

WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

17 DECEMBER 2021

Agenda item 6 – Statements received (full details set out in following pages):

1. David Redgewell – Transport issues
2. John Daghish – Public transport – light rail
3. Tay McLean-Foreman – Public transport - trams
4. Julie Boston – Catch the bus West of England campaign
5. Christina Biggs – Transport issues

STATEMENT 1 – David Redgewell

With regards to Bus service improvements plan and the Enhanced quality partnership we to work hard to improve bus service frequencies on the key investment corridors.

Bristol bus and coach station to Arnos Vale, Brislington, Keynsham, Saltford Corston, Newbridge, Weston Bath bus and coach station A4 corridor.

Bath bus and coach station, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton, Shepton Mallet and Wells bus and coach station. A367.

A37 corridor from Street, Glastonbury, Wells bus station, Chewton Mendip, Farrington Gurney, Clutton, Pensford, Whitchurch, Hengrove, Knowle ,Bristol Temple Meads station, Bristol bus and coach station.

A 4018 corridor Bristol cabot circus, Bristol city centre Park Street, Clifton Down station, Downs, Westbury on Trym, Henbury, Cribbs Causeway bus station.

Bristol city centre to Thornbury corridor. A38
Bristol city centre to Yate bus station and Chipping Sodbury. A420

Bristol bus and coach station to Ashton Gate, Long Ashton, Backwell, Yatton, Congresbury, Worle and Weston super Mare.

Bristol bus station, Long Ashton, Nailsea and Backwell and Clevedon.
Bristol city centre to Bristol Airport, Churchill, East Brent, Bridgwater and Taunton corridor.

Whilst corridor investment is welcomed including metro bus service corridor Bristol parkway to Cribbs causeway bus station.

The south Bristol metro bus loop from Whitchurch Hengrove Hartcliffe Withywood, South Bristol link road to Bristol city centre and via the portway parkway and severn Beach cabot park.
Which need metro bus service.

The concerns we have is a lot of bus walking and cycling and new bus Taxis and coach lane but with no bus services on high frequency on these economy necessary services.

Under bus back better and the West of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvements plan and the enhanced quality partnership.
With the setting up of Bus Advisory Board and passengers forum.

The problem we have is 32 bus service cuts across the West of England mayoral Combined Authority area of Greater Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset council.

Where First group plc west of England buses and stagecoach group plc stagecoach west have to run 90 % of services to receive bus service recovery grant from the Department for transport. Which has been reduced from £27.3 million week to £226,5 from September to 1st April 2022. Which leaves the bus operator unable to provide a complete service Network the Network being operated is about 80%

With the support bus service money from the west of England mayor Dan Norris and North Somerset council having been spent and we still do not the number 5 services from Downend to Fishponds Stapleton St Paul's and Bristol city centre.

Or the 18 from UWE bus station to Downend, staple hill, kingswood warmley North common, oldland common, willsbridge, keynsham, saltford, Newbridge weston and Bath spa bus station.

Where services are not restored

We must make sure we set in the budgets for Bath and North east Somerset council, the city and county of Bristol council, and South Gloucestershire council enough money to fund the supported bus service Network and bus stop shelters and bus stations and a interchanges facilities.

The public consultation of which needs extending so copy were not in Bus and coach station libraries tourist information offices and poster on some bus stops until the last few days of the public passengers and stakeholder consultation.

We would like an extension until the 20th December 2021

Bath spa bus and coach station needs a tourist information offices to replace the travel centre and also need visit west offices at Bristol bus and coach station

And the buffet and Newsagents reopened.

The most important issue is the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council western gateway transport Board and South west transport Board mps to write to Baroness Vere of Norberton and Grant Shapps secretary of state for transport to uplift and provide better financial support to the bus and coach services up to April 2022.

But with covid 19 very much still in the communities of South west England and mask wear window open buses and to be welcomed deep cleaning programmes the bus coach and train passengers figures stay at about 60 to 70 % and the department for transport also do not want fare increases on local buses.

But we need extra financial support buses in the Greater Bristol, Bath, weston super mare, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are about access to employment, education from schools to colleges and universities, medical care shopping leisure and tourism and night time economy.

We also need to address the bus infrastructure in Thornbury high street and Rock street bus interchanges.

