recommendation 9</u> The Council to review the transport budget in proportion to projected population growth and declining patronage. The wider social, economic and environmental benefits of investment in bus services should be taken into account.	HIGH	1
<u>Recommendation 10</u> Senior Transport officers to be involved at the early planning stage of development projects so that transport is planned and budgeted for in a strategic way.	LOW	2
<u>Recommendation 11</u> To review the cost implications of removing time restrictions on concessionary travel with a	HIGH	13

view to offering unlimited free travel throughout the borough to all concessionary pass holders. This should be done when the current extension from 9.30am to 9.00am has been operating for 12 months.		
<u>Recommendation 12</u> To explore the opportunity to advertise tenders at the same time as neighbouring authorities to encourage operators to tender for services at the same time. Explore the opportunity to do this with Shropshire Council for the Park & Ride contract due to be renewed in October 2010.	LOW	3
<u>Recommendation 13</u> The Council to procure bus contracts through the OJEU process and ensure as many operators as possible are aware of the opportunities.	LOW	4

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James Willocks	Passenger Transport Team Leader, Shropshire Council
Jon Hayes	Public Policy Team Leader, Shropshire Council
Helen Hill	Business Manager Transport, Telford & Wrekin Council
Martyn Wilthall	Transport Team Leader, Telford & Wrekin Council
Stuart Hyde	Mobility Management Team Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council
Stuart Freeman	Business Manager, Network Management and Policy, Telford & Wrekin Council
Brian Cotter	Northgate Kendric Ash
Angie Astley	Head of Business Transformation, Telford & Wrekin Council
Sarah Bass	Business Transformation, Telford & Wrekin Council

Members of the Bus User Group

Members of the Senior Citizens' Transport Action Group

Members of the Disability Forum

Members of the Young People's Forum

Members of the Rural Transport User Group

Telford & Wrekin Town & Parish Councils

We would also like to thank:

Sarah Stembridge and the Active Involvement Team for all their help with organising the consultation with the young people.

Tracy Bennett for organising the Community Panel Survey.

APPENDIX 1 – COMMUNITY PANEL SURVEY

		Base	Gender		Age group			Disability		Ethnicity		Community Cluster				
		All respondents	Male	Female	18-39	40-59	60+	No LTL	LTL	White British	BME (incl White Other)	Newport	Wellington	Telford North	Telford Central	Telford South
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
How often do you use the bus?	Daily	4	3	6	8	3	3	4	5	4	4	0	2	5	5	10
	Several times a week	13	13	12	0	11	14	13	14	13	13	10	10	16	14	10
	Less than once a week	12	13	10	11	8	15	12	12	12	13	11	14	12	9	13
	Less than once a month	17	15	18	14	18	16	17	14	17	14	26	16	16	14	19
	<i>Not in the last 12 months</i>	55	55	54	67	59	51	54	55	55	54	54	57	51	58	48
<i>Base</i>		617	337	278	33	174	316	439	133	521	90	82	167	189	147	31
How far away from home is your nearest bus stop?	Less than a 5 minute walk	68	74	62	83	76	63	71	58	67	75	61	66	73	70	60
	5-10 minute walk	25	20	31	17	17	30	25	30	27	15	32	29	20	25	27
	10-20 minute walk	5	5	4	0	4	5	5	6	4	10	0	4	5	5	13
	More than 20 minute walk	2	1	3	0	3	2	1	6	2	0	8	1	1	0	0
<i>Base</i>		284	149	134	11	71	158	200	66	243	40	38	73	94	64	15

