



(Draft minutes – subject to confirmation as a correct record at next meeting of Bristol City Council)

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF
BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2015 AT 6.00 p.m.**

- P The Lord Mayor - Councillor Campion-Smith
- P The Deputy Lord Mayor - Councillor Watson
- P The Mayor - George Ferguson
- A Councillor Abraham
- P Councillor Alexander
- P Councillor Bolton
- A Councillor Bradshaw
- P Councillor Brain
- P Councillor Breckels
- A Councillor Budd
- P Councillor Cheney
- P Councillor Clark
- P Councillor Clarke
- P Councillor Cook
- A Councillor Daniels
- A Councillor Davies
- P Councillor Denyer
- P Councillor Eddy
- A Councillor Fodor
- A Councillor Frost
- P Councillor Glazzard
- A Councillor Gollop
- P Councillor Goulandris
- P Councillor Greaves
- A Councillor Hance
- P Councillor Harvey
- P Councillor Hickman
- P Councillor Hiscott
- P Councillor Holland
- P Councillor Hopkins
- A Councillor Hoyt
- A Councillor Jackson
- P Councillor Jama
- A Councillor Joffe
- P Councillor Kent
- A Councillor Khan
- A Councillor Kirk

P Councillor Langley
P Councillor Leaman
P Councillor Lovell
A Councillor Lucas
A Councillor Malnick
A Councillor McMullen
P Councillor Massey
P Councillor Mead
P Councillor Means
A Councillor Melias
P Councillor Milestone
A Councillor Mongon
A Councillor Morgan
A Councillor D Morris
P Councillor G Morris
P Councillor Negus
A Councillor Payne
P Councillor Pearce
P Councillor Phipps
P Councillor Quartley
A Councillor Radice
A Councillor Rylatt
P Councillor Shah
P Jenny Smith
A Councillor Stafford-Townsend
P Councillor Stone
A Rob Telford
P Councillor Thomas
A Councillor Threlfall
P Councillor Tincknell
P Councillor Weston
P Councillor Windows
P Councillor Wollacott
A Councillor Wright

Honorary aldermen and alderwomen in attendance:

S Comer, A Massey, J McLaren

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(agenda item 1)

There were no declarations of interest.

31. STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(agenda item 2)

Statements:

The Full Council received and noted the following statements:

Re: agenda item 3 - Call-in referral – West of England Joint Transport Board decision – Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case:

- Statement PS 01 from Martin Garrett
- Statement PS 02 from David Redgewell
- Statement PS 03 from Gavin Smith
- Statement PS 04 from Charlotte Leslie MP
- Statement PS 05 from Nigel Currie
- Statement PS 06 from Rob Dixon
- Statement PS 07 from Alderman Sean Emmett

Statements were presented by those individuals who were present at the meeting.

In addition, at the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Cllr Brian Allinson, Chair of the West of England Joint Transport Board made a verbal statement.

Questions:

The Full Council noted that the following questions had been received:

Re: agenda item 3 - Call-in referral – West of England Joint Transport Board decision – Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case:

- Questions 1 & 2 from Christina Biggs
- Questions 3 & 4 from Rob Dixon
- Questions 5 & 6 from Brendan Biggs
- Questions 7 & 8 from Jenny Smith

Cllr Cook, Assistant Mayor for Place gave verbal responses to those questioners who were present at the meeting, and also responded to supplementary questions.

32. CALL-IN REFERRAL: WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT TRANSPORT BOARD DECISION – METROWEST PHASE 2 PRELIMINARY BUSINESS CASE (agenda item 3)

The Full Council considered a report of the Service Director - Legal & Democratic Services requesting that (following a referral by the Bristol West of England Call-In Sub-Committee), the Full Council debate the Joint Transport Board's decision on the Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case, with a view to determining either:

- a. To object to the decision and refer it back to the Board, together with its views; or
- b. Not to object to the decision, in which case the decision would become effective immediately.

