

West of England Joint Transport Executive Committee
13th March 2014

Views of Joint Scrutiny Committee

Purpose

1. To inform members of the views of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) following a meeting held on Wednesday 5th March 2014

Joint Scrutiny Committee Views

2. The following members were present at the meeting:

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Martin Veal
Cllr Lisa Brett

Bristol City Council
Cllr Tim Kent
Cllr Chris Windows (sub for Cllr Weston)
Cllr Steve Pearce (sub for Cllr Holland)

North Somerset Council
Cllr Tony Moulin
Cllr David Pasley

South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Pat Hockey
Cllr Bill Bowrey

3. The JSC received representations during the public forum on the following:

- Bus services, to and from Southmead Hospital, the subsequent loss of services when Frenchay Hospital is closed
- Confusion around the branding of West of England transport services
- The importance and need to work with neighbouring LEPs particularly in the light of the floods that were impacting on rail services
- That the West of England LEP should pressure government to assist with a speedy re-opening on the rail lines in the south west
- Funding for transport schemes should not be vired to other projects

Officers explained that these concerns would be communicated to the Local Transport Board. There were already regular discussions between neighbouring LEPs and ongoing contact with Network Rail.

Questions regarding local railway matters were asked (the responses to the original questions are at Appendix 1 to this report), the following supplementary questions were put:

- The necessity to have manned stations where there was a gradient of 1:75.
 - The feasibility study would reveal the appropriate location for the stations and whether manning may or may not be required.
- The necessary strength of business case required for stations serving Southmead and Ashley Hill.
 - All rail proposals had to meet the appropriate benefit cost ratio
- The possibility of bringing forward spending allocations
 - These had been set under devolved funding. The first 6 year allocation had been set aside for Phase 1. Previously the DfT had said that it was not possible to bring forward allocations or borrow against them

- Funding rail projects from Sec 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
 - There were no set limits to the level that could be set with developers, however the figure had to be reasonable within the context of a development and not impact upon it's viability.
4. Members received a presentation from Chris Aldridge of Network Rail, who commented on the good relationship shared with West of England officers and gave information on the following:
- The electrification of the Great Western Main Line
 - New train sets that would be deployed in the area
 - The cascade of rolling stock from May 2016 into the West of England area from the southeast
 - A description of some the works being carried out on the local network
 - The redevelopment of Temple Meads Station

Members commented on and asked questions:

- Flooding issues on the lines to the south west and the possibility of future proofing when restorative works were being carried out.
 - A number of different options were being explored
- The possibility of additional government funding to assist with the work.
 - This was being looked at
- The possible time savings of journeys between Bristol and London following electrification
 - There would be an increased frequency of service and saving in time of approximately 25 minutes
- Services to Weston-super-Mare following electrification
 - Bi-mode train sets would mean that they could continue beyond Temple Meads
- The possibility of creating an Enterprise Zone around Weston-super-Mare Station to enhance the possibility of enhancing the infrastructure.
 - Each LEP had been asked to designate one Enterprise Zone and that is at Temple Quarter, Bristol. The West of England decided to designate five Enterprise Areas as well. There is already an Enterprise Area designated at Junction 21.
- Would the increase in speeds result in changes to fare levels?
 - This would be a matter for train operators
- Had the four-tracking at Filton Bank been signed off?
 - The final work around project deliverability was being carried out and a funding announcement was expected in October
- How would passenger numbers be monitored on the new trains and could the information be made available?
 - They would have equipment to count numbers but in terms of sharing information this would be a matter for the operators
- The impact of the expansion of Bristol Port upon the freight line of Avonmouth and possible electrification, would this result in an increase in speeds?
 - Weight governed the speed of freight trains and electrification wouldn't have an impact on this. It was a matter for the freight operators as to whether the line would be electrified.
- Regarding the redevelopment of Temple Meads, would there be any scope to raise the height of the viaduct at the Bristol East Junction.
 - This would be a significant engineering project which would require the raising of the level of the station so it was unlikely that this could be achieved
- The ownership of the land at the Bristol East Depot and St Phillips Marsh

- This would be checked and members advised at a later date.
5. Members were advised of the new arrangements for the Joint Transport Executive Committee (JTEC) and the Local Transport Body Board (LTB) to be run as one single meeting, but under the respective constitutions with the heading of the West of England Joint Transport Board.
- Members noted this, but concern was expressed about the Joint Scrutiny Committee's capacity to deal with these issues as well other aspects of the LEP which might lead to a democratic deficit in terms of decision making and accountability.
 - It was explained that it was envisaged that the role of Joint Scrutiny would be strengthened with the development of a new assurance framework.
 - The chair commented that he was continuing to make representations about the resourcing of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

James White gave members an update on MetroWest.