What journeys do you make on the bus?	To work	17	14	19	40	25	11	18	12	18	11	16	20	14	10	40
	To college	3	1	6	0	5	3	3	6	3	3	0	2	6	2	0
	For leisure	90	92	88	100	86	93	89	94	89	94	91	92	91	92	73
<i>Base</i>		223	119	103	9	57	117	158	50	186	36	32	51	77	48	15
What times of the day do you generally travel the most?	Week day - Peak	25	21	30	55	35	17	25	25	26	20	22	28	27	18	31
	Week day - Off peak	77	78	76	73	65	85	74	84	77	78	86	75	77	79	63
	Weekends	32	29	37	45	38	27	35	25	29	55	27	30	35	32	44
<i>Base</i>		278	150	127	10	71	154	198	61	237	40	37	71	92	62	16
Is the journey you most regularly make direct?	Yes	83	79	86	83	88	79	82	82	82	85	78	77	89	81	87
	No	17	21	14	17	12	21	18	18	18	15	22	23	11	19	13
<i>Base</i>		269	146	122	11	69	148	192	60	228	40	37	71	89	57	15
And how regular is this service?	More than one bus every 20 minutes	58	58	59	*	56	58	58	60	58	63	4	62	69	61	92
	More than one bus an hour	23	25	19	*	25	24	23	19	23	20	71	8	21	16	8
	Hourly	10	7	15	*	11	9	9	15	10	11	7	17	6	14	0
	Less frequent	9	10	7	*	8	9	10	6	9	6	18	13	4	8	0
<i>Base</i>		221	117	103	7	61	118	158	48	185	35	28	52	80	49	12
How many buses does your journey involve?	One	79	79	79	*	80	81	80	76	81	68	88	84	80	72	*
	two	20	20	20	*	18	18	19	24	18	29	13	16	20	23	*
	Three or more	1	1	1	*	2	1	2	0	1	4	0	0	0	5	*
<i>Base</i>		171	85	86	6	45	94	128	33	143	28	24	44	54	43	6

To what extent does changing buses extend your journey time?	Less than 10 minutes	30	42	16	*	17	34	35	23	31	*	*	36	35	28	*
	10-20 minutes	52	48	56	*	42	55	55	38	50	*	*	55	53	44	*
	20-30 minutes	9	6	12	*	17	3	8	15	8	*	*	9	6	17	*
	More than 30 minutes	9	3	16	*	25	7	3	23	10	*	*	0	6	11	*
<i>Base</i>		56	31	25	3	12	29	40	13	48	8	6	11	17	18	4
Does the bus timetable coincide with when you want / need to travel?	Yes	80	82	79	62	80	83	81	77	80	83	79	78	83	82	71
	No	20	18	21	38	20	17	19	23	20	18	21	22	17	18	29
<i>Base</i>		270	146	123	11	69	149	192	60	229	40	38	72	89	57	14
How do you rate the punctuality of the buses in general?	Very good	30	30	29	25	26	34	28	34	30	30	59	32	16	27	33
	Good	46	46	46	33	49	44	48	39	44	55	35	38	58	46	40
	Neither good nor poor	17	15	20	25	19	16	16	20	19	10	5	20	18	22	13
	Poor	4	5	4	17	3	3	6	2	5	0	0	4	4	5	13
Very poor	3	4	1	0	3	3	2	5	2	5	0	6	3	0	0	
<i>Base</i>		273	146	126	11	69	152	195	61	232	40	37	71	91	59	15
In an average week, how often, if any, do buses run late?	Never	5	7	3	0	3	8	6	5	5	5	11	9	1	5	0
	Almost never	27	31	22	36	19	29	30	20	27	28	39	25	26	28	20
	Sometimes	39	35	43	36	48	36	37	42	37	46	28	32	45	41	47
	Most of the time	7	5	9	27	4	5	6	10	8	0	0	9	8	7	7
	All of the time	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	3	0	1	1	0	0
Don't know	21	21	22	0	25	22	21	22	22	18	22	25	20	19	27	
<i>Base</i>		270	144	125	10	69	150	193	60	230	39	36	69	92	58	15
What is the average length	Less than five minutes	26	31	21	36	22	26	28	21	26	24	33	24	26	26	27

