

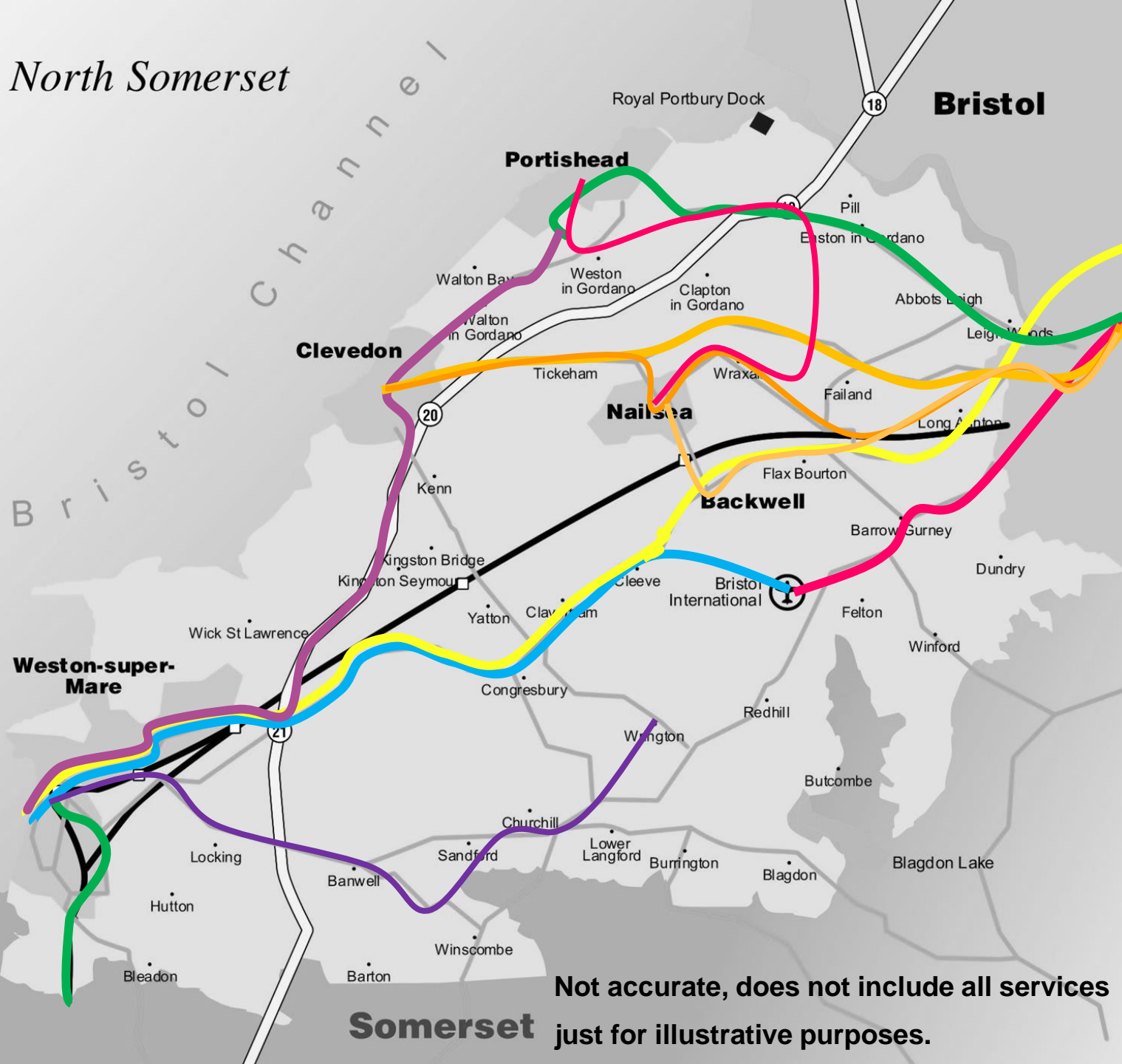
Then 29 come at once: launching demand responsive bus in North Somerset

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North Somerset



Not accurate, does not include all services just for illustrative purposes.

Demographic and Geographic context

- 1 large town
~80,000 pop.
- 3 medium towns
~15,000-25,000 pop. ea
- 48 villages
~100–6,000 pop. ea



The rural transport dilemma

- Fewer potential customers served by each bus stop.
- Buses travel longer distances, which increase fuel and maintenance costs.
- Infrequent timetables and frequent stops aimed at financial viability make bus travel less attractive, and increase the risk for customers if a bus is late or cancelled.



Why demand responsive transport?

- Buses only go where they need to, reducing journey times and distances.
- More fuel efficient buses, reduce operational costs.
- Buses respond to demand, significantly reducing the wait for buses.

With some tweaking services can become affordable whilst meeting the needs of people living in areas of low population.



WESTlink is being delivered in partnership between three main parties. The technology provider, the bus operator and local government.



