

**West of England
Joint Scrutiny Committee
26th November 2013**

Member & Public Forum

Notice has been given for the following representations:

Statements

- | | |
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| ITEM 1: David Redgewell on transport strategy, bus and rail matters | Pages
1-10 |
| ITEM 2: Harvey Tadman regarding the South Bristol Link | Page 11 |
| ITEM 3: Claire Griffiths regarding cycling in Bristol | Page 12 |
| ITEM 4: Cllr Ian Scott regarding Highwood Road, Patchway | Page 13 |

Questions

The following questions have been submitted:

- | | |
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| ITEM 5: Julie Boston, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) various questions on local rail matters with responses prepared by the West of England Office | Pages
14-15 |
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**John Malyckyj
Place & Infrastructure Support Officer**

*Statement from South West Transport Network
for the next BANES Cabinet, PTSE and full Council meetings
for South Gloucestershire next PTSE, full Council and Cabinet
meetings
West of England Partnership Scrutiny and Transport Board
meetings*

Duty to develop and maintain a Regional Transport Strategy

We are extremely concerned about the implications which arise from recent developments in Somerset which have called into question the future of the Severnside Rail Partnership and the Heart of Wessex Community Rail Partnership. The loss of these Community Rail Partnerships through withdrawal of funding would be extremely damaging to future development of rail services in the Severnside area. We must ensure that funding for Community Rail projects is maintained and that all the regional Councils lend their full support to developing the potential of existing as well as proposed new lines in the region. Allowing these partnerships to fail would make a mockery of localism.

These partnerships have also been a catalyst for bus/rail integration such as the Taunton-Minehead bus/rail link, the Highbridge to Burnham, Brean and Weston link and the WsM station to Cheddar and Wells link and WsM station to Bristol Airport. (The last two of these are about to be withdrawn, which marks a significant step backwards).

David Redgewell

South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953

*Statement from South West Transport Network for
Bristol City Council Cabinet and full Council in November/December,
West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 26 November, Transport
Board and Transport Executive on 2 December
South Gloucestershire Planning, Transport and Environment Committee on 20
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BANES Transport Committee on 20 November and Major Projects Board on 19
November*

Bus Service Alterations and Progress on MetroWest

We are concerned that the bus service alterations from a number of operators on 29 July and 1 September and on 3 and 10 November, particularly those affecting Bridgwater, Weston-super-Mare and North Somerset, have caused real passenger concern. The loss of almost all evening services in the Taunton Wellington, Bridgwater, Burnham and Weston-super-Mare corridor and the Taunton-Minehead corridor is especially damaging to the quality of life, rural economy and access to Healthcare in the major centres. This is despite the fact that there are “Quality Partnerships” between operators and the local authorities — i.e. Somerset County Council in this instance — on these routes.

On 1 September the situation has been exacerbated by the closure of all bus operations from Baker Dolphin (Weston to the Hospital, Weston to Worle on W5 and W14, the 121 to Banwell, Winscombe and Wrington via the town centre, although for the time being daytime services are being maintained on route 121, 66 (Congresbury to Portishead) and the 668/669 Lower Langford, to Cheddar, Street and Shepton Mallett. First took over the 121 route on 3 November but withdrew the service on Mondays-to-Saturdays from Temple Meads and Weston-super-Mare railway stations. Our request is to have this service restored as soon as possible to provide

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continuity of connectivity from these stations along with the 126 Weston to Cheddar and Wells service.

Following the cutbacks on the Bridgwater town services, some of which are now being restored by Webberbus and First (rerouting the 1 and the 14), the deepest concern here is the issue of continuity of public subsidy. Unless this can be addressed with central government and resources put into protecting the rural bus network (with rural proofing), the operators will never be able to make these services commercially viable. Whilst we hope that some of these services will be restored in November, this will not take place without an injection of public finance. On 10 November First started running services from Taunton to Weston via Burnham (service 21), but at present no timetables have been printed and there appears to be no Sunday service from Weston Station to Highbridge Station via Burnham.

It is very important that the West of England Partnership, Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire County Councils work together to protect the bus network across their boundaries and this issue of rural proofing is raised with the Secretary of State, the buses Minister Baroness Kramer and the Department for Transport. A similar situation arises with bus services between South Gloucestershire and Gloucester where the Bristol—Dursley—Gloucester corridor only has funding for a single year.