Following the debate, the Full Council voted on the following motion:

- “That Full Council objects to the Joint Transport Board decision on Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case, and that it be referred back to the Board, together with the views of Full Council.”

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was CARRIED (39 members voting in favour, 1 against, with 3 abstentions), and it was accordingly

RESOLVED:

- **That Full Council objects to the Joint Transport Board decision on Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case, and that it be referred back to the Board, together with the views of Full Council.**
(Note: a summary of the views of members as expressed during the debate is set out at appendix A).

(The meeting ended at 7.36 p.m.)

LORD MAYOR

Appendix A to Minutes of Extraordinary Full Council - 27 August 2015

Summary of views of members as expressed during the debate on agenda item 3: Call-in referral - West of England Joint Transport Board decision – Metrowest phase 2 preliminary business case

1. Cllr Holland:

- Those councillors who had called-in the decision were fully aware of the processes/procedures involved in taking forward the Metrowest business case via the Joint Transport Board, and of the relevant DfT criteria/requirements. There was no question, in any sense, that today's Full Council meeting was about "playing games" with this important issue.
- It was important to recognise that the key reason why this decision had been called-in was because there was a very strong local desire and necessity for a Henbury rail loop, not just a spur. A clearer message about the importance of achieving a Henbury loop should have been given to the consultants at the outset.
- As per her comments at the 7 August Call-In Sub-Committee, there had been shortcomings in the process leading to this decision. In particular, there had been insufficient scrutiny and consultation with local people, the local neighbourhood partnership and groups such as FoSBR, all of whom could have helped to inform and enhance the case for a Henbury loop. A far better case for the loop could have been made.
- Overall, the way in which this decision had been reached had left an impression that the Joint Transport Board was not committed to the Henbury loop.

2. Cllr Weston:

- He fully supported the above comments of Cllr Holland.
- In terms of process, he felt there had been a particular failing around a very lengthy, detailed report (approx. 1400 pages) being published on 9 July, in advance of a decision to be taken by the Joint Transport Board on 17 July. Although the report had been available, there had not been a reasonable/realistic opportunity or time for effective scrutiny of this report ahead of the Board's 17 July decision.
- Another clear process failing had been experienced due to officers not attending the local neighbourhood partnership to discuss the report, thus restricting the opportunity for local input and debate.
- In his view, the report considered by the Joint Transport Board contained major flaws in that it underestimated passenger numbers and passenger growth potential. The implications of future demand from development in and around north Bristol had not been given sufficient weight in his view.
- The report highlighted that if the loop was pursued, 3 items of additional rolling stock would be required but did not consider other options.
- He questioned the validity of the business case. Following the 7 August Call-In Sub-Committee, he had submitted some detailed questions. The responses he had subsequently received from officers contained insufficient detail and did not address his concerns.
- In his view, the Full Council should refer the decision back to the Joint Transport Board. There needed to be an opportunity for proper scrutiny to take place; the key figures in the consultants' report needed to be checked

for robustness; it was essential that that any work taken forward on a Henbury spur was “future proofed” to take full account of the requirements of the loop.

3. Cllr Bolton:

- He strongly supported the case for a Henbury loop at this stage, not the option of the spur alone.
- The decision to pursue the spur option at this stage seemed to be based on “following the money” available rather than being based on the right and appropriate thing to do. This showed a lack of ambition.
- A Henbury loop would form the basis of a local rail network, and would begin to address the serious issues of tackling congestion, improving air quality and providing a more sustainable transport system into the future.
- Bristol needed an ambitious rail strategy.
- He was concerned about the accuracy of some of the projections in the consultants’ report, e.g. he found the projected figures for the additional new journeys per year that would be generated by the loop difficult to believe, and the passenger growth numbers seemed suspiciously low / underestimated in the business case.

