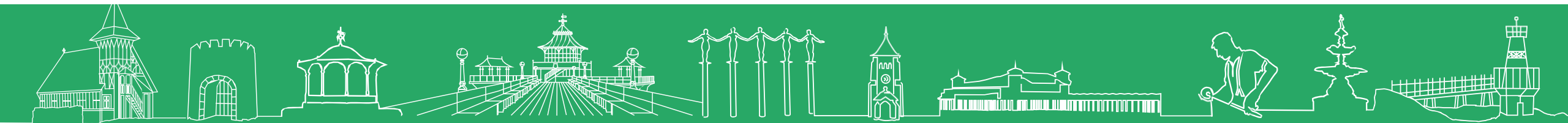


April 2026 Bus Services Update All Ward Councillor Briefing

Monday 23rd February 2026



- Context
- Bus routes in the north of the district
- Bus routes in the Weston-super-Mare area
- Bus routes in the east of the district
- WESTlink demand responsive transport
- Fares packages
- Next steps
- Questions?

- DfT new Bus Grant funding covers a three-year period 2026/27 to 2028/29.
- Significantly lower funding than we have had for the last four years during the BSIP Grant period.
- We have very minimal core council funding so the Bus Grant funding needs to cover:
 - Bus services.
 - Fares packages.
 - Demand responsive transport.
 - Staffing costs.
- Less funding = difficult choices.

- Many of our bus contracts end Mar 2026.
- Services were put out to tender in November.
- DfT announced reduced funding level in December.
- Higher tender prices for like-for-like services (due to increased operator costs, low concessionary reimbursement rate, and uncertainty around future bus network).
- Therefore, new contracts for services at like-for-like levels unaffordable due to increased costs and reduced funding.
- Action Summary – we are extending current contracts until Aug, but with some services changed, reduced or withdrawn (see later slides).

Other funding being applied:

- s106 funding (from developers).
- BSIP reserve includes ANPR (bus lane) income.

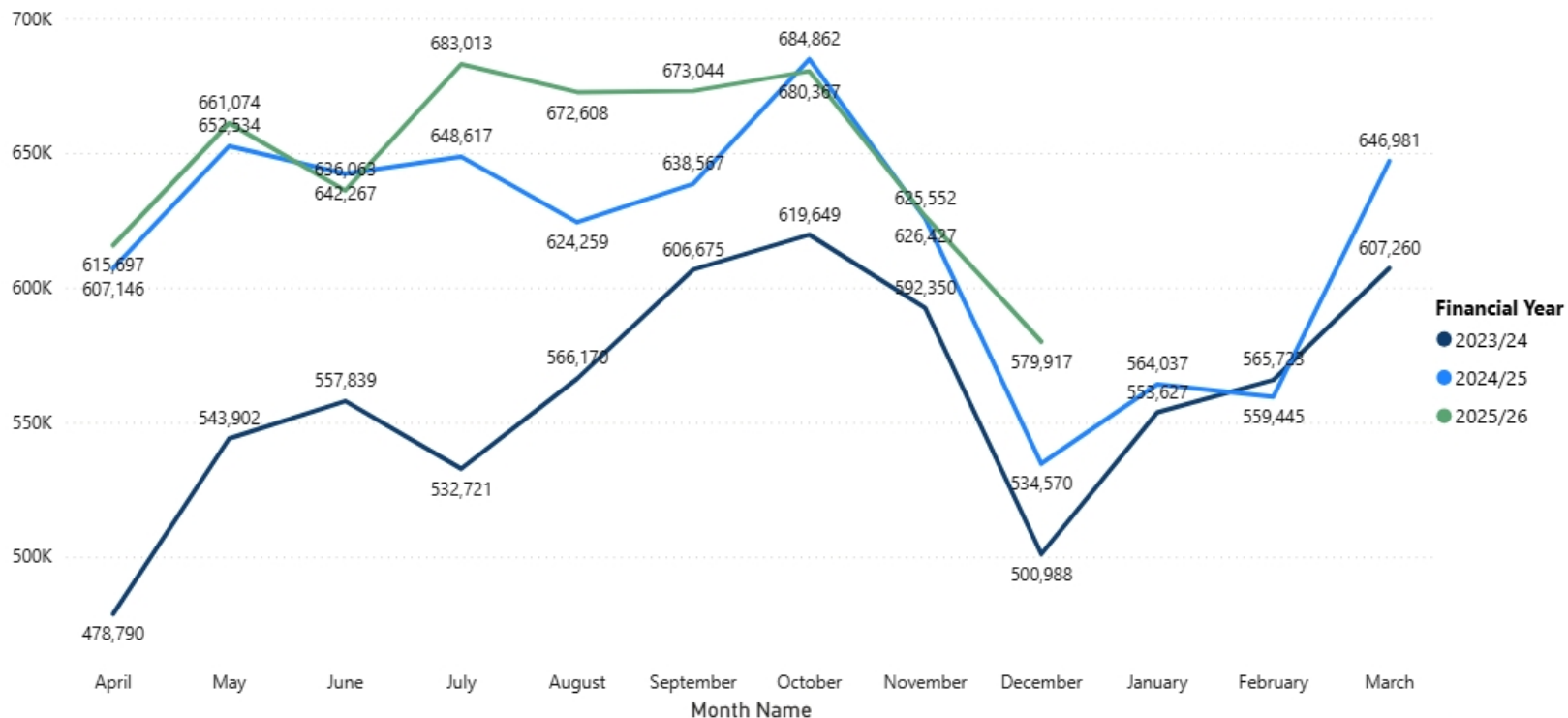
Efficiencies

- X1 returns to fully commercial footing at 20 minutes (~£800k saving).
- We are making WESTlink more targeted and efficient, by running it in-house, reducing the hours of operation and focusing on communities with no or little access to bus services (see later slides).
- Inter-operation with home to school transport (HTST) uses both budgets but generates an overall cost saving for the council.
- We are reducing our staffing.

First Bus reliability issues are being addressed – we are working with them and holding them to account.

- Bus patronage overall is increasing.
- Services such as X6 are growing and moving closer to commerciality due to our pump-prime enhancement. U2 extension to WsM also going well.

