Improving bus services serving Kirkby Stephen and the Eden Valley

A report by Adrian Waite (Councillor for Kirkby Stephen & Tebay) and Iain Aldred (Campaigner for Public Transport).

August 2025



Summary

Improved bus services in rural areas are vital for residents and local businesses as they support tourism and reduce traffic congestion / usage. Many communities are growing with additional housing that brings with it more cars. People living in rural areas who are non-car owners / users become increasingly isolated without a regular and attractive bus service.

Kirkby Stephen and the Eden Valley is no exception and for many years minimal bus services have operated, though from March 2023 onwards some positive steps have been made to improve this situation.

We are aware that Westmorland & Furness Council wishes to improve public transport in Kirkby Stephen and the Upper Eden and hope that this report will be accepted as a constructive contribution to the discussion about how this should be done. We understand that Westmorland & Furness Council is reviewing its approach to public transport as part of setting its budgets for 2026/27. This report represents our personal views. Our biographical details are included in Appendix A.

Background

Following the withdrawal of public subsidies in 2014, bus services in Cumbria soon became substantially reduced, with many routes ceasing to operate and others seeing a significant reduction in frequency. At the end of 2016, Grand Prix Coaches took the difficult decision to stop operating their 563 Penrith to Kirkby Stephen service. The operator had run the service for eighteen years, but following the funding axe in 2014, and after two years of trying to run the service commercially, they could not turn a profit on this busy route.

January 2023 the following services operated:

- **Stagecoach 563**: Operated three off-peak return services (Penrith Appleby) Monday to Friday.
- **Cumbria Classic Coaches**: Offered two services—Monday 571 from Brough to Kendal via Tebay, and Wednesday 572 from Kirkby Stephen to Barnard Castle.
- **Western Dales Community Bus**: Provided services from Kirkby Stephen to Penrith (Tuesday/Thursday) and to Kendal via Tebay (Friday).
- Saturday Services: None available across the Eden Valley.

March 2023 - additional:

• **Kirkby Stephen Town Council (KSTC)** funded a trial Saturday 563 service between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith via Appleby, with four return journeys, this trial proved successful and remains in operation. This was a bold and entrepreneurial move by the Town Council, initiated by former Town Councillor Mike Walker who took the lead on public transport issues in Kirkby Stephen at that time.

March 2024 - improvements:

• **BSIP funding (Westmorland & Furness Council)**: The 563 service was extended to operate between Penrith, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen, Sedbergh, and Kendal, providing weekday off-peak connectivity to major centres.

March 2025 – improvements:

- **BSIP-funded revisions**: Peak-time journeys introduced on the 563 service between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith. However, the section of route between Kirkby Stephen and Kendal via Sedbergh was removed.
- Western Dales Community Bus: Adjusted services to fill the gap by operating between Kirkby Stephen and Kendal via Sedbergh on Tuesdays and Thursdays, discontinuing trips to Penrith on those days to avoid duplication with the 563 service.

Western Dales Community Bus operate under section 22 of the Transport Act 1985. A limitation of the Western Dales Community Bus is sixteen seats with no standees. The service is dependent on a limited and diminishing resource of volunteer drivers. Therefore, it is unsuitable for regular (daily) trunk journeys.

July 2025 - announcement:

Cumbria Classic Coaches (CCC) announced that they would cease operating from the end of September 2025. Therefore, there is a urgent need to replace these services so communities are not left isolated without a bus service for any period. We understand that local residents are organising a petition to ask the Town Council, Westmorland & Furness Council and Tim Farron MP to ensure that these bus services are replaced. We also understand that Westmorland & Furness Council is already seeking quotes from commercial operators for the continuation of this service. the Cumbria Classic Coaches 572 service to Barnard Castle was really an 'out and back' coach trip which permitted ENCTS. It might be difficult to demonstrate social need but there is perhaps a case for a strategic connection across the A66 with an accessible bus

This announcement strengthens the need to:

- Improve the 564 service from Kirkby Stephen to Kendal, due to the planned cancellation of the Monday bus via Tebay and Grayrigg.
- Secure a replacement for the Wednesday 572 service from Kirkby Stephen to Barnard Castle.

The CCC 106 service from Penrith to Kendal via Shap and Tebay that doesn't serve Kirkby Stephen also needs to be replaced. (See separate section on this service at the end of this paper).

Proposed improvements

There are several key improvements that could be made to bus services serving Kirkby Stephen and the Eden Valley, connecting these to both Kendal and Penrith. We recommend that Westmorland & Furness Council consider funding these. They are as follows:

- Kirkby Stephen to Penrith Enhance Monday to Friday service from four to six buses by extending the two Appleby to Penrith short workings to start from / continue to Kirkby Stephen.
- Kirkby Stephen to Penrith Introduce a Sunday service following the success of the Saturday service. This could be all year or seasonal from Easter to end of October.
- Kirkby Stephen to Kendal via Sedbergh five / six days a week, with a peak and off-peak service Monday to Friday.
- Dedicated minibus link from Kirkby Stephen West Station to Kirkby Stephen town to connect with most trains on the Settle-Carlisle line to from Leeds / Carlisle Monday to Saturday.

These proposals are detailed in Appendix B.

563 Kirkby Stephen – Penrith via Brough and Appleby

- Monday to Friday Increase the current service to Kirkby Stephen from four to six services per day, this could be achieved by extending the 11.05 and 16.10 Penrith Appleby journeys to / from Kirkby Stephen. This would remove the current situation of lengthy gaps between departures, where buses depart from Penrith at 05.35 / 08.25 / 13.05 / 17.40 from Penrith to Kirkby Stephen and 07.10 / 09.40 / 14.35 / 19.30 from Kirkby Stephen to Penrith.
- Saturdays The current Saturday service is well used, suggest this timetable remains as now, though further improvements could be made to enhance the current timetable. £8,512 of funding was secured for the trial Saturday service, this funding was £5,000 from KSTC with the rest contributions from Penrith Town Council, Appleby Town Council, Kirkby Thore Parish, Brough Parish Council and Friends of the Settle-Carlisle line. The funding was for two years from March 2023, however in February 2025 the funding was no longer required and £2,987 was left for use in possible future schemes. The success of the Saturday service strengthens the case for buses to operate on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Sundays Following the success of the Saturday service, introduce an all year or summer Sunday service which would also operate on Bank Holidays. Real opportunity particularly Easter to end of October at least to support tourism / local businesses and make the Eden Valley accessible seven days a week by bus the Sunday Dales Bus network is successful, so could be a Sunday 563 bus with correct marketing. Many events in Kirkby Stephen are over a weekend, for example: the Easter Rally, various events at the Stainmore Railway and the Westmorland Dales Festival. Many walkers start / finish the Coast-to-Coast path at Kirkby Stephen.

