



West of England Sustainable Transport

***WEST*link service changes**

Councillor Briefing March 2024

Housekeeping

- This session is being recorded
- Please put your questions in the chat

Introductions

- Bob Scowen, Interim Head of Integrated Transport Operations
- David Heckles, Project Manager, Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Avril England, Principal Transport Operations Officer
- Marcia Daniels/Dave Frape – Communications team

Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Introductions
- *WEST*link challenges
- Overview to date
- Changes from 8 April
- Communications

Introduction

Bob Scowen



WESTlink Key Challenges

The speed at which the service launched

Developed at pace (3 months instead of a traditional 6-9 month process)
Utilised the already significantly progressed DDRT (Future Transport Zone project) app
App was set up with slightly different parameters – monitor and change post-launch

Extreme demand

Loss of 42 supported services on the same day WESTlink launched
DRT zones were created based on a review of the existing bus network and accessibility
Tendered the current contracts for drivers/vehicles on this basis

An ongoing challenging driver recruitment market

National shortage of PSV drivers and therefore operators had to derive a recruitment campaign and larger scale training programme – this had a time impact

Marketing and communications

Given the operational issues, reluctance to do large scale marketing
Passengers have grown organically

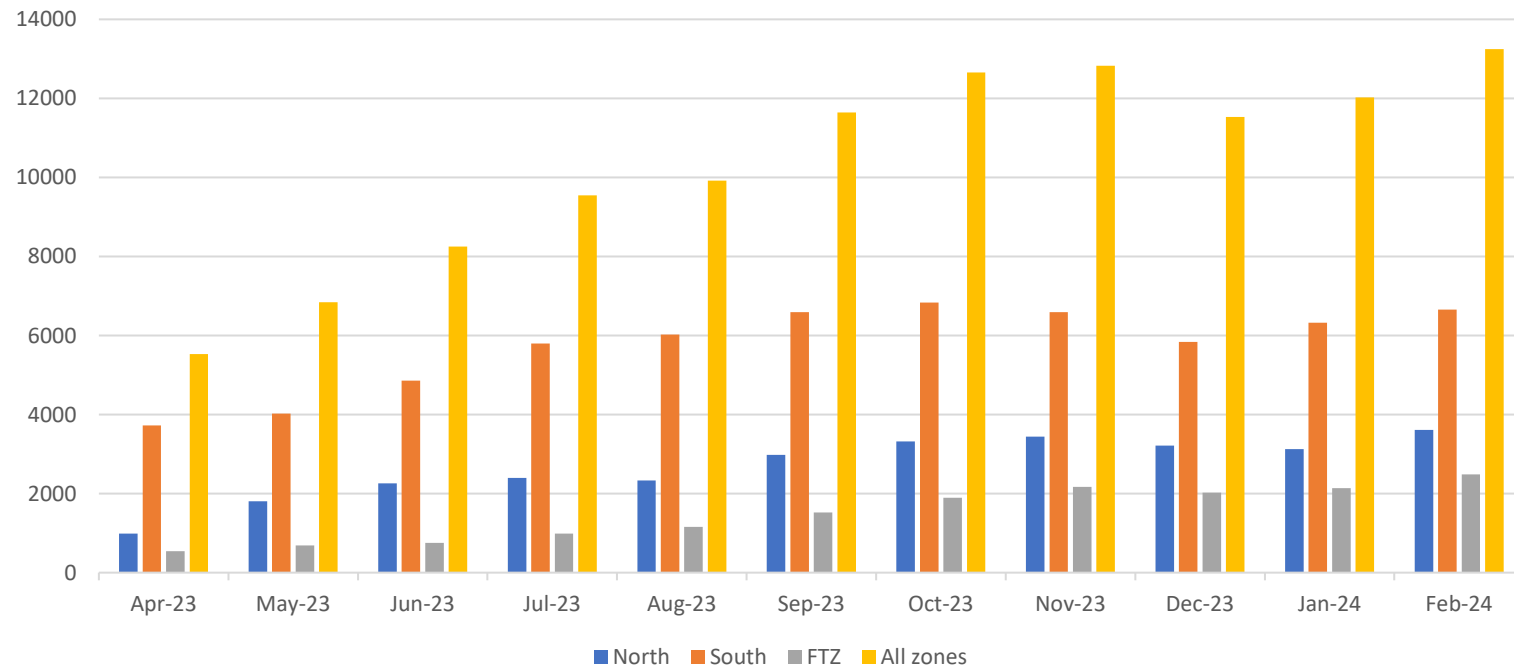
*WEST*link overview to date

David Heckles



Completed Rides

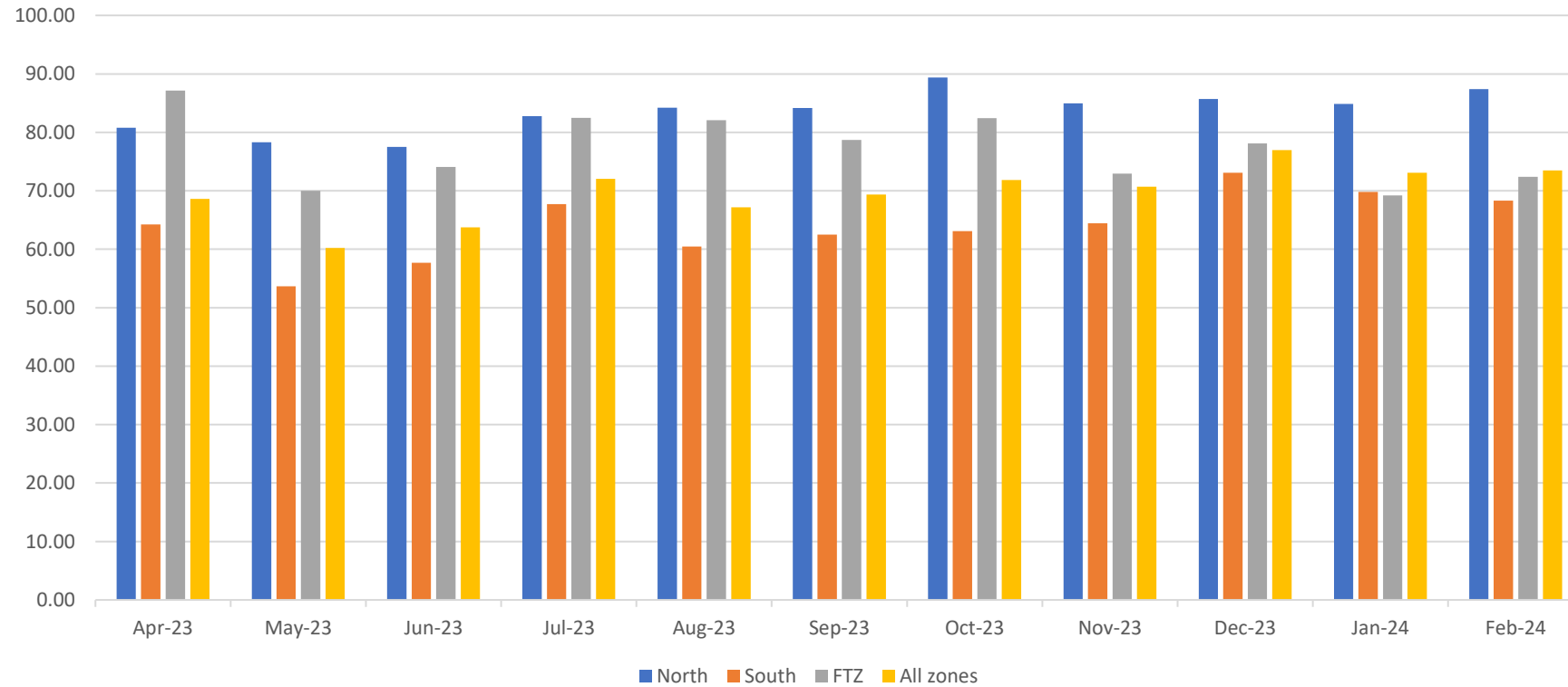
Completed Rides - all zones



* Completed rides is the number of rides completed (passenger journeys taken)