of time you have to wait for the delayed bus?	5-10 minutes	49	46	53	27	54	48	48	55	48	55	54	38	54	53	36
	10-20 minutes	19	19	18	9	18	22	17	21	19	17	13	36	11	14	27
	20-30 minutes	5	3	7	27	6	3	5	2	5	3	0	2	7	5	9
	30 minutes to 1 hour	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
<i>Base</i>		193	100	92	10	50	101	139	42	163	29	24	45	70	43	11
How do you find out bus timetable information & changes to the timetable?	At bus stops	55	61	47	*	52	55	51	62	57	44	74	45	62	40	71
	At the bus station	42	40	44	*	41	44	42	40	41	50	29	44	35	62	36
	Arriva website	17	16	17	*	21	13	20	7	17	14	24	16	15	15	21
	Telford Travelink website	8	8	9	*	8	9	9	5	9	3	9	10	10	5	0
	From a friend / relation	20	16	24	*	22	20	18	22	20	22	15	15	22	25	21
<i>Base</i>		251	134	116	9	63	143	179	55	214	36	34	62	86	55	14
To what extent do you agree or disagree that bus timetable information is easy to find?	Strongly agree	12	11	13	27	14	12	10	14	11	15	21	13	7	10	19
	Agree	47	49	45	27	37	52	49	41	47	51	54	36	52	53	38
	Neither	23	25	22	9	25	23	24	22	25	15	18	24	26	19	38
	Disagree	9	6	13	27	14	7	9	13	9	10	3	17	8	8	6
	Strongly disagree	4	6	2	0	4	5	4	5	5	2	3	7	2	7	0
	Don't know	4	3	5	9	6	2	4	5	3	7	3	4	5	3	0
<i>Base</i>		278	150	127	11	71	154	197	63	236	41	39	72	92	59	16
How do you rate: Temperature on the bus	Very good	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	14	12	5	8	19
	Good	57	61	51	45	56	58	58	52	54	70	68	51	58	59	44
	Neither	25	22	28	27	24	24	25	24	26	15	16	27	28	19	31
	Poor	5	5	6	18	4	5	4	10	6	0	3	3	5	8	6
	Very poor	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	3	1	2	0
	Don't know	3	1	4	0	4	1	3	3	2	5	0	4	2	3	0

<i>Base</i>		277	149	127	11	70	153	198	62	236	40	37	73	92	59	16
How do you rate: Comfort of the seats	Very good	5	5	6	0	6	6	5	6	6	0	3	7	4	4	19
	Good	49	52	46	45	45	51	52	37	47	63	62	48	45	49	50
	Neither	27	27	28	27	30	26	27	33	28	24	24	29	32	22	25
	Poor	15	16	15	27	16	16	15	17	16	11	8	14	16	24	6
	Very poor	2	1	3	0	3	1	1	5	2	3	3	1	2	2	0
Don't know	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	
<i>Base</i>		273	147	125	11	67	151	193	63	234	38	37	73	92	55	16
How do you rate: The overall comfort of the buses	Very good	7	8	6	9	9	6	6	6	8	0	8	7	3	5	25
	Good	45	47	44	36	41	47	48	34	43	63	55	49	43	38	44
	Neither	32	31	32	27	34	30	31	37	32	24	26	30	34	36	19
	Poor	13	13	13	27	13	15	11	16	14	8	8	13	16	15	6
	Very poor	2	1	3	0	3	1	2	5	2	3	3	0	2	5	0
Don't know	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	1	1	0	6	
<i>Base</i>		273	146	126	11	68	151	192	62	234	38	38	71	93	55	16
How do you rate: Disposal of litter from the bus	Very good	4	5	2	0	9	3	4	3	5	0	3	5	3	4	6
	Good	37	41	31	27	30	41	40	23	34	53	50	34	34	36	31
	Neither	29	26	33	36	30	28	28	33	30	22	37	25	27	27	50
	Poor	20	19	21	18	18	20	18	26	21	14	11	22	24	20	6
	Very poor	8	7	10	18	9	5	8	10	8	8	0	8	10	11	6
Don't know	2	2	2	0	3	2	2	5	2	3	0	5	1	2	0	
<i>Base</i>		272	147	124	11	66	152	193	61	235	36	38	73	90	55	16
How do you rate: Cleanliness of seats	Very good	4	6	2	0	7	5	4	3	5	0	3	5	4	4	6
	Good	40	44	34	36	40	39	40	36	37	57	47	47	33	36	38
	Neither	34	33	35	36	31	35	34	38	36	22	37	25	41	33	38
	Poor	15	11	19	18	13	15	15	15	15	14	11	15	13	20	13
	Very poor	7	6	7	9	9	6	7	7	6	8	3	7	8	7	6
Don't know	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	
<i>Base</i>		273	147	125	11	68	152	193	61	235	37	38	73	91	55	16

