

West of England Joint Committee

19 July 2019

Items from the public

Agenda item 8 – Items from the public

Statements received:

1	David Redgewell Subject: Transport Issues
2	Christina Biggs Subject: Rail Services and Transport Issues

Statement by David Redgewell for WECA Scrutiny on Wednesday 17th July 2019 and WECA Board on 19th July

In the middle of negotiations with the Mayor's plus the Combined Authority and N Somerset about a Regional Bus Deal talk of franchising is a complete distraction.

It looks like a fruitful deal that benefits bus passengers with clear timescales can be agreed, with partnership working and cross operator support. This has been very successful elsewhere such as in Leeds. The First investments will start on routes 1 & 2 and then 75 & 76. Working alongside the Mayor's the Authorities will deliver bus priorities to tackle congestion that holds the buses back and causes unreliability and adds costs. There will be more integration and we have already achieved commitments and government funding for an interchange at Bristol Parkway. First will add more integration and will be delivering 77 gas buses through the partnerships and 9 new buses for Bath. New buses cost between £200 – 400k and there is no spare money for the authorities to be buying fleets of buses and when operators are willing to buy them the money can be spent on other vital areas. The freedom pass which allows bus and rail travel in the City Region has had a price cut and there will be more marketing to publicise this ticket. Of course there is more to do and we need to fill the off peak buses when they have capacity. We can work with Destination Bristol to promote public transport to our important visitors in the tourist economy in this region.

In view of the JSP Inquiry I would urge WECA to meet with the operators over the summer to work on the public transport plans to make sure that the new communities are provided with accessible and sustainable public transport.

It is with great concern that we learn of the potential removal of the bus lane at Hambrook, this will have a severe impact on the reliability of bus services at a time when all local authorities across the region should be doing everything possible to promote buses and public transport use. Buses are part of the solution to the Air Quality problems and more should be done to give priority to buses. Services 19 and 19A serving Bath – Keynsham – Kingswood – UWE – Parkway (for connections to the hospital) – Patchway will be re routed around the roundabout at Hambrook adding time and delays and unreliability to this important route. The removal of bus lanes at Hambrook will also have a disruptive effect on the new MetroBus route between Bristol and Emerson's Green which is the start of a wider network and I believe carries over 2000 people per day.

Bus lanes and priority are essential to make the bus as reliable as possible and must be progressed across the region so I call upon all local authorities to work together and with WECA to promote the bus. Regardless of who actually operates the buses the company needs priorities to make the case for on going investment. A Bus Deal for the West of England is important to grow the use of buses in the region and reduce the dependence on cars.