Passenger trips per month

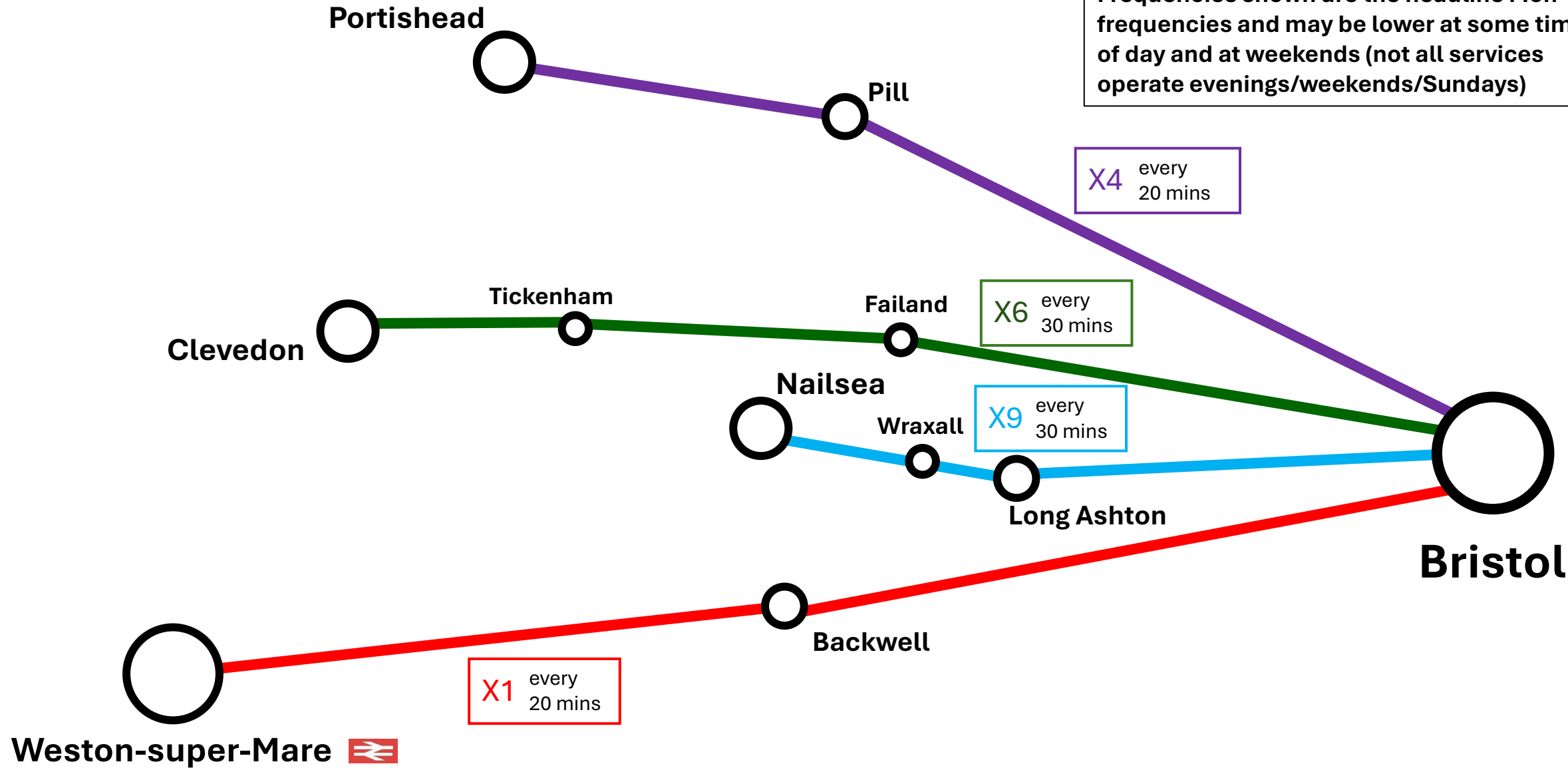


A reminder that there are different parts of the bus network that we will talk about today:

1. **Commercial services**: These are profit-making services controlled by private companies.
2. **Enhanced commercial services**: The council may provide funding to enhance a commercial service through longer hours, higher frequencies or extra days of operation. This is generally focused around growing patronage with the intention of making the improved service commercially sustainable in the long run. Could also be an enhancement for socially necessary reasons to fill a gap in the network.
3. **Supported services**: These are services that are not commercially viable but which are socially necessary and so are contracted by the council (subject to available funding). This includes both fixed-route and demand-responsive services.

North of the district – core commercial network

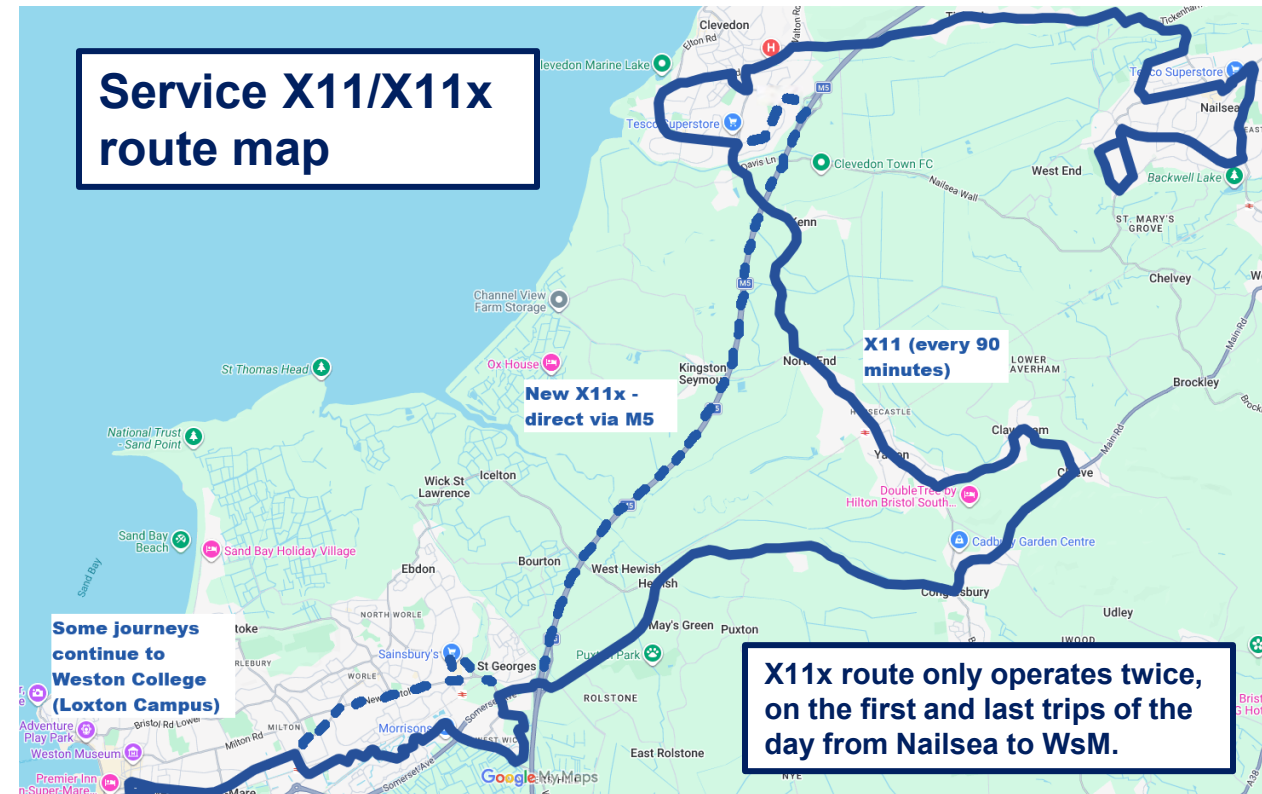
Frequencies shown are the headline Mon-Fri frequencies and may be lower at some times of day and at weekends (not all services operate evenings/weekends/Sundays)