We have a limited metro west railway Network although we welcome the cross city line from Severn Beach to st Andrew Road and Avonmouth Dock and half hourly service to Clifton Down, Bristol Temple meads, Bedminster and station to weston super mare across the city Region.

We need a governance review of west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council to allow North Somerset council to join.

And to set up an integrated Transport Authority.

With all public transport staff working for the west of England mayoral combined Authority including public transport infrastructure.

A Railway executive including light rail.

And a Director of Transport.

Head of public transport to be in charge of all former local Authority public transport staff.

On railway services and proposed light rail system.

Whilst we welcome the investment in Bristol Temple meads station. Which needs a bus interchanges facilities better shopping facilities waiting room disabled toilets and changing places and buffet restaurants improvements as a region transport hub on the inter city rail network. and gateway to South west England.

Other railway projects.

Following the reopening of the Exeter central, Exeter st Davids, crediton Okehampton.

A partnership between The Department for transport Network rail western route

First group, Great western railway. Devon county council heart of the south west lep

Oke rail, Dartmoor railway. Has open as great South western success story.

We need to make progress on Portway park and ride which has had Grant aid from the Department for transport with Funding from the west of England combined Authority and Bristol city council.

We need Network rail western route to start work on this scheme.

On the Bristol Temple meads to Pill and Portishead line Development order progress.

And the objection from Barry cash local Environmental campaigner and liberal Democrat withdrawn.

We know this not liberal Democrat party policy in the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council who support railway reopening and public transport Network improvements.

This may need to be made clear to the secretary of state for transport. Grant shapps.

We also need to see progress on the Bristol Temple meads Lawrence hill Stapleton road, Ashley Down, Filton Abbey wood, Filton North and Henbury loop line.

Would the metro mayor take action to push the city and county of Bristol and South Gloucestershire county council to grant planning permission.

To Deliver the Bristol Temple meads, keynsham, oldfield park ,Bath spa Freshford, Avoncliff, Bradford on Avon Trowbridge and Westbury service some services extend to Frome and warminster.

Bristol Temple meads, Lawrence hill Stapleton road, Ashley Down ,Filton Abbey wood, Bristol parkway, yate charfield, cam and Dursley and stonehouse Bristol road, Gloucester central and Cheltenham spa
We need a 30 minute service on this metro west route which is show as possible in Birmingham New street to Bristol Temple meads route study by Network rail western route.

We support the reopening of charfield station and stonehouse Bristol road.

We also need progress on st Anne's Park station, saltford, Ashton Gate, Corsham station.

We must make progress on the delivery of metro west railway Network which are along with buses services metro bus coach services and ferry are the back bone of The Somerset Greater Bristol Bath weston super mare Wiltshire and Gloucestershire public transport Network.

On light rail their a need to look at the Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads Arnos vale Brislington keynsham Saltford Newbridge Weston and Bath spa.

And the Bristol city centre Bristol Temple meads Arnos vale North Somerset railway line to callington road Hengrove whitchurch Hartcliffe withywood South Bristol link to Bristol Airport and return to the city centre need studying. It is also we make progress on Disabled access to station at Weston super mare Nailsea and Backwell Parson street Lawrence hill Stapleton road Avonmouth st Andrew road Freshford and Cheltenham spa lifts .

And a equalities manager employed at the west of England mayoral combined Authority.

We need a Railway executive on officers based under Peter mann team at the west of England combined Authority with North Somerset council and the western Gateway transport Board.

To hold The Department for transport and Network rail western route and the future Great Britain Railway Region.

We should be looking for an office in Bristol.

We must open up customers services and passengers engagement at the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

The Transport Authority needs to been to be delivering Public transport for the community.

We are so pleased the mayor Dan Norris is changing the west of England mayoral combined Authority away from being a ATM for the city and county of Bristol Bath and North east Somerset and South Gloucestershire council.

We look forward to a stronger west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council as full member.

As Grant shapps secretary of state for transport has made it clear Transport Grant will only be paid to city region

With metro mayors.

That why grant was not paid to the North East England combined Authority.

David Redgewell South west transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

Public statement update bus services and interchanges.

We are very concerned about the implementation of the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council bus strategy.

