

**West of England Joint Transport Board
4th July 2014**

Views of Joint Scrutiny Committee

Purpose

1. To inform members of the views of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) following a meeting held on Monday 30th June 2014.

Joint Scrutiny Committee Views

2. The following members were present at the meeting:

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Martin Veal

Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Pearce (sub for Cllr Holland)

North Somerset Council
Cllr Tony Moulin
Cllr David Pasley
Cllr Clive Webb

South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Pat Hockey
Cllr Bill Bowrey

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

- Disabled access to MetroBus and MetroRail
- Layouts and designs around Stoke Park
- The importance of combining London Waterloo with Bristol, via Bath
- Timescales for construction or passive provision of local stations and related infrastructure needed to be clear and coordinated with the IEP
- Speakers agreed with the five-year contract period specified in the Great Western Franchise proposals
- In the south of Bristol, MetroBus should be integrated with services 75 and 76, potentially reducing the need for extra MetroBus vehicles
- To date, there had not been any extended discussion between campaigners and elected members on the key issues of the GW Franchise.

Officers explained that these concerns would be communicated to the Local Transport Board. Officers also agreed to come back to scrutiny members with a publication date for the Mott MacDonald review into the Bathampton park and rail scheme, and when it will be made public.

4. Members received a presentation from Ed Plowden of Bristol City Council on gender equality in the planning of transport schemes designed to increase cycling and walking.
 - According to the 2011 census, 10% men and 4.6% women cycle to work, compared with 17% men and 21% women who choose to walk;
 - Most cycle commuters are between 25-45 years old;
 - Both Bristol City South Gloucestershire Councils offer training and bike loan schemes;
 - Better by Bike marketing attempts to highlight the ease and convenience of cycling and dispel the image of equipment and kit dependant, race orientated cycling;
 - Almost all commuting cycling is done between 3-5 miles into city centres.

Subsequent discussion raised the following points:

- The roads in Bath were too narrow to effectively accommodate a network of discrete cycle paths. Members queried what was being done about the quality of the road next to the kerb.
 - Officers responded that it was recommended for cyclists to ride one meter from the kerb;
- Members recommended that cycle paths should be delineated, but recognised that this was not always possible given the condition and size of existing infrastructure;
- Members noted that many of the figures quoted in the presentation were relevant to Bristol and not the wider area;
- It was not only women, but also men and children who felt at risk on the roads;
- It was noted that on quieter roads (rural roads outside of city centres), the only really viable option to improve conditions for cyclist and walkers would be to adjust the speed limits;
- Members wished to see broader advertising and awareness-raising of the Bikability training;
- The chair queried how far active travel routes were being considered by JTEC.

5. Members received a presentation from Jen Pritchard of the West of England office on Metrobus.

- The scheme includes highlights such as Smart ticketing, rapid efficient service, stops that feel like stations
- Seeking to improve walking and cycling routes alongside the bus routes (which will be segregated from general traffic)
- Key issue: in terms of delivery the programme is very compressed, with a requirement to ensure that all full approvals are submitted and signed off before parliament is dissolved at the end of March 2015.
- The Hybrid diesel/electric vehicle standard was endorsed by JTEC in 2013.

Subsequent discussion raised the following points:

- Would the network be exclusive to buses belonging to operators within the partnership, or would other rolling stock be able to use the routes?
 - Other buses could operate on the network, but would need to reach the required standard in order to do so. A policy would be devised to deal with breakdowns;
- Members were concerned that the priority for MetroBus was to attract people from their cars, and that sub-standard vehicles would detract from the offer and dilute the appeal of the network;
- There was concern that commonality between the stops of background services and MetroBus could impact on the commercial viability of existing services such as the 75 and 76;
- Disabled access should be of the highest quality;
- How would the return on £197m investment be measured and over what period of time? Essential that this evaluation is done. Planning should ensure the scheme looks to the future, not just concentrate on spending the money. There will never be a sufficiently broad appeal, or enough people cycling and walking; any plans to promote modal shift must be properly integrated with rail and bus services.
 - As the Quality Partnership Scheme was developed, it would become more specific and be legally complaint. The goal was to make this mode of transport as attractive as possible, and to integrate with employment

locations. A considerable 'wishlist' came out of a JTEC workshop on this subject, which officers are working through with operators.

6. Members received a presentation from James White of the West of England office on rail matters, covering three main areas as follows:

MetroWest Phase 1:

- GRIP Stage 1 – 2 report being finalised
- Business Case work started – strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management cases
- Joint Transport Board 12/09/14 decision on single option for GRIP Stage 3
- Portishead Station consultation will include 3 options and closes 28/07/14.

MetroWest Phase 2:

- GRIP Stage 1-2 and Business Case briefs finalised and issued to Network Rail
- Phase 1 Railsys timetable modelling finished before Phase 1 can start
- Bristol New Stations Study (Ashley Down and Horfield) being finalised
- GRIP Stage 1-2 report will go to the December Joint Transport Board.

Great Western Franchise Specification Consultation:

- Rolling stock to meet future demand and cascade of Class 165/6s
- Up to five year Direct Award for continuity and minimise disruption
- Additional services – Bristol to Oxford, more local stops
- Community Rail Partnership support, station improvements, targets and reliability
- Endorsed by Joint Transport Board on 04/07/14.

Subsequent discussion raised the following points:

- Politically it had been made very clear that the priority was for a Henbury Loop, not a spur. Why were plans and business cases persisting for a spur?
 - Officers responded that both options must be considered to test deliverability, viability, affordability and demand. Development of business cases would tackle this, and the Grip Stages would provide the technical test. It was understood that politicians will make the final decision, but officers were obliged to put forward proposals that proved value for money and deliverability, therefore all possibilities were being considered.
- Why is it taking so long to re-open the Portishead line? There is local demand for this. Is there anything more the UAs could have done to bring it forward?
 - Grip process is very involved and technical. It is slow, but it is project managed to ensure value for money and viability.
 - Funding now in place and has taken a long time to secure. May 2019 remains the current opening date. Statutory requirements must be followed. Timescales are long and challenging.
 - LEP and local UAs currently lobbying to get round the requirement for a Development Consent Order, which, if successful, may bring the date forward.
- There should be the potential to run mainline services from Portishead
 - Not yet been tested. Would currently still have to change at Temple Meads.
- Members largely agreed with the West of England's response to the Great Western Rail Franchise consultation and endorsed it.
- Temple Meads should be seen as a hub. Taunton and Swansea should also be considered as part of the network. How far is JTEC looking at the submissions that from the other transport authorities?

- Meetings with officers from neighbouring authorities to consider cross-border issues and joint wording will be agreed. One of the agreed common issues was the need for additional services to Taunton and to South Wales (Cardiff). This would be raised at the 4th July JTEC.
- Perceived issues around stopping the trains at Pilning.
 - There was a reference to Pilning in the final response.

Recommendation

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

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