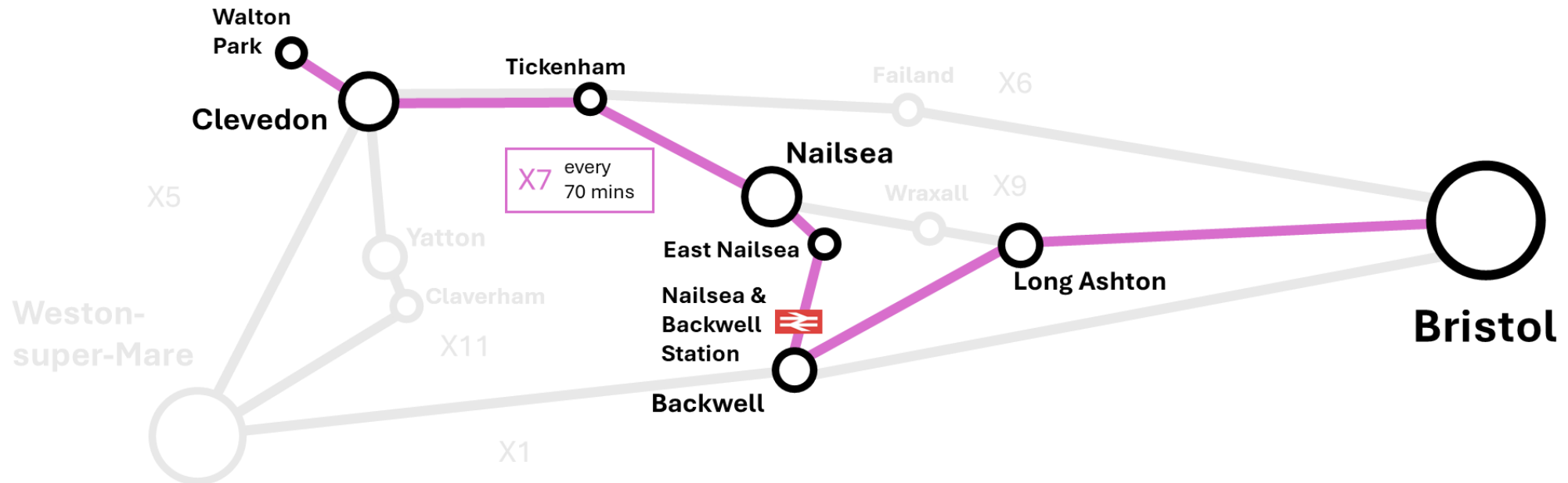
- **New service from April**
- Connects Portishead, NE Clevedon, Nailsea and Backwell with the Airport.
- Fully funded by Airport s106 contributions.
- Operates hourly 24/7.
- Reinstates direct bus link between Nailsea and Portishead (including school links).
- Local fares apply (except for travel to/from Airport).
- Ongoing review process.



- **X11** currently operates WsM – Claverham – Yatton – Clevedon, but will now be **extended to Nailsea**.
- This replaces the X18 which has been successfully trialled.
- X11 will **serve more of Clevedon**, and frequency will increase to **every 80-90 minutes**.
- In Nailsea, X11 will serve Pound Lane, Link Road, Station Road and end at Engine Lane.
- Trips on X5 & X11 in morning peak (particularly used for Weston College) will be sped up. **X5x** after Clevedon Triangle will head straight to motorway. **X11x** after Clevedon Tesco will head straight to motorway. An X11 trip will operate at similar time as now through Yatton and Claverham to WsM.
- X5 on Saturday will reduce to roughly every 2 hours, due to low usage.
- No change to X10 or X14 (night bus on Fri/Sat nights from Bristol to Portishead, Clevedon and WsM).

