

Agenda item 8 – Items from the public

Statements Received

1	David Redgewell on behalf of John Hassall/Nigel Bray (Railfuture Severnside) Temple Meads/George & Railway/Grosvenor Hotel regeneration projects
2	Cllr Martin Fodor (Bristol CC) Transport authority
3	Martin Gosney Metrobus
4	Cllr Mark Shelford (Bath & North East Somerset Council) a. Buses b. WECA Strategic Plan for buses c. The Council going and producing a private agreement with a Bus Company.
5.	Christina Biggs, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways Local Rail Services
6.	Julie Boston Bus Services
7.	Gordon Edwards Transport Functions & Transport Update
8.	Councillor Jo Sergeant (Bristol City Council) Libraries and the WECA Adult Skills budget
9.	Cllr Paul Myers (Bath & North East Somerset Council) High Streets
10.	Cllr Jerome Thomas (Bristol City Council) West of England Energy study
11.	Anthony Hick High Streets
12.	Councillor Pat Rooney (South Glos Council) High Streets
13.	Cllr Gary Hopkins (Bristol City Council) Transport Functions
14.	Andrew Shore Public Transport Forum

Statement 1

30 November 2018

Statement 1

Statement from Railfuture Severnside for the WECA Scrutiny meeting 28th November 2018 and WECA Board meeting 30th November 2018 regarding the Temple Meads/George & Railway/Grosvenor Hotel regeneration projects

Whilst Railfuture support plans to regenerate Temple Meads station and its environs we want a master plan for the area including land in the ownership of the University and Network Rail.

With regards to the proposals to demolish the Grosvenor Hotel and alter the setting of the George and Railway we are extremely concerned that historic buildings should be lost to Bristol in the setting of Grade I listed Bristol Temple Meads station.

The George and Railway is in fact a railway hotel that dates back to 1852 in its original form (The George Inn and Railway Tavern) and later as the George and Railway when it was taken over by the Bristol and Exeter Railway in 1875. Of course, whilst we welcome the University regeneration proposals, we would like to see the building retained as supported by English Heritage, Bristol Civic Society and CAMRA Bristol Pubs Group potentially as a café/restaurant and bar with hotel accomodation/workspace above in a similar way to the Hawthorn Hotel in Clifton.

We would also like to see the locally listed Grosvenor Hotel retained as a hotel with a public bar but would very much welcome the conference and meeting rooms as part of Engine Shed 2 with a new sympathetic extension.

We have concerns over the future design of the station complex especially as Network Rail want to reopen platforms 1 & 0 for both local and IEP trains to increase capacity for MetroWest services. There is a need to include services to Portishead, Henbury, Gloucester and Westbury with new stations at Ashley Down, Filton North, Henbury, Ashton Gate, Pill, Portbury, Portishead, Saltford and Charfield.

There should be a high quality shopping area around the Bristol and Exeter building and entrance to the lower station approach. Offices could be built to link the Friary, a new hotel, Engine Shed 2 and a bus & coach station with taxi's and ferry services.

There are plans for student flats which would retain the Grosvenor Hotel facade and a developer is interested in this site and welcome a planning application for student housing close to the new University campus.

We are very concerned about the piecemeal planning of the Temple Meads area with the University building alongside the river and quays and there is a need for the Brunel Mile and Station Street to be linked by building the new road under the station . The area is also in need of a good public transport interchange in front of this building and Bristol and there is a need to incorporate the Midland train shed back into rail use with the kind of shopping provision you see at London Paddington or Manchester Piccadilly and a modern bus interchange similar to London Liverpool Street on the Friary.

Statement 1

30 November 2018

The present MetroBus interchange does not appear to be fit for purpose.

The City Council and the Combined Authority/WEP must lead on a master plan as Network Rail do not have large sums of public money for the IEP electrification nor the Temple Meads enhancement.

In order to maximise the regeneration of Temple Meads, the Council/WEP and the Mayors must set the parameters for the regeneration. The lack of a master plan is threatening the setting of the Grade 1* railway station and does not follow NPPF guidelines.

