

West of England Joint Committee meeting on Friday, 1 July 2022

Questions received from the public

Item 1 – Stephen Andrews

Question 1: Thornbury High Street

It is generally regarded that the only statistically accurate survey of opinion is a 100% poll. For populations in the low tens of thousands, a truly random survey of 10% to 15% is usually regarded as indicative.

Toby Savage claims that he has carried out extensive consultation with the residents of Thornbury and that his plans to make his temporary closure of our High Street (for COVID 19 measures) permanent has considerable local backing. Can he please state the percentage of the local populace surveyed, the criteria for their selection and the result?

Response:

This is a matter which would need to be addressed to South Gloucestershire Council. As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Question 2: Thornbury High Street

The Atkins report states that the pedestrianised area will be friendly for young mothers to bring their children to "scoot" up and down the street. As most of the younger families live on the newer estates at least three quarters of a mile (most are more than a mile) away from the High Street, has Toby Savage ever escorted a six year old on a scooter a mile up hill, shopped then walked home carrying shopping bags, a child and a scooter?

Response:

This is a matter which would need to be addressed to South Gloucestershire Council. As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Item 2 – Jacqueline and David Howard

Question 1: South Gloucestershire Council's Thornbury High Street Plans

Thornbury Parish Poll - 26 May 2022 - In response to this question *Do you want Thornbury High Street to be returned to its pre-pandemic status of through traffic for all vehicles and timed parking bays on both sides of the carriageway?* 72% of the voters in Thornbury voted YES

Between 67 and 90% of people involved in surveys, consultations, engagement sessions and Town Meetings are against the High Street Scheme. South Gloucestershire have ignored the poll, surveys and consultation results. Our question to South Gloucestershire Council therefore is:

Question 1: Does South Gloucestershire Council and WECA believe in democracy?

Response:

As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll. This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to development and decision making on this scheme would need to be addressed to the Council.

In terms of funding through the Economic Development Fund, this was previously considered by the Joint Committee in line with agreed process at Outline Business Case stage and is again being considered by the Committee at Full Business Case. As Metro Mayor I have no vote in any of these matters.

Question 2:

Does South Gloucestershire Council and WECA believe democracy should be respected and upheld?

Response:

This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to development and decision making on this scheme would need to be addressed to the Council.

In terms of funding through the Economic Development Fund, this was previously considered by the Joint Committee in line with agreed process at Outline Business Case stage and is again being considered by the Committee at Full Business Case. As Metro Mayor I have no vote in any of these matters.

As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Item 3 – Andrew Chubb

Question 1: Thornbury High Street

For Toby Savage, it took less than 4 weeks to move buses to Rock Street. Last year SG announced buses returning to the High Street. SG have announced work on Rock street bus stop this week. This reinforces the belief that buses are not returning to the High street. The plan implementation appears to be gearing up pre decision so it is assumed a workable plan is in place. Please confirm the bus is returning to the High Street and when.

Response:

This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to detail of the proposal would need to be addressed to the Council.

Question 2:

Why have South Glos ignored the Local poll and not scrapped the plan?

Response:

This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to detail of the proposal would need to be addressed to the Council. As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Item 4 – Brian Cason**Question 1: Thornbury High Street**

Why has the Appraisal and Evaluation not been done, for the Economic Case, using the relevant financial cost data for all the options considered in the Full Business Case in accordance, with the Treasury Green Book and not been presented in the Full Business Case for comparison purposes?

Response:

The Full Business Case has been reviewed, including the economic case. Technically the scheme presents a fundable proposal in line with relevant Governmental guidance.

