

No gap in saved bus services affecting passengers in Coates, Eastrea, March and Whittlesey

Passengers of two threatened bus services, which the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority stepped in to save, can now look forward to no gap in service when the operator pulls out after August 31.

Earlier this year Stagecoach announced it would pull out of several services in Cambridgeshire after August 31, including the 31 route between Ramsey and Whittlesey and the nine route between Littleport and Cambridge. Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Paul Bristow called for them to be saved.

Last month, the Combined Authority Board agreed funding to go out to tender with bus operators to keep the services, but there was a risk that new operators would only be running services from the start of 2026, meaning a gap in service. Mr Bristow said the Combined Authority would work hard to try to cover the gap.

A short-term continuity plan has now been agreed. From September 1, the 31 between Ramsey and Whittlesey will be operated by Dews, and the nine between Cambridge and Littleport by A2B. Both will run broadly the same journeys that passengers rely on today.

Alongside safeguarding current routes, work is also under way on ways to improve the nine service, with timetable options being tested with councillors and parish representatives. The aim is for a more joined-up service which works better for passengers and communities.

In June, the Combined Authority Board also agreed to step in to save another service - the section of route between March and Whittlesey - to prevent the villages of Eastrea and Coates being cut off from Peterborough.

From September 1, Dews will operate two new services: the X32, running direct between March and Whittlesey via Coates and Eastrea, and the 32, which adds two return trips serving Turves and extends to Ramsey to supplement the 31.

Passengers can use the 31 and 32/X32 to reach Whittlesey, then connect onto the 33 for onward travel to Peterborough.

Mr Bristow said: "My pledge to get Cambridgeshire and Peterborough moving wasn't just a slogan, it's happening.

"These services are lifelines for the towns and villages they serve, and we've acted to protect them. I also said we'd work to avoid what would have been a very difficult gap in service for passengers who rely on them. I'm glad we can reassure passengers that there won't be.

"While we work on an affordable, deliverable plan for franchising, I'm determined we keep our bus services doing what they should – keeping people connected and supporting our towns and villages."