The Mayor's are currently working with Central Government for funding on a major regeneration scheme for Temple Meads station linked to the Temple Quarter University Campus site and we have already expressed concerns over the loss of the Cattle Market Tavern and associated buildings.

Recent plans have been the subject of a number of petitions and objections by community groups, Bristol Civic Society, National heritage organisations including the Railway Heritage Trust and Victorian Society among others and will not improve the quality of the Gateway to the City as part of one of the most historic cities in the South West. Tourists do not visit Bristol to see modern office blocks that look like London, Basingstoke or New York. This is supported by the fact that the tourism industry is worth £1.8 Billion to the City Region.

We support objections by the Victorian Society to what has been put forward so far and have made our own observations as follows :-

The need to redevelop this area should not be to the detriment of various designated and non-designated heritage assets, which would erode Bristol's distinctive local character. Temple Circus is an important gateway to the City, especially for anyone arriving by train to the famed Temple Meads Station, the original terminus to Brunel's Great Western Mainline. Besides the Grade I listed station, it is an area devoid of any historic buildings in the immediate vicinity owing to unfortunate and now discredited post-war planning philosophies. The Grade II listed George & Railway Hotel and the locally listed Grosvenor Hotel that are the subject of this application, as railway hotels, are exactly the sort of Victorian commercial buildings you would expect to find in this location, jostling for business from short term visitors. Both buildings would make a strong contribution to any streetscape and it is therefore disappointing and short sighted that this redevelopment proposes to demolish one and significantly compromise the integrity of the other.

Demolition of the locally listed Grosvenor Hotel The Grosvenor Hotel (c.1875) has a very good quality façade and potentially an interior of some interest.

It was designed by the architect Samuel Charles Fripp, who is known predominantly as a locally significant, Bristol architect. However, he does have numerous listed buildings to his name, which by definition makes them nationally important. Two of these are deemed to be of 'more than special interest' – the nearby Bristol and Exeter Building at Temple Meads Station (Grade II, 1852-4) and the Church of St Peter, Bishopsworth (1842, Grade II*), which suggests that*

Statement 1

30 November 2018

he was indeed a highly competent architect. The Grosvenor fully merits its locally listed status and it could be a borderline case for national listing. In addition to the aforementioned Bristol and Exeter Building, it is interesting to consider the degree to which Fripp was responsible for the character of the area, given that he planned the new Victoria Street after it had been proposed in 1845.

We object to its loss; it should be incorporated in any proposals for this site. According to NPPF guidelines suggest that Local Listing should be a material consideration when determining the outcome of a planning application'. The Council are well within their rights to now resist its demolition.

Partial demolition of the Grade II listed George and Railway Hotel

The deteriorated condition of the hotel is noted, though we suggest that this is not cause for the demolition of the majority of the building. It is a façade retention scheme with giant new floor plates of the office building replacing the original floor levels. Under these proposals it would lose almost all of its authenticity; such a significant loss of historic fabric and plan form should be considered to be substantial harm and would need to be strongly justified. It is not an appropriate way to treat a listed building and it is even more desirable to properly conserve the hotel, considering the unnecessary absence of other good historic buildings in the immediate area. We also object to this element of the proposals. Impact on the setting of listed buildings Bristol Temple Meads Station represents an outstanding group of railways buildings, each in fact deriving from what were three separate stations for different railway companies. Brunel's Great Western Railway is the most notable and is of immense historic importance. The line was very much a Bristol initiative, designed to reinforce its status as one of Britain's most important ports – under threat from a proposed Liverpool-London railway. Brunel's surviving station building is described as 'easily the most complete survivor of the early provincial termini, and an exceptionally important one.' The aforementioned railway hotels are very much part of the station's wider historic setting and their loss would arguably result in harm to the two Grade I listed buildings. Furthermore, we have reservations about the appropriateness of monolithic 6-12 storey buildings in the setting of these highly designated heritage assets. They are of a scale completely alien to the latter and would therefore erode whatever sense of their historic context that remains. National and local policy recommends conserving, and where possible, enhancing the setting of heritage assets. The application sites are large and offer flexibility; a more interesting scheme might make the most of more evenly distributed buildings around a reinstated Victoria Street and Temple Street as the public and pedestrian highways. There is no better way to embed and integrate a new development in a historically sensitive area by rediscovering and adhering to medieval street patterns and Victorian town planning which these respectively represent. It is recommended that these applications are refused on the grounds of harm to the historic environment and that significant amendments should be sought. Given the policy departures, this cannot be considered to be sustainable.