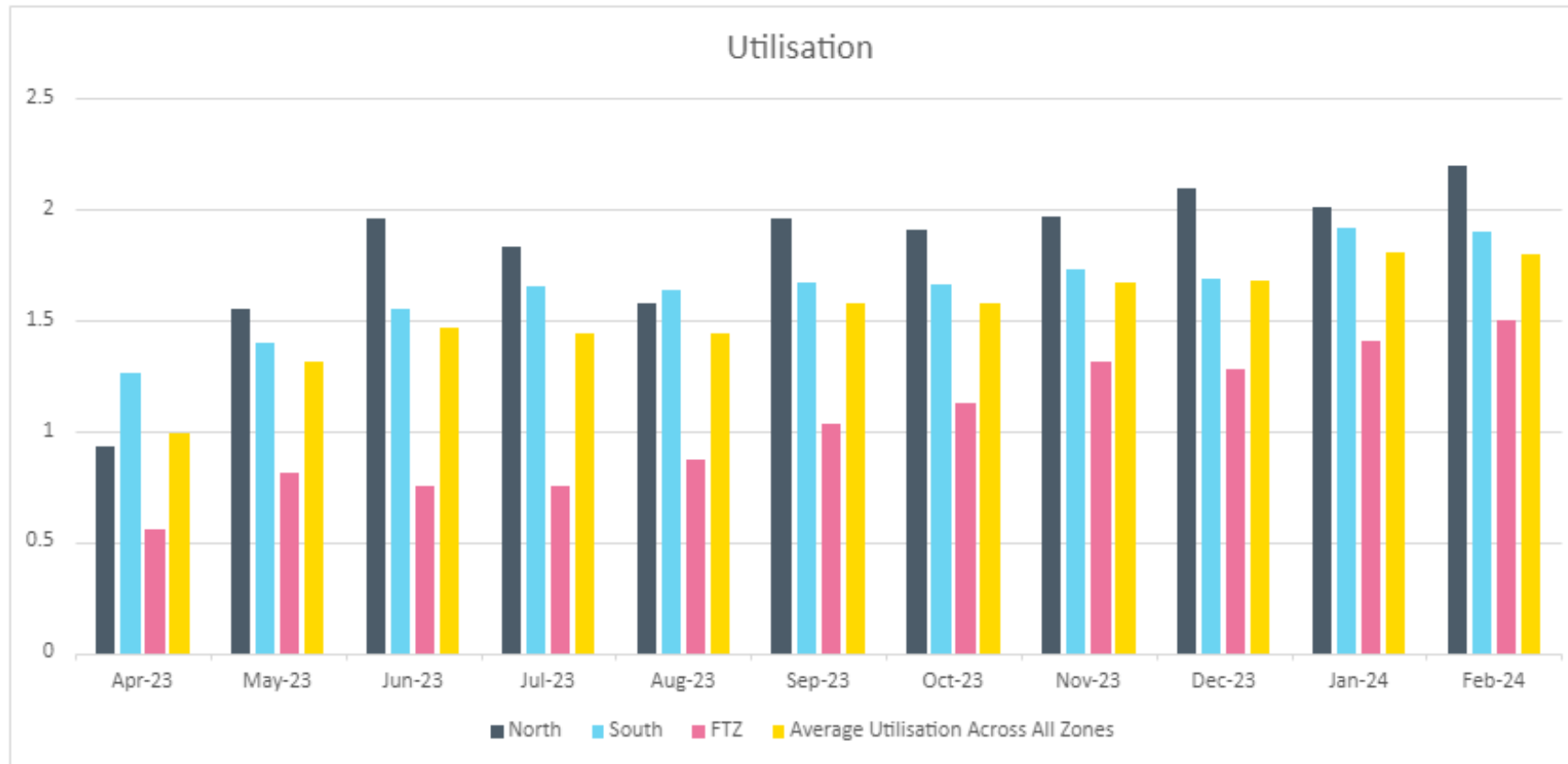
Met Demand

Met Demand - all zones (%)



* Met demand rate is the number of ride requests (passengers) met with a ride proposal / total ride requests (passengers)

Utilisation



* Utilisation is the number of completed rides / by the net driver hours

- Utilisation rate is calculated by dividing completed rides by net driver hours.
- This means it shows the average number of passengers/completed rides per driver/vehicle hour - a higher utilisation rate means more journeys have multiple passengers sharing rides.

Passenger Survey

- The people who have not yet taken a WESTlink journey and have no other means of travel, have either not been able to get a ride (21%), found the booking process confusing or difficult (15%), they are outside of the current boundary (23%).
- The most popular time of day for journeys is 09:00-16:00 - middle of the day (68%). This is not to say that commuting hours are not important, with 32% saying they use the service 07:00-09:00 (AM peak) and 40% 16:00-19:00 (PM peak).
- The most common journey purpose is leisure (49%), shopping (44%), and to connect to other public transport services (45%).
- Most people agree WESTlink can be used to connect people to existing public transport services.
- The reliability of WESTlink to provide people with a ride is considered the most important factor, followed by pre-booking.
- The highest method of how people found out about WESTlink was word of mouth (33%), likely attributed to the lack of marketing.
- 22% of respondents said they would not be able to travel without WESTlink, i.e. they have no other option.
- There is a strong reliance on the service and public transport in general for females, especially within the age ranges of 35-59 (with mention of childcare pressures and space for pushchairs) and 60-74 (mostly retired), with females also being the majority user.

Passenger Survey Quotes

Quote	Age & Gender
"To retain my independence and social inclusion, as I am registered disabled and have very limited ability to access a bus stop alone"	Female Aged 60-74
"Help with independence and social skills and not so noisy"	Female Aged 26-34
"It gives my teenage daughter and her friends the ability to travel and plan independently, a good life skill and in a safe environment & there are no buses"	Female Aged Under 16
"So I can be independent and not have to ask someone to drive me"	Female Aged 35-59
"My son is only 16 gives him access to transport & independence to access sports he takes part in"	Female Aged 35-59
"I do not drive, so WESTlink will be very important to me, to be able to travel much easier and quicker to see friends, family go to appointments etc."	Female Aged 35-59
"It fills in the gaps that the existing bus services leave. I can get to places I would not be able to otherwise. My children who don't drive use the service to access education & attend social activities."	Female Aged 35-59
"I think it is a reliable great service that has changed my life for the better"	Female Aged 75+
"I have two young children so WESTlink made it easy to get to variety of locations."	Female Aged 35-59
"Much easier when managing with my children, a pram and food shopping."	Female Aged 35-59
"As a parent with children living with me and going or coming back home on different time, WESTlink is on only public transport available with flexibility in my zone that seems to help us to move around."	Male Aged 35-59

WESTlink zones



Changes from 8 April

- First opportunity to make changes since launch
- Can alter in next round of bus service changes
- Will tackle issue of *WEST*link buses not being available when needed

WEST link Zones - from April 8



Contains Ordnance Survey data
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South Gloucestershire Council Area