Even running through to Sedbergh and Kendal would be a good opportunity on a Sunday for walkers / day trippers coming into Kirkby Stephen and the Eden Valley from Penrith and Kendal and visiting Sedbergh.

564 Kirkby Stephen - Kendal via Sedbergh

 Monday to Friday introduce a 'peak' and 'off-peak" service – where possible connecting at Kirkby Stephen Costa / Pennine Hotel with the 563 bus to / from Penrith or operate as a through service. This would also improve the bus service between Sedbergh and Kendal. Saturday service could be introduced.

Connecting Kirkby Stephen with Kirkby Stephen railway station

Kirkby Stephen town is located 1.65 miles from Kirkby Stephen railway station on the Settle-Carlisle line. A footpath links the station with the town.

The irregular frequency of trains makes it difficult to link buses to / from Penrith on the 563 service without buses waiting 30 – 40 minutes to meet trains to / from Leeds / Carlisle.

A dedicated minibus shuttle between the station and the town that connects with most trains could be the solution – more of an opportunity for these to wait for any delayed trains than buses that are heading to Penrith. During times where no trains are due, the minibus could link outlying villages such as Soulby / Crosby Garrett / Nateby / Great Musgrave / Ravenstonedale with Kirkby Stephen town.

We welcome the fact that Westmorland & Furness Council are currently commissioning a study on connections to / from Kirkby Stephen Railway Station and the Town Centre. We recommend that this study is commissioned and completed as a matter of urgency. We look forward to the publication of this report.

The relatively short distance between the town and the station might suggest a taxi bus would be the lowest cost option. However, there is a shortage of taxi operators at key times as the market is distorted by council home to school contracts.

We recommend that the railway station be developed as part of the rural transport network, becoming the transport hub for the Westmorland Dales with:

- Improved rail services: optimised timetable and stopping in the Eden Valley.
- Community occupancy of Kirkby Stephen station and better use of facilities.
- Incorporating the Settle & Carlisle railway as part of any rural transport strategy with an optimised timetable and stopping.

Improving bus stops

Stops should be marked with a pole / flag or clear road markings and information at bus stops. The 563 route is currently poor for this currently. In Kirkby Stephen alone, the Croglin Castle Apartments stop has just a very small timetable case on a road sign that could easily be missed, no bus stop flag or road markings. Between there and the Pennine Hotel / Costa there are no bus stops, a considerable distance. Kirkby Stephen - cemetery and Winton - Gap Lane End, has no bus stop pole / flag or road markings. Kirkby Thore village - has three bus stops, none have bus stop poles / flags or road markings - only the stop on the A66 towards Penrith has a bus shelter with a timetable in it and towards Appleby, only road markings.

Extending the 563 service to the station was a major step forward and better serves the linear nature of Kirkby Stephen. Unfortunately, bus stops were not installed or replaced at the same time, and stopping is therefore ad hoc.

Most bus stops in Appleby have poles / flags / road markings, so people know where to stand and wait for the bus – the same needs be done in Kirkby Stephen, Kirkby Thore and other locations on route.

Timetable information provided at bus stops confuses some people due to the current layout and showing return times but from certain places only. Where space is available it would be more appropriate to display the full timetable. For example, this could be done in the bus shelters in Kirkby Stephen Town Centre.

Kirkby Stephen Town Council has recently refurbished the bus shelters in the town centre.

Improving bus stops is a function of Westmorland & Furness Council and should include installing raised kerbs (for example at Winton) and bus shelters. We understand that funding is available under the government's capital allocations.

We recommend improvements to bus stops.

Marketing

To date very little marketing has taken place to promote existing services. Timetable leaflets have been produced, and the timetables also appear in the excellent Dales Area Bus and Train times guide. KSTC should be congratulated for producing and distributing an excellent guide to transport to / from Kirkby Stephen which is distributed to all households within the town.

Going forward a targeted leaflet drop to households along the 563 route should be actioned to raise awareness of the service. Included in this along with the timetable should be places you can visit using the bus.

Events in Kirkby Stephen such as the Westmorland Dales Festival, Easter Rally etc are good opportunities to promote visiting the events by bus (currently only on a Saturday) particularly from Penrith and Appleby.

A public transport user group for the Eden Valley would be a useful voice for promoting and improving services in the future.

We recommend improved marketing of bus services.

Competition

We note that there is very little competition in the bus market in Cumbria. One provider dominates the market with other providers being relatively small. It may be desirable for the Council to be proactive in stimulating competition, for example, by encouraging new local companies to be formed, encouraging operators from outside the county to offer services, or providing services themselves.

One way of encouraging competition would be to encourage a new operator into the area with a worthwhile bundle of services. We are aware that the Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line suggested a while ago that a triangle of services covering the 564 563 and 106 could be worked and serviced from the southwest (for example, Lancaster). Vehicles could be out stationed and rotated around a mini network. As a single route it would probably not be attractive.

We recommend that the Council consider ways of encouraging competition.

