Dr James Davies MP

Conservatives

Vale of Clwyd

02/04/2024

By e-mail: james.davies.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Dr James,

Thank you for your email regarding service the 51 service that operates between Rhyl and Denbigh.

Arriva Cymru have implemented new timetables across all our North Wales depots in response to the 20 mph speed limit change in September 2023. We have been open on this issue from the first week that this scheme was implemented, and we have been in contact with CPT, local authorities and Members of the Senedd to raise our concerns.

Across Wales we have undertaken punctuality reviews on all services, and this has led to us registering changes for 90% of our services. The impact on each service is different and so is the consequence to the network. In some case’s minor changes have been required but in others major changes have been required - this is particularly the case on longer interurban services where they go through so many 20 mph zones.

The changes have been a mixture of withdrawing parts of services, reduction in frequency and increased resource being injected in the services. These are not service changes that we want to make nor would we have made if 20 mph had not come in, there has been increased cost from additional buses and drivers and reductions in patronage experienced by poor service delivery and now patronage for areas’s where services has been reduced.

In terms of the 51 service we withdrew the service from the Tweed Mill to save some time on the route to help the service operate its route within the existing resource. This was a difficult decision – a part from this and where the bus enters the hospital grounds at Glan Clwyd this service is relatively direct already and any other changes would have had a significant patronage implication. In addition to this we have made changes to the X51 service which operates beyond Denbigh to Ruthin and Wrexham. Although a different route the services are linked so the performance of one impacts the other.

Until recently it has been difficult the impact of the change due to roadworks within Rhyl taking place until recently on Vale road which has impacted all services we operate in the region. In the last few weeks these roadworks have ended and we can see that now the service is operating more punctually and reliably – this means that for the majority of customers who use the service they now have a better service that they can rely on. In looking at the patronage at the stops on the main road we are carrying similar numbers of customers on this section of the route as before the change.

For next steps, now we are starting to gain more robust data (given the roadworks) we will undertake a further punctuality review and discuss this change with trade union collagues to get our drivers view given your feedback. We will analyse thousands of punctuality data points over the last month and identify if any time can be redistributed within the timetable i.e. is there any locations the buses have excess time and can this be used to return some journeys to the area.

At the same time we are working with Carolyn Thomas MS on the 20 mph task force and attended a meeting with representatives from councils across North Wales, TfW and the Welsh government 20mph taskforce. We presented the issue and have agreed to work together to try and review specific roads that have impacted services. Any changes to the future network will tie in with tender changes taking place at the beginning of July.

Yours sincerely



**Adam Marshall**

**Head of Commercial Arriva Cymru**