Core Zones

- FTZ – Future Transport Zone
- Thornbury Rural
- Yate Rural
- Boyd Valley

Shared Zones

- Thornbury Shared
- Yate Shared
- UWE Shared
- Cribbs Shared

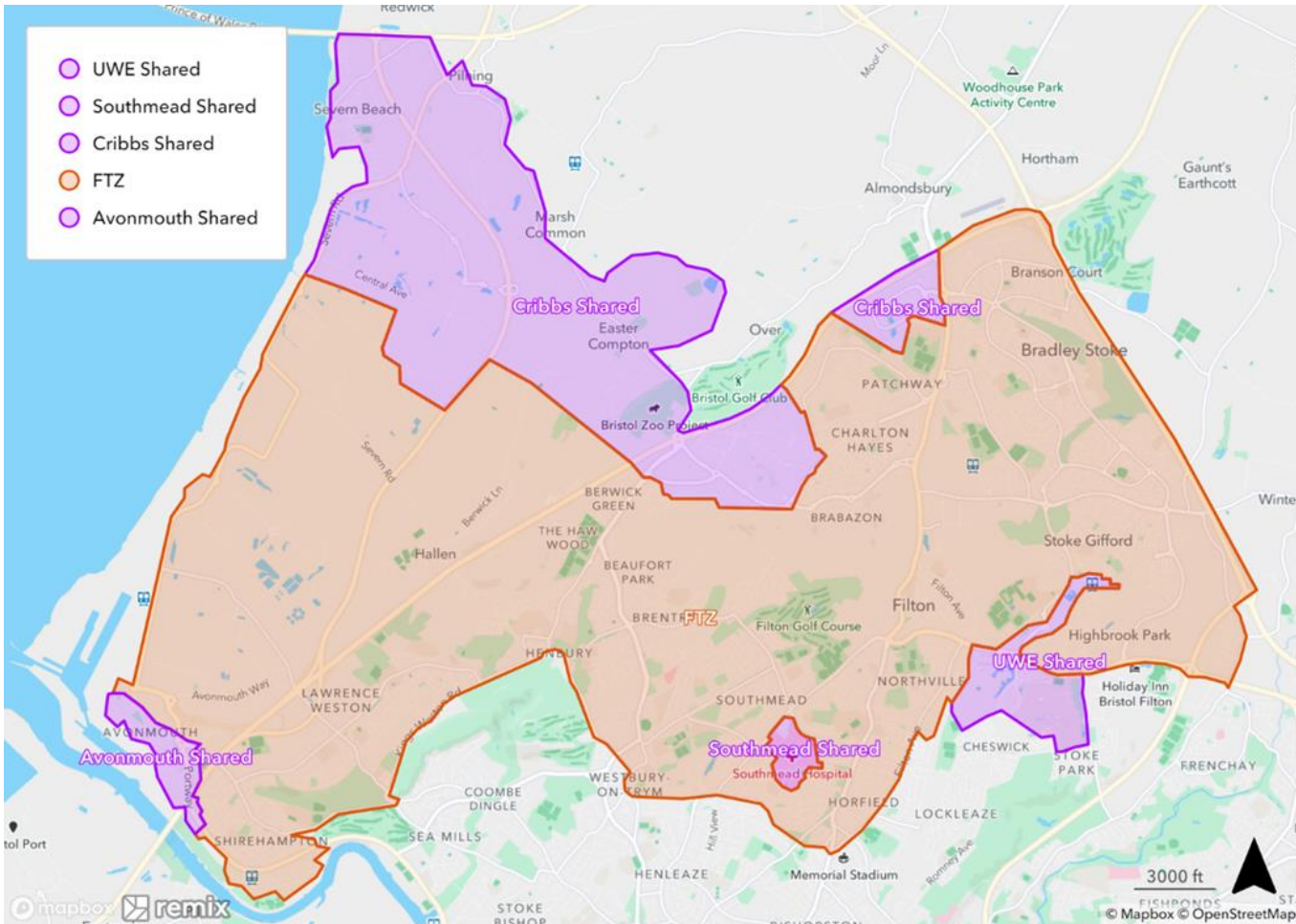


FTZ – Future Transport Zone



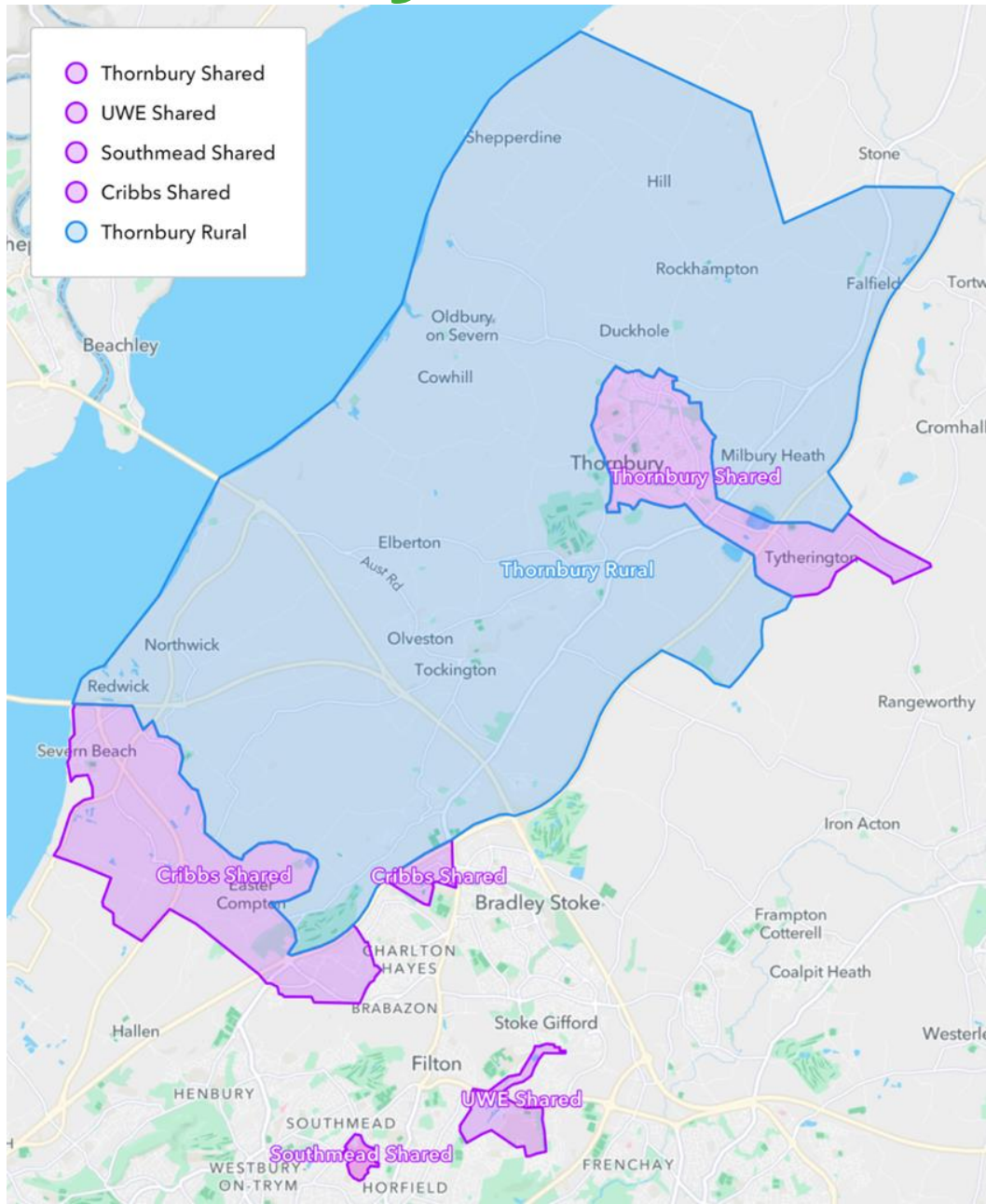
Core Zone – FTZ – Future Transport Zone (also crosses in **Bristol City Council** area)

Shared Zones – Avonmouth Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared



- Zone shape largely unchanged from its current form.
- Minor amendments include a new Shared Zone added around University of the West of England (UWE) & Bristol Parkway Railway Station encompassing the UWE, Bristol Parkway Railway Station, Filton Abbey Wood Railway Station, and MOD Abbey Wood.
- The Avonmouth Shared Zone has been reduced to only cover the area around the Avonmouth Railway Station and Portway Park & Ride, maintaining links between Portishead (to allow connections with the wider public transport network), and employment areas in Avonmouth.
- A new Cribbs Shared Zone has been created along the border with the Thornbury Rural zone to give users access to Cribbs Causeway, Aztec West, Severn Beach, railway stations in the zone, and nearby industrial areas.
- Current poorly connected leisure destinations like The Wave and The Wild Place will also become more accessible.