Funding

Westmorland & Furness Council (WFC) received BSIP funding from the Government as follows:

- 2024 / 2025 £1,289,000
- 2025 / 2026 £1,275,848

Funding allocations per route by WFC for 2025 / 2026 seem to favour urban areas more than rural areas. The table below shows the figures that were quoted in the report to Cabinet on 16th July 2024. Using Barrow town service 4 as an example, this service was allocated £178,000 to enhance daytime, evening and Sunday service whereas the 563 service was allocated £45,000 to improve frequency and extend to Kirkby Stephen railway station. The 646 service in Penrith was allocated £61,000 to improve the town service, which has led to one extra service in the morning Monday to Saturday and one extra service Monday to Friday (school days only) in the afternoon. Keswick to Penrith X5 got £160,000 and the 564 between Sedbergh and Kendal just £25,000. Greystoke to Penrith 105 got allocated £76,000 to restore a service with 6 / 7 buses per day. £100,000 was provided to improve services to the Barrow shipyard. The Barrow to Kendal and Penrith to Carlisle routes connect major centres that already appear to be well served by public transport. The table below shows the services to which we refer in this paragraph.

Service No.	Route	Request	£
4	Holbeck Park to Hindpool	Improve frequency of Daytime; Evening and Sunday Service	£178,000
563	Penrith to Kirkby Stephen	Improve frequency with possible extension to Kirkby Stephen and Appleby rail stations	£45,000
564	Sedbergh to Kendal	Improved service in conjunction with Western Dales	£25,000
646	Penrith Town Service	Improve peak service	£61,000
X5	Keswick to Penrith	Maintain improved Monday to Saturday frequency and evening service. Also improve Sunday frequency in Winter	£160,000
105	Greystoke to Penrith	Offer new Daily service. With possible extension to Settle-Carlisle line at Langwathby	£76,000
1-6	Barrow Shipyard Extension	To explore the extension of routes within Barrow from the Town Hall to BAE Systems (Barrow Island) to align with BAE Systems shift change times.	£100,000
104	Penrith to Carlisle	Maintain improved Monday to Saturday frequency and improve Sunday frequency	113,000
X6	Barrow to Kendal	Improve Monday to Saturday frequency and add peak service towards Barrow	175,000

We understand that the decisions made in respect of the 564 (and funding provision of £25,000) was on the assumption that Western Dales Community Buses would feature as part of the regular service. However, we consider that it is unsustainable to rely on a community operator to fulfil a trunk route. Instead, trunk routes should be provided by operators who have the capacity to provide a regular service with community bus services providing supporting services, for example connecting smaller villages to the main network.

The Council's cabinet determined this allocation of bus grants at its meeting of 16th July 2024. The report¹ described the council's process for deciding these allocations as follows:

"Each community has different needs and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Preference is more likely to be given where two or more of the following can be demonstrated:

- Needs are currently unmet.
- Social, environment and economic benefits i.e. access to employment, access to services, access to health, access to learning.
- Operator has identified an area for growth in their service which cannot currently be covered commercially but has potential to be.
- Short term investment has the potential to make a commercial service financially sustainable in the medium to long term.
- Match funding is available or there is an ability to attract other funding sources.

"Other areas of consideration include:

- Population served.
- Social, economic and environmental factors.
- Patronage trends.
- Likely costs (peak buses costs are higher / clockface frequency are more attractive / revenue per mile/hour better in built up areas). The normal criteria are cost per passenger journey (so gross costs less on-bus revenue less English National Concessionary Travel Scheme reimbursements divided by number of passengers carried). However, passengers carried will not be known and costs will be uncertain (identical services in different areas may have totally different costs due to supply of operators or lack of drivers vehicles).
- Distance to destination (e.g. revenue per hour).
- Opportunities for integration with rail, active travel (cycling and walking infrastructure) and all types of sustainable transport by providing good connections between them."

In our view this report and methodology lacks transparency in that:

- It is not clear how the different criteria are weighted to arrive at the recommended allocations.
- The sources of the data used are not specified.
- The matrix that we assume was created to evaluate the options is not included in the report.

We also consider that some of the criteria that have been selected are likely to work against the Council's stated strategic objective of providing bus services in areas (mainly rural areas) that are currently badly served by public transport. This may explain the apparently perverse outcomes of the exercise to which we refer above.

Our commentary on the criteria follows:

- Needs are currently unmet This suggests the Council has come to a view about the level
 of public transport that is needed in each area and has used this to identify areas where
 needs are currently unmet. However, the report contains neither a definition of public
 transport needs nor a schedule showing those communities whose needs are met and
 those whose needs are not.
- Social, environment and economic benefits i.e. access to employment, access to services, access to health, access to learning It appears to us that this is the Council's core objective, but it is not clear what weighting has been given to it in determining the allocation of funding. We would also expect the Council to address this issue by identifying those communities whose access to employment, services, health and learning fall below the level that the Council would regard as acceptable. However, this information is absent from the report.

¹ The schedule in the Cabinet report is appended to this report.

- Operator has identified an area for growth in their service which cannot currently be covered commercially but has potential to be – This implies that the distribution of bus subsidies has been driven in part by the business plans of commercial operators rather that the needs of communities.
- Short term investment has the potential to make a commercial service financially sustainable in the medium to long term We consider this to be an important consideration. We outline above how the Kirkby Stephen Town Council funded a new Saturday service between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith that has now become commercially viable; and consider that other opportunities may exist elsewhere. However, we have not been able to identify any schemes that the Council agreed to fund that meet this criteria, so we assume that the weighting given to it was low.
- Match funding is available or there is an ability to attract other funding sources We
 consider that this is a valid consideration, but it does not appear that the Council has
 awarded any bus funding to services that have other funding sources.
- Population served We consider this to be a perverse criteria because it will skew funding towards urban areas thus undermining the original intention of the policy that was to provide public transport in areas where it is currently inadequate, most of these being rural areas.
- Social, economic and environmental factors It is not clear what this means.
- Patronage trends We assume this relates to the number of passengers and whether they
 are increasing or declining. This information should be available on existing routes but is
 not clear how it could be calculated on potential routes. It is possible that this factor favours
 existing routes over new proposals.
- Likely costs A relevant factor, but it is not clear what the weighting is between financial and non-financial factors.
- Distance to destination (e.g. revenue per hour) This criteria would appear to favour shorter routes and would therefore lead to funds being allocated to short suburban routes rather than to longer rural routes. We therefore consider that this may be a perverse factor in that it will skew funding towards urban areas thus undermining the original intention of the policy that was to provide public transport in areas where it is currently inadequate, most of these being rural areas.
- Opportunities for integration with rail, active travel (cycling and walking infrastructure) and all types of sustainable transport by providing good connections between them – Creating an integrated transport system is obviously desirable, but it is not clear whether this criteria would favour routes that are close to existing routes and therefore routes in urban areas that are already well served with public transport rather than rural areas that are not.

