

**West of England  
Joint Scrutiny Committee  
6<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

## **Member & Public Forum**

Notice has been given for the following representations:

### **Statements**

- ITEM 1:** David Redgewell on behalf of South West Transport Network on MetroWest and MeroBus, a combined authority, the sale of Bristol Port, Avonmouth Station building, use of land at Temple Meads Station. Page 1
- ITEM 2:** Martin Garrett on behalf of Transport for Greater Bristol (TfGB) on Temple meads, connectivity, interchanges and potential. Page 25

### **Questions**

- ITEM 3:** Questions from Diane Bunyan on behalf of the Bristol Equality Infrastructure Networking Group (BEING). Answers are included. Page 27
- ITEM 4:** Questions from Christina Biggs on behalf of the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) Answers are included. Page 30

**John Malyckyj  
Place & Infrastructure Support Officer**

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

## MetroWest bus and rail and the Combined Authority

With a new government elected in London with a mandate on devolution to the City Regions as outlined by Greg Clark, the new communities and local government secretary, there is a need for the city region and the neighbouring shire counties (Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire) to come up with a fully funded plan in times of deep austerity. This is likely to require the implementation of a Delivery Authority on the ground. This may be in the shape of a Combined Authority with transport delivery powers or may take a different form, just as long as the Transport Authority has a full range of powers and access to appropriate funding.

The top priorities are:

### Bath

- Upgrading and improving the bus services in Bath (including rebranding and re-trimming of the fleet jointly with First Group, which must be done in conjunction with refurbishment of the vehicles).
- Reopen the café and toilets at Bath Bus Station.
- Prioritise an East-of-Bath Park and Ride, bus-based to start with but later with rail access.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- Reopen Corsham and Salford stations.
- Make Bath Spa railway station ticket barriers operational for 18 hours a day.
- Provide more bus priority measures in Bath.
- Complete the Transport Plan in Keynsham including new bus hub.
- Deliver electrification of local lines including the line between Newbury, Westbury and Bathampton.
- Extend MetroWest to Frome, Warminster and Swindon from Bath (Phase 3).

## North Somerset

- Sort out a new control centre for First Bus at Weston-super-Mare railway station, including passenger facilities for information once the First Travel Centre and the Tourist Information Centre have been closed (end of May and September respectively).
- To work in partnership between North Somerset Council, the West of England Partnership and bus operators including partnership working between Crossville and First Group as per the arrangements in Bridgwater where there is a joint company.
- To invest in a new bus-rail interchange including disabled facilities at Weston-super-Mare station as well as new ticket barriers.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- Improvements to the 126 service between Weston, Locking, Banwell, Cheddar and Wells including diversion via the railway station.
- Improve bus links between Yatton and Clevedon to act as a rail-head for the town.
- Improve bus facilities at the Six Ways terminal in Clevedon including reopening the waiting and toilet facilities.
- Making the reopening of the Portishead line a top priority whilst protecting rail freight facilities.
- New railway station at Ashton Gate funded by Bristol Sport.
- Upgrading disabled ramps at Nailsea and Backwell station.
- Late night bus from Bristol to Weston on Friday and Saturday night (up to 2am?)
- Protect site of Flax Bourton station for future development.
- All new local units for the Bristol Area as well as the mainlines to Exeter and Cardiff need to be upgraded with disabled facilities and increased passenger comfort before the carriages are rebranded in the green colour.
- Extend MetroBus to Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.

## South Gloucestershire

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- Protect the existing bus network, invest in newer vehicles with leather seats and wifi especially on routes to Thornbury and Yate and the 319 from Kingswood to Bath.
- Maintain and clean bus shelters.
- Provide Bus Priority on the A38 between Aztec West and Bristol City Centre
- Extend MetroBus to Thornbury and Yate.
- Improve bus station at Cribs Causeway.
- Support government funding for new bus station at UWE.
- Reopen the Henbury Loop, including new stations at Filton North, Charlton Hayes and Henbury (current proposals include removing one of these which we feel would be counter-productive).
- Fully integrate the Henbury Loop with MetroBus at Henbury and Filton North
- Improve Patchway Station including waiting facilities, disabled facilities, toilets and car-parking.
- Improve bus interchange at Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Parkway (where there are plans for a remodelled bus-rail interchange).
- Bus priorities on Gypsy Patch Lane.
- RPZ around Southmead Hospital.
- Consider car-parking charges to cover the cost of maintaining car parks.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- Fully support any branding concepts for public transport in the region, including Green Capital, MetroWest and Greater Bristol Bus Network.
- Develop Tourism-related transport policies.
- Improve Bus Links to Gloucester from Bristol, Yate and Thornbury.

## Bristol

- Put pressure on Central Government to make Temple Meads a fully functional railway station fit for purpose in the 21st century with a regional transport hub, a good intermodal transport interchange, shopping facilities, hotels, flats and access to the Arena.
- Improve (or where absent, provide) disabled access to local railway stations: Lawrence Hill, Bedminster and Parson Street.
- Continue to improve Bristol Bus Station: doors, cleaning and painting.
- Provide and Park and Ride on the North Side of the city (around Filton, offering access to both bus and rail services).
- Invest in a proper local bus/MetroWest/national rail/ferry interchange at Temple Meads.
- Provide revenue protection on the Bristol to Taunton line and Severn Beach line to collect all fares.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- Improve the City's bus fleet, providing 100 new hybrid buses for MetroBus and the inter-urban fleet in conjunction with First Group, Wessex and Stagecoach (and also A-Bus, National Express Kingsferry and RAPT Bath).
- Improve bus interchanges in the city centre, Broadmead, Old Market, Eastgate, Bedminster and Kingswood.
- Open the Romney Avenue Bus Gate as a matter of urgency.
- Improve bus cleaning at all depots in Greater Bristol, including Lawrence Hill.
- Decide on the future of Muller Road bus garage relocation.
- Introduce smart ticketing including bus-rail-ferry combined options.
- Make the Freedom Pass zonal and introduce children's and senior citizen's fares.
- Introduce a new PRZ around Southmead Hospital.
- New bus station at Southmead Hospital.
- Build new Portway Park and Ride railway station (without closing the existing Shirehampton station).
- Ashley Hill and Horfield stations to be opened.
- Henbury Station to reopen — will need car parking and bus interchange.
- Ashton Gate Station funded jointly with Bristol Sport

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

- **Transport Security:** work with BTP, Avon and Somerset Police, and the Port Police to improve CCTV, transport safety measures, revenue protection and remove graffiti from bus and rail vehicles and infrastructure.

## All Greater Bristol and Bath Authorities

- **Protect and fund the local transport network,** building on the successes of the last few years.