How do you rate: The overall cleanliness of the buses	Very good	6	8	5	0	12	6	6	7	7	3	8	7	5	7	6
	Good	40	41	38	36	39	41	41	30	35	68	55	40	34	40	31
	Neither	31	31	30	36	26	30	32	32	34	8	24	23	40	27	44
	Poor	16	13	20	9	18	17	14	23	17	14	11	22	14	20	6
	Very poor	6	7	6	18	5	5	6	7	6	8	3	7	7	5	13
	Don't know	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
<i>Base</i>		270	145	124	11	66	151	192	60	232	37	38	73	88	55	16
How do you rate: Your personal safety whilst waiting for the bus	Very good	5	5	5	9	7	4	5	5	4	8	5	3	5	5	6
	Good	48	50	44	18	52	50	48	48	45	62	65	49	42	49	31
	Neither	35	34	37	64	28	34	35	34	38	16	27	33	44	33	25
	Poor	6	6	6	0	4	7	6	5	6	5	3	3	5	7	31
	Very poor	4	3	4	9	4	3	3	7	4	3	0	8	1	4	6
	Don't know	2	1	3	0	3	2	3	2	2	5	0	4	2	2	0
<i>Base</i>		272	147	124	11	67	151	193	61	234	37	37	73	91	55	16
How do you rate: Your personal safety whilst on the bus	Very good	8	9	6	9	11	7	8	5	8	8	8	5	10	5	13
	Good	53	54	53	27	54	58	53	53	50	73	78	55	46	53	31
	Neither	28	26	31	64	27	22	29	31	31	13	14	27	34	28	31
	Poor	5	7	3	0	3	7	5	3	6	0	0	1	6	7	19
	Very poor	3	3	3	0	1	3	2	6	3	0	0	7	2	2	0
	Don't know	3	3	3	0	3	3	4	2	2	8	0	4	1	5	6
<i>Base</i>		277	149	127	11	70	153	197	62	236	40	37	73	93	58	16
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Bus drivers are generally considerate to other road users	Strongly agree	16	19	13	9	17	17	17	13	15	20	29	14	13	14	19
	Agree	60	58	63	55	57	60	59	60	59	65	63	55	62	67	44
	Neither	14	13	16	9	16	14	13	17	16	5	5	16	19	9	19
	Disagree	6	7	5	9	4	6	6	6	5	8	0	11	4	4	13
	Strongly disagree	2	3	1	18	1	2	3	2	3	0	3	1	0	5	6
	Don't know	2	1	3	0	4	1	2	2	2	3	0	3	2	2	0
<i>Base</i>		278	149	128	11	70	154	196	63	237	40	38	73	94	57	16