We consider it is a major omission that the Council has failed to include the impact on the visitor economy given the importance of this to the area. Bus services in rural areas are not just there to enable people who live in rural areas to access shops in larger towns (as the Council appears to believe) but to allow people from urban areas to access rural areas to enjoy the countryside and to boost the rural tourism economy. The Council states that economic development is one of its priorities and this should be reflected in its approach to public transport. We consider that this should be a major factor in the allocation of bus subsidies in future.

The Enhanced Partnership only works if there is an existing operator. As it is, any new proposals are predicated on those areas and services already served by the existing main operator (Stagecoach). This appears to leave the council subject to the commercial decisions of the operator. That operator will naturally behave in a commercial manner and focus on the better service propositions. Thus, the eastern flank of Westmorland & Furness (east of the M6) misses out.

We are therefore concerned that the Council may have selected criteria for determining which bus routes are subsidised that may be perverse in that they result in a disproportionate amount of resources being used to support bus services in relatively urban areas that are already relatively well served by public transport at the expense of relatively rural areas that are relatively badly served by public transport. The result appears to be an outcome that is at odds with the Council's original intention.

The Cabinet report also includes comments from elected members advocating support for bus services in their wards. It is not clear whether or how these comments were included as criteria for determining the bus subsidies or the weighting that was attached to them.

We also understand that the figures quoted in the cabinet report were budget figures and that the contracted amounts and actual expenditure may differ from the budget figures. We are not aware of the contracted or actual amounts having been reported to a council committee or made public. This part of the process appears to us to lack transparency.

We appreciate that the Council's budgets for bus subsidies are dependent on government funding that is not guaranteed in the long-term. However, we consider that it would be advantageous if funding could be agreed for a three-to-five-year period, thus enabling the services to get established.

Our recommendations are that:

- Prior to agreeing the next round of funding for bus services the Council reviews the
 methodology used to ensure that it is robust and is likely to deliver the Council's stated
 objective of supporting bus services in communities that are currently poorly served by
 public transport, principally in rural areas.
- This review should be carried out in consultation with local members, town and parish councils, public transport user groups and other interested parties.
- The contribution that bus services can make to economic development, especially the contribution that it can make to the visitor economy in rural areas should be a significant factor in future allocations of bus subsidies.
- Future reports to Cabinet should be transparent, stating clearly the methodology for selecting the bus routes that it is proposed to subsidise, the source of the data that is used, and the matrix that is used for scoring the options that have been considered. This would enable the Cabinet to take more informed decisions and for members of the public to understand the process and to see the logic behind the decisions.

Town and Parish Councils

We have noted above how the initiative by Kirkby Stephen Town Council has resulted in the Saturday service between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith becoming a permanent service. We consider that there may be scope for other Town and Parish Councils to start similar services. We recommend that Westmorland & Furness Council should encourage Town and Parish Councils to consider funding new bus services and to facilitate the process.

Westmorland & Furness Council internal audit report on bus subsidies.

The Council's internal audit service has prepared a report on bus subsidies. It is summarised in the audit committee agenda (a publicly available document) as follows:

- A policy defining criteria for subsidised buses was approved by the Highways and Transport Strategic Board, in line with other Council policies and priorities, and national legislation prior to Phase 1.
- Public consultation and engagement took place from mid-March to the end of April 2024 to inform the Council's decision around how BSIP+ funding was allocated.
- Efforts were made to demonstrate, as far as possible, that proposed routes could not be met by the commercial market.

- High priority recommendations were made in the following areas:
 - Metrics for assessing the success of subsidies have not yet been agreed and there is limited performance data which restricts the ability to monitor the impact and benefits of the subsidy and provide a sound basis to inform decision making. Decisions on Phase 3 were made without feedback from Phases 1 and 2 being obtained and considered.
- Medium priority recommendations were made in the following areas:
 - For Phase 2 routes, the Council did not clearly demonstrate which of the selection criteria were met by each route
 - The Budget Spreadsheet should show all relevant allocated costs and the remaining funding available
 - It is not clear how indicative costs were obtained for proposed routes put out to tender.
- The expectation, agreed at the time the report was finalised in May 2025, was that high priority recommendation and all three medium priority recommendations would be implemented by the end of August 2025.

We welcome the fact that the Council's internal audit has addressed these issues and the expectation that they will be addressed by the end of August 2025.

Conclusion

There is clearly a need for improvements to be made to public transport including bus services in Kirkby Stephen and the Upper Eden, along with other areas of Westmorland & Furness.

In this report we identify improvements that could be made and make recommendations about the processes that are followed for deciding which bus routes should be supported financially.

We are aware that the Council wishes to improve public transport in Kirkby Stephen and the Upper Eden and hope that this report will be accepted as a constructive contribution to the discussion about how this should be done.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are summarised as follows:

Proposed Improvements to Services:

- Kirkby Stephen to Penrith enhance Monday to Friday service from four to six buses by extending the two Appleby to Penrith short workings to start from / continue to Kirkby Stephen.
- Kirkby Stephen to Penrith introduce a Sunday service following the success of the Saturday service. This could be all year or seasonal from Easter to end of October.
- Kirkby Stephen to Kendal via Sedbergh five / six days a week, with a peak and off-peak service Monday to Friday.
- Dedicated minibus link from Kirkby Stephen West Station to Kirkby Stephen town to connect with most trains on the Settle-Carlisle line to from Leeds / Carlisle Monday to Saturday.