It is also very important the Bus Priority measures between Bristol and Thornbury go ahead along the showcase route, and the issue of Highworth Road in Patchway is addressed within this corridor. Bus lanes between

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Hambrook and the M32 and along the length of Gloucester Road, as well as those in Bedminster and the new South Bristol Link Road and Hotwell Road should be maintained despite vociferous opposition from the car lobby. The Mayor and the West of England Partnership must not give way on this important policy.

There is an urgent need to continue progress on upgrading Greater Bristol and Somerset's bus fleet and remove the last 18 step-entrance Darts and the ten non-low-floor double deckers from the fleet as soon as possible. The Mayor, WEP, BANES and Somerset to set dates to remove these vehicles by the end of the financial year. On the subject of accessible transport there is a real and pressing need for disabled accessible taxis in Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire.

Night-time Bus Services

We are pleased with the success of the extension of Greater Bristol daytime services to create the innovative night bus service. We would however urge the Mayor of Bristol, BANES Council, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset Councils to retain and improve on the current network. Routes 1, 2, 40A, 43, 44, 48, 49, 70, 73, 75, 76, 90, 339 and N50 all need to be retained with affordable fares and the following routes should be considered for addition to the night network:

- 6 and 7 between Bristol and Kingswood via Staple Hill
- 376 Bristol to Whitchurch, Wells, Glastonbury and Street

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- Bristol to Weston-super-Mare
- Bristol to Portishead (with possible extension to Clevedon)
- Bristol to Thornbury
- Bristol to Yate and Chipping Sodbury (replacing the N50 with the 342 running six nights per week).

We are pleased to see that Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon and Somerset, BTP, the Bristol Port Police and the Universities have worked so well together in creating an environment where access to the night-time economy in Bristol, Bath with its links to the Airport is available to so many people.

The recent route changes on Services 40, 40A and 41 in Bristol have left both night-time users and day-time users with an impaired level of service. Whilst we understand that these changes are primarily pragmatic rather than ideological on the part of First Group (reflecting traffic management problems in Sneyd Park and Broadmead/Old Market crew changes). Following strong local opposition to these changes in the Sneyd Park/Stoke Bishop area we understand that the service is to be restored in the Sneyd Park area, but seek clarification on whether the Old Market end of the route is also to be restored as this provides the easiest access to Temple Meads services as well as a direct link from the night-time economic zone centred on Old Market

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It is regrettable that there are no statutory quality partnerships on the routes signed with First or Wessex to deal with the issues of frequency, routing, vehicle quality and ticketing.

This group of routes has seen no investment in vehicles and consequently little growth in its market appeal over recent years. Whilst we welcome the planned investment in vehicles for routes 6, 7, 24 and 25, we do believe that the 40 group needs to be included in the next round of improvements.

MetroWest bus and train services

We would like to see details of progress on the Portishead line reopening (including the station sites at Portishead and Ashton Gate), the Interchange at Temple Meads with MetroWest Buses and works to finish the embarrassingly protracted Interchange at Bath Spa (including the disabled toilets and signage). We welcome the appointment of an officer from Centro to South Gloucestershire Council to coordinate the reopening of the Henbury Loop and integration of bus and rail services with the re-opened line including disabled facilities (for which specific funding is available). We are looking forward to seeing a proper delivery plan for MetroWest and in particular the Henbury line.

From a passenger perspective the widespread closure of public toilets at Bus Terminals (including disabled facilities) is very much regretted (Bath and Clevedon being prime examples).

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In Conclusion

It is good to see the working relationship which is developing between the Mayor of Bristol, the West of England Partnership and the bus and rail operators. Encouraging events have been the special train on the Henbury loop, the electric buses and the high-quality commuter coach on display at the Make Sunday Special event, and the investment in over 100 new and refurbished buses in Greater Bristol and Bath. We welcome the setting up of a Public Transport Forum for the Greater Bristol area by the West of England Partnership, along the lines of the successful forum partnership in South Gloucestershire and the sadly cash-strapped Somerset County Council Transport Forum.

David Redgewell

South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953

*Statement from South West Transport Network for
Bristol City Council Special Resources Committee (27
November?),
West of England Partnership Scrutiny Committee,
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Greater Bristol Supported Bus Network

We are extremely concerned about proposals to take £700K out of the Greater Bristol Bus Network funding. This 33% cut is a very serious threat to the survival of the network as a coherent set of routes. We would also insist that the Bristol Mayor and Council acknowledge the cross-boundary nature of the network and accept that cuts in Bristol will inevitably entail severe disruption to services in South Gloucestershire, BANES and North Somerset. In particular there will be knock-on service-reduction (potentially large-scale withdrawal) of services through Filton, Patchway, Cribbs Causeway, Bradley Stoke, Emerson's Green, Staple Hill, Kingswood, Longwell Green, Keynsham, Bath, Nailsea, Clevedon and Portishead. This will also likely kill off the Mayor's and BANES newly established and very well received 6-days-a-week Night Bus Network. This project was originally funded by central government to the tune of £70m from the DfT and £20m from First Group to improve the bus network including investment in new vehicles which is ongoing.