And the bus and public transport interchanges policy.
We only have limited bus and public transport interchanges in the Greater Bristol and Bath city region and North Somerset.
At the bus and coach station at Bristol Bath cribbs causeway bus station uwe bus and coach station, Yate bus station
Southmead hospital bus station.
The new bus and coach interchanges at weston super mare under construction
Bristol Parkway station and limited interchanges at Bristol Temple meads station. Metro bus interchanges.
Interchanges should include public toilet and refreshment facilities.
We have no bus or public transport interchange at keynsham or in Bitton. at cherry Gardens.
The best interchanges facilities for keynsham terminating services is Brislington park and ride site with full interchanges facilities and transfer from Bus service from Radstock midsomer Norton paulton Timsbury marksbury keynsham if the 178 services is replaced by services 172 .
But Oxford and Salisbury used Park and ride site for public transport interchanges.
This should be look at in the city and county of Bristol Bath and North east Somerset council South Gloucestershire county council and North Somerset council.
Yate park and ride is one such interchanges site.
Facilities are better at Cadbury heath.
Has the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council produce an interchanges facilities design Guide like Transport for London. The mayor combined Authorities for the west Midlands the mayor combined Authority for Greater Manchester and liverpool city region mayor .
Before implementing the of this policy can we please develop a design guide policy.
Under bus back better the National bus strategy we should setting a bus Advisory Board and passengers forum.
Jointly with North Somerset council.
Passengers and stakeholder at the heart of bus service improvements under supported services and services operated under the enhanced quality partnership.
We also need to make sure we have equalities group, Disabilities forums LGBTQ forum members, black South west .rural councils National union of farmers Town councils like Thornbury Yate ,chipping sodbury ,Radstock and midsomer Norton clevedon,weston super mare and Portishead and Avon parish councils association rep.
Not just the business community hospital Trust and universities.
We also believe the mayor and leader of North Somerset council should set up a passengers forum to be chair by the mayor and vice chair councillor Don Davies.

That the mayor Dan Norris in conjunction with councillor Don Davis should send out to all local councillors proposed bus service changes by first group stagecoach Group, Hct Group ,Rapt bus company. Bath Favesaver and the smaller operators.

On bus and coach interchanges we would like to realtime information systems displays passengers timetables graffiti removal from all bus stops and shelters Bristol city centre Broadmead and old market ,keynsham and Yate bus station all need graffiti removals.

New bus stop information is required at yate bus station.

The issue of work on the bus and Taxis interchanges at Thornbury high street and Rock street needs to progress with South Gloucestershire county council and stagecoach west hct and first group.

And the west of England mayoral combined Authority. South Gloucestershire council equalities group.

Thornbury Town council.

And the design of this important interchanges facilities.

For buses to Bristol bus station and city centre, Yate bus station and chipping sodbury, cribbs causeway bus station

Wootton under edge cam and Dursley may lane bus station connections for Gloucester Transport hub and Stroud bus station.

Berkley and sharpness cam and Dursley may lane.

Passengers need easy interchanges.

We also pleased to see Progress on Charfield station at the west of England mayoral combined Authority Board meeting.

On the Bristol Temple meads, Filton Abbey wood Bristol parkway Yate charfield cam and Dursley and stonehouse Bristol road new station and Gloucester central.

And on Bristol Temple meads station Eastern entrance but we need progress on the bus rail interchanges in the Friary

Temple gate and Bath Road .

We need a proper bus interchanges not just a bus stop and a shelters.

A fully accessible ferry terminals.

We also need Disabled changing places .

Car park for staff and the British Transport police and public car park and Bath Road.

Supermarkets and Boots chemist and Restaurants a Hotel welcome the conference centre university students flats and housing we would like to bus and coach services access under Feeder road railway bridge.

We Bristol clean air zone.

We need to see progress on Grants to stagecoach west buses.

Provision for Tourist coaches and National Express coaches stagecoach megabus coaches and Falcon coaches

And flix European has set up coach terminal with a west of England mayoral combined Authority blocking disabled access to Hampton by Hilton Hotel

Their is no bus shelters for the coach station that been set up.

Provision for the Railway replacement bus and coach services exemptions Which are fund by the Department for transport and Network western route and operated by first group Great western railway and cross country trains German state Railway.

By we welcome the clean air zone and lives that will be saved by the clean air in Bristol city centre and improvements in walking cycling and public transport.