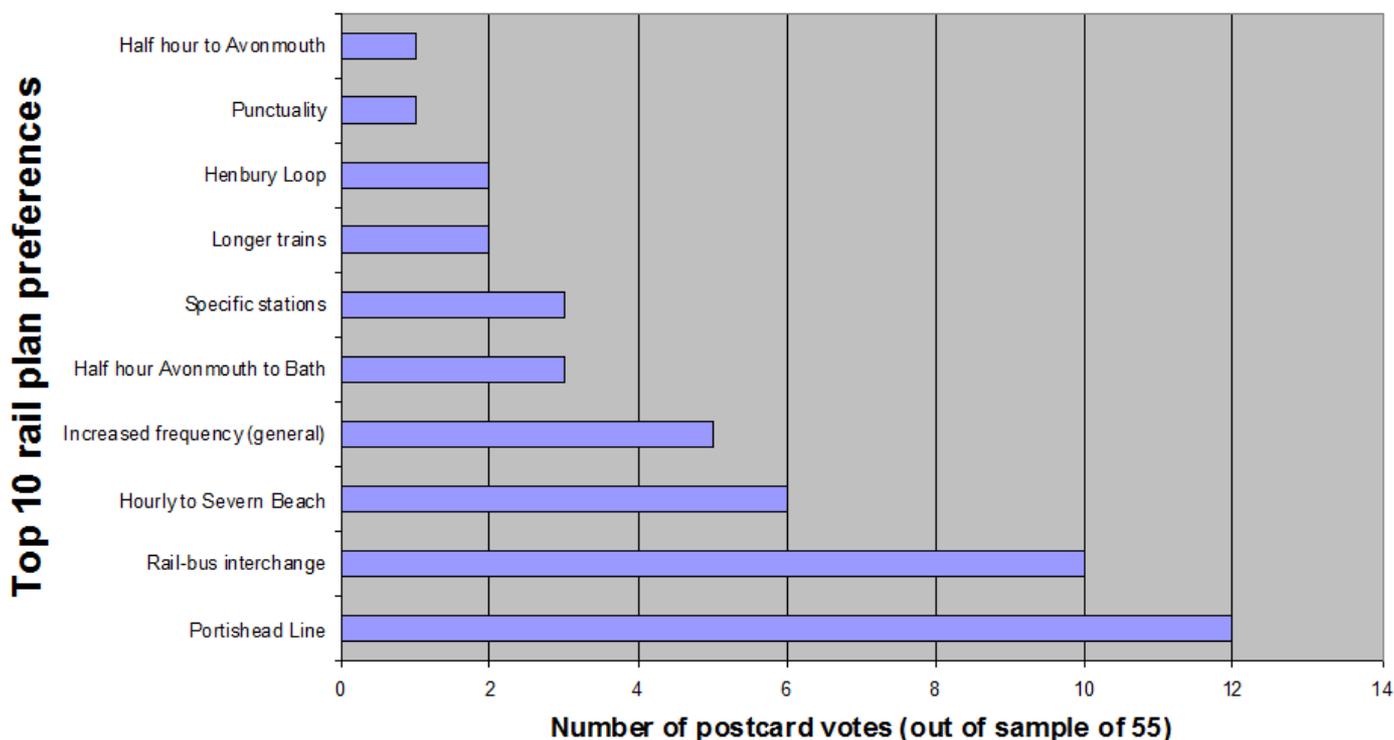
We also need good quality infrastructure in terms of bus stations and interchanges so that connecting between buses, trains and taxis and coaches is easy, there needs to be public toilets and cafes provided too. Integrated ticketing also needs to feature to make it as easy as possible for users both current users, potential users and not forgetting tourists. We are still waiting to see the WECA wide Bus Strategy.

We welcome the funding announcements for the Metro West rail packages and need to see the work progressed quickly. We also understand that the DfT are looking at the possibility of a Tram – Train solution in this area.



1. FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 – We are pleased to report that all 3000 postcards have been distributed and therefore we are formally closing our postcard campaign today. We have conducted an analysis of 55 of the cards that people have entrusted to us for hand delivery and present our suggested analysis in this bar-chart below. We understand that WECA cannot release the postcards already posted direct due to GDPR regulations so we will be handing the remaining cards in today to be analysed as WECA wishes.

FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 - suggested analysis method