Members commented on and asked questions on the following:

- Concern was expressed about the capacity of the Henbury Line to accommodate both passenger and freight services.
- The possible need to reserve or safeguard land along the line.
 - The initial modelling work carried out by consultants indicated that both types of trains could be run. However it should be noted that Bristol Port envisaged increased freight traffic on the line. Most of the line was double tracked.
- It was a concern that planning applications were being made to South Gloucestershire Council that impacted upon land use along the line.
 - There was a degree of flexibility which meant that any loops required could be placed at various points.

Pete Davis then updated members on major schemes. It was noted by members that the measures introduced as a result of the Weston Package had made a great difference to congestion and journey times, all involved in the delivery and completion of the project were to be congratulated.

Recommendation

6. That members note the views of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee

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Appendix One

Answers to questions submitted by Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways

Appendix One

Response to Friends of Suburban Bristol Railway questions to Joint Scrutiny on 5 March 2014

1a: Where in this Network Rail document is the requirement for staffing stations on a gradient found?

In the Network Rail Guide for Station and Planning Design (July 2011), and the Network Rail Investment in Stations- A Guide for Promoters and Developers (May 2011), there are several chapters on the requirement for safe design as a primary design feature.

After reading this material in detail and engaging with the local Network Rail Planning Team they have advised that certain considerations must be made for the promotion of stations on a gradient. They include the manning of the station to supervise passenger movement on the platform, engineering the grade out of the station environment and the installation of CCTV to monitor passenger movements.

1b: Why it is considered that staffing may be necessary, considering that all local trains have guards who could act in an emergency?

The manning of the station would offer supervision to the station environment particularly when trains are not at the station. Stations on a steep gradient introduce the risk of prams, bikes and wheel chairs rolling down the platform potentially causing injury to passengers. Train guards have a duty to supervise and manage the risk of injury to passengers on board trains and not at stations.

1c: Can you give an example of a station that would otherwise not be staffed which has been required to be staffed because of gradient issues?

The new station development at Corby was originally on a gradient of approximately 1:400. When the station promoters engaged with Network Rail on the development of this station they were challenged on the steepness of the grade. The promoters were asked to consider staffing the station to minimise risk. After negotiations with Network Rail and the Office of Rail Regulation, the promoters of Corby Station were allowed a variation of 1:230 for the development of the station. This required significant engineering mitigation to achieve this reduction in grade.

We are not aware of any station that have been required to man a station on a gradient as all recent station developments have sought mitigation to design stations on gradients of 1:230 or less.

2: Given that the whole City Deal allocation has now been used up on MetroWest Phase 1 and non-rail projects thus leaving MetroWest Phase unfunded, can WEP comment on the timing and budgeting of the following further possible sources of finance for MetroWest Phase 2 [2a to 2d]:

The £81.4m City Deal (devolved major transport scheme) allocation has not been used up on MetroWest Phase 1 and non-rail projects as the table below shows although funding for Phase 2 will only be available from 2021 and there is a potential shortfall.

Cost* Devolved allocation

Shortfall

	2015/16 – 2020/21		2021/22 – 2024/25	
MetroWest Phase 1	£55.4m	£44.9m	-	£8.3m
MetroWest Phase 2	£43.1m	-	£36.5m	£4.5m
Totals	£98.5m	£44.9m	£36.5m	£12.8m

*out turn costs.

2a) Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy on the four developers (Skanska, Redrow, Persimmon, and Bridgehouse) of the 5,700 houses planned for Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood Scheme plus 2,200 houses in Charlton;

Policy CS26 of the South Gloucestershire Council's adopted Core Strategy sets out the strategic infrastructure requirements for the Cribbs/ Patchway New Neighbourhood including those relating to transport, and these requirements are amplified in the draft Cribbs/ Patchway New Neighbourhood Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Following the end of public consultation on 28th February 2014 the SPD is being reported to South Gloucestershire Council's Planning, Transport and Strategic Environment committee on 26th March 2014, with a view to adopting it.

2b) Asking the above developers to consider designing and building the three local railway stations (Henbury, Charlton and North Filton) themselves;

See the answer to 2a) above.

2c) Strategic Economic Plan accessing £2bn Structural Investment Fund (EU) as drafted by West of England LEP;

Under guidance issued by the Government to Local Enterprise Partnerships in 2013 there is insufficient EU Structural and Investment Fund Growth Programme Funding available to make major infrastructure investments.

The £2bn figure quoted probably refers to the national Local Growth Fund allocation for 2015/16.

Local Growth Fund bids will be made through the West of England's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The draft SEP bid includes bids for £8.5m to make up the shortfall for MetroWest Phase 1 and £3.2m towards the development costs of MetroWest Phase 2.

2d) Regional Growth Fund?

Round five of the Regional Growth Fund has finished. Whilst a round six is expected in summer 2014 it should be noted that funding is aimed at helping businesses create jobs rather than for local authority transport schemes.

A £43m Regional Growth Fund bid was previously made for the Portishead Line in 2011 but this was unsuccessful on grounds of not generating enough jobs and being deliverable within the timescale the funding had to be spent.

West of England
5 March 2014