Every other historic station in the country has a master plan jointly between Network Rail and the local authorities and we should not be relying on piecemeal developments around this Grade 1* building.

We are still concerned over Council cuts to the following bus services :-

Service 10 Southmead Hosp – Patchway – Parkway – UWE – Lyde Green,

Service 16 Parkway – UWE – Fishponds – Hillfields – Hanham – Longwell Green

Service 17 Southmead Hosp – Fishponds – Staple Hill – Kingswood – Keynsham (no subsidy evenings and Sundays)

Possible cuts to Service 36 City Centre – Brislington

It is important to protect the bus network and not reduce journey opportunities for the general public who depend on them.

At the moment there is a need for training more drivers engineers and cleaners at First depots. Staff have been loaned in and the situation is improving certainly in the day but evenings and weekends have been a cause for concern.

We have major concerns about the level of roadworks which are causing serious disruption to the bus network.

We want to see Park and Ride services operating on Sundays from Long Ashton and Brislington. Could the service 1 and 39 divert into Brislington Park and Ride in a similar way to the Park and Rides at Salisbury and Cheltenham.

Following the recent track closures between Parkway and Temple Meads we have seen gridlock on Bristol's roads. We must make the Metro West rail schemes happen bringing more suburban trains to Bristol and relieving some of the congestion – as per the Bristol Transport Strategy.

We should be looking at the potential of tram-train on the Portishead line and Bristol Harbour railway from the City Centre to Long Ashton Park & Ride and Bristol Airport, also for the Henbury loop, Gloucester, Thornbury branch, Bath and Westbury and possibly to Clevedon using the closed railway trackbed. The Greater Bristol light rail consultation should be carried out as soon as possible using street stalls, libraries, supermarkets and glossy brochures for feedback from the general public and a workable scheme brought forward as a priority.

We support the principle of congestion charging and a clean air zone to improve Bristol air quality as long as it doesn't penalise bus and coach passengers. Vehicles using the zone should meet EURO 6 standards. We also support the Bath Clean Air Zone proposals in conjunction with the Bristol-Warmley-Bath, Bath-Westerleigh & Bath-Radstock light rail projects and station reopenings at

Statement 1

30 November 2018

Ashton Gate, Pill, Portishead, St Annes, Saltford etc as part of MetroWest. The Portishead needs to be reopened as a matter of urgency without this being moved into another future control period.

We must promote the integrated tickets on offer across the region in Bristol, Bath, Weston and the Avon Rider giving travel on all operator buses including Stagecoach South West.

WEC must monitor bus service cancellations and delays which should be passed on to Transport Focus, Bus Users UK, the Office of Road & Rail and the Traffic Commissioners so that complaints can be logged and follow-up action taken.

We must also use the money to improve bus stop infrastructure too and provide shelters and ensure accessible stops. We also support the development of bus rail and ferry interchange at Temple Meads, want to see better bus interchange in that area including MetroBus and note the lack of progress on the new bus station interchange at Bristol Parkway station (2019?).

We need to expand MetroBus services and want to see rail plans for the South Bristol loop and the Bristol Parkway services. We also need provision for coaches in the city centre and consider having more bus stops and a linear bus station in Bond Street.

We welcome the transfer of transport powers from the Unitary Authorities to WECA to help give greater control to run bus/rail/tram/ferry & MetroBus services in the Greater Bristol area.

DAVID REDGEWELL on behalf of JOHN HASSALL/NIGEL BRAY (Railfuture Severnside)

Statement 2

30 November 2018

Statement 2

Statement from Cllr Martin Fodor, Bristol City Council

The reports to WECA make clear the authority now has assembled all the transport authority powers previously held by the constituent authorities. Little indication is given to date of how these powers will be used or when the resources held by the authority will be invested to make a difference to the 'business as usual' experience of congestion, frustration, and hazards for vulnerable users of the highways and people who could choose to use but have yet to switch to other modes than driving.