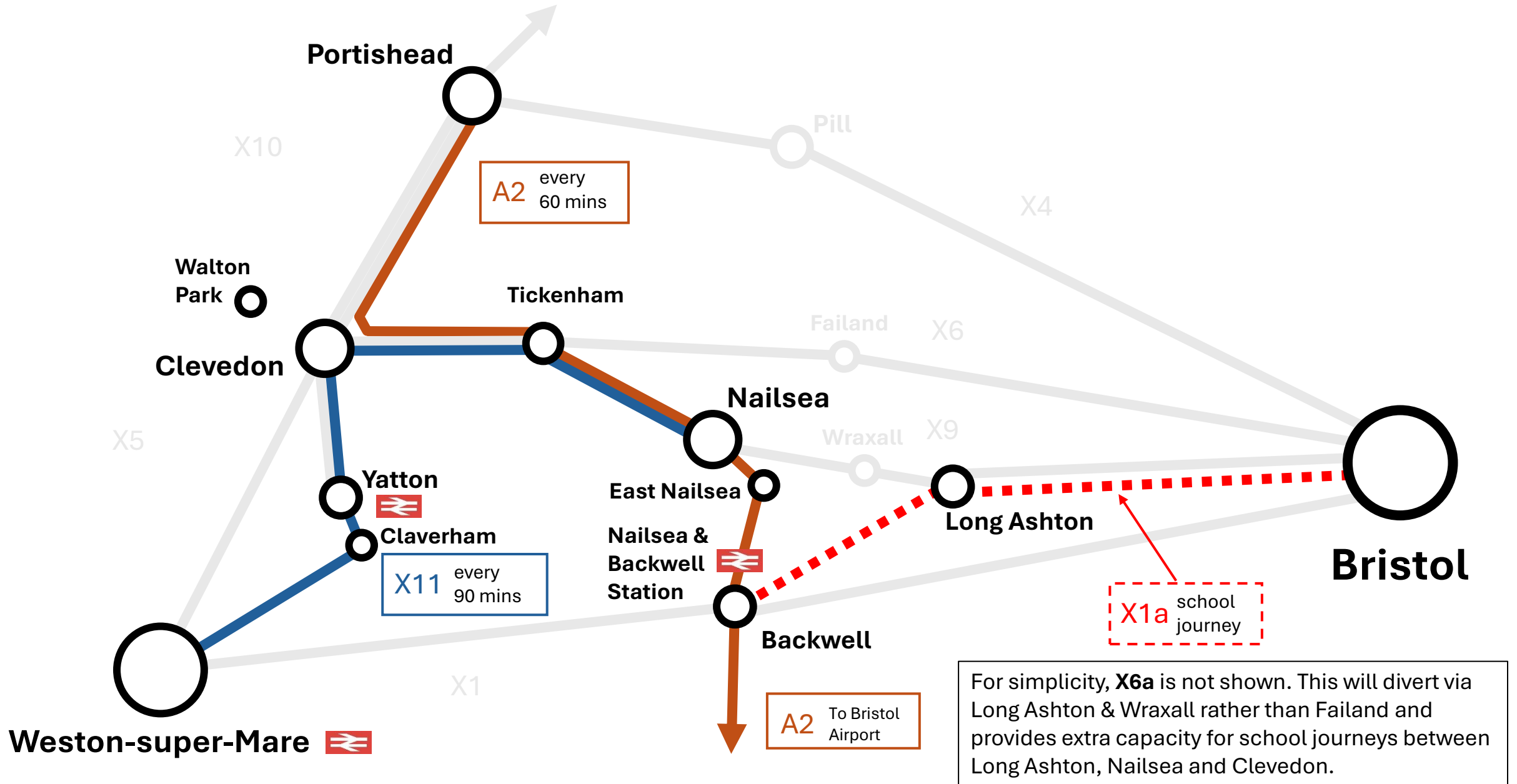


- X7 requires significant financial support to continue. Patronage dropped by a third in 2025/26, with 10,000 fewer boardings each month. In contrast, X6 patronage is growing – up by 12-18,000 boardings monthly.
- Both Clevedon and Nailsea have more frequent and direct Bristol services through the X6 and X9.
- Duplication of routing is damaging overall services’ commerciality.
- Mitigations for key community links are shown on next slide, including an extended X11 and the new A2.
- Walton Park currently has around 2 people per bus journey (approx. only 23 passengers boarding in Walton Park area each day). Cost of extending X6 is c. £200k for an additional bus – an unaffordable subsidy of £15 per trip.

