



Cyngor **Abertawe**
Swansea Council

Cabinet Office

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Lee Waters MS
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

VIA EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
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Our Ref: RS/CM
Your Ref:
Date: 7th June 2023

Dear Deputy Minister

Further to your request for our acceptance of the reduced BES settlements which Welsh Government (WG) are proposing for the current financial year I have been tasked by our region to respond on behalf of the four Leaders. I confirm that we have discussed this as a region and we have significant concerns as to the impact of the reductions. However, we recognise that we must accept the funding level determined by WG in order to protect the services in the short term.

The timescales for reviewing the impact of the funding reductions have been incredibly tight and I am sure that you can appreciate the need for us to fully consider the impacts on the communities affected in particular for other services such as school transport, community transport and health transport. Although a 'yellow list' of potential service reductions has been sent through as requested, I am not able to confirm support for the proposals as we have not had an opportunity to consult with stakeholders and democratically elected representatives. This yellow list is a provisional list and does not match proposed budget reductions and should not be regarded as something the region is recommending in any way.

I would also request that consideration is given to further marketing work both to publicise the impact of these funding decisions to help the travelling public, but also to encourage bus passengers to return to the buses following the Covid pandemic. Longer term, community transport may be a means to help address some of these concerns, and we would propose further work with WG on this matter. During the Covid period there were clear and effective messages given out to the public to avoid using public transport and there has not been a marketing campaign to try to rebuild user confidence for using public transport.

I recognise that WG have some very challenging budget pressures but I would like to reiterate the need for continued investment in public transport as it provides a vital lifeline for many communities and individuals. As such whilst leaders understand we



have no option but to accept the grant for the immediate future, it is our expectation that WG will continue to work proactively with local government across Wales to find a sustainable and acceptable solution to bus matters.

We look forward to working in partnership to work through this very challenging situation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rob Stewart', written in a cursive style.

**Y CYNGHORYDD/COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
(ON BEHALF OF SWANSEA, NEATH PORT TALBOT, CARMARTHENSHIRE
AND PEMBROKESHIRE COUNCILS)**