Connecting Kirkby Stephen with Kirkby Stephen Railway Station:

- Westmorland & Furness Council are currently commissioning a study on connections to / from Kirkby Stephen Railway Station and the Town Centre. We recommend that this study is commissioned and completed as a matter of urgency.
- We recommend that the railway station be developed as part of the rural transport network, becoming the transport hub for the Westmorland Dales.

Improving Bus Stops

We recommend improvements to bus stops.

Marketing

We recommend improved marketing of bus services.

Competition

We recommend that the Council consider ways of encouraging competition.

Funding

- Prior to agreeing the next round of funding for bus services the Council reviews the
 methodology used to ensure that it is robust and is likely to deliver the Council's stated
 objective of supporting bus services in communities that are currently poorly served by
 public transport, principally in rural areas.
- This review should be carried out in consultation with local members, town and parish councils, public transport user groups and other interested parties.
- The contribution that bus services can make to economic development, especially the contribution that it can make to the visitor economy in rural areas should be a significant factor in future allocations of bus subsidies.
- Future reports to Cabinet should be transparent, stating clearly the methodology for selecting the bus routes that it is proposed to subsidise, the source of the data that is used, and the matrix that is used for scoring the options that have been considered. This would enable the Cabinet to take more informed decisions and for members of the public to understand the process and to see the logic behind the decisions.

Town and Parish Councils

 We recommend that Westmorland & Furness Council should encourage Town and Parish Councils to consider funding new bus services and to facilitate the process.

Adrian Waite & Iain Aldred August 2025

Appendix A - Biographical Details of the Authors

lain Aldred

lain worked in the transport industry (rail) for 31 years, 26 years of which was spent working in a commercial department. In that time, he has covered Stakeholder Management, Revenue Protection and Revenue Development roles and have been involved in service development, particularly on the Cumbrian Coastline, working with the Department for Transport and Community Rail Cumbria.

He has supported the 563 Saturday bus service from Penrith to Kirkby Stephen since its introduction in April 2023 and now since the Monday to Friday improvements during the week from March 2024 and again March 2025. He has encouraged others to use this bus and organised several group walks to support the service and in turn benefit local businesses.

He is passionate about improving rural bus services in the Eden Valley both for the local community and to support tourism and local businesses.

Adrian Waite

Adrian is an accountant who worked for seventeen years in local government including as a Finance Director and Strategic Director. Following this he worked for 27 years as Managing Director of AWICS Limited, a management consultancy and training business that principally supports local authorities and housing associations with financial management and value for money. He is also a former Housing Association Chair.

He was elected to Kirkby Stephen Town Council in 2023 where he has held the portfolio for public transport; and was elected to Westmorland & Furness Council to represent the Kirkby Stephen and Tebay ward in 2024. He is an advocate for improved public transport in Kirkby Stephen, Tebay and surrounding areas.

Appendix B – Proposed Timetables

563 Monday to Friday timetable option 1

- No longer serving Kirkby Stephen railway station this covered by service 564 and possibly a minibus shuttle service.
- Morning journeys departing Penrith before 0900 to serve Penrith bus station as previously
 was the case and the 0835 bus from Penrith once again to serve Temple Sowerby.
- One bus required to provide this service.

	M-F	M-F	M - F	M-F	M - F	M-F
Penrith Railway Station		0835	1105	1320	1610	1740
Penrith Bus Station	-	0840	1110	1325	1615	1745
Penrith Bus Station - stand 2	0620	0841	1111	1328	1617	1747
Penrith Hospital	0623	0844	1114	1331	1620	1750
Temple Sowerby	-	0855	1125	1342	1631	1801
Kirkby Thore - A66	0635	0859	1129	1346	1635	1806
Kirkby Thore - Sanderson Croft	-	-	-	1349	1638	1809
Appleby - Sands Church	0644	0908	1138	1400	1649	1820
Appleby - Royal Oak	0645	0909	1141	1401	1652	1821
Warcop - shelter	-	0920	-	1412	-	1832
Brough - Clock	0659	0928	-	1420	-	1840
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0709	0938	-	1430	-	1850
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry						
Close	0712	0941	-	1433	-	1853
	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry						
Close	0715	0944	-	1436	-	1856
Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	0720	0949	-	1441	-	1901
Brough - Clock	0733	1002	-	1454	-	1914
Warcop - shelter	0742	1011	-	1503	-	-
Appleby - Royal Oak	0751	1019	1142	1511	1653	1926
Appleby - Sands Church	0752	1021	1143	1513	1654	1928
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	0804	1033	1155	1525	1706	-
Kirkby Thore - A66	-	-	-	-	-	1937
Temple Sowerby	0811	1040	1202	1532	1713	1942
Penrith Sainsburys	0824	1053	1215	1545	1726	1955
Penrith Railway Station	0830	1059	1221	1551	1732	2001
Code						
M – F: Monday to Friday						

- No longer serving Kirkby Stephen railway station this covered by service 564 and possibly a minibus shuttle service.
- Morning journeys departing Penrith before 0900 to serve Penrith bus station as previously was the case and the 0835 bus from Penrith once again to serve Temple Sowerby.
- 1610 Penrith Appleby / 1653 Appleby Penrith bus extended to / from Kirkby Stephen

One bus required to provide this service except for the 1740 / 1856 bus from Penrith / Kirkby Stephen requiring a separate vehicle.