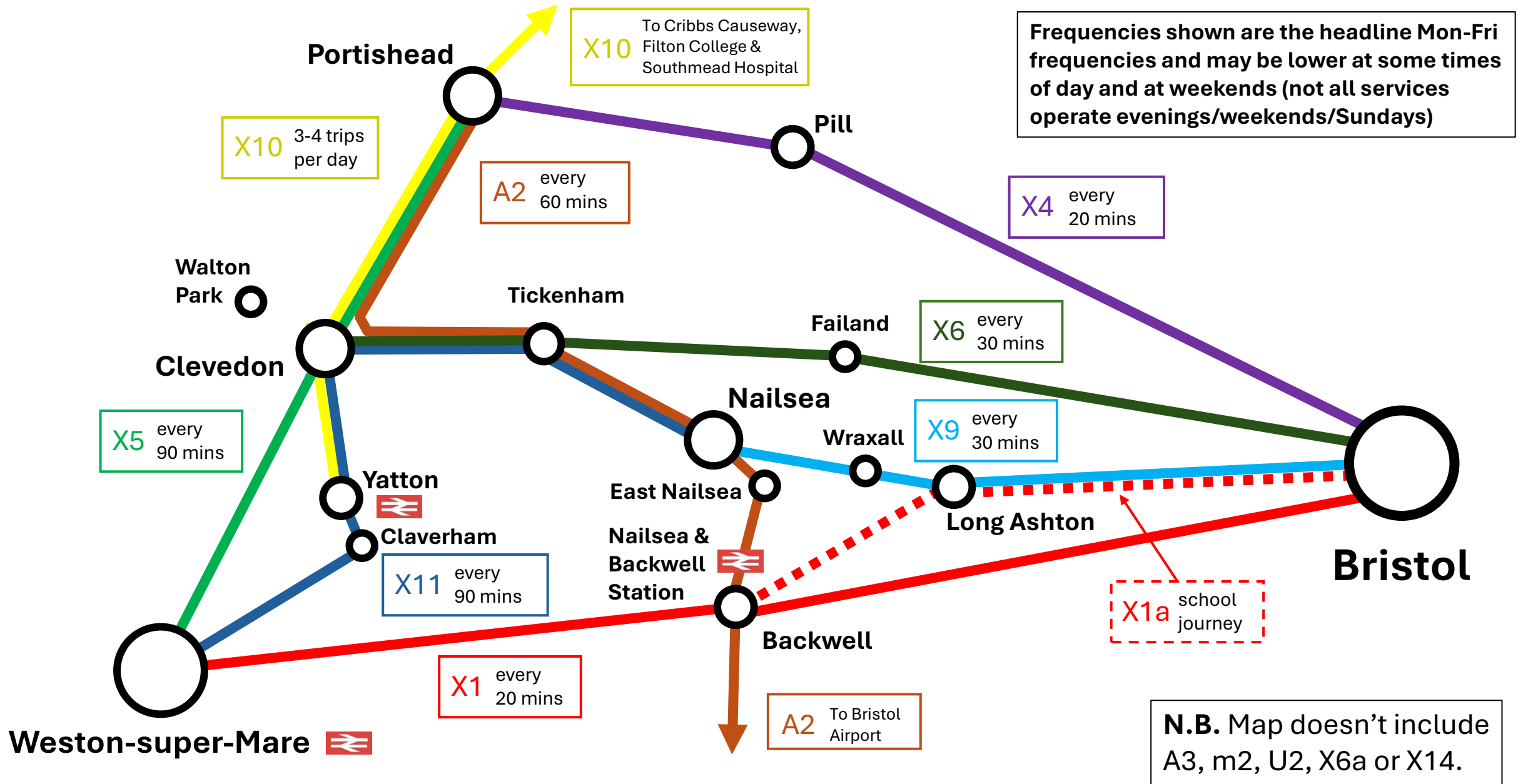


Community need	Mitigation
Clevedon – Nailsea link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended/more frequent X11 linking Clevedon and Nailsea (X11 will also now serve more of Clevedon). This replaces/enhances the X18 which has been trialled successfully. New Service A2 provides additional link between Nailsea and outskirts of Clevedon (Castlewood area).
Nailsea – Bristol link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra Sunday evening trips on X9 (faster than on current X7).
Clevedon – Bristol link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra evening trips on X6 and extra trips on Sat morning (faster than on current X7).
Bus service on Trendlewood Way and Pound Lane, Nailsea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New A2 hourly 24/7 service provides service on Trendlewood Way (interchange required to get to Bristol or central Clevedon). Extended/more frequent X11 to Clevedon and WsM takes over Pound Lane service.
Bus service to Walton Park, Clevedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand responsive transport available. Walton Park will no longer have fixed line bus service. WESTlink will serve the area Mon-Fri 09:00-14:00.
Long Ashton impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School links are maintained/improved (see below). Loss of direct link to Clevedon, Backwell and Nailsea & Backwell Station (except for school journeys/DRT). Loss of current additional trip to Bristol every 70 minutes (but 30-min link to Bristol retained on X9).
School connections	<p>All school links retained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A2 service to and from Backwell, Nailsea, Clevedon and Gordano Schools, timed for school journeys. X1a providing link between Long Ashton and Backwell School, with extra trips added for capacity (total of 2 in AM and 3 in PM) (note: X1s is renumbered to X1a). Diverted X6a trip provides extra capacity between Long Ashton and Nailsea School/Clevedon School. Extended X11 provides link connecting Clevedon with Nailsea School.