## Detailed Priorities

We welcome the proposals for the new station site in Quays Avenue, Portishead and the progress on reopening the branch line between Portishead and Bristol Temple Meads, Bath Spa/Clifton Down/Severn Beach as part of MetroWest Phase 1. We would like to see a full transport interchange at Portishead for bus/rail/taxis/walking and cycling. Also an M Shop for selling tickets/public transport information/toilets and a café. We would like to see a similar arrangement at Pill and provision made for a future station at Ashton Gate to be funded partly by Bristol Sports and interchange with MetroBus. Other provision needs to be made for disabled access at Parson Street and interchange at this station and Bedminster.

On the Severn Beach line provision needs to be made for waiting shelters at Severn Beach, maintain and enhance the station building at Avonmouth (by restoring the original station canopy to a design matching photographic evidence from the 1960s) as this station is an ideal interchange point for Henbury loop services with connections to bus

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

services 41, 501 and 502. We welcome the new station at Portway Park & Ride and station facility improvements at Clifton Down including a ticket office. Revenue protection is a major problem on the route.

The Direct Award from the DfT will allow the Secretary of State to devolve rail and public transport powers to Devon and Cornwall and the Bristol/Bath City Region travel to work area (extending into the counties of Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon including the Weymouth line into Dorset) so it is important to take up the Government's offer to create a combined authority for the Bristol/Bath City Region taking over the powers of the West of England LEP on transport, planning, strategic housing and waste management. This would give the Combined Authority specific responsibility for public transport delivery, which in the context means taking overall control of the MetroBus and MetroWest projects along with the Greater Bristol bus network

It is important, despite the protests in Stapleton and Frenchay, that we focus on the total public transport package for Greater Bristol/Bath. The scheme North-South includes bus interchanges at Whitchurch Hospital (South Bristol), Bedminster, Redcliffe Hill, City Centre, Bus Station Lewin's Mead/Haymarket, UWE Frenchay (providing the plans can be developed for the new University bus station site), Bristol Parkway station, Bradley Stoke Willowbrook Centre, Aztec West and Cribbs Causeway and rail interchanges at Bedminster, Parson Street and Bristol Parkway with future options at Filton North and Henbury on the Henbury loop and interchange with coach services at Bristol bus and coach station, Aztec West and Cribbs Causeway.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

The environmental impact of the Stoke Lane Frenchay allotments will need to be carefully examined to include Cotswold stone on any walling around the Stoke Park estate and rural fencing around the allotments and tree planting. We welcome the saving of the oak trees and landscaping. There must be a commitment to no Park & Ride sites in this area from South Gloucestershire Council, the Mayor of Bristol and the West of England Partnership. This section of the route needs a careful review in the light of local concerns from residents in Downend, Frenchay and Stapleton but it is very important that we don't lose the £190 million funding in the City Region as the project is not just about MetroBus but improved interchange and connection facilities with rail/local bus and ferries and is supported by First Group, Wessex Connect and RATP Bath Bus Company.

RailFuture, Bus Users UK (Sevenside), South West Transport Network, TfGBA and FOSBR and the public transport unions have been calling for a fully integrated MetroBus/MetroWest rail and bus network across Greater Bristol to be fully integrated into a public transport system for the City Region as the Green Capital of Europe 2015. All the listed groups are also pressing for the urgent establishment of a combined transport authority as soon as the General Election is out of the way, with the support of North Somerset, BANES and South Gloucestershire. We also need to set up a Public Transport Forum for Bristol and the City Region as supported by the Mayor and Full Council

We are very concerned about the loss of bus services No 5 to Downend, 36 to Brislington Tesco and South Bristol Hospital, night services on the 90 to Knowle, 1 and 2 to Southmead and Westbury on Trym, and the uncertainty over the 87 and 88 Bristol to Dursley due to budget cuts by the Mayor

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

(£350,000 cut) and South Gloucestershire Council (£590,000). Bus services are as important to the citizens of Greater Bristol the libraries in the City and Kingswood (South Gloucestershire).

There are alternative services to Brislington (Callington Road) provided by the NHS trust, but these are not coordinated with the Greater Bristol Bus Network (these need to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and have through-ticketing arrangements). The A-Bus services sponsored by Tesco and Sainsburys also need to be registered and provide through tickets. The new 600 service provided by Severnside around Fishponds/ Downend and UWE also need to be registered.

As more and more RSZ schemes are created by our local authorities, it is increasingly vital that sufficient funds are found to improve bus and rail services to a point where more people feel confident about using public transport rather than private in order to go about their business.

As a final point, we need to be clear that the MetroBus project will entail the procurement of 50 hybrid gas/electric vehicles. At the moment there are only 5 in the successful Clean Fuels Bid from the Department for Transport, which means that we need to resource a further 45 vehicles as well as two bus depots in order to bring the service into operation.

David Redgewell

Martin Cinnamond

Ian Beckey

Jon Dixon

**South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953**

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

*North Somerset Transport Scrutiny in June 2015 (date not known)*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 12 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

**with Jenny Raggett (TFGBA),  
Nigel Bray (Railfuture Severnside,  
and John Hassell Bus Users UK**

## Sale of Bristol Port

Regarding the sale of the freehold of Bristol Port to First Corporate Shipping trading as the Bristol Port Company we are very concerned about the sale of railway assets and land that are incorporated within the docks and to which the main access routes by rail are the Henbury loop and the Severn Beach line both of which are integral parts of the MetroWest project.

For the port to flourish we need good passenger rail access for both staff and visitors to Avonmouth and Royal Portbury, therefore we ask the Mayor to review any sale agreements to make sure that the port can develop a full container service and relocate Freightliner to the port estate and provide deep sea container services within the land at Avonmouth and Severn Beach in South Gloucestershire. Rail freight facilities at Portbury should also be protected and passenger services need to be improved at Avonmouth including station facilities — ie retaining and reusing the historic station building and improving passenger facilities for visiting cruise ships.

The Henbury loop must be retained for the use of passenger traffic to Henbury, Charlton Hayes, Filton North, Bristol Parkway, Filton Abbey Wood and onwards to Bristol Temple Meads. The sale must not prevent the reopening of this route to passenger traffic and the line to Portishead.

We welcome the study by Bristol Port Company to provide a tunnel under the St Andrews Road Gate for passenger traffic to the Henbury line and freight traffic which is important to the port whilst allowing road freight

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

to enter the docks.

Any modern port in Western Europe needs to be well connected to the national rail network and should be looking to develop its rail facilities — especially for freight — in a competitive international market which requires a deep sea container berth as planned at Bristol.