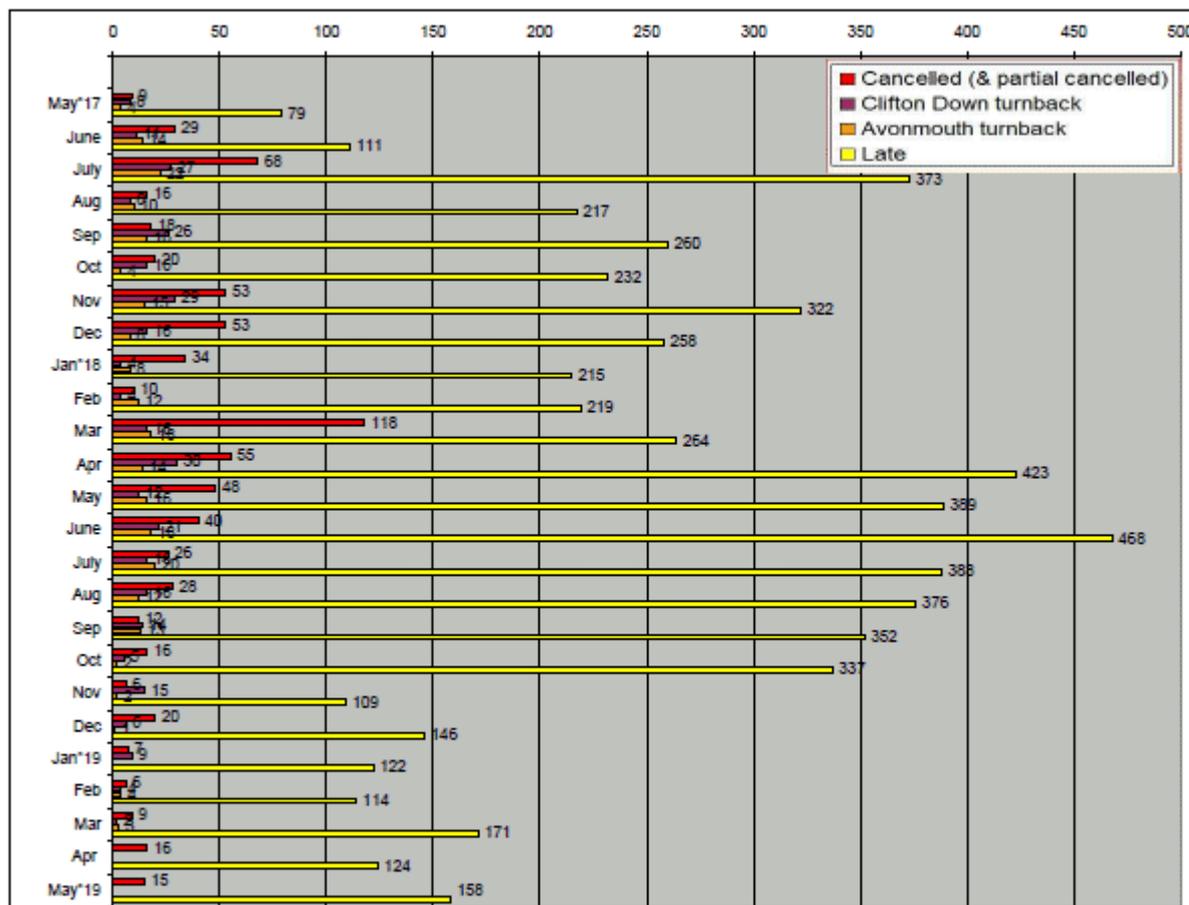


2. Filton Bank and the green light for MetroWest Phase 1A

- a) FOSBR notes that since the implementation of Filton Bank in November 2018 (for which we have campaigned for over 10 years), the reliability of the Severn Beach Line can now be considered to be restored to pre-2017 levels (see chart below), and urges WECA to urgently conclude negotiations and **implement MetroWest Phase 1A, initially half-hourly from Temple Meads to Avonmouth and hourly to Severn Beach, in the May 2020 timetable at the latest.**
- b) We appreciate the urgency (and the political necessity to WECA) of a half-hour service to Keynsham, Oldfield Park and Westbury, but as we understand this is dependent on the remodelling of Bristol East Junction, we would urge WECA to implement the Temple Meads to Severn Beach service first, as soon as possible, and not wait for Bristol East Junction as this is not yet approved.
- c) It is in any case advisable to test the resilience of the half-hour timetable on a small scale before linking to a through service to Westbury. It is quite possible that with knock-on delays through the single-track section of the Severn Beach Line, there will be delays and cancellations initially, much as for the Class 166 introduction in 2017-18 (see reliability chart for evidence of this completely unacceptable disruption to the service)

- d) We have accordingly launched an online (via Change.org, link on our website) and paper petition for this half-hour service which we will present to the September WECA meetings. We appreciate that it is not solely in WECA's gift to implement the service and so the petition calls on all decision makers, including WECA and DfT, to work together on this.
- e) In the mean time we urge WECA to press the DfT to approve funding for the remodelling of Bristol East Junction so that MetroWest Phase 1A can be extended to Westbury, and to initiate discussions on selective double-tracking of the Severn Beach Line.
- f) In the light of the climate crisis FOSBR would recommend that **no fare rise** be discussed, negotiated or implemented at this point as i) the reliability of the new service cannot be guaranteed, ii) the running costs to GWR should be covered by the subsidy agreed by the Outline Business case of £1.1 million, much as in 2008 by BCC, and iii) that the resulting rise in ridership together with smart ticketing may well cover the running costs after the proposed 3 years of pump-priming.
- g) As WECA has already committed £9m for capital delivery and the timetabling work is complete, there is no reason to be negotiating with DfT or GWR about service delivery. WECA should honour its Outline Business Case agreement to subsidise the MetroWest services for the first three years and not haggle over service delivery at this point.
- h) ***MetroWest Phase 1A should be considered as WECA's highest priority contribution to combat climate change and air pollution, and if implemented by May 2020 would fall well within the current timescale of Bristol's Clean Air Plan.***