We would like to see free Railway tickets as well as bus tickets for local journeys and the Freeman pass

We welcome the metro mayor Dan Norris and Network rail western route in the proposed Shirehampton parkway on Seven Beach via Clifton Down Bristol Temple meads railway line which is fully funded.

The showcase bus route from Street Glastonbury wells bus station Chewton mendip Farrington gurney Clutton pensford whitchurch Hengrove Bristol Temple meads and Bristol bus station city centre Park street Clifton Down station Westbury on Trym Henbury and cribbs causeway.

We welcome this bus and sustainable transport improvements corridor.

We must reduce the private car and lorries from Bristol city centre and save lives.

On the bus and sustainable transport corridors

A4 Bristol bus and coach station and Bristol Temple meads Arnos vale Bristlington, keynsham , Saltford Newbridge, Weston and Bath spa coach station.

A367 Bath bus and coach station peasedown st john , Radstock , midsomer Norton , paulton , Shepton mallet and wells bus station.

We must make sure the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council and Somerset county council provide bus service on this corridor under the bus service improvements plan and enhanced quality partnership.

Update statement from David Redgewell South west transport Board and Railfuture Severnside.

Update on my Public statement.

With 33 bus service change from the 30 th January 2022 and stagecoach west from the 2nd January 2022 .

We had a lot of stakeholder and passengers interested in South Bristol somer valley Town of Radstock, Westfield, midsomer, Norton paulton, keynsham Bath .

I have received 125 phone call on my phone asking how to contact the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council public transport Customer services line.

I explain they need to email the west of England mayoral combined Authority or the metro mayor Dan Norris.

On public emails.

But we need urgently to set passengers help line to talk to customers about bus and rail services .

Especially with such are large numbers of bus service changes.

We need to improve public transport passengers services within the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council.

Please can we carry out more stakeholder and passengers consultation and to set up urgently a passengers forum Bus service Advisory Board and passengers phone line.

David Redgewell South west transport Network.

STATEMENT 2 – John DGLISH

Future Light rail public transport for WECA

Has WECA been following the advances on lower cost rail track forms for light rail/tram that are quick to install, reducing construction disruption and may reduce the need to move underground services.

Trampower LR55 prefabricated rail and slab in 2 slots cut into existing bitumen road bed

<https://www.lr55.co.uk>

P-CAT City rail prefabricated slab rail

<https://www.precastadvancedtrack.com/>

Coventry VLR(Very Light Rail) removable prefabricated track form

<https://www.electricandhybridrail.com/content/other/coventry-s-green-vlr-moves-a-step-closer-to-completion-thanks-to-new-track-design>

see bathtrams.uk for more information

Regards

John DGLISH

STATEMENT 3 – Tay Mclean-Foreman

17th December 2021 committee meeting
re Trams case for B&NES

Please find attached a flyer which was used during the Climate Change Festival in October 2021. It summarizes our situation and also in respect of our frustration with WECA.

Further to the flyer, here further notes :

- Light rail is proposed where the need for mass transit is greatest and pressures of growth are highest. Our vision is for light rail mass transit in the zone of highest demand, well connected with regional train services and local bus networks. Using this approach, the mass transit system can include extended reach and flexibility to connect to more remote areas where light rail is not practical.
- <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s49556/Tram%20Report.pdf>
- This document provides: • An introduction (section 1) which explains the rationale for this scoping study, including the policy context and supportive evidence from campaign groups; • The **strategic evidence** (section 2) for introducing a tram system to Bath, including data on traffic demand in order to understand and identify the key corridors within Bath that may provide the greatest benefits from the introduction of a tram; • The **technological aspects** (section 3) of trams that need to be taken into consideration, including power systems, minimum road space requirements, minimum turning radii at junctions, maximum gradients, maximum loadings and structural support requirements, track construction, depot requirements, supplier market, safety implications; • **Corridor assessments** (section 4) of the key corridors identified from the strategic evidence section. Assessments take into account highway widths, current public transport services/routes, gradient, identification of key growth sites, and consideration of environmental factors; and • A summary (section 5) which presents the findings of this initial study, and sets out **potential next steps in progressing the investigation into a tram for Bath.**
- **Funding possibilities**
- We (Bath Trams group) are discussing funding etc. Interesting that a proven Project Director from Nottingham has shared his experience. His final paragraph sums up the spread of risk and eventual revenue stream (to the Nottingham C Council). I read a while ago, that Edinburgh has something similar to Nottingham, where EH council actually reaps the financial rewards of their successful tram (despite initial problems). EH as with Bath, is a World Heritage CITY - the only two cities in UK with that UNESCO heritage award.
- Cambridge it is good to hear all perspectives, and options that don't involve a tunnel certainly should be given close consideration. One of the portals on an unsightly carpark is unlikely to raise heritage concerns, but the other might.