To what extent do you agree or disagree: Bus drivers are generally considerate of passenger safety and comfort	Strongly agree	18	23	13	27	13	21	19	13	19	13	35	16	12	17	25
	Agree	50	48	52	36	54	53	50	48	47	65	49	45	54	55	31
	Neither	19	16	23	27	17	14	21	16	20	13	14	21	20	16	31
	Disagree	10	11	9	9	11	10	8	17	11	8	0	14	11	10	13
	Strongly disagree	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	5	2	0	3	3	1	0	0
	Don't know	1	1	2	0	3	1	2	2	1	3	0	1	2	2	0
<i>Base</i>		278	149	128	11	70	154	197	63	237	40	37	73	94	58	16
To what extent do you agree or disagree: Bus drivers are generally friendly and helpful	Strongly agree	21	28	13	27	16	25	22	15	21	21	34	21	14	22	20
	Agree	47	45	49	18	49	48	46	47	45	56	50	42	53	47	27
	Neither	19	14	26	18	26	15	19	23	21	13	16	23	18	17	27
	Disagree	9	11	8	18	7	10	9	11	10	5	0	12	10	10	13
	Strongly disagree	3	3	2	18	0	1	3	3	3	3	0	1	3	2	13
	Don't know	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	1	3	0	1	2	2	0
<i>Base</i>		277	149	127	11	69	155	196	62	237	39	38	73	93	58	15
Do you ever travel with children in a buggy?	Yes, most journeys	3	1	5	8	1	1	4	0	3	2	0	3	1	7	6
	Yes, some journeys	7	3	12	17	13	3	7	6	7	7	3	5	11	7	6
	No	90	95	84	75	86	96	90	94	90	90	97	92	88	87	88
<i>Base</i>		280	151	128	11	71	155	200	62	238	41	37	73	93	61	16
How easy is it to get on the bus with the buggy?	Very easy	3	*	5	*	0	*	5	*	4	*	*	*	0	*	*
	Fairly easy	55	*	59	*	60	*	57	*	56	*	*	*	50	*	*
	Neither	24	*	23	*	30	*	29	*	20	*	*	*	33	*	*
	Fairly difficult	10	*	5	*	10	*	5	*	12	*	*	*	8	*	*
	Very difficult	7	*	9	*	0	*	5	*	8	*	*	*	8	*	*

<i>Base</i>		29	7	22	2	10	7	21	5	25	4	1	6	12	8	2
Have you ever not been able to get on the bus because of lack of space for the buggy?	Yes, often	23	*	27	*	9	*	23	*	24	*	*	*	0	*	*
	Yes, occasionally	57	*	59	*	82	*	55	*	56	*	*	*	73	*	*
	No	20	*	14	*	9	*	23	*	20	*	*	*	27	*	*
<i>Base</i>		30	8	22	2	11	7	22	4	25	5	2	6	11	9	2
Which of the following statements most applies for the bus journey you most regularly make?	The buses are overcrowded	10	10	10	17	10	9	9	11	10	10	3	11	11	9	13
	The buses are well used	74	73	75	67	72	75	76	70	73	79	86	67	76	77	60
	The buses are under used	15	15	15	17	18	14	14	16	16	10	11	19	12	14	20
	The buses are empty	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	4	1	0	0	3	0	0	7
<i>Base</i>		268	143	124	11	68	149	194	56	228	39	36	72	89	56	15
Do you ever use a saver bus ticket?	Yes, often	10	8	12	33	14	5	9	13	11	5	14	13	4	10	19
	Yes, sometimes	10	10	11	9	13	7	9	16	11	5	5	13	14	6	6
	No	80	82	77	55	73	88	82	71	78	90	81	74	82	84	75
<i>Base</i>		279	150	128	11	71	153	198	63	236	42	37	70	93	63	16
If yes, what types?	Telford Day Saver	81	84	79	*	68	94	94	59	80	*	*	84	76	*	*
	Telford Weekly Saver	17	12	21	*	21	13	12	29	18	*	*	11	12	*	*
	Telford 4 Weekly Saver	7	0	14	*	5	0	6	12	8	*	*	0	6	*	*
	Telford 10 Trip Saver	11	4	17	*	16	6	6	24	12	*	*	11	6	*	*