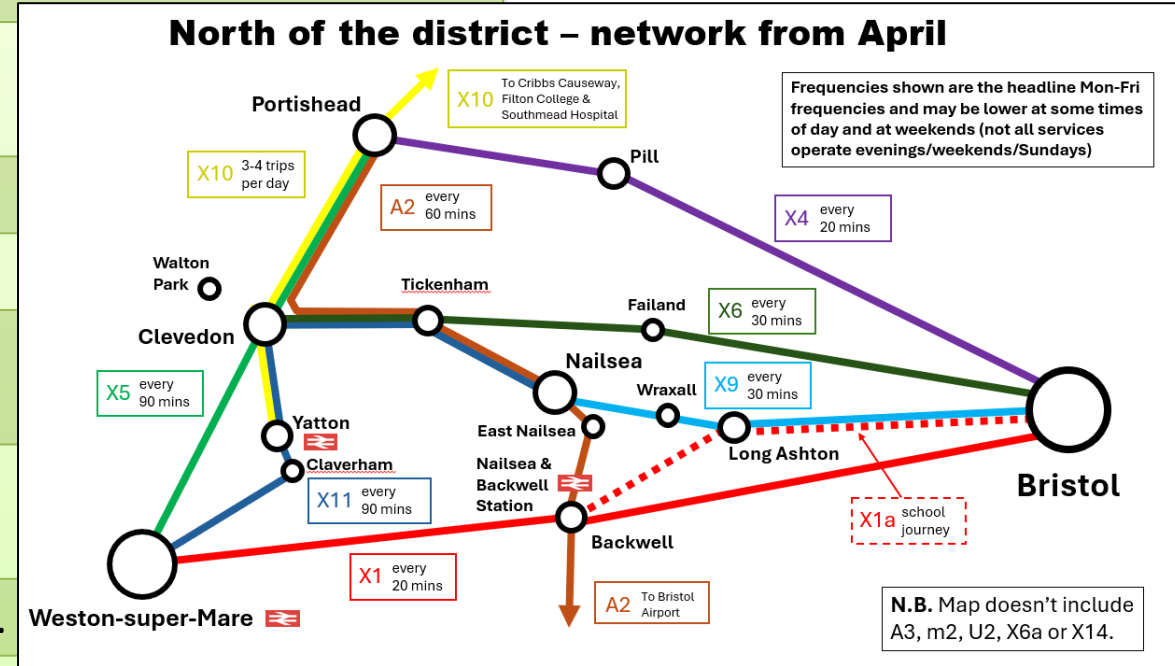
North of the district – X7 mitigations



North of the district – network from April

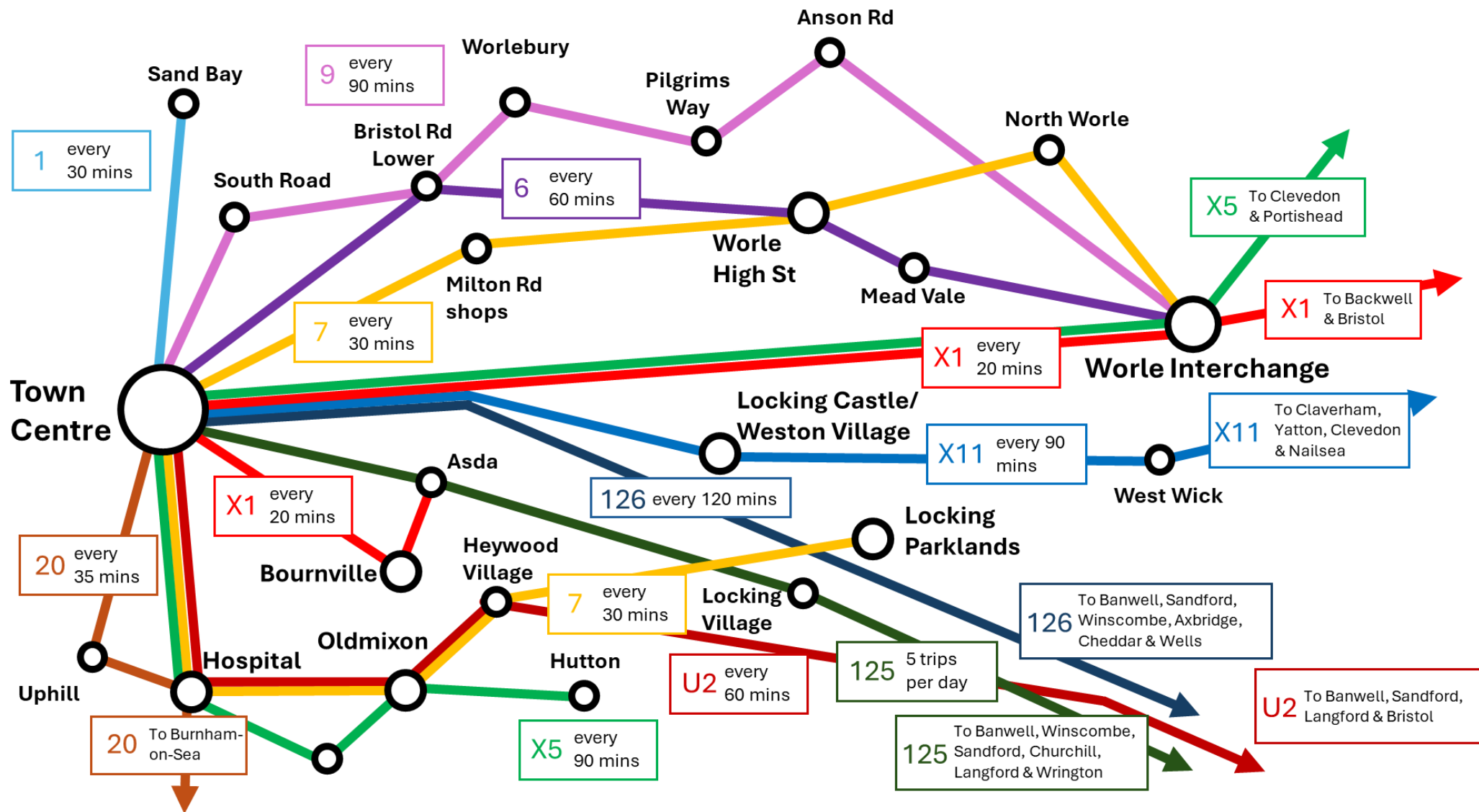


Serv.	Changes in April
A2	New 24/7 bus service Airport – Backwell – Nailsea – northeast fringe of Clevedon – Portishead
X1	Timetable revised to a 20-minute frequency Mon-Sat and 30-min on evenings and Sundays.
X4	Minor timing tweaks.
X5/X5x	Saturdays reduced to every 2 hours (low demand).
X6	Extra evening trips and Sat morning trips (mitigating X7 withdrawal).
X7	Withdrawn – service will cease. Mitigations shown on previous slides.
X9	Extra Sunday evening trips (mitigating X7 withdrawal).
X10	No change.
X11/X11x	Route extended to Nailsea. More of Clevedon served. Frequency increased to every 80-90 minutes. Additional faster morning trip to WsM as X11x.
X14	No change.
X18	Withdrawn, replaced with improved X11.