	M - F	M – F	M - F	M - F	M - F	M - F
Penrith Railway Station		0835	1105	1320	1610	1740
Penrith Bus Station	ı	0840	1110	1325	1615	1745
Penrith Bus Station - stand 2	0620	0841	1111	1328	1618	1747
Penrith Hospital	0623	0844	1114	1331	1621	1750
Temple Sowerby	-	0855	1125	1342	1634	1801
Kirkby Thore - A66	0635	0859	1129	1346	1636	1806
Kirkby Thore - Sanderson Croft	-	-	-	1349	1639	1809
Appleby - Sands Church	0644	0908	1138	1400	1650	1820
Appleby - Royal Oak	0645	0909	1141	1401	1651	1821
Warcop - shelter	-	0920	-	1412	1702	1832
Brough - Clock	0659	0928	-	1420	1710	1840
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0709	0938	-	1430	1720	1850
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry	0740	0044		4 400	4700	4050
Close	0712	0941	-	1433	1723	1853
	N4 F	N4 F	N4 F	N4 F	NA E	NA E
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry	M - F	M – F	M-F	M - F	M-F	M-F
Close	0715	0944	_	1436	1726	1856
Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	0720	0949	-	1441	1731	1901
Brough - Clock	0733	1002	-	1454	1744	1914
Warcop - shelter	0742	1011	-	1503	1753	-
Appleby - Royal Oak	0751	1019	1142	1511	1801	1926
Appleby - Sands Church	0752	1021	1143	1513	1803	1928
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	0804	1033	1155	1525	-	-
Kirkby Thore - A66	ı	-	-	-	1812	1937
Temple Sowerby	0811	1040	1202	1532	1817	1942
Penrith Sainsburys	0824	1053	1215	1545	1830	1955
Penrith Railway Station	0830	1059	1221	1551	1836	2001
Code						
M – F: Monday to Friday						
IVI — I . IVIONUAY IO I NUAY		<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>		

This option provides the most attractive timetable offering six round trips from Penrith to Kirkby Stephen throughout the day, removing the considerable gaps in the timetable currently between Appleby and Kirkby Stephen.

- No longer serving Kirkby Stephen railway station this covered by service 564 and possibly a minibus shuttle service.
- Morning journeys departing Penrith before 0900 to serve Penrith bus station as previously
 was the case and the 0835 bus from Penrith once again to serve Temple Sowerby.

One bus required to provide the first three and last round trip, a separate bus required to provide the fourth and fifth round trip. These could be linked to other services.

Days	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
Penrith Railway Station	-	0835	1105	1320	1610	1740
Penrith Bus Station	-	0840	1110	1325	1615	1745
Penrith Bus Station - stand 2	0620	0841	1112	1328	1618	1747
Penrith Hospital	0623	0844	1115	1331	1621	1750
Temple Sowerby	-	0855	1126	1342	1634	1801
Kirkby Thore - A66	0635	0859	1130	1346	1636	1806
Kirkby Thore - Sanderson Croft	-	-	-	1349	1639	1809
Appleby - Sands Church	0644	0908	1139	1400	1650	1820
Appleby - Royal Oak	0645	0909	1140	1401	1651	1821
Warcop - shelter	-	0920	1151	1412	1702	1832
Brough - Clock	0659	0928	1159	1420	1710	1840
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0709	0938	1209	1430	1720	1850
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry	0740	00.44	1010	4 400	4=00	40.50
Close	0712	0941	1212	1433	1723	1853
Days	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry						
Close	0715	0944	1215	1436	1726	1856
Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	0720	0949	1220	1441	1731	1901
Brough - Clock	0733	1002	1233	1454	1744	1914
Warcop - shelter	0742	1011	1242	1503	1753	-
Appleby - Royal Oak	0751	1019	1250	1511	1801	1926
Appleby - Sands Church	0752	1021	1252	1513	1803	1928
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	0804	1033	1304	1525	-	-
Kirkby Thore - A66	-	-	-	-	1812	1937
Temple Sowerby	0811	1040	1311	1532	1817	1942
Penrith Sainsburys	0824	1053	1324	1545	1830	1955
Penrith Railway Station	0830	1059	1330	1551	1836	2001
Days						
M – F: Monday to Friday						

This option to be used in conjunction with 563 Monday to Friday timetable option 1.

- Restores Monday to Friday service to / from Kendal via Sedbergh.
- Improves service between Sedbergh and Kendal.
- Serves both Kirkby Stephen and Oxenholme Lake District railway stations.
- One bus required to operate this service.

Service	564	564	564	564	564	564
	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
Kendal - Bus Station	0600	0830	1105	1325	1610	1730
Oxenholme - Railway Station	0612	0842	1117	1337	1622	1742
Motorway Bridge	0623	0853	1128	1348	1633	1753
Sedbergh - opposite Library	0635	0905	1141	1400	1646	1805
Sedbergh - Maryfell	0637	0907	-	1402	-	1807
Cautley - Cross Keys	0645	0915	-	1410	-	1815
Fat Lamb Inn	0654	0924	-	1419	-	1824
Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	0706	0936	_	1431	-	1836
563 Bus to Penrith departs	0720	0949	-	1441	-	1901
Service	564	564	564	564	564	564
	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
563 Bus from Penrith arrives	0709	0938	-	1430	-	1850
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0714	0943	-	1441	-	1855
Fat Lamb Inn	0727	0956	-	1454	-	1908
Cautley - Cross Keys	0737	1006	-	1504	-	1918
Sedbergh - Maryfell	0747	1016	-	1514	-	1928
Sedbergh - Library	0749	1018	1142	1516	1647	1930
Motorway Bridge	0802	1031	1155	1529	1700	1943
Oxenholme - Railway Station	0813	1042	1206	1540	1711	1954
Kendal - Bus Station	0825	1054	1218	1552	1723	2006
Code						
M – F: Monday to Friday						

This option to be used in conjunction with 563 Monday to Friday timetable option 2 or 3.

- Restores Monday to Friday service to / from Kendal via Sedbergh
- Improves service between Sedbergh and Kendal
- Serves both Kirkby Stephen and Oxenholme Lake District railway stations.
- One bus required to operate this service.

Service	564	564	564	564	564
	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
Kendal - Bus Station	0600	0830	1105	1325	1610
Oxenholme - Railway Station	0612	0842	1117	1337	1622
Motorway Bridge	0623	0853	1128	1348	1633
Sedbergh - opposite Library	0635	0905	1141	1400	1645
Sedbergh - Maryfell	0637	0907	-	1402	1647
Cautley - Cross Keys	0645	0915	-	1410	1653
Fat Lamb Inn	0654	0924	-	1419	1702
Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	0706	0936	-	1431	1714
563 Bus to Penrith departs	0720	0949	-	1441	1731
Service	564	564	564	564	564
	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F	M – F
				1430	4700
563 Bus from Penrith arrives	0709	0938	-	1430	1720
563 Bus from Penrith arrives	0709	0938	-	1430	1720
563 Bus from Penrith arrives Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0709 0714	0938 0943	-	1441	1730
			-		
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	0714	0943	- - -	1441	1730
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn	0714 0727	0943 0956	-	1441 1454	1730 1743
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys	0714 0727 0737	0943 0956 1006	-	1441 1454 1504	1730 1743 1753
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys Sedbergh - Maryfell	0714 0727 0737 0747	0943 0956 1006 1016	- -	1441 1454 1504 1514	1730 1743 1753 1803
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys Sedbergh - Maryfell Sedbergh - Library	0714 0727 0737 0747 0749	0943 0956 1006 1016 1018	- - - 1142	1441 1454 1504 1514 1516	1730 1743 1753 1803 1805
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys Sedbergh - Maryfell Sedbergh - Library Motorway Bridge	0714 0727 0737 0747 0749 0802	0943 0956 1006 1016 1018 1031	- - - 1142 1155	1441 1454 1504 1514 1516 1529	1730 1743 1753 1803 1805 1818
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys Sedbergh - Maryfell Sedbergh - Library Motorway Bridge Oxenholme - Railway Station	0714 0727 0737 0747 0749 0802 0813	0943 0956 1006 1016 1018 1031 1042	- - - 1142 1155 1206	1441 1454 1504 1514 1516 1529 1540	1730 1743 1753 1803 1805 1818 1829
Kirkby Stephen - Costa Fat Lamb Inn Cautley - Cross Keys Sedbergh - Maryfell Sedbergh - Library Motorway Bridge Oxenholme - Railway Station	0714 0727 0737 0747 0749 0802 0813	0943 0956 1006 1016 1018 1031 1042	- - - 1142 1155 1206	1441 1454 1504 1514 1516 1529 1540	1730 1743 1753 1803 1805 1818 1829

The Sedbergh Bus User Group have developed their own proposed timetable that is very similar to the above. However, it is predicated on the needs of Sedbergh and does not prioritise a connection with the 563. One of those priorities is to get workers to Sedbergh for 08.00.

563 Sunday and Bank Holiday timetable option 1

- Two return trips to Kirkby Stephen and one short working to Appleby.
- Doesn't serve Kirkby Stephen railway station.

Service	563	563	563	Service	563	563	563
	SUN	SUN	SUN		SUN	SUN	SUN
Penrith Railway Station	0940	1215	1510	Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry Close	1050	-	1625
Penrith Bus Station - arr	0945	1220	1515	Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	1055	-	1630
Penrith Bus Station - dep	0947	1222	1517	Brough - Clock	1108	-	1643
Penrith - Health Centre	0950	1225	1520	Warcop - Bus Shelter	1117	-	1652
Temple Sowerby - Post Office	1001	1236	1531	Appleby - Royal Oak	1125	1253	1700
Kirkby Thore - A66	1005	1240	1535	Appleby - The Sands Church	1127	1255	1702
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	-	-	1538	Kirkby Thore - Sandersons's Croft	1139	1307	1714
Appleby - The Sands Church	1014	1249	1549	Kirkby Thore - A66	-	-	-
Appleby - Royal Oak	1015	1251	1550	Temple Sowerby - Post Office	1146	1314	1721
Warcop - Bus Shelter	1026	-	1601	Penrith Sainsbury's	1158	1326	1733
Brough - Clock	1034	-	1609	Penrith Railway Station	1204	1332	1739
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	1044	-	1619				
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry Close	1047	-	1622				

563 Sunday and Bank Holiday timetable option 2

- Two return trips to Kirkby Stephen and one short working to Appleby.
- Train times apply on Sundays only.

Service	563	563	563	Service	563	563	563
	SUN	SUN	SUN		SUN	SUN	SUN
Penrith Railway Station	0940	1245	1527	Train from Leeds to Carlisle arr	1105	-	1612
Penrith Bus Station - arr	0945	1250	1532	Train from Carlisle to Leeds arr	-	-	1658
Penrith Bus Station - dep	0947	1252	1534	Kirkby Stephen - Railway Station	1120	-	1713
Penrith - Health Centre	0950	1255	1537	Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	1127	-	1720
Temple Sowerby - Post Office	1001	1306	1549	Brough - Clock	1140	-	1733
Kirkby Thore - A66	1005	1310	1553	Warcop - Bus Shelter	1149	-	1742
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	-	-	1556	Appleby - Royal Oak	1157	1323	1750
Appleby - The Sands Church	1014	1319	1607	Appleby - The Sands Church	1159	1325	1752
Appleby - Royal Oak	1015	1321	1608	Kirkby Thore - Sandersons's Croft	1211	1337	1804
Warcop - Bus Shelter	1026	-	1619	Kirkby Thore - A66	-	-	-
Brough - Clock	1034	-	1627	Temple Sowerby - Post Office	1218	1344	1811
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	1044	-	1637	Penrith Sainsbury's	1230	1356	1823
Kirkby Stephen - Railway Station	1050	-	1643	Penrith Railway Station	1236	1402	1829
Train from Leeds to Carlisle dep	1105	-	-				
Train from Carlisle to Leeds dep	-	-	1658				

563 Sunday and Bank Holiday timetable option 3

- Three return trips to Kirkby Stephen, two of which serve Kirkby Stephen railway station.
- Train times apply on Sundays only.
- Earlier arrival into Penrith in the morning.