Question 2: Thornbury and its High Street

The original funding of £220k from Active Travel England came with Statutory guidance. Why has this Statutory guidance not been followed to ensure that the Traffic Management Act of 2004 has been complied with - there are now issues of congestion, expeditious movement of traffic, a lack of information (traffic data) which has led to road safety and footfall reduction issues which has in turn not led to an informed decision-making for Thornbury and its High Street. These will remain if the interventions detailed in the Full Business Case are implemented

Response:

The Combined Authority and South Gloucestershire Council have complied with all the requirements and guidance issued by the Department of Transport (DfT) for the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2, including regular monitoring reporting to the DfT on the schemes. The Full Business Case for Thornbury High Street (which can be viewed here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Thornbury-High-Street-Full-Business-Case-13-May-2022-Version-2.pdf>), assessed the options for the scheme on Thornbury High Street against local and national guidance and objectives. For more information on the modelling that input into this,

please contact South Gloucestershire Council. As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Item 5 – Paul Williams

Question 1: Thornbury High Street

All surveys and consultations carried out so far show a large majority (over 70%) against the proposed pedestrianisation of the High Street. Why are the wishes of local residents and businesses being ignored?

Response:

This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to development and decision making on this scheme would need to be addressed to the Council.

As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Question 2: Thornbury High Street

Businesses in the High Street report significant downturns in footfall since the closure (against 2019 figures) with some premises already vacated and others confirming that they will close. Does this not suggest that closure is wrong?

Response:

This scheme is being promoted by South Gloucestershire Council and comments related to development and decision making on this scheme would need to be addressed to the Council.

As Metro Mayor I have consistently called for a full, fair and respectful consultation which should include traders and praise the work of the recent Parish Poll.

Item 6 – David Redgewell

Question 1:

Modernisation of Network rail western route - Network rail has upgraded the the western route from London Paddington to Chippenham and has upgraded less Electrification the route to Bristol Temple meads

London Paddington to Bristol parkway and Cardiff central full Electrification

With a signaling at the Didcot control centre moved from Bristol.

The Roc

Joint control centre first group Great western 3 and Network rail at Swindon

4 track on Filton Bank from Bristol Temple meads to Bristol parkway and Patchway.

We have modern maintenance facilities as per these pictures helicopters, Drones .and modern tampers .

Modern IET train Depot at stoke Gifford.

Modernisation of Gloucester central.

With transport interchange.

We need to reopen the Bristol Temple meads to Portishead line via pill

Bristol Temple meads to Henbury line

Via Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood Filton North and Henbury for cribs

Charfield station, Ashton Gate and Salford. St Anne's.

Electrification through from Chippenham to Bristol Temple meads and Bristol parkway,Patchway. Is a top priority

And on to Weston super mare and Taunton.

Lift footbridges at Cheltenham spa

And western super mare.

And make the Network fully accessible.

We have money for Bristol Temple meads station

To build on the master plan transport interchanges and infrastructure for a modern railway station as malvin Rees says

I hope labour does not get into this railway Debate but push on with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council railway agenda.

And western gateway transport Board.

Staff on Western routes have always be at the forefront of modernisation.

and we need to get on with metro west .

What progress is the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Mayor Dan Norris and councillor steve Bridger making with the Department for transport and secretary of state for transport on metro west railway Network.

Response:

The Combined Authority and North Somerset Council are waiting for government to confirm if they are prepared to invest the cash needed to address the delays and inflation that are in no way the fault of local partners but which have slowed plans to reopen the Portishead railway line.

Metro Mayor Dan Norris and Cllr Steve Bridger continue to make high level representations to Government.

Question 2:

What progress is being made?

On the intergration of the local Enterprise partnership and North Somerset council in to the west of England mayoral combined Authority.

And setting up an intergrated transport Authority like the west Midlands Andy street and Grater Manchester Andy Burnham. And Steve Rothman mayor of liverpool city region.

With power to operate public transport and precepts the community to provide.

Bus services. Railway services Metro west. Light rail system. Interchanges facilities. Bus and railway infrastructure. Ferry service.

And urgently repair and maintain bus stops shelters and interchanges facilities realtime information across the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

As per the leveling up white paper. And bill And Great Britain railway bill Jointly with the regional transport Boards.

Response:

As Metro Mayor I support government plans to fold in LEPs to Combined Authorities and precepting powers for transport. Further integration of transport functions is crucial and I support all transport officers sitting within the Combined Authority and to take responsibility for managing and maintaining bus interchanges, bus stops and shelters.

End