It is very important that not only does the sale of the port protect jobs and economic development for the City region (and in particular in North Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire), but if these very important facilities are to be privatised it must not be about what money can be raised for very short term capital receipts to develop the High Street, Castle Park or the Arena at Temple Meads, nor in fact should it be about about spending the money in Avonmouth ward.

The first priority for the Mayor and the City Council is to protect the docks as an economic unit for employment and commerce for the City region. We would also encourage the Mayor to seek to include legal clauses to allow expansion of the port railway including access to and from the Henbury loop and the line from St Andrews Road Junction to Avonmouth Docks. Paths for freight trains allocated to the port by ORR and Network Rail clearly need to be protected, but this must not be at the expense of creating unworkable conditions for passenger services on the Henbury Loop or Severn Beach line. A good level of service for these routes needs to be specified and protected from erosion.

In addition, some of the proceeds from the sale of the Port could be reinvested in Avonmouth station, Portway Park and Ride and the Henbury loop. Only if these important pieces of infrastructure are protected will we

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

have the conditions for a thriving Port and this should be the basis of any sale. Without protecting the rail infrastructure the sale of the Port should not go ahead.

If the Port is at any future point resold by Bristol Port Company to Dubai Shipping or an international port business, the terms of the current sale need to protect the value of these assets for the taxpayers of Bristol and the West of England LEP (or future Combined Authority).

Another concern is what provision has been put in place for future of the Port Police as a public body. The Port Police are currently a Crown Force which is partly overseen by the City Council in its roles as freehold owner of the dock and as a shareholder in First Corporate Shipping.

Again we would like assurances that the Port Police will be maintained as a Crown Force and that they will continue to work closely with British Transport Police and the Avon and Somerset Police. We are concerned that they should still be under public control and should not be replaced by security guards as at Southampton — especially in view of the heightened security alert at all UK ports.

We also wish to see the port maintain investment in good public transport access to the facilities at Avonmouth and Portbury including public bus services through LSTS funding jointly with First Group. A Park and Ride station at Portbury should also be given priority. Given that this would be sited on land adjacent to Portbury Docks, this provision should be protected from objection by the Port Company.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

It is vital that the City takes a long-term view of its transport infrastructure. In this respect, we should view the sale of assets to the Port Company in much the same way as Bristol Omnibus was sold to Nation Bus Company and then First Group, whilst the land and depots at Hengrove, Lawrence Hill and Muller Road remain in the City Council's portfolio, A similar situation exists with the Bristol Bus Station where the land still belongs to Avon and Somerset Support Services. The City Council and its fellow councils in the Greater Bristol region should seek to maintain an economic interest in the port estate and thereby some degree of control over the economic role which the Port plays in the City region and South West Economy.

We look forward to a full and open debate at Cabinet about the sale of what can only be regarded as one of the most important assets of the City region. This must not be discussed in a closed session debate as was the case with the Scrutiny Place Committee. Clearly we understand that the land value is a commercial matter which requires some degree of privacy when discussed. However, the infrastructure and other assets, and in particular the railway which is shared with passenger services, is something which is very much a matter of public interest in every sense of the term.

We still feel further public consultation needs to take place over transport and infrastructure issues related to the docks. This should not be a "Fire Sale" in response to critical austerity amongst the City Region's authorities. We are not alone in voicing these concerns and would draw the attention of Cabinet to the Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways' AGM in January 2015, where FOSBR as well as the rail unions — RMT, TSSA, ASLEF and Unite — echoed and shared our concerns.

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

## *Addendum to Clarify Options for Port Rail Infrastructure*

We believe that two options need to be explored with regards to the Port rail network:

1) The transfer of the Port rail network to Network Rail (Western) so as to allow investment in tracks and signalling of the Henbury loop and the Severn Beach line beyond Clifton Down. At the moment signalling is controlled by a signal box at St Andrew's Road, but this should be incorporated into the Network Rail signalling centre at Didcot to allow both passenger and freight operations around the Avonmouth area. Under this proposal the rail infrastructure would be removed from the freehold sale and remain under public control.

2) If this is not possible then a legal undertaking should be sought to prevent First Corporate Shipping (ie Port of Bristol) from frustrating the reopening of the Henbury loop to passenger services between Filton Abbey Wood / Bristol Parkway, through Filton North, Charlton Hayes, Henbury and Hallen Marsh Junction. We would like to see details of any legal undertakings be made public by the Mayor and the Cabinet and that the Council commit itself to full public consultation over the public interest in this process along with the West of England Transport Board and Scrutiny.

David Redgewell

Martin Cinnamond

Ian Beckey

**South West Transport Network** – Tel 07814 794953

with Jenny Raggett for Transport for Greater Bristol

South West Transport Network **Statement** for  
*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*  
*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Scrutiny on 6 July 2015*  
*West of England Transport Board on 17 July*

John Hassel for Bus Users UK (Sevenside)

Nigel Bray for Rail Futures (Sevenside)

*Avonmouth and Kingsweston Neighbourhood Partnership on 30 June*  
*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*  
*Bristol City Council next full Council meeting (date not known)*  
*Bristol City Council next Cabinet meeting (date not known)*

# Avonmouth Station Building

Network Rail West with the support of the Severnside Community Rail Partnership still intend to demolish the historic station building on the Down platform at Avonmouth station despite the opposition of the South West Transport Network, Railfuture (Severnside), Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways, local councillors, Charlotte Leslie MP, George Ferguson the Mayor of Bristol, the Civic Society, Living Easton and the rail unions among others citing a lack of funding for restoration as a justification for knocking it down.

We don't accept this premise as it was going to cost £60,000 to demolish the station and £120,000 to restore it. Possibly in response to this, Network Rail has now quoted an outlandish figure of £700,000 to restore the building, which beggars belief. Across Devon and Cornwall Councils have been successful in restoring stations for community use using various funds including Heritage Lottery, Coastal Communities Fund used on the Swanage Railway, Clevedon Pier, the MV Balmoral and Wakefield Kirkgate funded by the Railway Heritage and Community Partnership funds as examples.

In the case of Avonmouth, it seems cavalier in the extreme to remove one of the most important heritage features of the village, which provides an

---

## South West Transport Network **Statement** for

---

*Avonmouth and Kingsweston Neighbourhood Partnership on 30 June*  
*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*  
*Bristol City Council next full Council meeting (date not known)*  
*Bristol City Council next Cabinet meeting (date not known)*

intrinsic link to the area's railway and industrial history. Furthermore, with the reopening of the Henbury loop, Avonmouth will take on a more significant role as a passenger hub, providing an interchange between the routes to Henbury, Severn Beach and Clifton/Bristol as well as the local bus network.