	Midlands Day Saver	22	20	24	*	32	6	21	24	20	*	*	16	35	*	*
	Midlands Weekly Saver	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	0	0	*	*
	Midlands 4 Weekly Saver	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	0	0	*	*
	Midlands 10 Trip Saver	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	0	0	*	*
<i>Base</i>		54	25	29	5	19	16	34	17	50	4	5	19	17	9	4
What mostly determines the type of saver ticket you buy?	Cost of travelling	65	75	56	*	65	63	71	47	66	*	*	68	80	*	*
	Your travel pattern	33	21	44	*	35	38	29	47	32	*	*	32	13	*	*
	Ease of buying the pass	2	4	0	*	0	0	0	7	2	*	*	0	7	*	*
<i>Base</i>		49	24	25	4	17	16	31	15	47	2	4	19	15	7	4
Do you have a disability which makes bus travel difficult, or care responsibilities for someone with a disability or mobility issue?	Yes	19	17	22	0	23	20	14	35	19	20	11	21	21	23	0
	No	81	83	78	100	77	80	86	65	81	80	89	79	79	77	##
<i>Base</i>		272	144	127	11	69	149	192	63	231	40	35	71	89	61	16
What improvements, if any, could be made to make	Low steps	37	28	49	38	38	36	34	46	36	44	26	23	39	56	38
	A bus stop nearer to where you live	10	11	10	13	10	10	8	19	9	15	13	9	8	10	23

bus travel easier?	More help from the driver to get on/off the bus	18	15	21	13	20	16	14	31	18	18	6	29	14	21	15
	Seats near the door dedicated for use by people with a disability	32	29	36	50	37	29	28	48	31	38	23	25	34	48	15
	None	42	49	33	25	47	41	47	25	43	35	58	48	39	31	31
<i>Base</i>		227	123	103	7	60	125	160	52	192	34	31	56	79	48	13
To what extent do you agree or disagree that bus services within Telford & Wrekin meet your travel requirements?	Strongly agree	10	12	8	0	10	11	11	8	10	7	8	10	10	11	13
	Agree	50	51	48	42	49	50	49	53	48	61	54	46	52	53	27
	Neither	20	15	25	50	20	17	20	13	20	17	16	15	26	17	20
	Disagree	13	16	11	8	17	13	15	13	14	10	14	22	6	11	27
	Strongly disagree	5	5	5	0	4	5	4	9	5	2	8	6	3	6	0
	Don't know	2	2	3	0	0	3	2	5	3	2	0	1	3	2	13
<i>Base</i>		282	152	129	11	71	157	199	64	240	41	37	72	94	64	15
To what extent do you agree or disagree that local bus fares offer value for money for the service delivered?	Strongly agree	5	6	4	0	4	6	5	5	5	8	6	3	6	5	14
	Agree	24	27	19	27	28	22	24	18	22	31	37	22	19	23	36
	Neither	29	30	28	27	22	31	31	26	31	18	31	20	37	26	21
	Disagree	16	11	23	27	26	10	16	18	17	15	11	14	21	13	21
	Strongly disagree	8	8	8	18	7	8	7	13	9	3	0	16	4	11	0
	Don't know	18	18	18	0	13	23	17	20	16	26	14	25	12	21	7
<i>Base</i>		268	148	119	11	69	145	190	61	228	39	35	69	89	61	14