A couple of points of clarification: one of the most deprived parts of Cambridge is served by the "Darwin Line", connecting it to employment, education and health sites. The network would in time extend to other relatively deprived areas. Our model is designed to be complementary to heavy rail, not duplicative, which would serve Wisbech and could serve part of the east with the addition of a couple of stops. We're also looking at Tram-Train, eg to Haverhill (another area where there exists deprivation). So, looking at the model as a combination of both light and heavy rail it does not exclude these areas - quite the opposite - and we expect the network would expand over time. It's not practical to connect everywhere at the outset.

Yes, it would be really great if Bath can lead the way! All best for the campaign there!

Thanks to all!

- **Bath compared to Oxford & Cambridge**
- " Andrew is right to stress the problem of reaching the surface, and tunnels also create ugly gashes, which would be resisted in a historic city like Cambridge. Historic towns attract many visitors who want to see the buildings, and trams add to the appeal, as cities like Grenoble and Freiburg illustrate.

However the real problem of this plan in my view is that it does nothing to connect up the most disadvantaged places to the East of the railway line, which makes Cambridge one of Britain's most divided cities. At the same time it misses out the importance of connecting up isolated towns in the Fens, like Wisbech, which will benefit if and when the rail link is reinstated.

In both Oxford and Cambridge the idea of trams has been rejected without analysis because it is said 'the streets are too narrow'. Yet the whole point of introducing trams into the centre is to get the cars out, thus releasing space for people to walk and cycle. It seems impossible to get people in the UK to take an integrated approach and look holistically at their cities. Perhaps Bath can show the way! "

- Please contact me if you have further enquiries. It is 'no coincidence' that trams are being rolled out all over the world in unprecedented pace. The urgency to tackle Climate Emergencies using PROVEN MASS TRANSIT
- is now on our door steps.

Our beautiful World Heritage City is blessed with fine buildings dating back to the Romans; stunning crescents by the Georgians; a lively social scene; great shops; theatres and wonderful countryside all around. But it is cursed with congestion, and pollution that lower the quality of life and contribute to thousands of early deaths annually.

Bath suffers from traffic congestion causing serious damage to health, the environment, historic buildings and structures. Without coordinated action, Bath will continue to be polluted and choke. We must take remedial action before it is too late. We mustn't encourage more cars by building more roads. Even when they not cluttering the roads they take swathes of land just parked.



It is time to reintroduce the only solution proven across Europe, Britain and the world to provide clean, quiet, high frequency, efficient transport that attracts drivers out of their cars: the Tram.

Trams co-exist with beautiful ancient cities all over Europe.

Edinburgh, the UK's other World Heritage City, despite initial concern, is very keen to extend its tram network as the operation made profit in the third year of the six years financial assessment!

Tram transport authorities in Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Cardiff have already received funding to branch out their networks. Obviously, they have confidence that trams will bring jobs and prosperity whilst ticking most of the right boxes for clean air, environment and sustainable resourcing.

Trams can deal easily with the hills in and around our city. Current trams run on 100% green sustainable energy, use 20% of a bus's energy, and shed no deadly rubber tyre particulates.

Technological advances in tram vehicles, delivery and efficiency are second to none in the rail industry.

Congestion

- Trams happily coexist with pedestrians and help to increase bicycle journeys
- They can help cars and vans by using Green Wave technology to lead cohorts of vehicles through the city.
- Whenever trams or light rail have been reintroduced into Edinburgh, Sheffield, Manchester, Croydon, Newcastle, Nottingham and London Docklands drivers willingly take the tram leaving space for essential drivers.
- Green Wave technology lead cohorts of vehicles through the city reducing delays to cars and trams without the need to segregate them.