4. Cllr Hopkins:

- There had been a lack of ambition for a Henbury loop from the outset. The assumptions on which the consultants had developed the business case seemed to have been based on encouraging the spur option.
- He seriously questioned a number of the assumptions in the business case, especially in relation to service frequency and passenger numbers. The impact of development in and around north Bristol had been underestimated.
- A much stronger business case for the loop could have been made if a different approach to the assumptions made had been adopted. The Mayor should also in any event be pushing the case with central government if necessary for increased resources to support the loop.
- He was also concerned that insufficient conditions had been included (regarding the loop) in terms of the recent decision to sell the freehold of Council land to the Bristol Port Company.
- The Full Council should not now be in the position of considering this call-in; proper processes should have been followed from the outset.

5. Cllr Tincknell:

- She drew attention to the campaign led by Alderman Emmett and others over the last 10 years in support of improved rail services and rail stations to support the Horfield and Lockleaze areas.
- The Lockleaze area was poorly served by public transport. The decision of the Joint Transport Board to not support a Henbury loop seemed to “fly in the face” of community planning (the Lockleaze neighbourhood plan was currently being consulted on) and ignored the increased demand for better public transport which would be generated by future housing development in and around north Bristol.
- Given this, the Joint Transport Board needed to rethink their priorities, and should if necessary press the government for increased resources.

6. Cllr Windows:

- He supported the comments of Cllr Weston and was appalled by the Joint Transport Board decision, and was particularly concerned about the assumptions/figures included in the consultants' report about estimated passenger numbers and passenger growth potential.
- In his view, the decision should be referred back to the Joint Transport Board for re-consideration.

7. Cllr Clarke:

- He was concerned that the Joint Transport Board was supporting a Henbury spur rather than the loop. He was not convinced by the arguments for this – the consultants' report did not seem to “smell right.”
- He was not clear as to why the report linked the loop in with demand from Yate.
- He queried how much additional cost would be involved if the Henbury spur was extended to a loop at a later stage (compared with taking the loop option forward now).
- If parameters/assumptions had been set differently, would this have produced a stronger business case for the loop?
- The decision should be referred back to the Joint Transport Board for re-consideration. In his view, consideration should be given to commissioning a fresh report to reassess the business case.
- He was concerned that the West of England scrutiny function was insufficiently resourced.

8. Cllr Negus:

- Decisions taken by the Joint Transport Board were crucial to Bristol and the Bristol region.
- If the parameters / assumptions were changed, would that change the outcome of the assessment made / decision reached by the Joint Transport Board? It was essential to secure the best deal possible for Bristol and to avoid a situation that might result in a substantial delay in delivering improved local rail services.
- He was very concerned about certain comments included in the public forum statement submitted by Charlotte Leslie MP, which in his view seemed to question the partiality of Joint Transport Board members.

9. Cllr Mead:

- He was concerned that the consultants' report had not taken sufficient account of the “bigger picture” implications of significant housing development (e.g. at the former Filton airfield site) on the already congested and heavily used arterial and other routes in and around north Bristol.
- Given this, it was essential to provide public transport solutions, i.e. rail options which would address/reduce road use. Bristol needed a proper local rail system to take pressure off the road system. In his view, as part of a local rail system, a station at Horfield would be well used.
- As per the comments of other members, he was sceptical about the assumptions made by the consultants about passenger numbers and projections.

10. Cllr Eddy:

- He was fully supportive of the call-in of this decision.
- In his view, the opportunity cost of not going ahead with the Henbury loop at this stage needed to be considered.
- The current “gridlock” on Bristol’s roads needed to be addressed – previous opportunities in the 1980s/90s had been missed. An improved local rail system was essential, including the Henbury loop. Consideration needed to be given also to improving rail services in other parts of the city, e.g. the enhancement of passenger services available from Parson Street station and potential delivery of a new Ashton/Ashton Gate railway station.

11. Cllr Pearce:

- The current situation represented a “crunch” time for the Council and the Joint Transport Board. It was essential to secure the best deal possible, and view the situation with a long term (25-50 year ahead) perspective.
- In his view, it was clear that the Henbury loop would serve the people of Bristol better (than the spur option) given the housing growth projections for north Bristol. The spur decision seemed to be “a siding we’ve been shunted into.”
- He was concerned (from conversations with councillors from across the West of England region) that the West of England scrutiny function was not properly resourced, to help enable sound judgements to be reached – he suggested that Bristol and the 3 neighbouring authorities should each consider making £15,000 available to resource a policy/scrutiny officer to support the West of England scrutiny function, and to help tackle the current “stranglehold of processes.”