Number of train services cancelled, turnback or late, by calendar month on Severn Beach Line: May 2017 - May 2019



"Late" = train service 5 or more minutes late on arrival at final destination
 "Cancelled" = cancelled throughout, "Cancelled partial" = skipped scheduled stops at intermediate stations
 "Turnback cancel" = turned back prior to (or started after) scheduled stations

From baseline 316 Severn Beach Line services per week*, 5*50 weekdays, 46 on Saturdays, 20 on Sundays**

*Fewer during bank holidays and Filton Bank 4-tracking blockades inc 13/14 Oct, 27 Oct-18 Nov, 24/25 Nov, 1/2 Dec

**Summer Sunday service increases from 20 to 26

Compiled for FOSBR by TM, collated by CJD

2. **MetroWest Phase 2** – We welcome the WECA decision passed on Friday 14 April to proceed MetroWest Phase 2 to the Full Business Case (GRIP 3) and would urge that plans for a full station are developed with YTL for the Arena at Filton, a direct connection to Bristol Parkway and at least a half-hour service. We would continue to urge WECA to hold talks with Bristol Port Authority to resolve the issue of road access at St Andrew’s Gate, and suggest a study into a bridge at St Andrew’s Rd station or internal roads linking to Holesmouth Bridge.

3. **Joint Spatial Plan** – FOSBR recommends that investigations be carried out into all the proposed Strategic Development Locations, not just Charfield. In particular we would like draw your attention to our JLTP4 consultation submission where we show 2011 census data that 26,000 cars each day drive from S Glos into Bristol. To that end we therefore recommend that studies be undertaken into reopening stations at Coalpit Heath, Flax Bourton, Uphill/Locking and that a study be undertaken of remodelling of Westerleigh Junction, perhaps using the Westerleigh Oil Depot freight line and reinstating Ram Hill Loop, to facilitate the delivery of the Thornbury Line, initially as a Park and Ride from Tytherington Quarry. In the mean time we commend Pilning as a Park and Rail for Thornbury as Pilning (unlike Charfield) is to the south of Thornbury.