Pollution

- Destructive and dangerous environmental pollutants are reduced, the economic and social benefits are clear to residents, businesses and local authorities.
- Steel wheels means no harmful 2.5 rubber particulates partly responsible for 1,000 deaths per year in our area.
- Renewable energy use means no carbon emissions.
- Many UK cities are looking at trams networks as their future mass transit infrastructure.

Bath in particular

- Bath has a population of around 85k but received over 6m visitors in 2019! Student population is estimated at 20k.



- Buses alone cannot solve Bath traffic problems
- No more crushing the vaults as buses do.
- Why is WECA not taking Trams seriously when only they attract motorists?

STATEMENT 4 – Julie Boston

Catch the Bus West of England campaign has been newly launched and aims to improve existing bus services and bus passenger and bus driver wellbeing.

1. **We request that Dan Norris, West of England Mayor, ensures that the Enhanced Bus funding being given to West of England Combined Authority, (WECA) in 2022 should pay for free bus travel to all under 25s.**
2. We request that **West of England Combined Authority** fund 4 buses an hour on all routes in the **West of England Combined Authority** **apart where that frequency currently exists.**
3. We request that WECA adopt the Transport for London model for funding bus as a service not for profit.
4. We request that the attached list of bus-rail interchange improvements be implemented such as railway station signage and putting bus stops near railway stations.
5. We request that WECA should give specific rail station or bus route numbers for the location of all public forum meetings.
6. We request that an up-to-date bus map is made available on the WECA website and advertised via TravelWest with accurate online and both printed and real-time bus stop information.

NB I would like to speak to this statement

Julie Boston, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways co-founder

Tina Biggs, Bristol Clean Air Alliance

Amy Cotterell, XR Youth



Note on Covid-19 – FoSBR urges the West of England Mayor to encourage continuing government investment in maintaining local rail service frequency throughout the pandemic, and to encourage car commuters to return to rail travel. FoSBR also commend the government policy of investing in rail infrastructure to restart the economy and commend the MetroWest programmes as a means to do this locally in the West of England.

1. MetroWest Phase 1A – half-hour services from Weston super Mare to Avonmouth via Temple Meads, hourly to Severn Beach; later extension to Westbury and Gloucester.

a) FoSBR is delighted with the long-awaited and long-fought-for delivery of MetroWest Phase 1A with the successful start of the new timetable on Sunday 12 December 2021. However we note with disappointment the cancellation of many of the morning services in this first week, particularly the 07:28 departure from Clifton Down which was cancelled on two successive days, causing passengers to miss the onward connection to London. FoSBR urges the West of England Mayor to seek assurance from GWR that these first few weeks of this major improvement in the service should be prioritised so as to maintain and build passenger confidence, and that a log should be kept of all latenesses and cancellations, and an action plan established with GWR to restore the former good reliability, in particular supporting GWR to address the current driver shortage possibly brought about by the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.

b) We urge the West of England Mayor and the Mayor of Bristol to publicise and promote this major upgrade to the service as WECA's highest priority immediate contribution of local rail to air quality, and as being implemented as envisaged in 2021 would fall well within the current timescale of Bristol's Clean Air Plan which is due for implementation in the summer of 2022.

c) We also urge the West of England Mayor to ensure timely delivery of the MetroWest Phase 1A extension to Gloucester planned for the summer of 2022 and the extension to Westbury planned for Dec 2022 as this will deliver much-needed half-hourly services to Yate and Cam and Dursley, and to Keynsham, Oldfield Park and stations between Bath and Westbury.

2. MetroWest Phase 1B – the Portishead Line

FoSBR notes with considerable alarm the threat of a further six-month delay to the Development Consent Order by the intervention of the Secretary of State for Transport. FoSBR notes that Network Rail have stated that if the approval of the DCO is delayed beyond mid-January 2021 then the consequences for the scheme will be "catastrophic". FoSBR draws the Joint Committee's attention to the formal questions submitted to this Joint Committee and urges that the West of England Mayor seeks a meeting with the Secretary of State to determine the true reason for the delay. FoSBR draws the Committee's attention to our support of the North Somerset evidence for the very low carbon footprint of rail compared to other forms of intercity and local transport and to the DfT Transport Decarbonisation Plan which notes the special status of rail in this respect. FoSBR notes that the opposition to HS2 by Extinction Rebellion is not in any way extended to local rail improvements.