Whilst we understand that cuts have to fall somewhere, it seems extremely short-sighted to jeopardise one of the most successful and high-profile developments in local public transport in recent years (including the investment in new vehicles by First and Wessex, the dropping of fares by both companies and the campaign by the WEP to get more people onto the bus and rail network).

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It might be possible to look for significant savings in renegotiating or commercialising the Park and Ride network, especially as MetroWest Buses are supposed to run subsidy-free (including the Park and Ride services). We remain somewhat sceptical of the subsidy-free plans as no other city in Europe manages this feat at the moment. It must also be said that there is a strange lack of coherence in making the currently proposed cuts whilst pushing ahead with plans for the Metro Bus Network across the city region which is likely to leave the public with a confused and unconvincing feeling about the region's transport planning.

We are also concerned at the proposals to slash £470K from the Community Transport budget, particularly as there are still more than twenty buses providing services across the city which are non-low-floor and disability-unfriendly, thus making the Community Transport service all the more necessary.

It is essential that we have a clear policy on access for all to public transport in the Greater Bristol area and this will necessitate the commitment of WEP to a clear date and planned program for the removal of the remaining non-low-floor vehicles from the network in Bristol, Bath, Wells and Weston-super-Mare. The Bristol and Bath city region is lagging well behind comparable urban centres across the UK and Europe in modernising its bus and rail fleets to achieve proper access for all. This issue also has clear implications for the modernisation of the region's rail

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stations, many of which have limited, partial or absolutely no disabled access. With the forthcoming Intercity Electrification Program, this is the perfect opportunity for WEP to bid with FGW for Access for All grants from the DfT.

The proposals for wholesale closure of public (and disabled) toilet facilities across the region should be approached quite differently by “translating” standalone facilities into shared units within cafes, shopping centres and transport interchanges. This requires a coherent policy and a structured plan (similar to the Bath model) to ensure that these facilities do not simply disappear to the detriment of the travelling public. (Notwithstanding the fact that the Bath Bus Station toilets and café are presently closed due to a flood!)

David Redgewell

South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953

To john.malyckyj@westofengland.org

Today at 10:55 AM

I would like to submit the following statement to the Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 26th November, 2013 at Bristol City Hall.

Consultants seem to be admitting that there will be losses of revenue to bus services as a result of BRT schemes, with a net loss of £4.1m on the South Bristol Link BRT service. This isn't surprising, given the pathetically low passenger numbers that are expected. West of England Partnership are simply trying to dress awful projects up as 'green' schemes. This loss will have to be met by the local authorities. Bristol is usually the fall guy, so we can expect to see more services in Bristol being chopped. These costs are on top of the large BRT funding gap. We ask if this is financially irresponsible, especially given the current financial crisis faced by Bristol.

Below is the extract from the consultant's comment, which can be seen in full at

<http://planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online->

[applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MPM5ZYDN00C00](http://planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MPM5ZYDN00C00)

It has to be said that the information from the promoters isn't clear, as elsewhere they refer to a loss of revenue of £9m, which is even higher. They say:

"The impacts on revenue presented in the TEE table is a loss of £2.6m. However, £1.0m of this relates to trips contained within north Bristol, leaving a revenue loss of £1.6m which can be considered to relate to the scheme.

This total however will relate to revenue losses on services other than those introduced as part of the SBL scheme. Based on forecast patronage for the new service, revenue over the appraisal period is estimated at around £3.5m. This will offset a large proportion of the £7.6m operating cost leaving a net loss of £4.1m on the SBL service."

Many of us are well aware of Bristol Council's Faustian pact with North Somerset, under which Bristol pays 80% of the BRT2 funding gap (approximately £14m). Doubtless this will be at the cost of other services that survived this round of cuts. Now in the face of the current budget crisis, it appears that BRT will require further direct subsidy.

Source: The above was found buried in one of the consultant's responses.

Now would be an appropriate time to end this humongous fiasco before yet more public money is irresponsibly thrown away.

Harvey Tadman
Bristol

Bristol Cycling-statement for attention of Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 26th November, 2013 at Bristol City Hall.