Service	563	563	563	Service	563	563	563
	SUN	SUN	SUN		SUN	SUN	SUN
Penrith Railway Station	0905	1135	1527	Train from Leeds to Carlisle arr	-	1256	1612
Penrith Bus Station - arr	0910	1140	1532	Train from Carlisle to Leeds arr	-	-	-
Penrith Bus Station - dep	0912	1142	1534	Kirkby Stephen - Railway Station	-	1301	1648
Penrith - Health Centre	0915	1145	1537	Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry Close	1015	-	-
Temple Sowerby - Post Office	0926	1156	1549	Kirkby Stephen - Pennine Hotel	1020	1308	1655
Kirkby Thore - A66	0930	1200	1553	Brough - Clock	1033	1321	1708
Kirkby Thore - Sandersons Croft	-	-	1556	Warcop - Bus Shelter	1042	1330	1717
Appleby - The Sands Church	0939	1209	1607	Appleby - Royal Oak	1050	1338	1725
Appleby - Royal Oak	-	-	-	Appleby - The Sands Church	1052	1340	1727
Warcop - Bus Shelter	0951	1221	1619	Kirkby Thore - Sandersons's Croft	1104	-	-
Brough - Clock	0959	1229	1627	Kirkby Thore - A66	-	1349	1736
Kirkby Stephen - Costa	1009	1239	1637	Temple Sowerby - Post Office	1111	1354	1741
Kirkby Stephen - Station Road / Quarry Close	1012	-	-	Penrith Sainsbury's	1123	1406	1753
Kirkby Stephen - Railway Station	-	1245	1643	Penrith Railway Station	1129	1412	1759
Train from Leeds to Carlisle dep	-	1256	-				
Train from Carlisle to Leeds dep	-	1319	1658				

106 Penrith to Kendal via Shap and Tebay.

Following the announcement that Cumbria Classic Coaches (CCC) will cease operating buses from the end of September 2025.

An urgent need to improve the existing WFC funded Monday to Saturday 106 service which provides two journeys each way between Penrith and Shap and extend this to Tebay and Kendal to replace the withdrawn CCC Tuesday and Friday service. This would also partly replace the 571 CCC service from Brough to Kendal via Kirkby Stephen and Tebay on a Monday.

One vehicle could provide three journeys each way Monday to Saturday which would be an improvement on the existing Tuesday and Friday service – see timetable below.

Service	106	106	106	Service	106	106	106
	M-S	M-S	M-S		M-S	M-S	M-S
Kendal - Blackhall Road	0845	1200	1510	Penrith - Bus Station depart	1020	1335	1645
Kendal - Morrisons	0850	1205	1515	Penrith - Hospital / Health Centre	1023	1338	1648
Grayrigg	0900	1215	1525	Eamont Bridge - Bee Hive	1028	1343	1653
Tebay - Mount Pleasant	0916	1231	1541	Clifton - George & Dragon	1033	1348	1658
Old Tebay - roundabout	0918	1233	1543	Lowther - Estate Office	1037	1352	1702
Orton - Square	0924	1239	1549	Hackthorpe - Lowther Castle Inn	1040	1355	1705
Shap - Market Square	0937	1252	1602	Shap - Market Square	1054	1409	1719
Hackthorpe - Lowther Castle Inn	0949	1304	1614	Orton - Square	1107	1422	1732
Lowther - Estate Office	0952	1307	1617	Old Tebay - roundabout	1111	1426	1736
Clifton - George & Dragon	0956	1311	1621	Tebay - Mount Pleasant	1113	1428	1738
Eamont Bridge - Bee Hive	1001	1316	1626	Grayrigg	1128	1443	1753
Penrith - Sainsbury's	1007	1322	1632	Kendal - Morrisons	1139	1454	1804
Penrith - Bus Station	1010	1325	1635	Kendal - Blackhall Road	1145	1500	1810

Appendix C – Schedule contained in Cabinet report 16th July 2024

Service No.	Route	Request	£
1	Biggar Bank to Hawcoat	Improve frequency of Sunday Service	£5,000
2	Town Hall to West Shore	Improve frequency of Evening and Sunday Service	£18,000
3	Newbarns to Ormsgill	Improve frequency of Sunday Service	£5,000
4	Holbeck Park to Hindpool	Improve frequency of Daytime; Evening and Sunday Service	£178,000
6	Barrow to Windermere	Maintain extra peak and improve daytime frequency	£203,000
11	Ulverston to Barrow via Coast Road	Improve service	£38,000
40	Kendal Town	Maintain Sunday service	£14,000
104	Penrith to Carlisle	Maintain improved Monday to Saturday frequency and improve Sunday frequency	£113,000
105	Greystoke to Penrith	Offer new Daily service.With possible extension to Settle-Carlisle line at Langwathby	£76,000
106	Kendal to Penrith via Shap	Improve service.With possible extension to Settle-Carlisle line at Langwathby	£92,000
505	Coniston to Ambleside	Improve peak service	£30,000
508	Windermere to Penrith	Improve frequency in Summer, including at peak times for workers	£85,000
516	Dungeon Ghyll to Ambleside	Improve peak service	£61,000
532	Cartmel to Grange	Maintain more frequent service. Potentially increase to five days per week	£31,000
552	Arnside to Kendal	Improve service	£29,000
555	Keswick to Kendal	Improved evening service	£18,000
561	Appleby to Kendal	Re-introduce Wednesday service	£5,000
563	Penrith to Kirkby Stephen	Improve frequency with possible extension to Kirby Stephen and Appleby rail stations	£45,000
564	Sedbergh to Kendal	Improved service in conjunction with Western Dales	£25,000
567	Kendal to Kirkby Lonsdale	Improve frequency	£61,000
597	Windermere Town Service	Provide service on extra day	£5,000
646	Penrith Town Service	Improve peak service	£61,000

			£1,706,000
888	Alston-Penrith	To explore a twice daily service Monday - Friday	£88,000
517	Little Langdale Shuttle	To explore a service for weekends in summer (July-August) To explore a service Monday-Friday in summer school holidays	£7,000
1 - 6	Barrow Shipyard Extension	To explore the extension of routes within Barrow from the Town Hall to BAE Systems (Barrow Island) to align with BAE Systems shift change times.	£10,000
X12	Ulverston to Coniston	Improve service	£38,000
X6	Barrow to Kendal	Improve Monday to Saturday frequency and add peak service towards Barrow	£175,000
X5	Keswick to Penrith	Maintain improved Monday to Saturday frequency and evening service. Also improve Sunday frequency in Winter	£160,000
UB1	Ullswater Service	Support local funded service	£5,000
680	Nenthead to Carlisle	Maintain improved service	£25,000