3. MetroWest Phase 2 – services from Temple Meads to Gloucester and reopening of the Henbury Line

a) We welcome the continuing investment in the Henbury line, including the plans for Ashley Down station, and note the long-term benefit of the scheme to public transport but also the immediate value of this investment producing jobs.

b) We appreciate the need for value for money at this time, but point out that the City Deal funds have been committed and that building the Henbury Line now will incentivise buyers and developers to build out the 8,000 homes in the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood Scheme more rapidly, which in turn will deliver the ridership and modal shift that North Bristol needs.

c) Whilst we welcome MetroWest Phase 2 hourly service to Henbury in its current form, we note that a half-hourly service is technically feasible and also that it was the 40-minute service on the Severn Beach Line that was decisive in delivering the ridership of 1.4 million that the Severn Beach Line currently enjoyed in 2019 pre-Covid. We commend the light rail plans promoted by the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance, particularly the suggestion that both MetroWest and the JLTP4 Mass Transit plans should form part of a more ambitious and integrated rapid transit scheme.

d) FoSBR notes that with the completion of Filton Bank four-tracking in December 2019, it is now feasible for Constable Road station, included in the JLTP4, to be brought forward, particularly as several large housing developments are under construction nearby, including 184 homes between Constable Road and Bonnington Walk. FoSBR urges that MetroWest officers conduct a new study on a station at Constable Road as it appears that the business case is six years old and does not include the impact of the 900 new homes planned in the area. Furthermore the previously proposed site is inconvenient due to its current inaccessibility. A site closer to or linked to Constable Road bridge should be explored. We also note that no replies have yet been provided to our questions about these issues.

4. FoSBR's recommendations for the next steps in West of England rail investment

- a) **Pilning station: £2m easy win for S Glos car commuters:** FoSBR notes that of all the existing stations in the West of England, Pilning station is the only one that has a weekly parliamentary service and in addition has only one, westbound, accessible, platform. Restoring the footbridge was estimated to cost £2m in 2016 when the footbridge was removed during electrification. If the footbridge is replaced, there are two trains an hour through Pilning – the Cardiff to Portsmouth and the Cardiff to Taunton – which could stop there, especially in the morning peak at 08:32 westbound. A selection of stops on services returning from Bristol to Pilning could be introduced on a trial basis. Pilning is an ideal site for a regional Park and Rail for S Glos residents north of the M4 to park at Pilning and take the train to work in Cardiff and North Bristol, currently a long trip round via the Severn Beach Line.
- b) **Pilning station: £2m easy win for Severnside workers:** Pilning is close enough to the Severnside enterprises to the south of the M4, for workers from Wales, especially Newport, to travel initially by bike on train. At present there are some intrepid workers who are making this journey by rail from Newport and other Welsh cities taking their bikes on the train on the Cardiff to Portsmouth and Cardiff to Taunton services, changing at Temple Meads, to catch the Severn Beach Line to St Andrew's Road. Not all workers are prepared to do this, so employers are being forced to lay on buses from Newport to Severnside. SevernNet and Pilning Parish Council have appealed to the West of England Mayor on this matter and FoSBR urges Mr Norris to act on this as a matter of the first priority. Network Rail's view that there was a need for more London to Cardiff services should be reviewed to reflect post-COVID changes to working patterns. In addition, the introduction of Class 387 units may allow accelerated timing of trains between Cardiff and Bristol Parkway, which could make a stop here more feasible from a timetabling perspective.
- c) **Coalpit Heath station not road bypass:** FoSBR note that although there is considerable rail investment, that the West of England Combined Authority seems to be persisting in progressing most of the JLTP4 road-building schemes, notably the South

Bristol Orbital and the Coalpit Heath and Winterbourne bypasses, despite strong local opposition and the JLTP4's stated aim of preventing climate change. FoSBR continue to commend feasibility studies into a rail station at Coalpit Heath, where there is room for a passing loop (until the proposed four-tracking is delivered in the future), and a new station at Corsham, as promoted by Wiltshire Council. As for the south of Bristol, FoSBR recommends that the proposed WECA mass transit scheme should include a light rail link to Radstock, and commends the light rail and traffic management plans drawn up by the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance (TfGB) and presented by TfGB to the WECA meetings this week.