Tina Biggs from FOSBR is trying to put forward a rescue package for the building and would like the support of the Council and the Mayor to assist with funding bids and whilst funding is being secured we want the demolition to be stopped by the West of England Partnership and discussions arranged as promised by the Mayor with interested parties, conservation groups and the Avonmouth and Kings Weston Neighbourhood Forum and Partnership.

At a previous Councillors' question time when the Mayor suggested the neighbourhood partnership should look at the issue it had not been put on the agenda.

If the Mayor proceeds with the sale of the Port of Bristol at Severnside, £1m has been promised as reinvestment capital for the surrounding communities. A proportion of this could be earmarked for Avonmouth Station, providing much-needed community facilities.

Of course on the 17th July the West of England Transport Board will make a decision on funding the Henbury loop and the level of train services required. As mentioned above it is very important that we maintain a

---

## South West Transport Network **Statement** for

---

*Avonmouth and Kingsweston Neighbourhood Partnership on 30 June*  
*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*  
*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*  
*Bristol City Council next full Council meeting (date not known)*  
*Bristol City Council next Cabinet meeting (date not known)*

decent passenger facility at Avonmouth including full use of its historic assets similar to Wakefield Kirkgate which was in a far worse condition than Avonmouth. A design brief for Avonmouth station including the historic building should be put together by the City Council and the West of England Partnership as part of the MetroWest station enhancement programme.

In Liverpool and Newcastle with combined transport authorities and proposed Metro Mayors, stations of this kind are being incorporated into the local infrastructure as booking offices and M-Shops.

We believe that the Mayor should raise this matter with the Railway Heritage Trust, and the peers who take a special interest in railway heritage: Lord Faulkener or Worcester, Lord Berkeley and Lord Bradshaw. In the meantime, it seems shockingly ironic that Network Rail Western Region's contribution to the Bristol European Green Capital project involves demolition of one of its few remaining historic station buildings whilst at the same time trying to improve Severn Beach station on the same line.

John Dixon South West Transport Network,

Jenny Raggett (TFGBA),

Nigel Bray (Railfuture Severnside),

John Hassell Bus Users UK,

Tina Biggs (FOSBR)

David Redgewell

**South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953**

South West Transport Network and the groups listed at the bottom of this statement are very concerned that Bristol City Council has given itself planning permission as part of the Local Enterprise Partnership in the setting of the Grade 1\* listed building in the case of the Clock Tower yard application at the Brunel Engine shed for Set Square and Bristol and Bath universities.

The concern we have is for the setting of the listed buildings. The loss of the car park for the station and the delays this could cause to the regeneration of the Brunel Engine Shed for passenger services from platforms 1 & 0.

The delay to the transport interchange for buses, taxis and ferries, the problem of the old converted freightliner containers is a symptom of the lack of a master plan for Temple Meads. We support the principle of the new shop units in the subway but would like to see the units open later especially for hot food. The pedestrian area should not be blocked especially for disabled customers and mothers with buggies and those with luggage. We consider that the new containers will be an eyesore and non DDA compliant

We do not understand why the West of England Partnership have not used the offices in Kenton House or Wilder Street in Stokes Croft which are empty and owned by the City Council or the South Gloucestershire Council Offices at Castle Street, Thornbury for Set Square and the Bristol and Bath universities group and the LEP.

We would urgently ask the West of England Partnership Planning and Housing Board Transport Board and Leaders Board to come up with a master plan for Bristol Temple Meads.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network and TSSA,

John Dixon South West Transport Network, Jenny Raggett (TFGBA), Nigel

Bray (Railfuture Severnside, John Hassell Bus Users UK, Tina Biggs

(FOSBR)

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*

*Bristol City Council Cabinet on 6 July*

*Bristol City Council Place Committee (next meeting)*

*Bristol City Council Full Council (next meeting)*

*BaNES Cabinet on 8 July 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 16 July 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 15 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*

---

# Greater Bristol Land Use, Planning and Transport

As an example, we support the retention of the Bus Contracts in South Gloucestershire Council on the grounds that they underpin economic growth in Severnside, Thornbury and UWE (including Sunday and evening provision). As a general point, we are very concerned that the permissions are being given for the Cribbs Causeway / Patchway New Neighbourhood areas and Eastworks without the necessary public transport provision being written in to the plans — i.e. the Henbury Loop and feeder bus services. This also applies to the Portishead line and the need to generate business in Portishead.

Our biggest concern with land use planning in the Bristol/Bath City Region is the lack of good affordable public transport links and sustainable development (including a proper planning brief for the Mall). We are further concerned that there is insufficient provision of affordable housing within the currently proposed development at the Mall.

Our concerns are also expressed about the lack of affordable housing within the city centres of Bristol and Bath—a good current example of which is the Carriage Works in Stokes Croft and the Gas Works and General Hospital sites in Bristol. We are in danger of central properties in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare becoming out of the reach of normal local people.

---

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

---

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*

*Bristol City Council Cabinet on 6 July*

*Bristol City Council Place Committee (next meeting)*

*Bristol City Council Full Council (next meeting)*

*BaNES Cabinet on 8 July 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 16 July 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 15 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*

---

This also applies, of course, to rural areas where the lack of affordable housing is even more critical.

We certainly do support the provision of 100 new homes in Charfield, as long as a significant number of these are provided as affordable properties. These will be on an ideal rail location (given the interest in re-opening Charfield station as part of MetroWest Phase Two/Three).

It is very important that we get a good working relationship between Land Use planning and Transport Planning in the Bristol/Bath Sub-Regional Plan.

The whole viability of the local plan is dependent on a European class public transport network. With the government's recent review of Network Rail spending (a wholly owned government agency) we are in a very tight corner and must argue our case loud and clear for the necessary funds to facilitate the infrastructure and revenue spending which will be necessary to deliver a successful regional transport system. The top priorities are:

- delivery of the Henbury loop and the Gloucester/Cheltenham line with new stations at Henbury, Charlton Hayes, Filton North, Charfield and Stonehouse (Bristol Road),
- reopening the Portishead line with new stations at Portishead, Pill and Ashton Gate (in conjunction with Bristol Sports),
- upgrading the line through to Weston-super-Mare and Taunton with a protected station site at Flax Bourton
- extending services through Bath to Swindon with additional stations at Corsham and Wotton Bassett

---

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

---

*West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Leaders Board on 10 July 2015*

*Bristol City Council Cabinet on 6 July*

*Bristol City Council Place Committee (next meeting)*

*Bristol City Council Full Council (next meeting)*

*BaNES Cabinet on 8 July 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 16 July 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 15 July 2015*

*West of England Partnership Transport Board on 17 July 2015*

---

- extending MetroWest services to Frome and Warminster with an additional station at Bathampton (perhaps as part of the turnback),
- drawing up a master plan for Bristol Temple Meads as a regional hub for the South West of England for buses trains and ferries (similar to Manchester Piccadilly or Portsmouth Harbour Interchange)
- creating master plans for top-level intermodal interchanges at Bristol Parkway station, Bath Spa station and Weston-super-Mare station.

