

Date: 09 August 2022



Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport

North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

Sent via email

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Dear Secretary of State,

North Somerset communities will suffer if bus routes are cut as emergency funding ends

Following Government plans to stop the emergency funding for bus companies in September First Bus has responded by announcing the withdrawal of a swathe of buses across North Somerset including the X5, X2 and 126. These cuts will be devastating for communities leaving many residents **stranded with no access to public transport.**

Both the X5 and 126 are vital routes that run through the ward I represent and it's deeply concerning to hear that from October these routes will be withdrawn. Many residents rely on these routes to get to work, school, college or medical appointments and if these are withdrawn it could cause job losses, cost families more to get children to school/collage or mean people can't access their GP. Residents are being hit by the cost of living and now to hear the news that their only bus routes are being withdrawn is a kick in the teeth.

Government has promised to level up funding but I am seeing our communities levelled down and the Government's decision to stop the emergency funding for buses is the catalyst for the crisis about to engulf North Somerset. The sustainability of buses in North Somerset is perilous but you're able to stop this before it's too late.

To stop the crisis in North Somerset I urge you and your department to urgently act and:

- **Continue the financial support to bus companies** until passenger numbers are closer to pre-pandemic levels
- **Provide greater funding and powers to local authorities** to be able to replace like-for-like routes where private companies withdraw

North Somerset residents and bus companies cannot wait until the conclusion of a Conservative leadership election - we need urgent action now. I urge you please act as residents in my community will be left stranded.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Cllr. Ciaran Cronnelly
North Somerset Councillor for Winterstoke Ward