- d) New stations at St Anne's and Saltford for the Bristol to Bath corridor** – Although it will be necessary to implement passing loops at these stations, these new stations could render unnecessary the need for the proposed Mass Transit bendy-bus from Bristol to Bath as there are already express FirstBus services in place.

5. Investment priorities: public and active transport not road improvements.

- a) FoSBR continue to bring WECA's attention to the fact that further road-building not only destroys the environment but also brings more cars onto the road and undermines public transport. We commend the instatement of the Bristol Bridge bus gate and pop-up cycle lanes in Bristol, and urge that the Living Neighbourhoods suggestions be acted on, as well as the more ambitious Traffic Management Plans and Parking Plan as promoted by the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance.
- b) FoSBR welcomes the ambition of the West of England Combined Authority ten-year plan published in December 2020. We urge that these proposals are ranked in priority order and that MetroWest officer time is devoted to gathering evidence for the business plan of each suggested rail infrastructure improvement. FoSBR commends the organisation of the West Midlands Rail Executive and suggest that WECA initiate talks and visits with these and other ITAs in the UK to learn how to staff these Rail Executives and deliver schemes to budget and on time. FoSBR welcomes the ambition of the West of England Mayor in seeking to appoint qualified staff to the Combined Authority, and urges that a substantial proportion of the business rates revenue stream should be allocated to staff salaries.
- c) FoSBR welcomes the new extensive WECA Local Cycling and Walking Investment programme and suggests that a similarly detailed plan, with maps, is drawn up for rail and bus services, including rail-bus interchange. FoSBR would urge BCC to ensure that future MetroWest rolling stock is not only zero-carbon but has extra space for bicycles on board local services. The stations should also have cycle lockers and perhaps even e-bike hire, as well as designated parking space on the Voi app for use by the successful West of England Combined Authority Voi scooter scheme. The real-time bus information should be maintained and extended to all functioning bus stops and the printed timetables brought into sync with the online timetable and bus stop locations.

6. Bus investment and rail-bus integration

- a) FoSBR notes with grave concern the imminent ending of Covid-19 funding for bus services and the danger that the promised new Enhancement funding for buses will be dissipated to cover this anticipated cut to Covid-19 funding.
- b) FoSBR notes the complementarity of buses and trains and the potential for full area coverage with a combination of rural rail services and a network of local buses calling into local rail stations.

c) FoSBR notes that although light rail is considered to achieve greater modal shift away from the car than the bus, yet buses are running here and now, and that a simple programme of encouraging bus travel as the climate-conscious mode of choice by responsible citizens, together with publicising existing ticket deals (such as GroupSave, the West of England-wide rail and bus day ticket and the £1 evening flat-rate), printing a bus map showing rail lines and stations, distributing copies of maps and bus and rail timetables to community centres, and liaison with bus driver unions, would do much to encourage greater use of the existing bus network. Additionally, there should be a rail and bus ombudsman responsible for the West of England area who liaises with both GWR and FirstBus and StageCoach and Bristol Community Transport and other operators to receive regular updates on reliability and of threatened routes.

7. In summary: FoSBR favour a West of England transport model where the local rail network provides a backbone for rail-bus and rail-cycling interchange, while awaiting the delivery of the Mass Transit scheme, and with the deterrent of the Bristol and Bath Clean Air Zones, should ensure a permanent shift away from the private car, with resulting improvement in air quality, citizen health and wellbeing and an immediate reduction in carbon emissions.

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Links

Press coverage of the GWR launch event marking the delivery of the MetroWest Phase 1A service: followed by service cancellations and coverage of the previous West of England Combined Authority Joint committee meeting: <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/better-bristol-rail-service-launch-6342289>

FoSBR Plan for Rail: [FoSBR Plan for Rail - Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways](#)

Article on JLTP4: [Reducing car use in the West of England – can rail do the job? - Rail Professional](#)

FoSBR statement in support of the N Somerset additional evidence on Carbon Budgets submitted to the Development Consent Order review process.

https://fosbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/portishead_dco_ns_es3_add_comments.pdf

Summary of the Network Rail proposals for four-tracking on the Cardiff to Paddington line between Bristol Parkway and Westerleigh Junction as well as the remodelling of Westerleigh Junction

<https://fosbr.org.uk/four-tracks-from-bristol-parkway-to-yate/>

