

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 20 January 2021

Councillor Caro Wild,
Cabinet Member, Strategic Planning & Transport,
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Neuadd y Sir
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Dear Cllr Wild,

PRAP: 20 January 2021 - Bus Emergency Scheme Phase 2 (BES 2)

Thank you for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee for consideration of the Bus Emergency Scheme Phase 2 (BES 2) as an urgent item. Would you also please pass Members' thanks to the officers in attendance, Jason Dixon, Operational Manager, and John Gibson Principal Engineer.

The Committee notes that since the start of the pandemic Welsh Government (WG), Transport for Wales (TfW), bus operators and Local Authorities have been working in partnership to ensure that transport is available on key routes. We note also that you consider BES 2 to be a good opportunity to implement improvements in a partnership model of transport planning and therefore are proposing that Cabinet give the Lead Local Authority for the City region on this matter (Monmouthshire County Council) approval to sign the BES 2 agreement on behalf of Cardiff Council. Members reflected on this position and wish to pass on the following observations and concerns to inform Cabinet's consideration of the matter tomorrow.

We understand that the BES 2 emergency funding agreement formalises the WG offer of financial support to bus operators until July 2022, incentivising them to cover all routes rather than commercially profitable routes only. The Committee is concerned at the implications for Cardiff Bus routes if the Council signs up to the BES 2, given that there will be guidance from Welsh Government that could mean changes to existing routes and, potentially, to more profitable ones.

Members consider there is a risk that the conditions attached to the proposal to incentivise operators to engage in planned changes in line with Welsh Government's

longer-term ambitions for reform could be unattractive to some smaller bus operators.

Members are keen to establish the role that TfW will play longer term, and whether they are likely to control all modes of transport in Cardiff including bus services. We acknowledge the benefit of linked ticketing and the opportunity for more circular routes around the City. We note also that the BES 2 intention is that Local Authorities retain all powers to provide supplementary services where there is a gap in provision. We acknowledge the potential benefit of TfW acting in a co-ordinating role, helping Local Authorities to better understand transport planning. However, it may be the case that not all bus operators, who had no choice in the loss making restrictions which were imposed, will accept the constraints, including profit capping, which signing up to BES 2 would entail.

Members feel strongly that the Council's ambitious environmental priorities necessitate that it retains control over the type and quality of its bus fleet. It is imperative that the Council retains autonomy on this matter to ensure it can deliver and support its environmental and cost saving priorities.

Finally, we are keen to establish the Council's progress in recovering the monies loaned to Cardiff Bus during the pandemic and **request** that you pass on our enquiry to the relevant Cabinet Member and Corporate Director for a response.

Once again thank you for your commitment to the scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Walker', written in a cursive style.

COUNCILLOR DAVID WALKER
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet Observers, Leaders of opposition groups
Andrew Gregory, Director of Planning, Transportation & Environment
Jason Dixon, Operational Manager, Transport, Development & Network
Management
John Gibson Principal Engineer, Public Transport
Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Office Manager
Lili Thompson, Cabinet Support Officer
Andrea Redman, Committee Support Officer