(i) The regional mayor and other authority members will be well aware of the pressures to improve the pedestrian environment and conditions to maximise attractions for journeys on foot (and by disabled people) especially in central area like Bristol city centre. More walking can make a great difference to persuading people out of cars.

(ii) Similarly WECA will be well aware how important continuous, high quality cycle routes all the way into and through places like Bristol city centre are, to enable and attract cycle trips by commuters otherwise using motor cars.

(iii) Finally, the authority members will be very conscious of the high level of disquiet about the expensive, unreliable bus network around the region, which is frequently held up by congestion, shortage of drivers, roadworks, and is a frequent source of complaints about high and rising fares.

I'm here to ask when/if the powers will now be used to invest in strategic high quality pedestrian, cycle and bus routes around the region, especially to provide access to the highly congested city centre in Bristol and strategic routes used by thousands of commuters daily?

Statement 3

30 November 2018

Statement 3

Statement from Martin Gosney

Metrobus

At the launch of this project the slogan -;

Buy Before You Board ;

was used to promote the service however on November 11th this slogan mutated into -;

Buy Before You Board IF YOU CAN.

IF YOU CAN why ?

Until and inclusive of November 10th customers were able to purchase at I-Points both the Bristol Inner Zone Day Ticket and the Bristol Outer Zone Day Ticket.

On November 11th these two products mutated into the Bristol Zone Day Ticket and the West of England Zone Day Ticket of which only the Bristol Zone Day Ticket is available at the I-Points, the re-incarnated Bristol Outer Zone Ticket as the West of England Day Ticket is not.

As a retired IT professional I see no valid reason why the West of England Day Ticket and its cousin, the 7 day West of England Weekly Ticket cannot be included on the screen which gives the sole West of England Monthly Ticket to give a selection of three West of England Zone Tickets, the Day Ticket and the Week and Monthly Season on a single screen display as many of the other ticket seem to be grouped in 3's.

I look forward eagerly to the Authority's excuses why this situation prevails and the reasons for the Authority's future procrastinations in preventing a swift resolution to customers like myself who find themselves disadvantaged.

Can customers like myself legitimately claim the I-Point is not working, it won't sell me the ticket I want. No, I've tried it, the female driver who I enquired about this situation agreed with me, the West of England Day Ticket SHOULD be available at the I-Point after she had consulted the I-Point at the Emersons Green Terminus and then consulted the on board ticket machine and found no West of England Day Ticket on there either.

STUMPED, so am I.

M. Gosney.

Statement 4

30 November 2018

Statement 4

Statement from Cllr Mark Shelford

Cllr Mark Shelford to speak at the WECA meeting on Friday, subject:

1. Buses.
2. WECA Strategic Plan for buses.
3. The Council going and producing a private agreement with a Bus Company.



1. **Filton Bank:** FOSBR notes that the four tracks on Filton Bank are now open and looks forward to the completion of the works in early January 2019. We would like to thank WECA and WoE officers and elected members for their support for our campaign and are planning a celebration event soon to which all stakeholders will be invited.

2. **Joint Local Transport Plan consultation draft:** FOSBR welcomes the inclusion of the Henbury Loop and Thornbury Line in the JLTP4 draft under consideration today. We continue to commend our FOSBR Rail Plan 2018, which is based on our 2016 rail survey in which 700 people participated – in particular the restoration of Pilning station and consideration of our further stations of Coalpit Heath (with a passing loop), Chittening, Uphill, Long Ashton and Corsham. We would also recommend that the Bristol East Junction remodelling be mentioned explicitly and that consideration be given to selective double-tracking on the Severn Beach line to improve reliability.

3. **MetroWest Phase 1** - FOSBR welcomes the report on MetroWest Phase 1 and recommends that both MetroWest Phase 1A (half-hour service to Avonmouth, hourly to Severn Beach) and Phase 1B (Portishead Line) be expedited. We welcome the suggestion of light rail for the Portishead line if it is less expensive, but would point out that a fleet compatible with the existing GWR fleet is preferable from the point of view of ease of powering and maintenance, and for contingencies if any trainset breaks down or is delayed.