Thornbury Rural



Core Zone – Thornbury Rural

Shared Zones – Avonmouth Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared

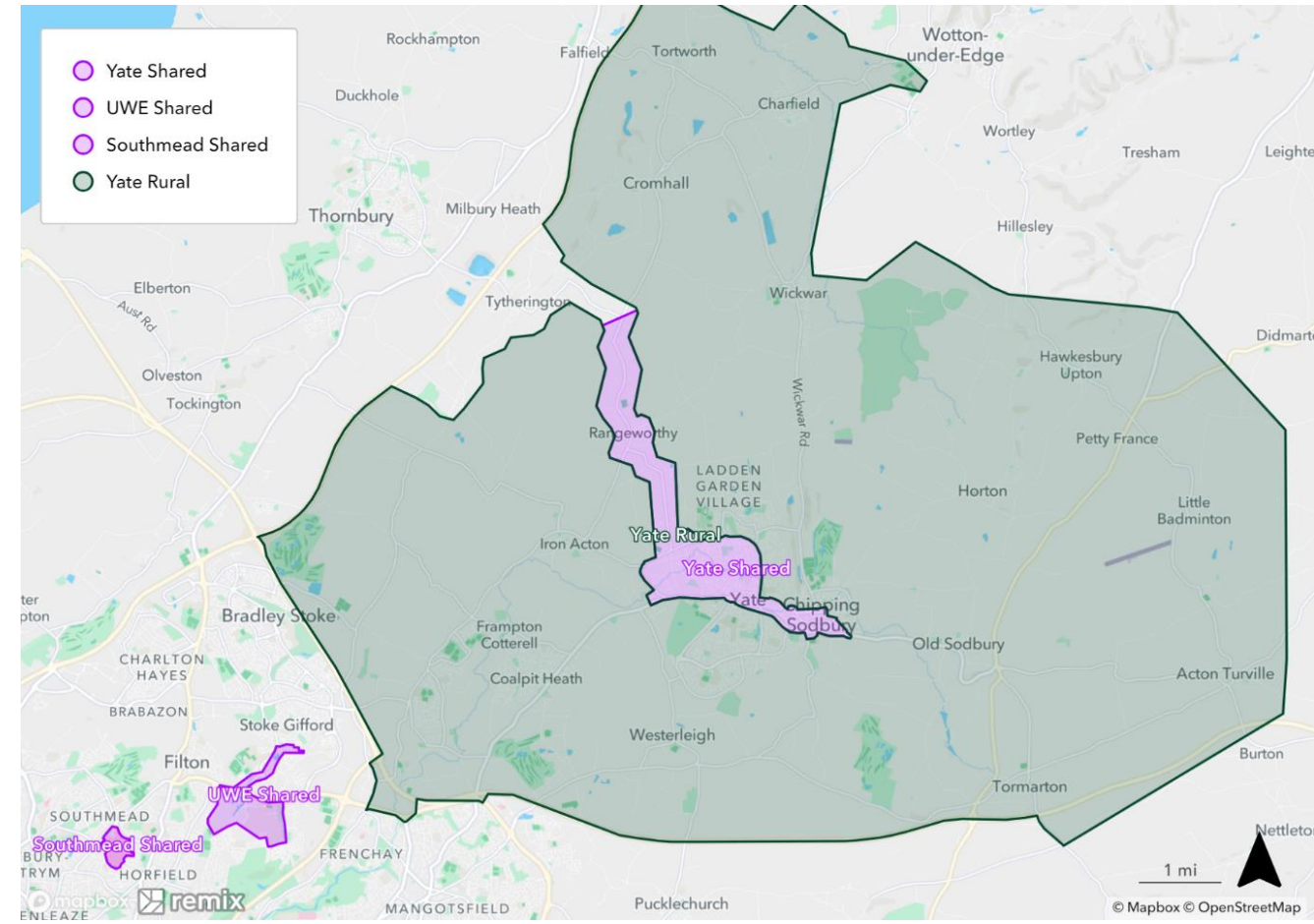
- North Zone has been split largely using the M5 as a border. The zone expands passed the M5 to the villages of Itchington and Tytherington due to their geographic closeness to Thornbury Town.
- The current borders of the Thornbury rural zone with Gloucestershire and the FTZ remain the same.
- Additional links have been created with the Cribbs Shared Zone, UWE Shared Zone and Southmead Shared Zone due to existing public transport links to these key areas are limited.
- Users starting their journey in the Thornbury Shared Zone will be able to travel to the Yate Shared Zone (see Core Zone Yate Rural below)
- While we wanted large zones to be split, it was deemed important to retain access between Thornbury, Yate, and Chipping Sodbury, as well as villages in-between such as Rangeworthy. Not only was there a historical bus connection between the two towns, WESTlink usage data shows this is a highly popular journey.

Yate Rural



Core Zone –Yate Rural

Shared Zones – Yate Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared



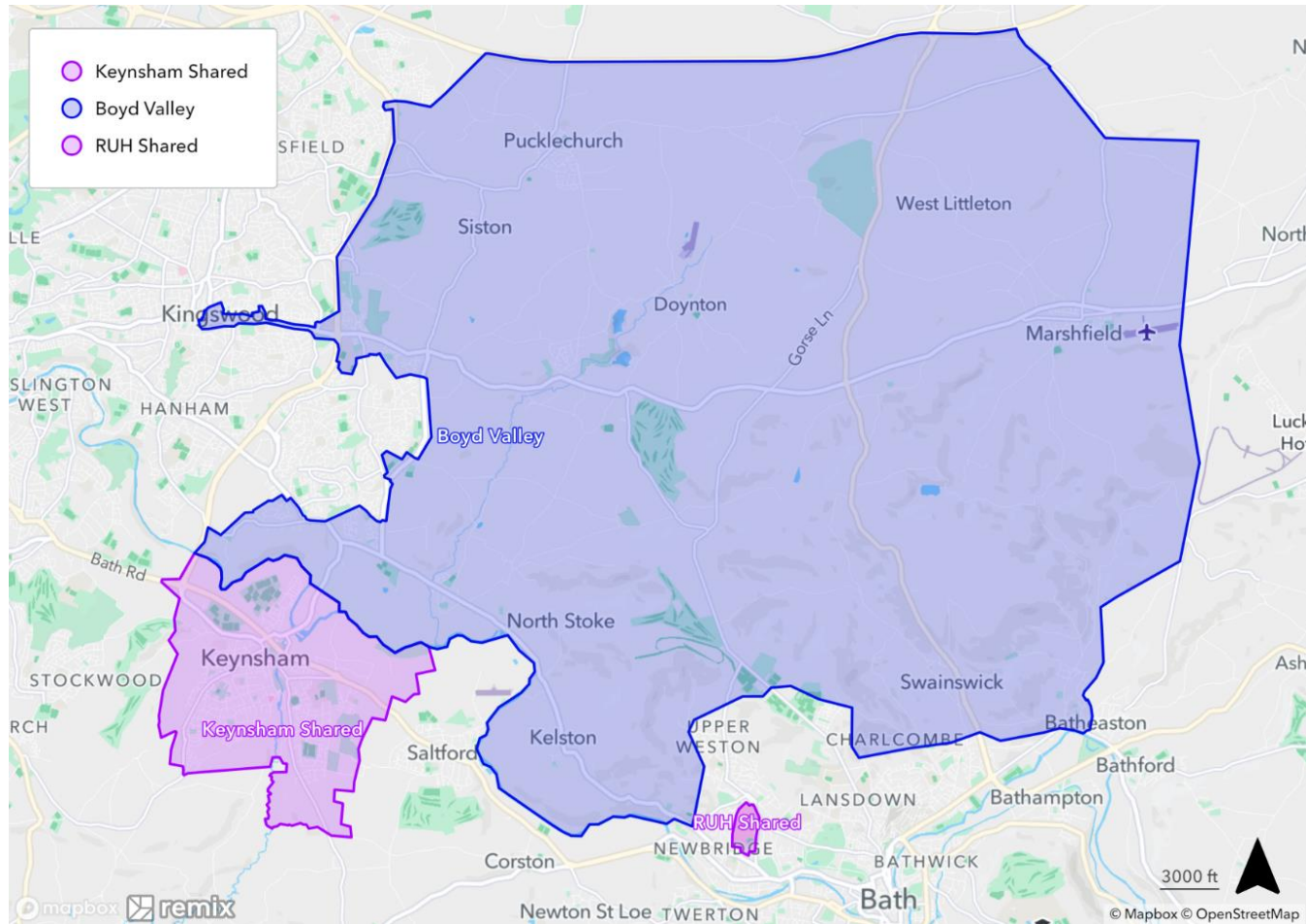
- Originally part of the North Zone, the Yate Rural Zone has been created broadly using the M5, M4 motorways, and the county of Gloucestershire as borders.
- The zone has been expanded to include **Hambrook** at the request of South Gloucestershire Council Officers.
- The Yate Rural Zone retains a connection into Gloucestershire to allow students living in the zone to continue using *WEST*link to travel to and from **Katherine Lady Berkeley's School** near Wotton Under Edge.
- Users within Yate Rural Zone will have access to the Yate Shared, UWE Shared, and Southmead Shared zones, creating accessibility between the Yate and Thornbury shared zones. This retains the link between Yate and Thornbury, while maintaining the goal of restricting long journeys.
- Public transport links to UWE, Bristol Parkway Railway Station, and Southmead Hospital is currently limited, hence why we have enabled those in Yate Rural to make these journeys.