On radio 4 today, yet again there has been an article on cycling, this time more general than the specifically critical item about the bad cycling facilities in Bristol that was broadcast last week. This time it was about women and cycling, although as it pointed out men have the same concerns on the whole. Many women find city cycling very intimidating and I am one of them. They particularly dislike having close interaction with large vehicles, so why when there is a popular cycle path from Bath to Bristol, which is solely for cyclists although there was an attempt to over-ride this, has Bristol CC agreed to override the newish Sustrans cycle route (route 41) from Bristol to Long Ashton and insist that cyclists and walkers have to share it with buses. How particularly strange that in the same situation with the Bath cycle route, the cyclists interests prevailed, whereas in Bristol, with its so called cycling credentials, the Bristol CC unlike other members of the West of England Partnership that fought their corner, has decided to mix buses and cyclists against much opposition and at enormous cost. Let it be noted that this is not a simple and cheap route to build, going over a flood plain and entailing the building and strengthening of a number of bridges. How can funneling yet more traffic into Bristol on yet another road be a good decision on the part of the Council?

Claire Griffiths BS8

Statement from Cllr Ian Scott, South Gloucestershire Council

“The West of England bodies need to address the concerns of Patchway residents regarding the traffic congestion being suffered on Coniston Road as a result of Highwood Road becoming a bus lane. This can be addressed by reviewing the road layouts to ensure that there is also car use, or alternatively providing local residents with updated technical equipment in their cars that will allow local access but prevent wider access to enable Patchway residents to join up west Patchway with local facilities via Highwood Road, and also using the system to block traffic on Coniston Road by having the same system between Highwood Road and Sycamore Drive.”

Councillor Ian Scott

Response to Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways' questions for the West of England Scrutiny committee

The questions (see below) raised by the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways will be covered by the GRIP Stage 1 – 2 study. South Gloucestershire Council will be commissioning Network Rail to undertake a GRIP Stage 1-2 study for the MetroWest Phase 2 project in 2014. Ahead of the study's findings it would be premature to try and answer the questions.

Nonetheless it is useful to share some aspects of the GRIP Stage 1 -2 work. The work will include looking at both a spur and loop options for the Henbury Line. Interaction between existing and anticipated freight services and passenger services on the Henbury Line and vehicular access to/from Avonmouth Docks will be a key issue. Infrastructure requirements will be identified.

Work on MetroWest Phase 1 includes an option for an hourly service between Avonmouth and Severn Beach rather than half hourly. This could link with a Henbury 'loop' service as part of Phase 2.

South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol City Council allocated a £330,000 budget for development costs in 2013/14. Budgets for 2014/15 will be confirmed through the councils' wider budget setting.

Ultimately the GRIP Stage 1-2 study is expected to come up with a single option to take forward to GRIP Stage 3 with a likely decision by the Local Transport Body in December 2014. Construction is planned for 2020 with opening in 2021.

It should be noted that the devolved major transport scheme funding 2015 to 2021 is fully allocated to MetroWest Phase 1. Ahead of future devolved funding post 2021 alternative sources of funding would need to be identified to deliver MetroWest Phase 2.

It is not appropriate for us to respond to questions 5, 6 and 7 regarding third party access requirements to the rail network.

Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways

17 Belmont Rd, BS6 5AW

11 November 2013

Questions for West of England LEP Scrutiny committee

Tuesday 26 November 2013, City Hall, College Green, Bristol

*Todd Graham, Bristol City Council's railway development officer, has identified a limited number of steps needed to obtain formal approval for passenger services on the **Henbury Loop Line**. He also confirmed that passenger trains used this for a regular diversion as recently as 2004.*

1. *What schedule does WEPLEP propose to process these formalities with the aim of reinstating services as soon as possible?*
2. *There are also funding and franchise related issues. What steps does the WEPLEP intend to take to obtain funding and address the formal processes of obtaining rolling stock and formal approval?*
3. *What is the shortest schedule that WEPLEP can complete these steps in?*
4. *–FOSBR urges the WEPLEP railway development officers to find out what suitable stock is available in the national pool, or might become available, and to look into fitting the schedules together. This could include working out how a 30 min interval could be achieved on the existing Avonmouth service.*
5. *(a) What rights has the Port of Bristol over the line (Lease, contract, ownership, important customer?)*
6. *What are the operating arrangements for coal loading? Is the whole loop actually currently operated as a long siding?*
7. *© What type of operation does its physical signalling permit?*

John Hall

Julie Boston, Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways