

**Diamond Bus are aware that customers currently have some concerns regarding our proposed service review and complaints about the current operational issues that we have encountered in some of our service areas.**

We have identified some key themes that have caused concern and wish to respond to customers regarding these issues.

Please find below some recent frequently highlighted comments, we hope that our below responses will give customers further insight into the reasons behind our decisions.

**1. Diamond services are unreliable – Passengers are having to wait over 30-45mins+ for services to arrive:**

For a number of months, Diamond Bus have been making a considerable loss by providing the current bus provision in Worcestershire. Our labour costs form over 50% of our income, therefore we have been looking internally how to reduce our operating costs. Approximately 6 months ago we tweaked some of the working schedules for services - this did not create operational issues for us or an increase in passenger complaints.

Following this, we recently changed the schedules further, to help reduce costs. This did not reduce journeys, but reduced standing time. This has caused some delays and we have seen an increase in complaints. After identifying this latest change has caused some issues we have now put resources in place to increase supervision and making Peak-Time adjustments to put additional running time in. We are continuing to review our changes to see what is workable, both for the company and passengers.

**2. Because Diamond services are unreliable – Passengers lives are significantly affected by being late for school, college or having wages docked for lateness at work:**

We apologise sincerely for any inconvenience our services have caused customers. As we have set out in our recent press releases, we face some serious circumstances with many loss-making services. As a company, we felt it was better to look for ways in which we could reduce costs initially to save these services before we had to take the decision to remove some of them completely.

**3. Diamond claim passenger numbers are too low, but if services were more reliable, more people would catch them:**

The current dilemma is not only a Diamond Bus issue, it is an industry-wide problem created by a national reduction in the number of people using buses post COVID.

Like any operator we do suffer from reliability problems – sometimes this is down to operational issues such as vehicle failure or staff availability. However other external factors such as congestion problems also contribute to issues on our network.

We continue to provide our bus tracking services via the Diamond App to aid customers plan their journey and ensure service disruption is visible to customers.

Although unfortunately delays have been experienced on some services, over the whole Diamond network we can assure residents that we are not suffering high levels of lost mileage, that our services are running and we continue to work hard to resolve any outstanding issues as quickly as possible.

**4. Bus services would attract more passengers if they ran more frequently or at later times etc:**

We would like services to run longer and later to meet locals needs, however with much reduced passenger numbers and low service revenue it is difficult to consider extending operating hours.

We do have some infrequent services. Historically the frequency has reduced because there aren't enough people using those services. Rather than remove them altogether we have tried to maintain some form of service on a less-frequent basis. These services have always been unviable for the business

**5. Why have Diamond just bought Johnsons Excelbuses, if they claim bus services are not viable?**

Rotala Plc the parent company of Diamond Bus has sufficient working capital and overall the group is profitable.

The investment in Johnsons was made to introduce more business into Diamond, to spread the overhead and effectively improve the break-even point for our Redditch Depot. The acquisition has therefore helped Redditch.

**6. Why have Diamond taken on new services when they cant operate what they already have?**

The increase in operational issues is a short term problem and connected to changes in working schedule, as explained in point 1.

Additionally, problems experienced with the new services in Warwickshire, were as a result of our need to quickly build knowledge around a complex set of routes and timetables following the Johnsons Excelbus acquisition. Over the last three weeks of operation reliability on our Stratford bus services has significantly improved.

**7. What are people who rely on the bus services that are likely to be cancelled going to do?**

As a company we do not want to cut services, ultimately we want to grow our services to keep communities moving. We have been in discussion with Local Authorities, MPs and councillors to make them aware of the situation and hope that by working together we can collectively improve this position.

For a long time we have operated services which are unviable and we have not taken this decision lightly. However our business is losing around £1m per year and we can not continue as we are.

We would encourage concerned residents contact their local district councillor / MP / Council regarding their concerns. We have made them aware of our intentions and they may have a strategy to deal with this.

**If customers are experiencing problems with their service we always request that they let us know. The details they provide helps us to focus our attention and to analyse the impact of the changes we have made. We would encourage customers to get in touch with us directly at [comments@diamondbuses.com](mailto:comments@diamondbuses.com)**

**The latest updates on the development of service reviews will continue to be found here: <https://www.diamondbuses.com/news/diamond-midlands-review/>**

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