Boyd Valley



Core Zone - Boyd Valley (also in B&NES area)

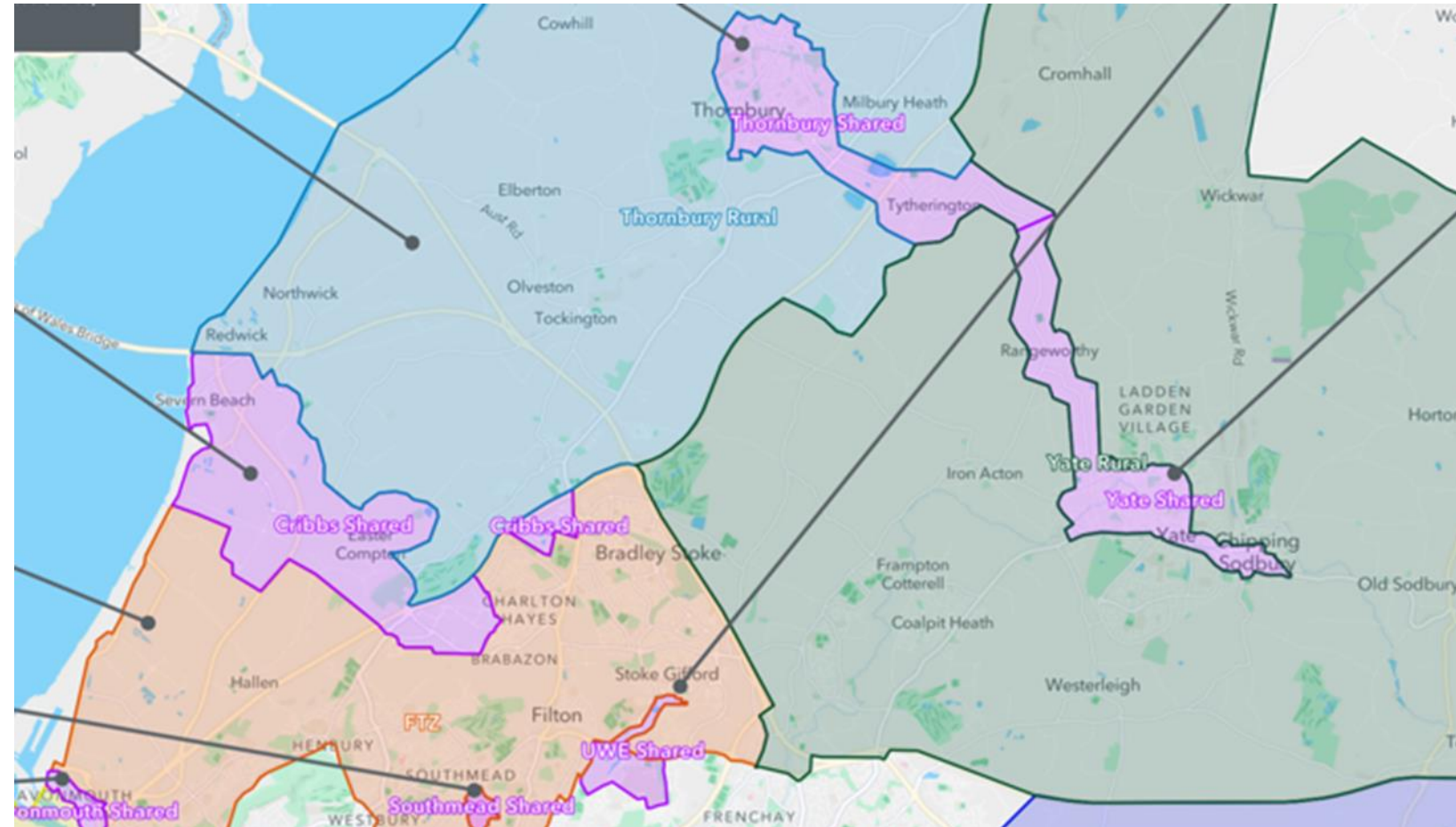
Shared Zones – Yate Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared



- The existing North Zone has been further split under the M4 motorway to create the Boyd Valley Zone.
- This area is large and sparsely populated.
- The zone has been expanded from the current area to include Kingswood as a geographically close urban centre with an array of amenities, and to allow users the opportunity to connect with existing public transport services for onward travel to central Bristol and Southmead Hospital.
- This zone retains access to the shared Keynsham area as well as a new RUH (Royal United Hospital) Shared Zone. The RUH has been added following a request from Bath & North East Somerset Transport Officers.

Shared Zones

Shared Zones – Thornbury Shared, Yate Shared, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared



Thornbury Shared:

- Accessible to and from: Thornbury Rural, Cribbs Shared, Yate Shared, Southmead Shared & UWE Shared

Yate Shared:

- Accessible to and from: Yate Rural, Thornbury Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared

UWE Shared

- Accessible to and from Yate Rural, Thornbury Rural, Thornbury Shared, Yate Shared, Southmead Shared, Avonmouth Shared, Cribbs Shared, FTZ

Cribbs Shared:

- Accessible to and from Thornbury Rural, Thornbury Shared, Southmead Shared, Avonmouth Shared, UWE Shared, FTZ

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Questions

Bath & North East Somerset Council Area

Core Zones

- Boyd Valley (previously covered in SGC slides)
- Bath Rural
- Chew Valley

Shared Zones

- Keynsham Shared
- RUH Shared,
- Thornbury Shared, Yate Shared UWE Shared
- Cribbs Shared

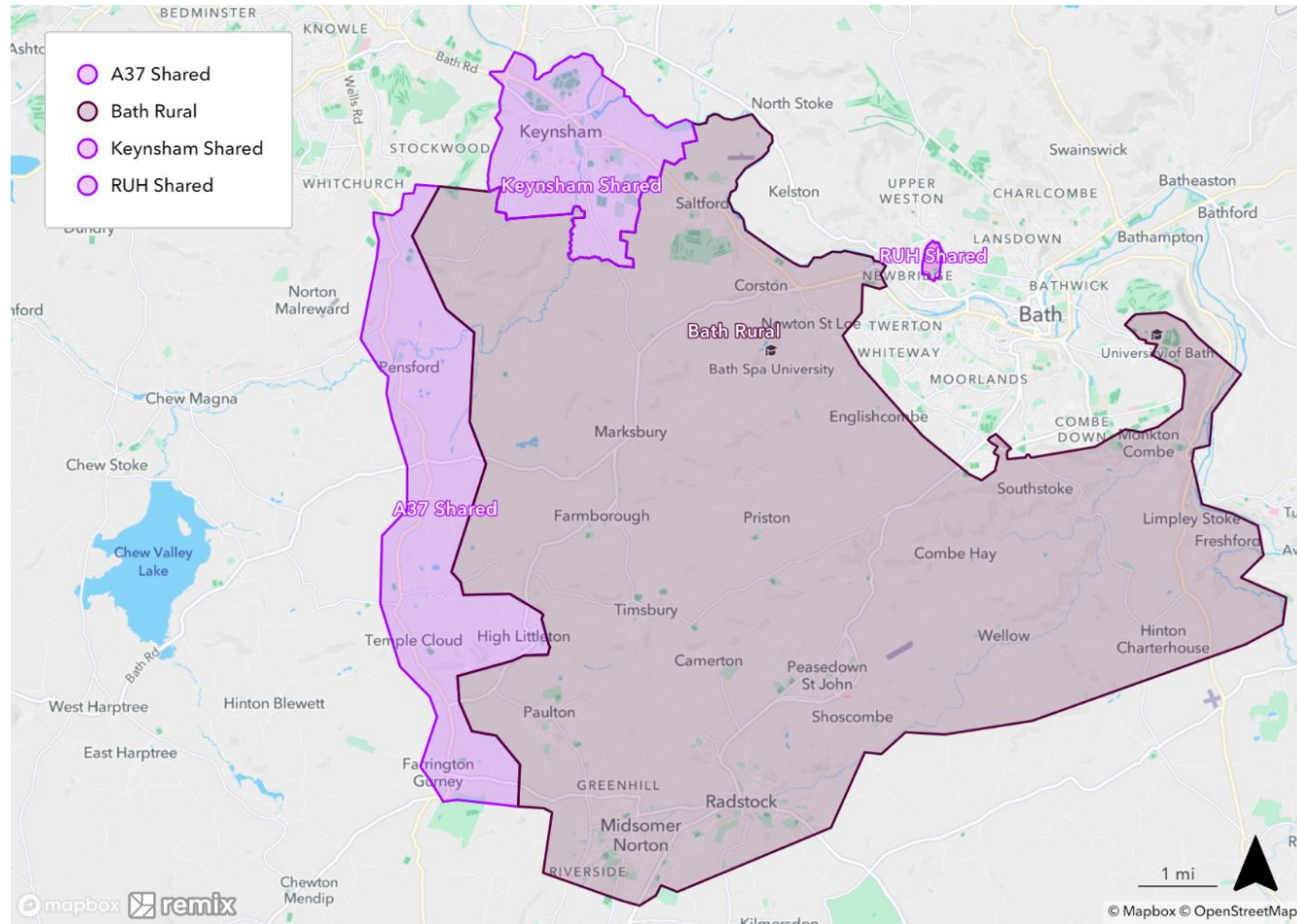


Bath Rural



Core Zone – Bath Rural (partially extends into Wiltshire)