4. **Severn Beach Line** – We ask that WECA should consider working up proposals for selective double-tracking of the Severn Beach Line as the single-track sections are highly sensitive to delays. While awaiting the Phase 1A half-hour service we would ask that consideration be given to filling the 96 minute gap in the evening service between 20.03 and 21.39 departures from Avonmouth.

5. **Temple Meads** – FOSBR welcomes the WECA funding of £2m for the Temple Meads Masterplan and urges that Station Street and a bus exchange on the Friary should be delivered as a first step.

6. **Bristol Airport** – FOSBR notes the Airport's wish to expand, and would ask that before this happens that Bristol Airport commit to providing public transport for all existing customers, including restoring a rail-bus link to Nailsea and Backwell station, which already has a half-hour train service and regional GWR connectivity to Cardiff, Gloucester and Taunton as well as a mere 11-minute road transit time to Bristol Airport. This would obviously be a supplement to the existing Bristol and Weston Flyers but would suit executive short-stay business travellers due to the much reduced journey time to the airport. WECA should initiate an exploratory postcode study soon.

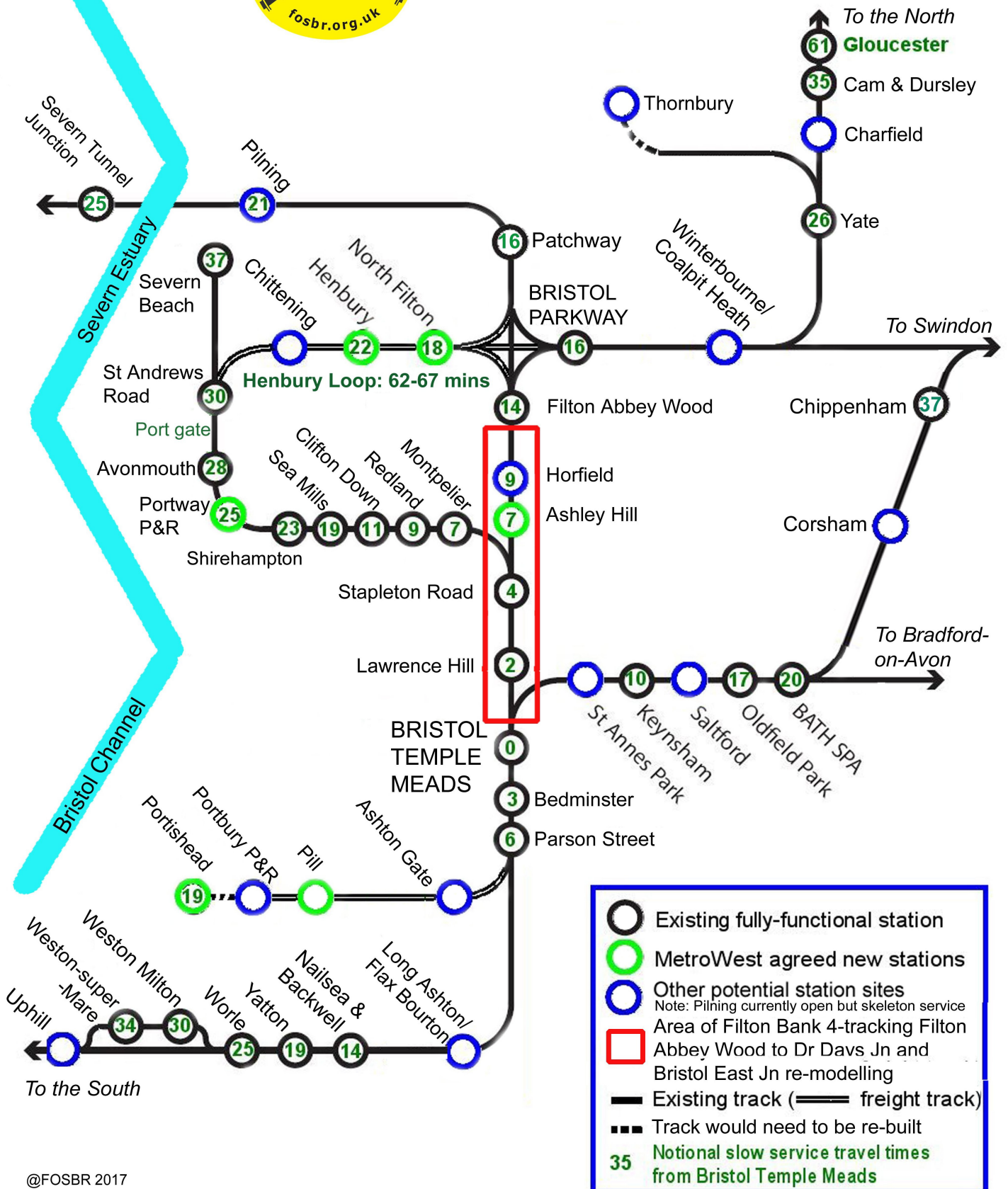
7. **Pilning** - FOSBR notes that alternative sites for a new Pilning station nearer to the village and to Western Approach could provide a higher footfall and recommends that WECA investigates the alternative sites. We note that a Park and Rail at Pilning would serve a very large area as both destination and starting point and would have significant immediate impact on air quality on the M32.