David Redgewell

Martin Cinnamond

Ian Beckey

Jon Dixon

**South West Transport Network** – Tel 07814 794953

## Item 2: Martin Garrett Statement

### **Temple Meads, connectivity, interchanges & potential.**

**Temple Meads station** is focal not only to the region's rail system, but to our future MetroRail. It is therefore essential that its current refurbishment and redesign programme cater both for this level of anticipated increased usage, but also interchange with buses.

This is not the case at present.

At present, 'existing trend' **demand projections** for local rail and bus have been given to Network Rail for future planning purposes. These reflect neither actual recent bus patronage growth, nor the potential for bringing buses from other parts of the city into Temple Meads, nor the potential growth of MetroRail. This needs to be rectified urgently.

We understand further, that at present there is cash for the InterCity Electrification project, but that for MetroRail is delayed. However, the regional authorities should be able to attract government money for **rail decentralisation** programmes, as do other regions, if they choose to apply for same. This they should do.

The city should negotiate with **First Bus** and **Network Rail**, to divert additional bus routes into Temple Meads, notably from the Kingswood and Bedminster directions. These can also serve the Arena.

Temple Meads should be the region's chief **bus/rail interchange** point, though it does not function so at present; many users being obliged to over-rely on the taxis which clog the station approach. Interchanges that do work relatively well are Bath Spa and Bristol Parkway. But more are needed in the region, notably: **Filton Abbey Wood** (for Southmead Hospital, the northern parts of Bristol City Council's area, etc. Market data indicates that it is surrounded by a bigger population than Parkway, and more local trains stop there.), **Weston, Yatton** (for Clevedon), ... for Cheddar,....**Yate** (for Chipping Sodbury), **Keynsham, Bedminster, Parson St., Clifton Down, Stapleton Rd, Lawrence Hill**, and in future **Filton North** and **Ashton Gate**. The relevant

regional and local planning authorities should actively plan for such bus/rail interchange development, and we call upon them to do so. Only then will **MetroRail** and the regional rail system reach its full potential, and begin to relieve our cities' traffic congestion problems.

Gavin Smith Martin Garrett TfGB

**Item 3:** Questions for West of England Local Economic Partnership Scrutiny Committee from Diane Bunyan on behalf of the Bristol Equality Infrastructure Networking Group (BEING)

1. As organisations of BAME, disabled, LGBT, older people and women, living, working and studying in the West of England area, we were concerned that the Strategic Economic Plan describes the West of England area as dynamic and diverse yet only mentions women, ethnic minorities and disabled people under Section 2.4 Social Inclusion in relation to underrepresentation in enterprise.

We are of the view that the skills, creativity and talents of everyone need to be encouraged and developed and we find little evidence that this is being addressed for example by encouraging women to work in science, engineering and technology or to increase the number of BAME people working in digital media.

The accompanying Equality Impact Assessment identified various issues to focus on, for example under People – knowledge economy, skills and social inclusion it proposes *“Proactively building on the experience of meeting the skills and needs of the WE through clear and well defined engagement with all diverse groups”*

**Could you identify where these actions have been taken and what has been the outcome?**

**Response:** the actions taken by the LEP in relation to equality and diversity aspects of the Strategic Economic Plan focus on the schemes and projects coming forward through the Local Growth Fund (see response to question 2 below) which are approved via the LEP and Strategic Leaders Board. The responsibility for wider consideration of actions identified within ‘Equality and Diversity Impacts for the West of England Strategic Economic Plan 2013-30’ but outside of the LGF under the four identified levers of growth will sit within the organisation undertaking the initiative or implementing the scheme. For example for ‘Place and Infrastructure’ this will largely be the four Councils for programmes such as MetroBus and MetroWest, for ‘People’ this will be further and higher education providers etc. No resource is available within the LEP to undertake such assessment and this would be likely to be a duplication of effort.

In terms of actions directly undertaken by teams within the LEP, the skills team is acutely aware of equality and diversity issues and embeds these within its work with businesses, education providers and local authority partners.

**Sector-informed priorities:** In tackling skills shortages and skills gaps in the local economy, priorities are informed by local and national employer-led sector-specific issues. For example:

- Since January 2015, the LEP skills team delivered a city-region wide campaign (Rise of the Engineer) to promote career opportunities within the **engineering and advanced**

**manufacturing sector** locally, profiling a “Female Engineer of the Month” featuring inspirational women from the likes of Network Rail, Renishaw and the National Composites Centre. These case studies are available online as part of the Rise of the Engineer microsite, which has attracted over 5,000 unique visits to date.

- Diversity remains an issue for new entrants in to the **creative and digital industries** and this was addressed through a LEP-led plan of action in partnership with BBC Digital Bristol Week, Creative Skillset and local partners including Ujima Radio. Since March 2015, a strategic commitment has been made by creative and cultural businesses across the Bath and Bristol area to create 50 opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds.
- In the **construction and development sector**, it is encouraging that nationally women entering the sector has increased by 14% since 2010, yet troubling that BME representation is second lowest of all industrial sectors. In commissioning the Construction Industry Training Board to co-design a construction skills strategy to meet forecast workforce needs across the sector, the LEP has ensured there will be a focus on increasing participation of under-represented groups.

**Targeting funding:** The LEP has ensured that EU funding (particularly European Social Fund) across the West of England is appropriately targeted to those groups who would benefit the most. Informed by an evidence base provided by the four unitary authorities, those target groups include, amongst others: adults with low levels of English language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills; career changers; women; BAME residents as well as groups where there is clear evidence of under-representation in the workforce.

**Supporting older people:** The LEP Skills Group has established a working group with the Department for Work and Pensions locally to progress a number of aspirations within Government’s “Fuller Working Lives” framework to reduce the proportion of people leaving the labour market involuntarily over the age of 50, particularly carers, disabled people, those with health conditions and people who are made redundant. This group met for the first time in May 2015 and reported to the Skills Group the following month.

**Supporting learners with disabilities:** In terms of working with younger people, the LEP’s Employability Chartermark supports the development of employability within schools. We have recently demonstrated the benefits this can have for those with learning difficulties and disabilities with New Fosseway School, a special school within Bridge Learning Campus, Bristol, which provides education for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with needs on the autistic spectrum. All pupils

have a statement of special educational needs. The senior leadership team has reported the impact the LEP's intervention made.