VIA provides the technology that receives bookings, collects data and plans routes for drivers.



WeDRT and Via are the operator, sourcing and planning the drivers and buses, and receiving calls from the call centre.



North Somerset Council and *West of England Combined Authority* are providing strategic input to the service, and leading on the communication.



North Zone

Mon-Sat 07:00-19:00

South Zone

Mon-Sat 07:00-19:00

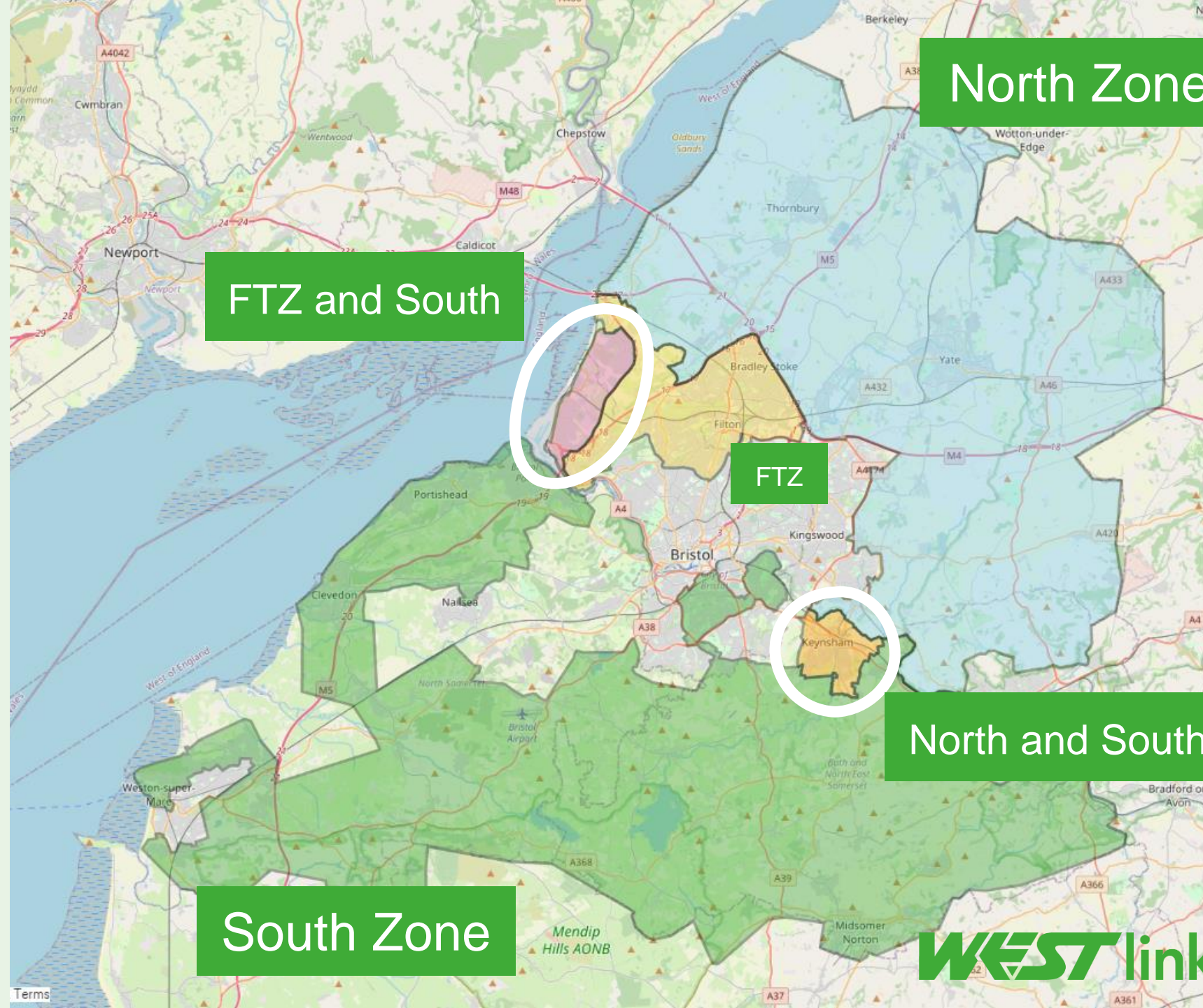
Call Centre

Mon-Sat 05:30-21:30

Sun 09:00-18:00

£2 for adults,
£1 for children*

Older persons and disabled persons concessionary passes are accepted on the service.