Non bus users - have you ever used the bus service for local travel?	Yes	53	53	55	80	61	43	55	46	53	56	47	49	55	58	60
	No	47	48	45	20	39	57	45	54	47	44	53	51	45	42	40
<i>Base - Non users</i>		<i>367</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>166</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>262</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>312</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>15</i>
Why did you stop using the bus service?	Journey time too slow	57	56	57	53	68	49	59	49	54	68	68	46	57	61	50
	Too expensive	28	25	31	32	29	25	26	28	27	29	24	20	25	35	40
	Required route not available	28	25	31	47	31	26	30	21	25	43	40	26	24	30	20
	Lack of direct services	31	34	27	53	31	31	31	23	26	57	36	34	24	35	20
	Proximity of bus stop	8	7	9	11	9	5	7	12	6	14	8	6	10	7	10
	Alternative transport more convenient	57	56	59	68	54	60	60	49	55	68	68	56	59	57	30
	Concerns about personal safety	18	19	17	37	18	14	15	21	20	11	20	16	19	17	30
	Service not available at the required time	30	35	24	32	35	30	33	26	27	46	44	30	22	33	30
	Lack of comfort of travel	18	17	18	21	20	15	17	21	18	18	16	16	17	20	10
	Not accessible with a disability	11	12	11	0	9	16	8	26	13	4	0	14	13	13	10
Unpleasant	11	9	14	11	9	7	12	12	12	7	4	10	16	11	10	

	experience															
Base - Non users		203	109	94	17	65	81	142	43	172	28	25	50	63	54	10
Why do you currently not use buses?	Journey time too slow	60	61	59	57	68	54	64	46	59	69	65	56	62	58	60
	Too expensive	28	25	31	33	29	26	28	24	26	34	19	23	21	39	40
	Required route not available	33	34	33	57	35	32	37	20	30	52	46	37	26	37	10
	Lack of direct services	29	32	27	43	35	26	29	22	27	45	46	29	26	28	20
	Proximity of bus stop	8	8	9	14	6	5	7	12	8	10	8	6	13	5	10
	Alternative transport more convenient	59	62	55	67	50	62	61	56	59	55	58	63	67	54	20
	Concerns about personal safety	18	17	19	29	18	15	15	22	18	17	15	13	15	19	50
	Service not available at the required time	29	30	28	29	35	26	31	29	28	34	38	27	25	32	30
	Lack of comfort of travel	15	16	15	14	19	15	15	15	15	17	15	13	11	21	10
	Not accessible with a disability	9	9	9	0	4	15	6	22	10	3	0	12	10	9	10
Unpleasant experience	5	4	6	0	7	4	5	5	5	3	4	4	7	4	10	
Base - Non users		207	113	94	18	68	82	150	41	176	29	26	52	61	57	10
What would encourage you	Cheaper prices	32	29	34	50	33	26	33	26	31	35	31	28	29	38	35

to use the bus service?	More reliable service	23	18	28	54	22	17	20	30	21	33	17	19	25	28	24
	Availability of direct service to required destination	48	47	50	63	53	51	48	46	47	59	63	53	41	46	41
	Proximity of bus stop	16	18	14	25	19	16	14	23	16	18	23	18	13	15	24
	Quicker journey times	34	30	39	50	34	29	34	35	32	47	33	36	34	32	35
	Cleaner buses	18	18	17	29	13	18	18	16	19	10	4	22	20	17	18
	Less crowded buses	16	13	20	42	15	10	16	14	16	20	6	16	21	18	6
	More comfortable buses	16	14	17	21	21	13	16	17	16	18	10	15	14	22	18
	Services available at the required time	38	35	41	63	37	36	37	40	35	53	42	42	35	39	18
	More accessible for people with a disability	15	13	17	8	13	17	12	27	16	8	10	22	15	14	0
	None of the above	20	25	14	8	21	21	20	21	21	14	13	20	24	17	29
<i>Base - Non users</i>	364	197	166	24	106	174	257	81	310	51	48	102	103	93	17	
If all your requirements were met by the bus service, would you...?	Try to use the bus service	46	44	48	48	52	44	45	51	44	62	60	40	40	49	56
	Continue to use car or other methods of transport	35	37	33	26	31	34	37	33	36	23	31	37	41	29	31

	Don't know	19
<i>Base - Non users</i>		388

20	19	22	17	22
210	177	25	113	192

19	16
271	88

20	15
330	53

9	23	19	22	13
55	113	105	98	16