2. In 2013 during the drafting of the Economic Strategy the DCLG commented, in relation to equality and diversity as one of the cross-cutting themes:  
*“All projects will have some form of impact on cross cutting themes whether small or big and each project will be required to contribute to the overall themes at Programme level. Improvement would be made by providing more information to include high level equality commitments and an explanation of how the funds will address the issues (linked to the equality characteristics) identified in the evidence base. The document would also benefit from more information to show how the Strategy has been positively influenced by wider partners and clarification of whether the LEP intends to buy in any additional equality expertise.”*

Our comments on the draft re-enforced this view and we were disappointed that this approach was not adopted in the final strategy.

**How is the WoE LEP ensuring that all funded projects contribute to equality and diversity and how this is monitoring; what equality expertise is used to support this and how local organisations can contribute to this process?**

**Response:** In line with approach outlined in ‘Equality and Diversity Impacts for the West of England Strategic Economic Plan 2013-30’, all projects which come forward through the Local Growth Fund (and also the Economic Development Fund) are required to complete an Equality and Diversity assessment and plan as part of the business case and scheme approval process. These are reviewed by an external specialist and comments provided to the schemes promoters. Once finalised these are published and are available on the LEP website at <http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/funding/local-growth-fund>

It will be the responsibility of the projects to monitor whether specific intended outcomes have been achieved and resources are not available in the LEP to support or oversee this activity.

3. **How will the Scrutiny Commission ensure that equality and diversity is addressed and integrated into the plans and projects funded by the LEP and how will it ensure that the Strategic Leaders’ Board meet the legal requirements of the Equality Act?**

**Response:** these responses have been prepared by officers in advance of the meeting and this is a question to be considered by the Members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

**Item 4:** Questions from the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways questions to Joint Scrutiny, 6 July 2015

1. Will the WEP Joint Scrutiny members endorse or comment on the attached business case as drafted by Charlotte Leslie MP?

**Response:** This is for Members of Joint Scrutiny to consider.

2. Can WEP confirm that despite the sale of the BCC share of the Port freehold that Network Rail do not need Port permission to redouble the rail line from Avonmouth Station to reconnect with the Loco Release line just north of the St Andrew's Gate level crossing (see attached map?)

**Response:** Bristol City Council (BCC) safeguards all operational rail land from development so the sale of the BCC share of the port freehold would not affect its safeguarded status. Space requirements for any redoubling scheme will dictate whether 3rd party land would be required outside of the currently operational railway.

3. What is the current state of repair of Holesmouth Bridge – what tonnage can the bridge bear at present and what proportion does that represent of the current Port road freight?

**Response:** See the response to question 4.

4. Can WEP confirm that Network Rail are not obliged to build a rail cutting underneath the level crossing at St Andrew's Gate station if this would create a flooding risk or risk of ground collapse?

**Response:** The Bristol Port Company has commissioned a bespoke GRIP2 study from Network Rail into separating track from highway by means of putting the railway into a cutting underneath the entrance to Avonmouth Dock. At the time of writing, the verified outcome from the Port's GRIP2 study is awaited. It would be premature to comment on this proposal or other potential options ahead of the study being published.

5. Can WEP confirm that First Great Western and freight operators have the right to send as many trains as are necessary for the functioning of the national network through the two level crossings currently used as the only road access to the Port of Avonmouth?

**Response:** Train paths for both freight and passenger trains are subject to the Timetable Planning Rules with timetable conferences and negotiations between freight and train operating companies and Network Rail. For more information go to:

[www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/3741.aspx](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/3741.aspx)

6. Can WEP confirm and identify the DfT funds available to eliminate level crossings on safety grounds?

**Response:** Network Rail has a rolling policy to close over 250 high risk level crossings by 2019. The majority of these are footpath crossings. The crossing at St Andrews Road is not one of those being considered.

Funding for closures is from Network Rail's Level Crossing Risk Reduction Fund. £96m has been allocated for Control Period 5 (2014 to 2019) as part of the CP5 Delivery Enhancements Plan, March 2015.

7. Will WEP aid the Port in making the safety case for providing 24 hour road access to the Port via a road bridge or other solution that would decouple the current conflict between road freight and passenger rail traffic?

**Response:** The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership is happy to work with the Bristol Port Company on improving access to Avonmouth.

Christina Biggs  
Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways

# Outline Business Case for the Henbury Loop

## What is the 'Henbury Loop'?

The Henbury 'loop' line is a piece of railway line, from Filton North Station through to Chittingning Station, (see map) which connects two of the West Countries 'Enterprise Areas', Filton (home of Rolls-Royce and Airbus) and Severnside (Home of the Bristol Port Company), in the northern half of Bristol.

The track is currently used solely for freight services and primarily serves only the Bristol Port Company. Re-opening the line to passenger services will create substantial economic benefits and will provide better transport links between the two local Enterprise Areas and within the Greater Bristol area.

The planned MetroWest Phase II scheme currently proposes; hourly services on a reopened Henbury line with capacity for two new stations along the route, as well as additional stations at Ashley Down, and possibly Horfield. However, crucially, decision-makers have yet to be decided whether or not the Henbury line will re-open as a 'loop', as it is hoped, or whether it will become a turn back 'spur' which would terminate at the newly opened Henbury Station. Moreover, the timescale for completion of the project is 2023, which would be too late to prevent the inevitable traffic gridlock which will be created due to the construction of some 6,000 new homes on the sight of the former Filton Airfield.

