



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1338
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00843/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

10 May 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your correspondence of 25 April regarding a petition the Committee has received from Andrew Jenkins on future bus funding.

Thanks to UK Government's economic mismanagement we're facing unprecedented financial pressures and difficult choices on funding allocations.

As you will be aware, the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) has kept vital bus services running throughout the pandemic. The scheme had been due to end in March 2023, but following extensive discussions, we announced in February that it would be extended for an initial transitional period of three months to the end of June 2023.

Following further conversations BES has been extended for a further three-week period to the end of this academic year, 24th July 2023 ([Written Statement: Bus Emergency Scheme and Franchising Expert Panel \(31 March 2023\) | GOV.WALES](#)). This will mean that school transport will continue as normal. It will also provide further stability for the industry while we work on the transition away from emergency style funding to plan bus networks which better suit the new travel patterns we have seen since the end of the pandemic.

Regional Planning Teams have been set up to assess the likely impact on our bus networks when BES funding ceases on 24 July. We are presently working closely with these teams to plan and prioritise the services that will best serve our communities within the funding available beyond this point.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We've seen permanent changes in travel patterns, whereby passenger numbers simply haven't recovered. We've recognised that emergency support for the industry has been crucial, but clearly the network will need to change in future.

Working collaboratively with key partners is critical as we now consider transitional options away from bus emergency funding within the budgets available. My officials and I continue to meet regularly with the industry and local authorities.

Alongside this work we are also in discussion with the bus industry and their trade organisations in developing a 'back to bus' marketing campaign that will promote the merits of bus travel.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change