12. Cllr Hiscott:

- She referred to the development of the metro rail network in Sunderland as a good example of a city that had taken forward a local rail network, with a network of local stations.
- Bristol needed and deserved an effective local rail network, including the Henbury loop – the alternative was to condemn north Bristol to “gridlock”.
- She paid tribute to the work undertaken by Charlotte Leslie MP in connection with the case for the Henbury loop.

Summary of points made by Cllr Simon Cook, Assistant Mayor for Place in responding to the debate:

- He took seriously the points raised by members about West of England scrutiny.
- The report (as considered by the Joint Transport Board on 17 July) had been circulated to the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee members, together with a request for comments. Only 2 comments had been received in response.
- Nevertheless, in light of the comments made by members at today’s meeting, if the Full Council decided to refer the decision back to the Joint Transport Board, his view was that a joint scrutiny committee meeting (to examine the report in detail) should be held in advance of the further Joint Transport Board meeting.

- He also felt (in light of the comments raised during the public forum and during today's debate questioning figures and assumptions from the consultants' report) that there would be merit in arranging a "face-to-face" meeting involving the consultants, councillors and interested groups to enable a frank discussion about these aspects. He would look to initiate the arrangement of such a meeting.
- The Joint Transport Board had taken its decision based on the consultants' report. The Board had also needed to ensure that its decision fell within the £43m cost envelope.
- It was important to recognise that reputable consultants had been engaged, who had strived to present the Board with an expert, fair and balanced view, taking into account the cost envelope.
- In reaching their decision, the Board had interrogated the figures included in the consultants' report, including assumptions on passenger numbers and the implications of development in and around north Bristol, including the development of the former Filton airfield site.
- The Board had not taken a decision "against" a Henbury loop. The Board had instead supported a phased approach – the decision supported a spur at this stage, with the long term prospects for a Henbury loop to be considered by the West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Future Transport Study.
- If the decision was referred back to the Joint Transport Board by the Full Council, the Board would face the same situation in relation to the cost envelope. In his view, the Board should not change its decision – any delay due to the Board rejecting the consultants' report and commissioning further work would result in increased costs, and a potential 3-4 year delay in securing DfT funding. In such circumstances, it was possible that the area could even be penalised by the Chancellor for failing to deliver its plans in accordance with the rules/guidance set by central government – in which case it was possible that no improvements would be secured if the proposals were to fall.
- His request to Full Council was therefore that the Joint Transport Board decision should be accepted, to enable the submission of the business case to the DfT to continue.

Summary of points made by Mayor Ferguson in responding to the debate:

- He had listened to the debate with great interest. He was mindful of the points made about securing the best transport deal for Bristol and referred to past, missed opportunities.
- Bristol had fallen behind other cities. He had clear aspirations for Bristol to have a high quality, multi-modal transport system, sustainable into the future and bringing improved air quality and other environmental / quality of life benefits.
- He acknowledged the concerns expressed about DfT criteria, but the advice he had received from officers was that the Henbury loop option was so far away from meeting the DfT benefit:cost ratio criteria that there was no realistic prospect of it being included in the business case.
- The delivery of Metrowest phase 2 depended on government funding. He supported a Henbury loop but unfortunately the case for including it in this business case had not been proved in the context of the DfT formulae/criteria. Given this, he could not object to the Joint Transport

Board decision and was not prepared to potentially put the investment proposed by the business case “at risk”. He was also personally supportive of an ambitious devolution deal for Bristol, and of working closely with Bristol’s neighbouring authorities to achieve this.

- His request was that the Full Council should accept the Joint Transport Board decision, thus enabling the Henbury spur to be progressed, and with the loop considered as a potential later phase.