## Is it Possible?

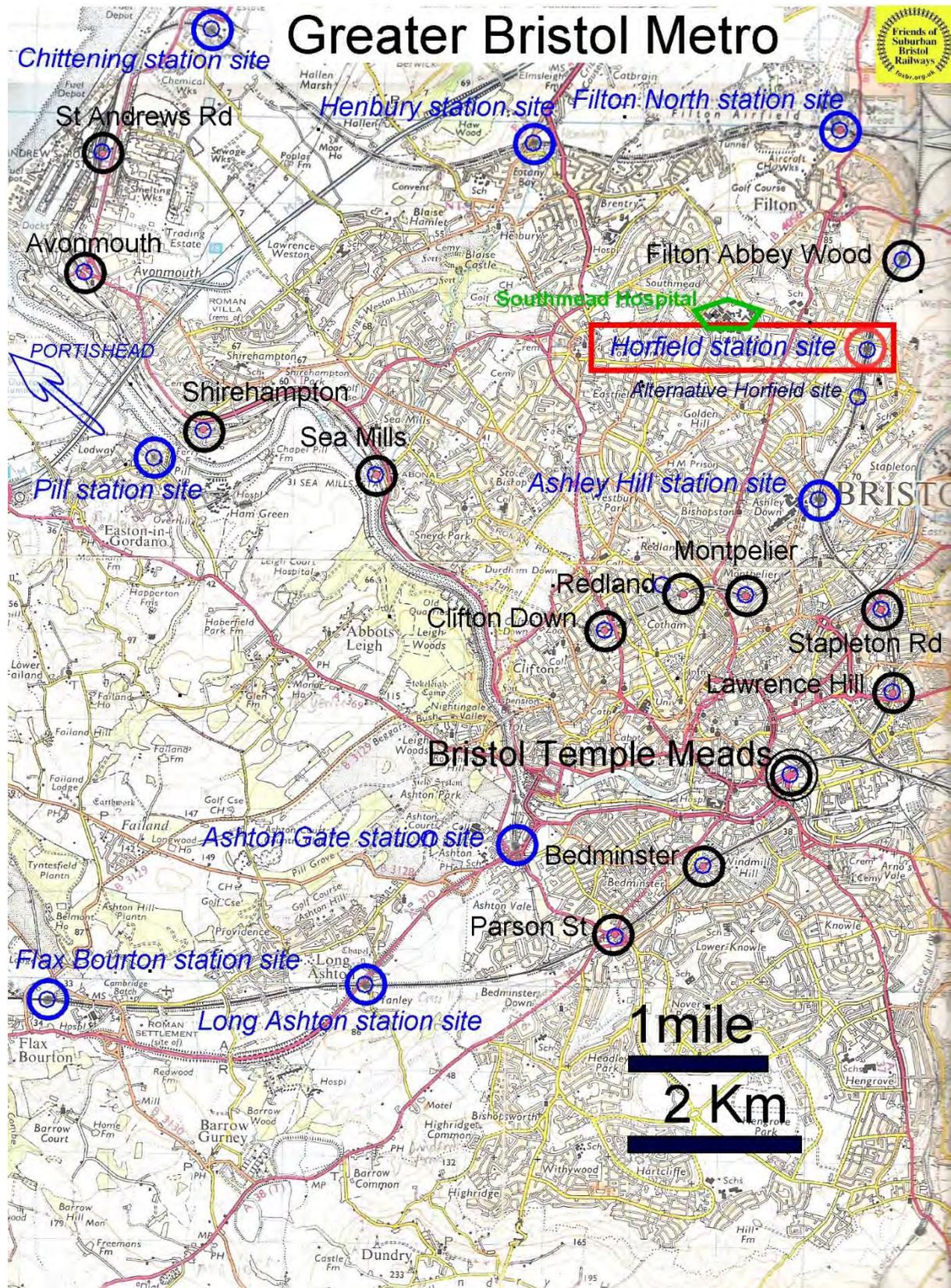
Given the very welcome announcement in October last year that works to upgrade the 'Filton Bank' stretch of track which connects Bristol Parkway Station to Bristol Temple Meads, to four tracks, it will soon be possible to extend local rail services and to create a proper Bristol metro around the northern fringe of the city. The "Henbury Loop" would connect existing passenger services on the Severn Beach line with those at Bristol Parkway, Abbey Wood and Temple Meads.

Furthermore, the track, including the part which would complete the 'loop' section is already in place. Only minimal upgrades would be required to ensure the track is suitable for passenger services.

Work on the four-tracking is expected to be completed by December 2016 so there seems little technical explanation as to why a loop line cannot be guaranteed and extended ahead of schedule to help alleviate the likely disruption and congestion created through the extensive housing and employment construction program currently under way in and around the site of the old Airfield, the Cribbs-Patchway New Neighbourhood (CPNN) as it is currently termed.

The only potential difficulty lies in the fact that the line currently cuts off both entrances to the Port of Bristol (West Town Gate and St Andrews Gate). This is currently mitigated by a level crossings at either entrance. Increased rail services

however would escalate access problems at the Port, preventing road access by an additional estimated 5 hours and 45 minutes per day.



However, given Network Rail's commitments to eradicate level crossings wherever possible, and the Ports desire to see unhindered 24 hour access, it should not be too difficult to find a solution to this problem. Indeed, the Port has already commissioned a Network Rail study to look into the possibility of creating a 'cutting' at the St Andrews Road Gate which would see trains pass under St Andrews Road.

## **What will it cost?**

As the track already exists, the cost of providing additional passenger services are minimal. A Halcrow study (2012) estimated the cost of the entire MetroWest Phase II project to be only £38m – of which the Henbury 'loop' accounts for about £25m. The DfT Devolved Local Major Scheme Funding has been earmarked (although not confirmed) for the project in 2019, meaning no services with begin until 2023.

Given the HS2 report published last year which suggested that Bristol could lose as much as £100m of investment to regions bordering the new line, an investment of £38m to help mitigate these affects should be considered paramount.

## **The Business Case**

In the Greater Bristol Metro Phase II Report, commissioned by the West of England Partnership in May 2013, any business case relating to MetroWest Phase II would have to meet five principle business objectives relating to;

1. Economic growth
2. Delivering a more resilient transport network through better utilisation of heavy rail corridors
3. Improving accessibility
4. Improving quality of life
5. Maximising other Modes of Transport

The project also has three supporting objectives;

- Reduce traffic congestion
- Enhance the capacity of the rail network
- Reduce the adverse environmental impact of the transport network as a whole

### **1. Economic Growth**

Transport links to the Severnside Enterprise Area are poor and people who do not drive are effectively barred from working at the site. Employees regularly complain of being unable to fill vacancies because of people's inability to access their sites, acting as a drag on productivity and production.

Around 30% of Bristol households do not have access to private transport and are therefore prevented from working in our city's most industrially intensive areas. Young people in particular are often priced out of jobs because of the unaffordability of buying and maintaining motor transport and are unable to take up low-paid work such as jobs with training or apprenticeships. Given the Government's appreciation

and welcome commitment to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020, providing the necessary public transport required to access them needs to be a top regional priority.

Low-paid workers, upon which the often labour intensive industries of Severnside rely, are also priced out of the market due to their inability to drive or afford cars. This has the knock-on effect of increasing unemployment rates and unit labour costs while reducing competitiveness, global market-share and profits.

High-tech industry, such as those involved in aerospace in Filton, have informed us that without improved infrastructure and transport links, (particularly in light of new housing developments), their long-term commitment to Bristol could be questioned.

The “Henbury Loop” line is therefore imperative to improving efficiency, labour-market flexibility and in making business more competitive domestically and internationally. It will help improve recruitment, skills, reduce logistical problems and help promote Bristol generally as a modern and innovative industrial area.