Shared Zones – A37 Shared, Keynsham Shared, RUH Shared



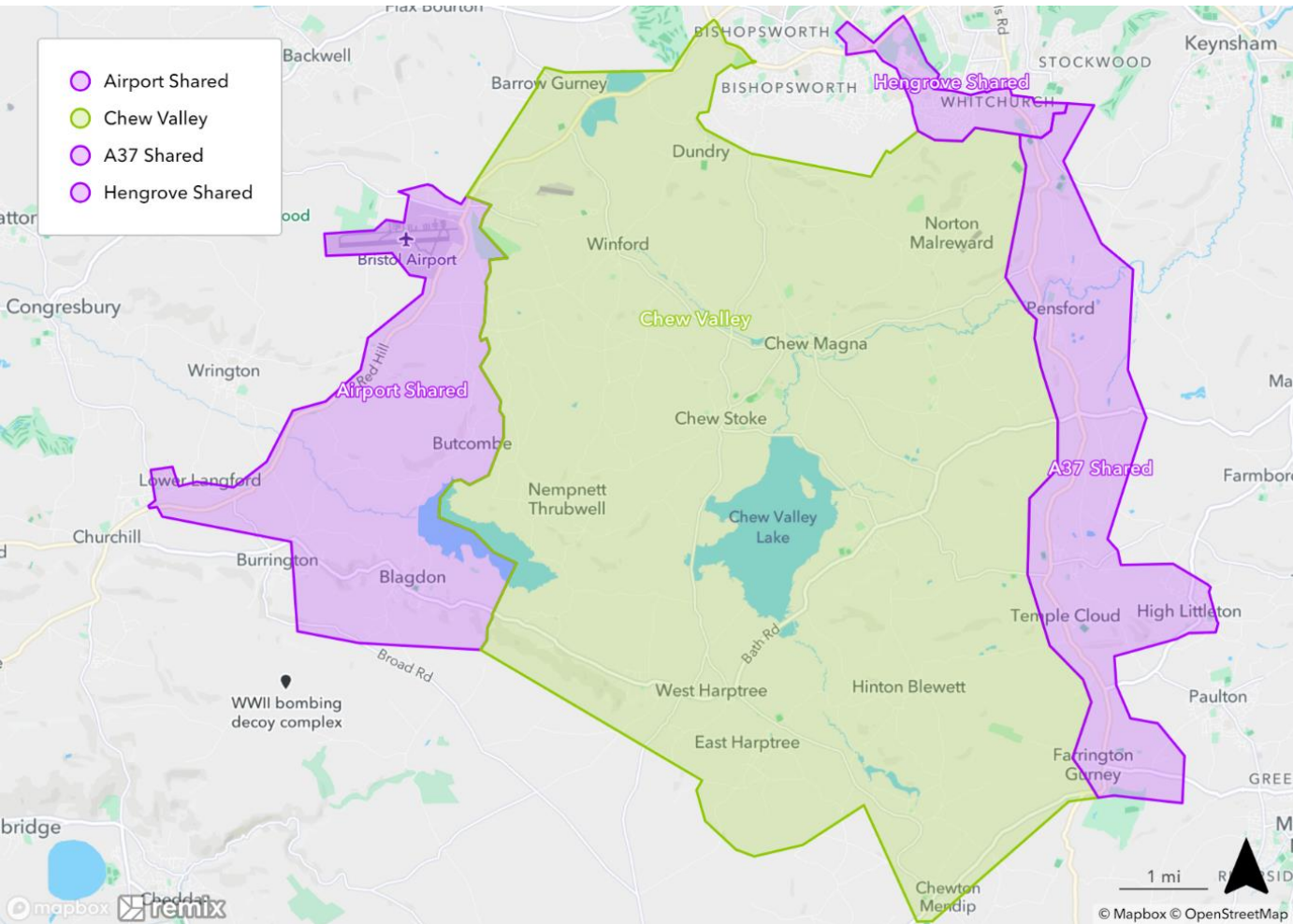
- The north of the Bath Rural Zone retains a largely similar border with the A37 now forming the western border, where an A37 Shared Zone has been created.
- Two extensions have been introduced
- A request was made by Bath & North East Somerset Officers to add St Martins Hospital
- Combined Authority Officers also added the University of Bath to create connections with existing bus services to and from Bath City Centre.
- Users in the Bath Rural Zone can travel to and from RUH Shared Zone, A37 Shared Zone, and Keynsham Shared Zone.
- Public transport links into central Bristol or Bath can be achieved by connecting onto high frequency bus services (which will be signposted in the app), or at Keynsham Railway Station.
- Passengers are also still able to access trains from Freshford Station.

Chew Valley



Core Zone – Chew Valley (Also in NSC, Somerset & BCC area)

