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# Council awards new bus contract to save local services

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From Monday 25 April Stagecoach West will be operating the new Number 50 service which will run hourly from early morning to early evening Monday to Saturday in both directions between West Wick and Hutton calling at Worle, Worlebury, Grove Park, Weston town centre, Uphill, Weston General Hospital, and Bleadon. The council is offering passengers free travel on the service for the first week of operation to encourage residents to give it a go and get back on the bus.

The new service will run from 7am to 7.45pm and cover the areas served by the 2, 4, 5 and 6 routes which are being withdrawn by First Bus on Sunday 24 April.

The number 50 route will run for an initial period of 18 months with an option to extend depending on popularity.

Cllr Don Davies, North Somerset Council's Leader and executive member for public transport said: "Providing this service will enable members of our community to continue their journeys to access work, education, the hospital and other essential services. It will also provide a good connection to rail services from Weston town centre ensuring the continuation of sustainable travel options for many people.

"Without our intervention our biggest town would have had virtually no services for cross town journeys. I would like to record my thanks to the council staff and councillors who have enabled us to arrange this new service so quickly following the withdrawal announcement last month. This swift action will mean the new service can start without any delays.

"Bus usage has not yet recovered to its pre-pandemic levels, so my message to everyone is use it or lose it. We can't commit to subsidising this service indefinitely."

Rachel Gelihamassi, Managing Director at Stagecoach West, "We are very pleased to be able to step in and keep the local community connected. It's great that customers can trial our service for free during the first week and we hope to welcome many customers on board."

The timetable and route map for the new service 50 will shortly be available at [www.travelwest.info](http://www.travelwest.info) along with all other locally-available routes.

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