Weston-super-Mare area network from April

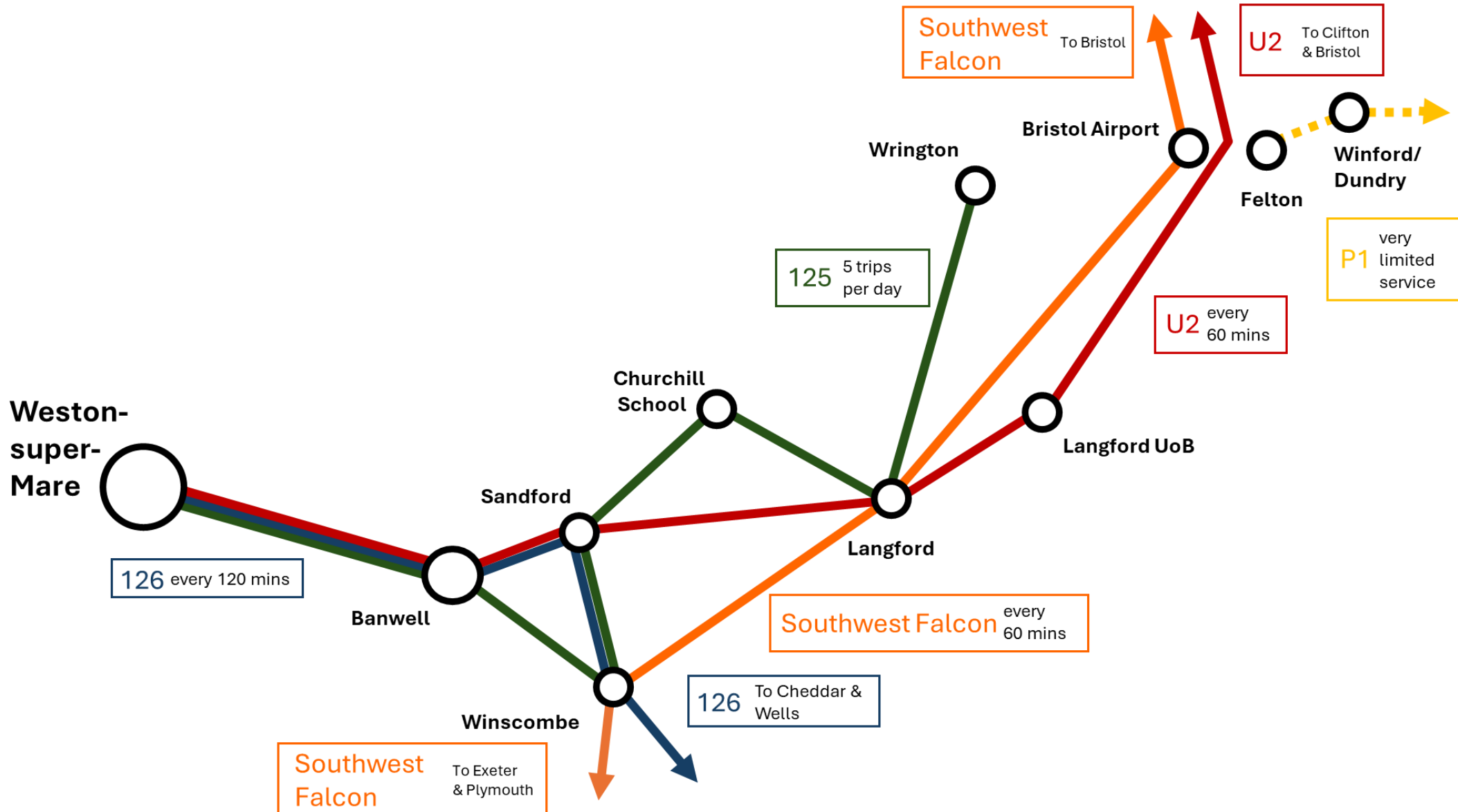
Open, Fairer, Greener



Serv.	Changes in April
1	Annual seasonal uplift – Doubling of frequency and return of Sunday service.
6	Mon-Sat reduction in frequency (approx. hourly rather than approx. 30 mins). Later start time and earlier end time on Mon-Fri. Sunday service will cease.
7	No change.
9	Increased frequency (every 90 mins - up from every 120 mins).
20	Annual seasonal uplift – Doubling of frequency and return of Sunday service.
125	No change.
126	Slight changes to timetable, to enable better connections to college/hospital on 7/U2. Extended to railway station.
A3	Timetable change, but same frequency.
U2	No change.
X1	Timetable revised to a 20-minute frequency Mon-Sat and 30-min on evenings and Sundays.
X5	Saturdays reduced to every 2 hours (low demand). Will now serve Bleadon Hill in both directions.
X11	Frequency enhanced to approx. every 80-90 mins. Direct journeys to Nailsea now possible.
X18	Withdrawn (merged with X11). 3 trips a day through Mead Vale lost as a result.

September onwards:

- New developer s106-funded service to Mead Fields is being investigated (via Locking Castle).
- If so, X11 route could change to go through Mead Vale instead of Locking Castle.
- Service 6 is not in a strong position and overlaps a lot with Service 9 (and potentially X11) so will need to be reviewed in wider context.
- Further work is needed ahead of September regarding most effective routes for serving communities (e.g. Hutton, improved 9 routing to serve the areas in the north of Weston, Mead Vale served by X11 (more direct to town)).
- U2 is growing and provides direct link to Bristol. Further work needed.



Serv.	Changes in April
125/125s	No change.
126	Cheddar/Wells route is being tweaked to allow interchange to U2 for travel to college/hospital
A1	No change.
A4	Timetable change. Note that First Bus have taken over A4 after buying Bath Bus Company. They are introducing consistent branding across the airport routes.
P1	Change of operator. Route extended until schools finish in July but will then cease due to very high cost per passenger c.£35 being unaffordable and poor VfM.
U2	No change.

- Little change in bus network.
- U2 doing well – will be re-tendered for September.
- A1/A3 - We need to raise awareness of discounted bus travel for local residents.
- 125/125s no change in April. To be reviewed for September. Route overlaps with U2 and 126 and is therefore poor value for money. We are investigating – subject to funding – better value ways to serve Wrington and Churchill School.

- WESTlink is the West of England demand responsive transport service.
- From April WECA-contracted vehicles will cease to operate in North Somerset, except in the Chew Valley zone (which also includes some trips in the Airport shared zone).
- NSC zones will operate 09:00-14:00 Mon-Fri (no Saturday service). WECA-led zones will operate 07:00-19:00 Mon-Sat.
- NSC zones will be operated in-house by NSC's ITS team, using 7-seater electric vehicles (and wheelchair-accessible vehicle). The same vehicles separately operate home-to-school transport at school start/finish times.
- Booking process remains the same (using WECA-procured technology platform and call centre) so booking trips is consistent everywhere across the West of England area (one network approach).

WESTlink

Our focus is to connect communities with limited or no bus access into the bus network. Both in isolated rural areas and in parts of the towns where it is difficult for people with mobility challenges.

- Proposed changes to zones are shown on next slide.
- 5-mile cap on journey length is being introduced to prevent long trips and increase vehicle availability (WESTlink focus is to connect people locally to fixed line bus services – a feeder service).
- Fares to increase to £3, to aid financial sustainability of service. £7 day ticket remains available to support transfer to bus network/onward travel.
- No discounted fare for children (free travel for under-5s). Service only available 09:00-14:00.
- Free travel for bus passholders will continue for now, but we will need to consult with users – costs are unsustainable – would users be willing to pay full or half fare if it ensures the service's future?



Our focus is to connect communities with limited or no bus access into the bus network. Both in isolated rural areas and in parts of the towns where it is difficult for people with mobility challenges.