North Zone

FTZ and South

FTZ

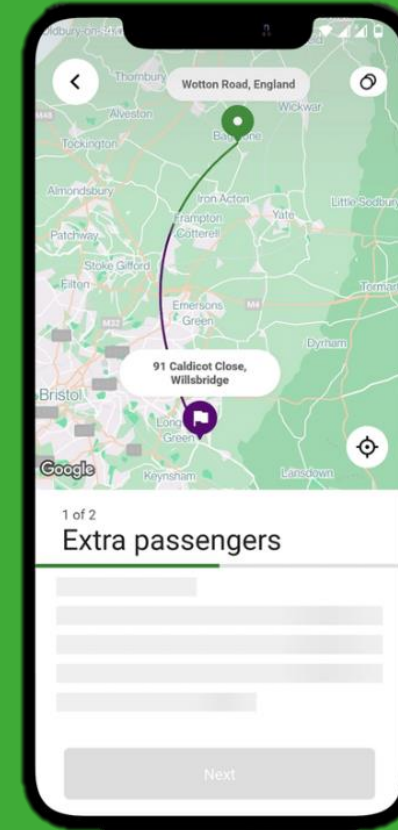
North and South

South Zone

WEST link



Use the mobile app

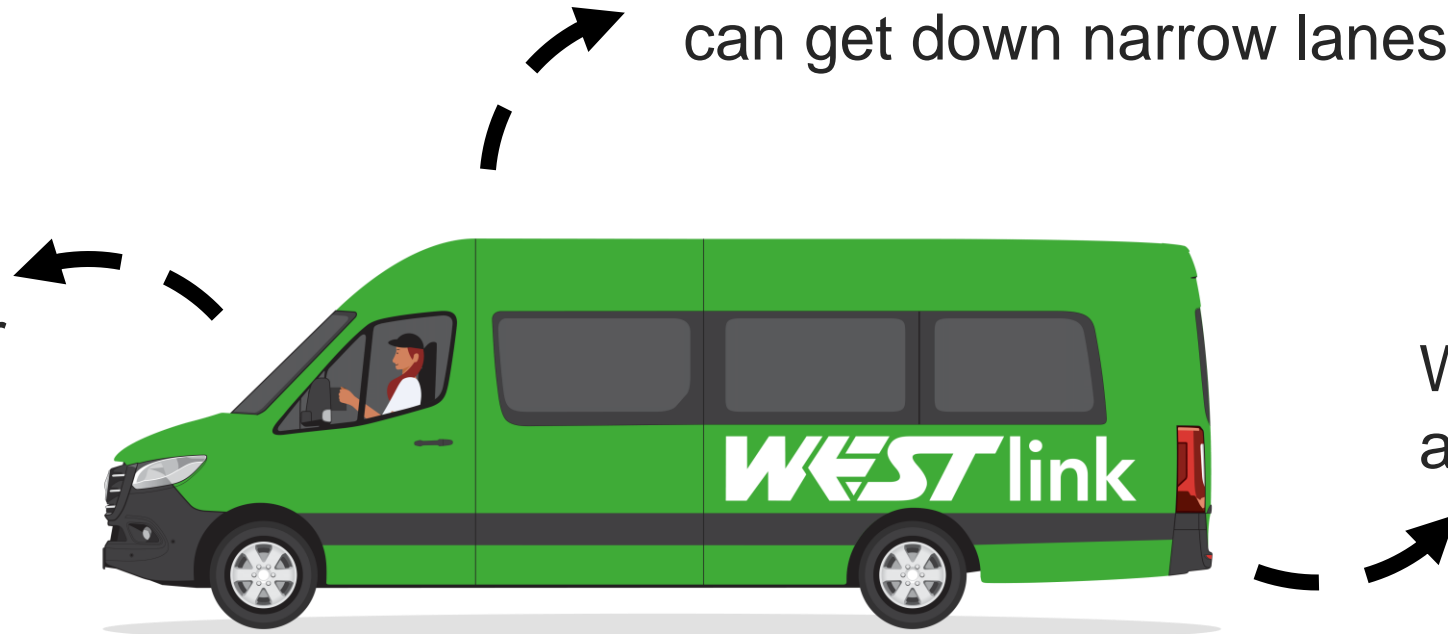


WESTlink buses are 12 seater Mercedes Sprinter buses

There are 25 in operation, which will become 29.

Small, agile and
can get down narrow lanes

Friendly driver



Wheel chair
accessible lifts



Successes

- High uptake and growth in the first four weeks
- Good service reliability, esp. for pre-booked services
- High customer satisfaction
- Enthusiastic support from the community, and community engagement

Challenges

- Confidence to travel for non-mobile users
- Transitioning bus users
- “on-demand” demand management
- Users taking journeys that are longer than we intended
- Complicated journey planning(?)



What next?

- Continuing to work with communities through town councils, voluntary sector, schools and employers
- Formalise engagement through an ambassador programme
- Tweaking service design to change user behaviour and improve service efficiency

“It picked us up on time, very easy to use and booked a bus. I was told the plate number, the model of van and name of driver. Driver is very friendly, seat comfortable. It’s such a great service plus very affordable. I’m very happy with it.”