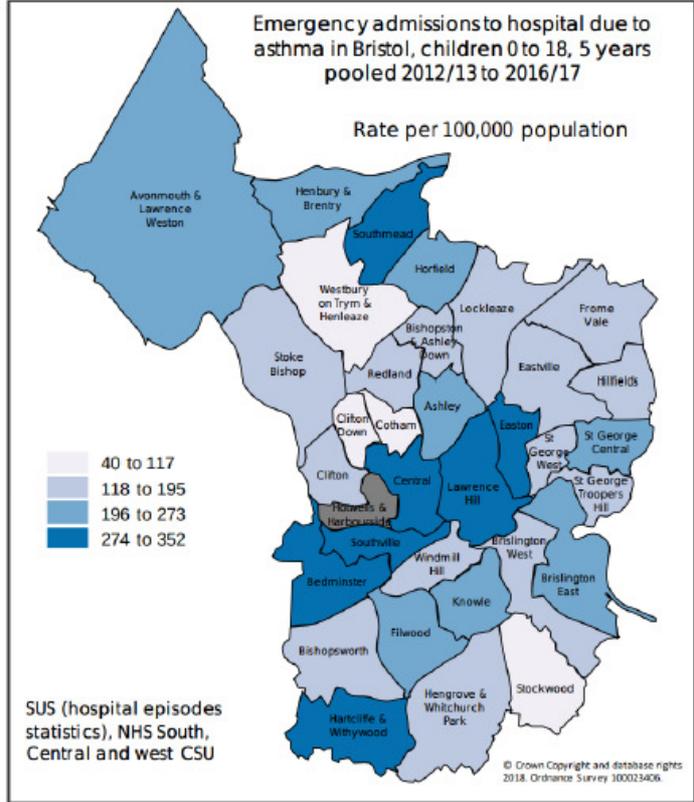
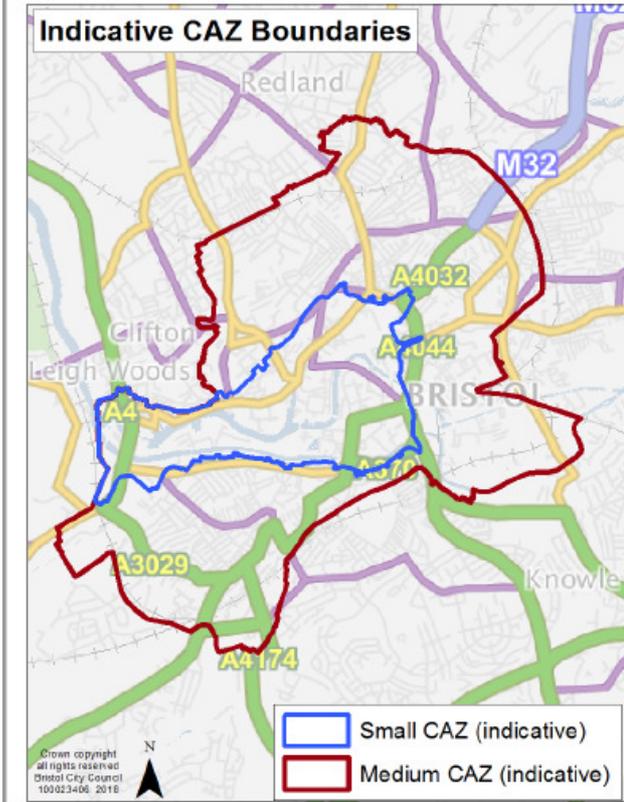
4. **Clean Air Plan** – In light of the above-cited 26,000 cars per day travelling into Bristol from S Glos, FOSBR regard the proposed remodelling of the B4058 Junction as cynical in the extreme. FOSBR support the suggestion by James Freeman of FirstBus to modify the proposed remodelling of Hambrook Junction by retaining the forward bus lane. FOSBR supports FirstBus’ suggestion to remove the right hand turn to the north and to instead use this as a third lane going forwards towards the M32. Removing the forward bus lane will only disincentivise bus travel and make air pollution in Bristol even worse!



4. FOSBR support bus travel and bus-rail interchange as part of the complete solution, and are very disappointed to hear that despite committing £2 million a year ago to an upgrade of the real-time bus information system, that this has not been planned or considered yet by WECA.

Dear Marvin,

Please clean up Bristol's dangerous air pollution in the fairest, fastest and most comprehensive way. Both nitrogen dioxide from diesel vehicles and particles from wood burning are known to hasten death from respiratory illnesses, reduce lung capacity in children and to exacerbate asthma. All road traffic, whether from petrol or diesel cars, contributes to poor air quality and climate change. I pledge to examine my own travel patterns and act to reduce my pollution production now. *Please implement a Medium Clean Air Zone!*



FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 – car-free travel from your door



A reliable half-hour train service:

- WECA to have rail powers and operational oversight;
- **Longer** trains with more seats and **room for cycles**;
- Rail-bus interchanges at Filton Abbey Wood for Southmead Hospital and Nailsea & Backwell for Bristol Airport, accurate real-time bus information at stations;
- Multi-modal **smart ticketing**, with guards on all trains;
- Delivery of MetroWest Phase 1A **half-hour train service between Avonmouth and Bath**, hourly to Severn Beach;
- 30 min service for Patchway, Parson St and Bedminster;
- Future 15 or 20 minute frequency.

Robust infrastructure to unlock capacity:

- Completion of Filton Bank four-tracking;
- Bristol East and Westerleigh Junction remodelling;
- Replace footbridge at Piling for Severnside commuters;
- Emission-free trains: electrification to Bristol Temple Meads and battery or hydrogen-fuelled local trains;
- Extra platforms and bus hub at Temple Meads;
- Selective double-tracking of Severn Beach Line.

Reopening stations across the network:

- Deliver Portishead line with an initial hourly service with planning for half-hour service;
- Henbury Spur extension to Henbury Loop;
- Welcoming WECA's proposals for Horfield (at Constable Rd), St Anne's, Salford, Ashton Gate & Charfield;
- Consideration of further stations at Coalpit Heath, Chittington, Uphill/Locking, Corsham & Long Ashton;
- Exploring an extension of Tytherington line to Thornbury.