

West of England Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee meeting on 23 January 2023

Questions received from the public

1. David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside

Question 1

What progress is being made by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris and south Gloucestershire council leader Toby savage and Mayor Marvin Rees to make urgent progress on the Henbury loop line to reopen the line to passenger services Ashley Down (which has planning permission) and funding via the west of mayoral combined transport Authority.but also to seek urgent action to get planning permission granted for Filton North YTL Arena station and Henbury for cribs causeway. Railway stations as part of metro west which is part of a mass transit system

Working with Network rail western route the Department for transport and first group plc Great western railway.

Response:

Full Business Case and funding approval for Ashley Down Station forms part of the Committee/Joint Committee submissions that are being brought forward on 27th January 2023. If approved, this will enable site works to commence in February/March 2023 and the station to be opened in 2024.

An updated planning application for North Filton Station was issued before Christmas and is under consideration by South Gloucestershire Council. They are aware of the urgency of the project and feedback is expected by February 2023. The Combined Authority and South Gloucestershire Council are working closely with Network Rail to ensure that Henbury Station planning application will be ready for submission by the end of February 2023. Approval of both applications will unlock the procurement of the remaining detailed design and construction phases.

Question 2

Whist it would be very much in the passenger interest to Franchise the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council bus Network. Mayor Dan Norris.

It will take up to 5 years buy buses and the bus Depots in city region at Weston super mare, Bristol Hengrove and Lawrence hill Bath and wells in Somerset all on which provide First group plc buses in Greater Bristol and Bath city region Patchway Depot of stagecoach group.

What progress is mean time is Bristol city council along with Banes and South Gloucestershire council. Making in this budget to a Transport levy to fund the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris the city region support bus Network.

and regulate the the bus service via Bus Advisory Board and an Enhanced quality partnership.

What progress by metro mayor Dan Norris and councillor steve Hogg of North Somerset council to set up the Department for transport required legal bus service improvements plan Board and passenger forum as soon as possible.

And a Transport Board made up the 4 Executive councillors Don Alexander Bristol city council Sarah Warren Banes council Steve reade South Gloucestershire council steve Hogg North Somerset council.

Response:

The Combined Authority and North Somerset Council are currently fully committed to implementing the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for which we were successful in securing the 2nd highest funding award in the country. The preferred approach being followed to secure agreement with bus operators, and the only one currently available to the Local Transport Authorities, is an Enhanced Partnership (EP). The authorities are about to conclude the initial EP and 'make' the EP Plan and Scheme which will release the funding from government to progress the measures proposed through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Franchising remains a long-term option but is costly and high-risk for the LTAs and is unlikely to deliver the sort of benefits some believe it will – for example it will not increase driver numbers or bring additional revenue funding for services. The EP, once in place, will be monitored for its effectiveness and amended as deemed necessary over the course of the coming years as the BSIP and related capital funding programmes are delivered.

2. Suzanne Audrey

Background - YTL recently announced that their arena will not open until the end of 2025 or the beginning of 2026. The announcement also stated that the capacity of the arena would increase to 19,000. It is my understanding that the transport plan was based on up to 17,000 capacity.

Question 1

If the capacity of the arena is increased by 2,000 people, will this require modifications to the existing transport plan, or even a new transport plan?

Response:

Subject to Committee approval, the Combined Authority will provide funding to support the operation of an hourly service between Bristol Temple Meads and Henbury stations (including stops at Ashley Down and North Filton stations). Any increase in service provision above one train per hour, to reflect assumed demand associated with the Arena, is subject to discussions between Great Western Railways, the Department for Transport and YTL.

Additional information:

The project team only very recently became aware of the planned arena capacity increase. We are in discussions with our consultant and Network Rail who are supporting us with the planning application for North Filton Station to understand whether it will fundamentally change the transport (travel) plan or the station design. The project is at outline design stage and we expect to further refine our transport plan, in any circumstance, as part of the detailed design stage. However, we can give assurances that the impact of the capacity change will be given due consideration over the coming weeks before we embark on further design work.

Question 2

In what ways are members of the scrutiny committee informed and/or consulted about issues relating to the YTL arena and related transport issues?

Response:

The Scrutiny Committee reviews and has oversight of all papers and issues that are passed to the Combined Authority Committee for discussion and approval. January Committee for example will be considering funding issues associated with MetroWest2 which includes North Filton station serving the Arena. The Planning, Housing and Transport Board also considers broader areas of Transport interest, not just those issues going to Committee.

End