1 – Clevedon and Portishead

2 – Nailsea, Backwell & Long Ashton

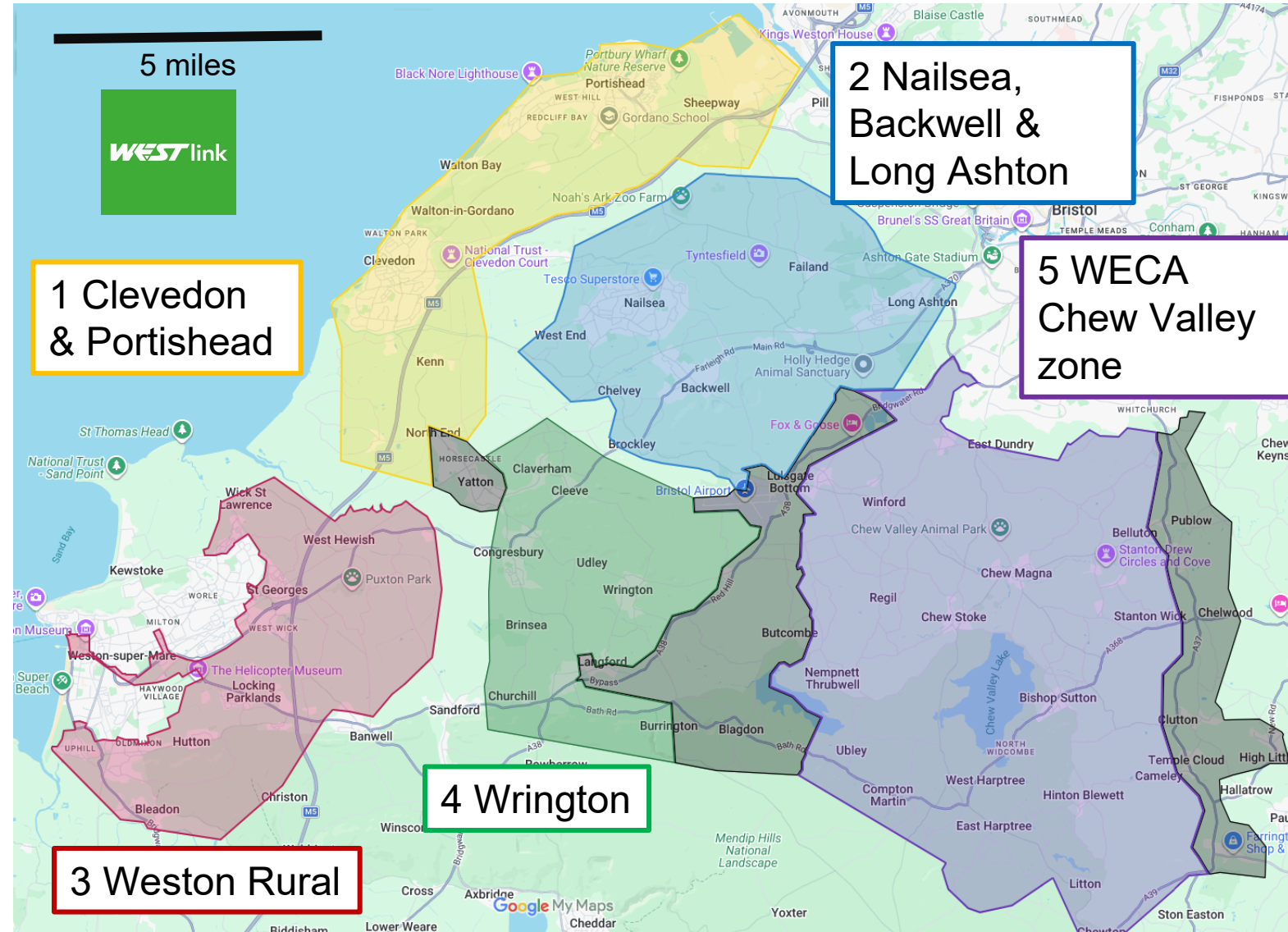
3 – Weston Rural

4 – Wrington

- 4 zones operated by NSC vehicles.
- Zone overlap areas (in grey) are in Yatton and the 'Airport shared zone'.
- 5-mile journey cap in all NSC zones.
- £3 single fare or £7 day ticket.

5 – WECA-led Chew Valley Zone

- WECA operated zone, continues to run using WECA contracts.
- Operates Mon-Sat 07:00-19:00.
- No mileage cap.
- £2/£1 fares continue in that area.



Main changes

Serv	Route	Current service	Proposed changes	Comments
6	Worle – Mead Vale – Upper Bristol Rd – WsM	M-Sa 30-min freq. Sun 60-min freq.	Remove Sun service. Mon-Sat reduce to 60/70-min.	Service is far from being commercially viable and Sunday is particularly poor. Possible in September it may be merged into/replaced by amended Services 9 & X11.
A2	Portishead – Nailsea – Airport (via edge of Clevedon)	N/A	New service. Operating hourly 24/7.	Funded by Airport s106. Creates new link to Airport for Nailsea and Portishead. Reintroduces connection between Portishead and Nailsea. Also replaces parts of X7.
X7	Clevedon – Nailsea – Bristol	M-Sa 70-min freq. Sun 60-min freq.	Withdraw.	X11 being amended to provide Clevedon to Nailsea link. Walton Park will be un-served, however we are investigating alternative coverage. (DRT/Fixed)

Reconfiguration of 9/X11/X18 due to X7 withdrawal

Serv	Route	Current service	Proposed changes	Comments
9	Worle – Worlebury – WsM	M-Sa 120-min freq.	Frequency increased to approx. 90-min.	Enabled due to interworking with X11. Helps mitigate 6 frequency drop.
X11	WsM – Yatton – Clevedon	M-Sa 120-min freq.	Extended to Nailsea and route amended in Clevedon. Frequency increased to 90-min.	Due to withdrawal of X7, X11 needs to be enhanced to provide the Clevedon-Nailsea link. Regular WsM-Nailsea now available.
X18	WsM – Yatton – Clevedon – Nailsea	M-F 3 trips in each direction.	Withdraw (merge route/resource into X11).	Means withdrawal from Mead Vale (which still has 6, albeit at reduced frequency).

Other changes

Serv	Route	Current service	Proposed changes	Comments
1	WsM – Sand Bay	M-Sa 60-min freq.	M-Sa 30-min freq. Su 60-min freq.	Annual seasonal uplift in service.
20	WsM – Burnham	M-Sa 70-min freq.	M-Sa 35-min freq. Su 70-min freq.	Annual seasonal uplift in service.
X1	WsM – Bristol	M-F 15-min freq. Sa 20-min freq. Su 30-min freq.	Reduce M-F freq to 20-min.	Makes service commercial (approx. £800k saving p.a.).
X5	Portishead-WsM	M-Sa 90-min freq.	First MF journey sped up as an X5x. Reduce Sa freq to 120-min.	Low current usage. First and last journeys protected.
X6	Clevedon – Bristol	M-Sa 30-min freq. Sun 60-min freq.	Extra evening trips due to X7 withdrawal.	
X9	Nailsea – Bristol	M-Sa 30-min freq. Sun 60-min freq.	Extra Sun evening trips due to X7 withdrawal.	

Minor tweaks to services 126 and X4. P1 continues until end of July on same route/timetable but different operator – service at risk after July.

Community transport WESTlocal schemes will also end in April (WDCT & NDCT). All offer very poor value for money.

Fares Package	Notes
Care Leavers Free Travel	Continued. Free travel to young people leaving the care system.
24/7 Disabled Travel	Continued. Enables pre-9am travel on buses using the Disabled Concessionary Travel pass.
Avon Rider Fare Cap	<p>Continued. Day ticket multi-operator fares Multi-operator Rider Tickets - WEST e.g. £7 adult day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rider Tickets are day tickets that are accepted by all bus operators in a given area. • Valid for travel on the day of issue and up to 2.59am the following morning. • No limit to the number of journeys you can take – show your ticket when boarding. • Not valid for tour buses, express coaches, or bus services for special events. • Bought on any bus operating in that Rider ticket area – including Park & Ride services
Kids Go Free	On hold whilst funding is confirmed. Promotional free travel during school holidays.
£1 Child Fare Cap	On hold whilst funding is confirmed. Year-round fare cap for under-16s.

Date	Activity
Now	Ward Cllr briefing on April bus service changes
23 February	First Bus and other operators' information goes live
25 February	Information on WEST website goes live
27 February	Town and Parish Council session on April bus service changes
10 March	All Councillor Briefing on Enhanced Partnership, Real Time Information and funding
From 1 April	Roadside information changes
5 April	Service change date
March-April	Ward Cllr engagement process on 30 th August changes (workshops)
June	Bus Forum
30 August	Service change date. Further bus network changes are likely, but detail is still to be confirmed.