## **2. Delivering a more Resilient Transport Network through Better Utilisation of Heavy Rail Corridors**

Bristol is already one of the most congested cities in Britain with often huge tailbacks at peak times. Traffic congestion within the Greater Bristol has increased dramatically over the last ten years to levels well above those experienced nationally. It is estimated that 21% of travel time in Bristol is spent stationary. This costs the local economy approximately £350 million per year (JLTP 2006).

Bristol is also very hilly, which makes it less amenable to cycling, and partly due to near constant traffic, bus services are unreliable and often late, if they arrive at all, often at least partially because of traffic congestion. The only sustainable, reliable alternative to these modes of transportation therefore, are trains.

As mentioned, there are huge housing developments (an extra 6,000 homes on Filton airfield alone) underway in North Bristol, increasing pressure on the already strained road network. Numerous academic studies have shown how providing sustainable transport before housing developments are completed is the best and most effective way of enabling modal shift away from cars, and into trains and buses. It is therefore critical that if Bristol is to avoid traffic gridlock for years to come, that we put in place sustainable alternatives before people are forced to get into their cars. To not utilise a piece of railway track which sits on the doorstep of a huge new development, before houses are completed, would be a huge and tragic missed opportunity.

Given that the track is already in place and is already used for freight services, using it for passenger services as well would be the logical and most obvious way to achieve this goal. In July 2013, local MP, Charlotte Leslie, chartered a train with First Great Western along the stretch known as the “Henbury Loop” Line in order to demonstrate that it is usable of passenger trains.

Rail passenger numbers are increasing nationally year on year. Following a period of decline over several decades, rail journeys in Great Britain have seen large increases since the mid-1990s. The number of journeys has doubled since 1994/95, increased by a quarter in the last 5 years and by half in the last 10 years.

Moreover, on the current Severn Beach line in Bristol, which forms part of the Henbury loop line, the growth has been dramatic. In May 2008, the City Council were persuaded to subsidise a more reliable 40 minute service on the Severn Beach line which resulted in passenger numbers more than doubling from 450,000 passenger trips in 2007 to 1,000,000 passenger trips in 2013. All the evidence suggests that if services are improved, usage will increase dramatically.

### **3. Improving Accessibility**

Accessibility concerns the providing of an alternative to cars or buses for households accessing major employment and leisure sites within Bristol.

As already mentioned, the “Henbury Loop” would provide improved access which would be invaluable for many people and business in the Severnside area. The “Loop” would also better link Severnside with the Filton Enterprise Area and the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone around Bristol Temple Meads station. This latter area has plans to generate around 17,000 jobs in the near future and Filton looks set to create an iAero aerospace ‘hub’ to cater specifically for high-end, high-tech industry. Linking these zones, via rail, would create a sustainably traversable enterprise triangle in the north of Bristol and act as a focus for provincial growth for the whole South West region.

Within the north of the city, the Mall is also looking to expand, Bristol Rovers and UWE hope to construct a new 20,000 all-purpose stadium, Bristol Zoo is expanding onto a second site, and as previously outlined, a huge new residential complex has already been approved. Access to all of these new and existing sites would be massively enhanced with the opening of the loop line to passenger services.

### **4. Improving quality of life**

For all of the reasons outlined, the reopening of the “Henbury Loop” as a passenger service connecting new and existing residential and industrial areas would contribute exponentially to improving quality of life. This would not just be for those who would use the new services, but also for those who would see traffic congestion reduce, buses become more reliable, roads become safer, and the obvious health benefits that better air quality and less CO2 emissions would create.

Most Bristolians love their city, but almost all lament the poor public transport infrastructure which forces many onto the roads who would otherwise chose to commute in trains or buses, and which brings congestion and pollution in the city to unacceptable levels. Only a proper “Henbury Loop” rail line, constructed before massive new residential areas spring up across the northern fringe, can hope to remedy these problems and help address the main aspect of life in Bristol which almost all consider to be problematic.

## **5. Maximising other modes of transport**

Fully exploiting use of existing railway infrastructure to re-open the “Henbury Loop” also presents a large opportunity for increasing use of bus, cycle and walking modes of transport. If bus routes, cycle routes and walking opportunities are strategically planned around railway stations in the North of the city, the likelihood is that people will be more amenable to using cross-modal transport, rather than their car, as has happened in London. If there are fewer cars on the roads, more people on buses, a virtuous circle of bus services can also begin, of prompter buses, more fare collection, more routes serviced etc.

## **Conclusion**

Given these arguments, we consider that the business case for a proper “Henbury Loop” line, rather than a ‘spur’, to be obvious. It is also clear that the current timeframe is not ambitious enough and will not prevent further traffic gridlock. The scheme needs to be brought forward to take account of developments such as the CPNN and provide transport alternatives which would encourage modal shift.

Although the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) seems bizarrely reluctant to request early funding from Government, the project has the overwhelming backing of local residents, business, Government and politicians of all stripes. Indeed, in a recent letter to Charlotte Leslie MP, the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, urged the LEP to “look again” at the funding and timetable for the “Henbury Loop” which is currently not scheduled until 2021. He also stated clearly that he would be “surprised” if the LEP was not convinced of the case for the “Loop”.

We therefore call upon:

1. The LEP to heed the words of the Secretary of State and to pursue with all haste a strategy that would see the implementation of a full “Henbury Loop” line before other infrastructure developments result in the permanent gridlock of our city.
2. The Secretary of State for Transport, and the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government to acknowledge that the Local Enterprise Partnership priorities are not currently reflecting public priorities, and in the next Parliament, to seek ways to reflect the public priorities in future investment in Bristol’s railway infrastructure.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Leslie - Former MP and Conservative Candidate (Bristol North West)  
Jack Lopresti – Former MP and Conservative Candidate (Filton and Bradley Stoke)  
Mayor Ferguson – Elected Mayor of Bristol  
Nigel Greenhalgh - On behalf of the Cribbs-Patchway New Neighbourhood  
Development Partners  
Mike Norton – On behalf of the Bristol Post  
Andrea Young – On behalf of North Bristol NHS Trust

Nick Higgs – On behalf of Bristol Rovers Football Club  
Peter Mitchell – On behalf of Clifton Rugby Football Club  
David Pinchard – On behalf of the Institute of Directors  
Ken Simpson – Federation of Small Business  
Sean Connolly – On behalf of Rolls-Royce Ltd  
Bill Marshall - On behalf of the University of the West of England (UWE)

**NB: Other potential signatories limited by election purdah**



# Port of Avonmouth - road and rail access



Holesmouth Bridge

Henbury Loop



St Andrew's Rd Station site



St Andrew's Gate Level crossing



Avonmouth Station and level crossing



Portway A4

Level crossing under M5 bridge

Map from Bing Birds Eye  
Annotated by  
Christina Biggs  
FOSBR Secretary  
24/02/2015