Shared Zones – A37 Shared, Airport Shared, Hengrove Shared

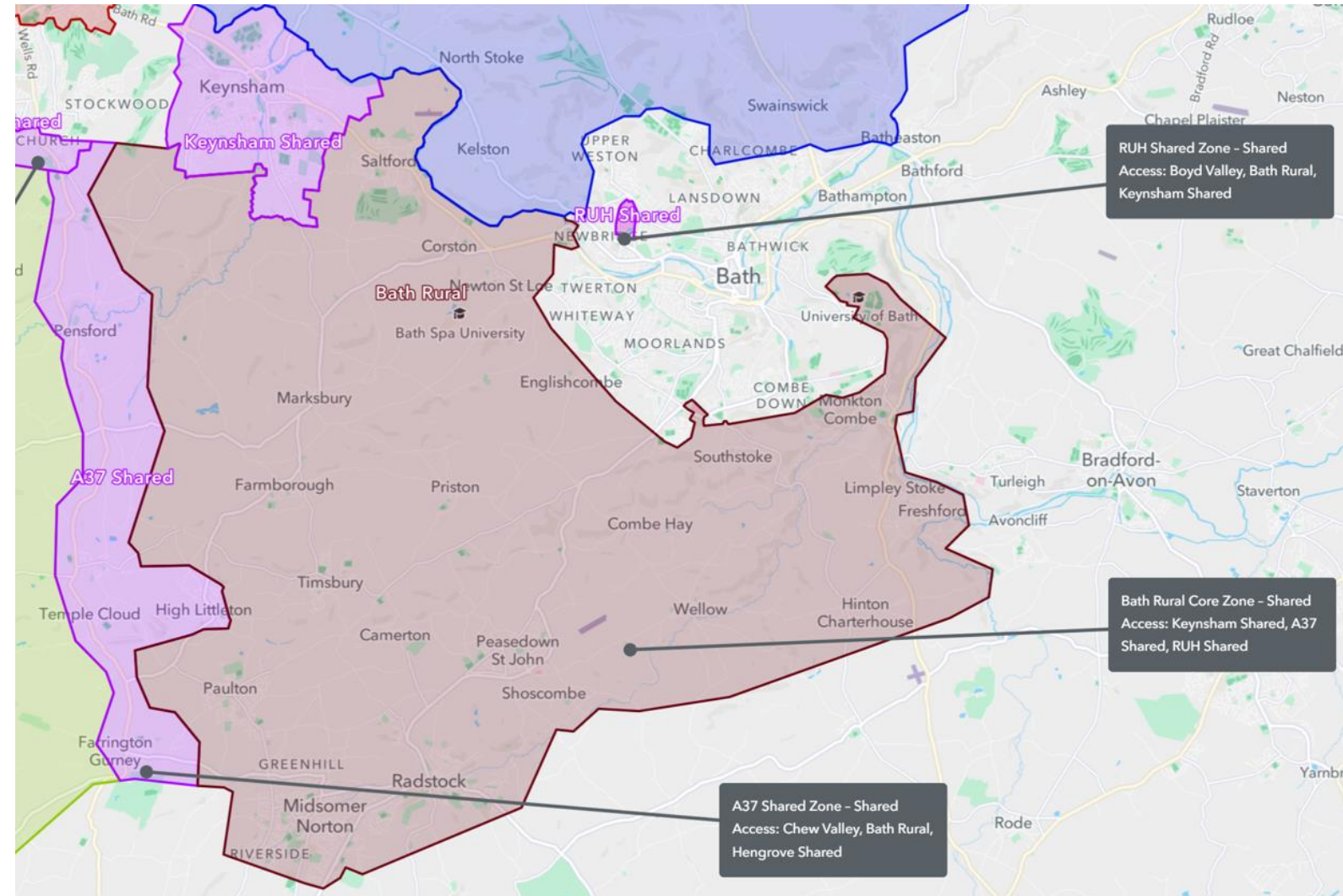


- To the west, the zone follows the NSC boundary before absorbing NSC area of north of Felton, which is considered part of the Chew Valley despite being in North Somerset. The Zone was split here to create a new Airport Shared Zone, incorporating the A38, with Blagdon still accessible from the Airport Shared zone.
- A37 Shared Zone extended into High Littleton allowing users within Chew Valley to connect with the 522 bus service for journeys to and from Bristol, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Peasedown St John, and Bath.
- Users will no longer be able to travel into central Bristol using WESTlink. However, a spur has been created in Withywood to allow connections onto bus service 75 into Bristol.
- The Zone has also been split to the North creating a new Hengrove Shared Zone. Chew Valley users can access Hengrove for its retail, leisure, healthcare, and public transport links interchange opportunities i.e. the high frequency m1 metrobus to and from Bristol.
- Chew Valley is accessible by Hengrove Shared, Airport Shared and A37 Shared.

Shared Zones



Shared Zones – RUH Shared, A37 Shared, Keynsham Shared



RUH Shared:

- Accessible to and from: Boyd Valley, Keynsham Shared, Bath Rural

A37:

- Accessible to and from: Chew Valley, Bath Rural, Hengrove Shared

Keynsham Shared

- Accessible to and from: Boyd Valley, RUH Shared, Bath Rural

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Questions

Bristol City Council Area

- Core Zone
 - Bristol South
 - FTZ
- Shared Zones
 - Hengrove Shared

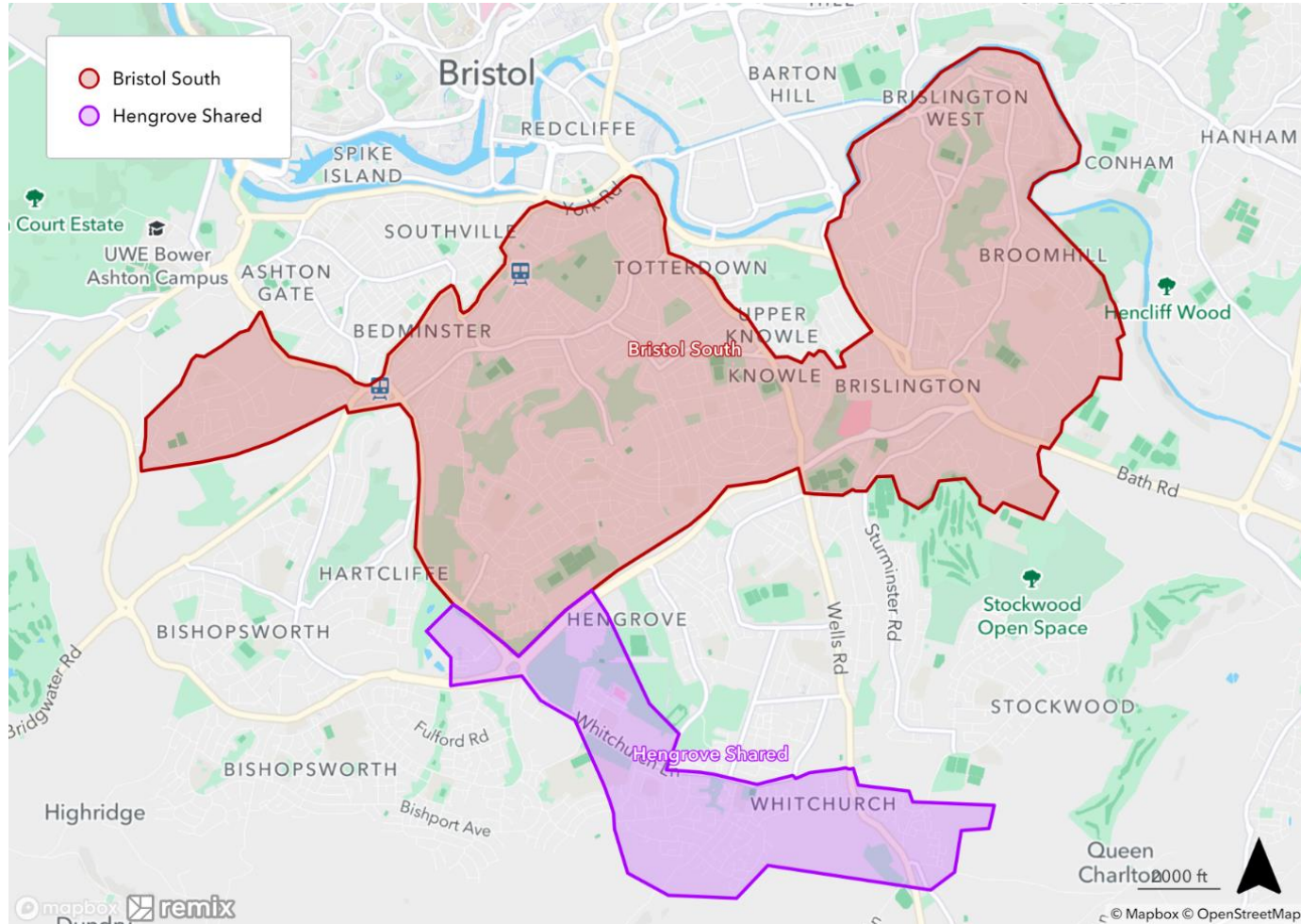


Bristol South Zone



Core Zone – South Bristol

Shared Zones – Hengrove



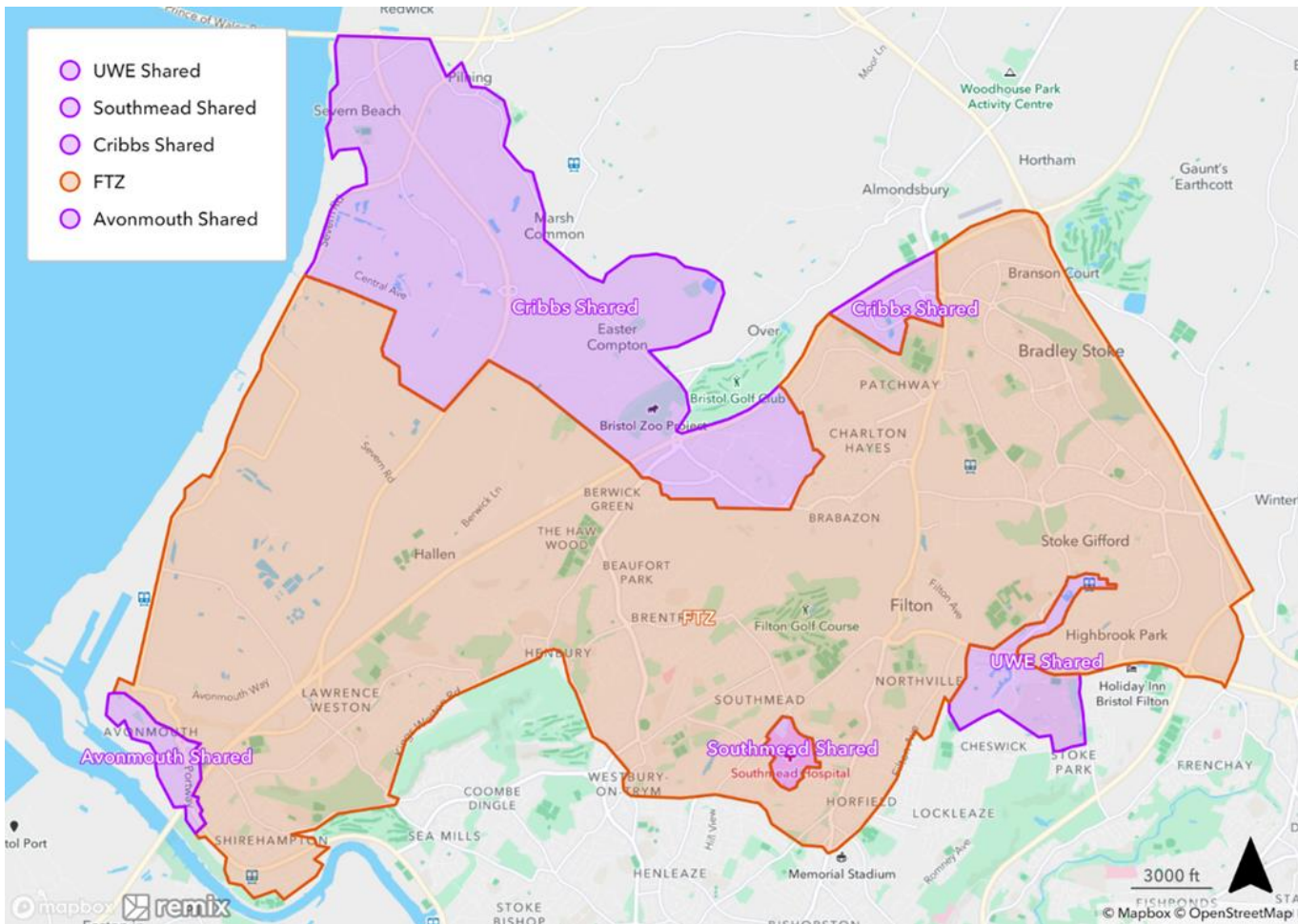
- Bristol South Zone retains similar boundaries to its current extent at present, taking in Windmill Hill, Totterdown, Knowle, Knowle West, St Anne's and much of Brislington.
- Zone has been split south of Hartcliffe Way, creating a new Hengrove Shared Zone. This Shared zone retains Bristol Zone Residents access to Hengrove's commerce, leisure, and healthcare facilities, while limiting long distance journeys into Bristol from surrounding Zones.
- South Bristol Zone has also expanded in some areas where current public transport offerings were weaker. These areas are **Ashton Vale** and **Hungerford Road**, as well as **West Town Lane**. Shortly after the introduction of WESTlink there were appeals from the **Hungerford Road** area to be included in the Zone. We are now able to add this area in.
- The Hengrove Shared Area has also been slightly expanded from the original zone, bringing in the area surrounding the **Hengrove Leisure Park**, including its cinema, restaurants, and bingo hall.

FTZ – Future Transport Zone



Core Zone – FTZ – Future Transport Zone (also crosses in **South Gloucestershire Council** area)

Shared Zones – Avonmouth Shared, Southmead Shared, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared



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Shared Zones

Shared Zones – Hengrove Shared, Avonmouth Shared, Southmead Shared

Hengrove Shared:

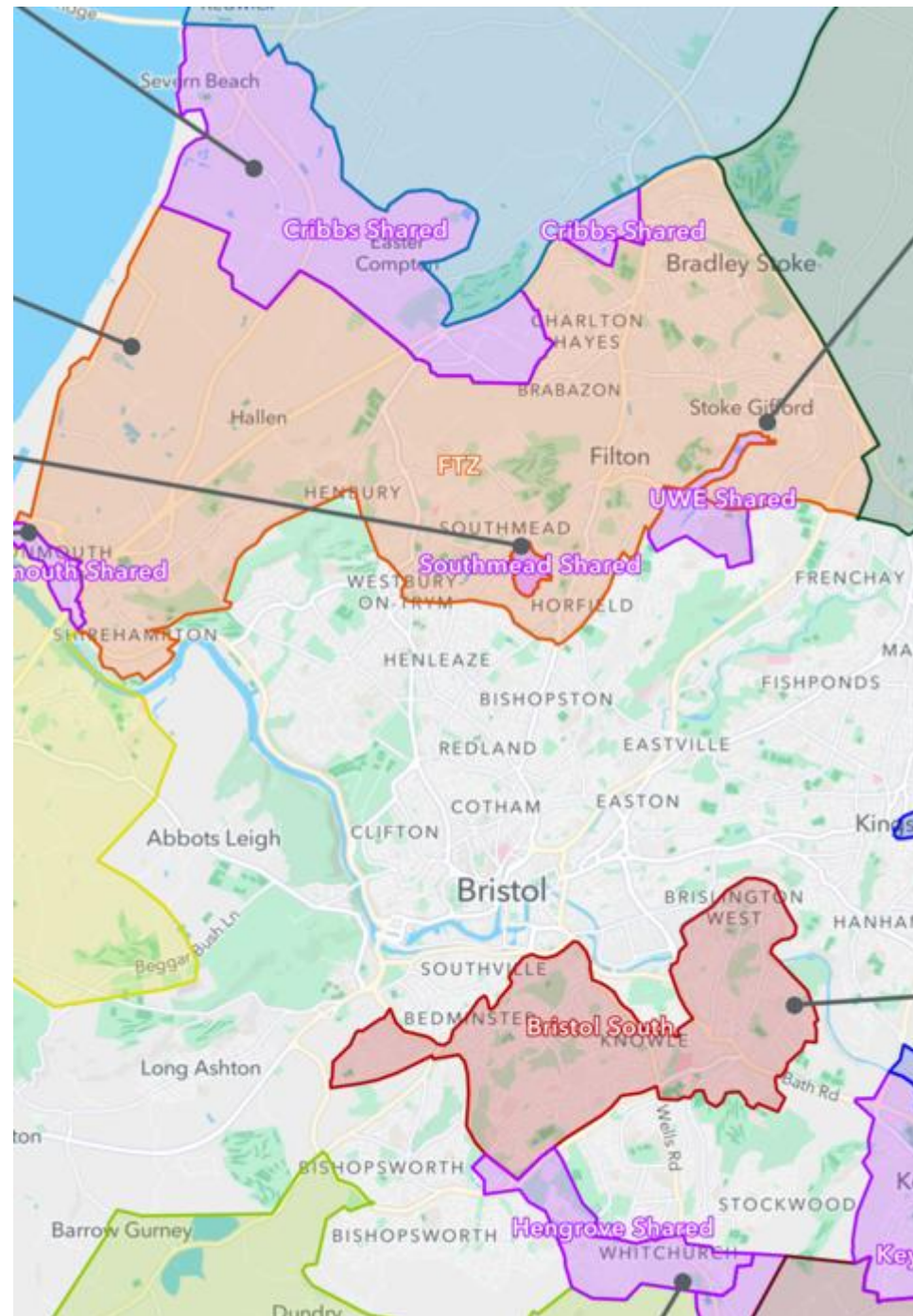
- Bristol South, Chew Valley, A37 Shared, Airport Shared

Avonmouth Shared:

- Portishead, FTZ, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared, Southmead Shared

Southmead Shared

- FTZ, UWE Shared, Cribbs Shared, Avonmouth Shared, Yate Rural, Thornbury Rural, Thornbury Shared, Yate Shared



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Questions

Other changes coming into effect on 8 April 2024



- Booking changes - Offered the best available option which sometimes will be a standard, scheduled bus service, and not a *WESTlink*
- Breaking news – AvonRider Multi-Operator Ticket!

Communications

Marcia Daniels & David Frape



Changes are coming – w/c 18 March

- Press release
- Councillor briefing (with info to follow)
- Stakeholder email
- Website updates – TravelWest and Combined Authority
- Customer email
- App push notification
- Social media

Zone maps – w/c 25 March

- Overall zone map information leaflets
 - On bus
 - Available on request (via westlink@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)
- On-bus posters
- Individual zone maps and FAQs online and on request
- App push notification
- Customer email
- Social media

Launch

- No pre-booking available and no Sunday service on 7 April in FTZ zone
 - Reminder email
 - App push notification
- Website changes and social media – 8 April

The logo for WEST (West of England Sustainable Transport) features the word "WEST" in a bold, white, italicized sans-serif font. The letters are closely spaced, and the 'E' and 'S' have a distinctive, stylized shape.

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Thank you and questions