7. **Thornbury** – FOSBR notes that freight trains are now being tested on the Thornbury Line and asks that negotiations be opened with Network Rail on an upgrade of the track. FOSBR urges that until Westerleigh Junction is upgraded, WECA investigates imaginative uses of the existing Tytherington Line, such as a bolt-on powered carriage for a MetroWest Phase 2 Gloucester train, and using the Westerleigh Freight Line to provide better cross-over connectivity at Westerleigh Junction.

8. **Governance** – FOSBR welcomes the appointment of Peter Mann at WECA but strongly urges WECA to take steps towards becoming an Integrated Transport Authority with both the rail and bus powers to enable it to oversee and plan for truly integrated, reliable and frequent public transport.



The Future of MetroWest Phase 3



Statement 6
Julie Boston

Regional Bus Services

As one of the angry passengers who met in pouring rain on College Green on Saturday 24 November for better bus services, I call on West of England Metro Mayor, Tim Bowles, to use the new powers to create a reliable, affordable, accessible, accountable and integrated bus service for the region's buses.

Bristol Post covered this with a full page report on Monday 26 /11/ 2018

Julie Boston

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE MEETING – FRIDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2018

STATEMENT BY GORDON EDWARDS CMILT

AGENDA ITEMS 13 ('TRANSPORT FUNCTIONS') and 15 ('TRANSPORT UPDATE')

Statement 7

Introduction

Bath and North East Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council have attained an enviable reputation, amongst local transport authorities in the South West of England, for giving a high priority to ensuring that people living in the smaller towns and in rural parts of the area of both authorities have good access by public transport to education, employment, health, leisure and retail facilities by the most cost-efficient delivery mechanism – it is imperative that the expertise and skills of the responsible officers of these two constituent councils is not 'lost' in the transfer of functions to the combined authority.

Agenda Item 13 ('Transport Functions')

The paper makes no reference whatsoever to the vital importance of ensuring that the officers of the combined authority have the necessary skills and expertise to address the important issue of ensuring that residents of the smaller towns and rural parts of the combined authority continue to retain good access by public transport to education, employment, health, leisure and retail facilities by the most cost-efficient delivery mechanism.

Agenda item 15 ('Transport Update')

The paper conveys the strong perception that the existing transport officers of the combined authority are totally 'urban-centric' – the only reference to rural accessibility in the section on 'Bus Strategy' is in paragraph eleven with the reference to the 'extent of service provision in some rural areas'.

Paragraph nine of the Bus Strategy report contains the following statement – 'Fares review by the main commercial operator (First) holding the standard day fare at £4 for twelve years'; this statement only refers to customers purchasing 'mTickets' for the Bath and Bristol zones (cash purchasers pay £4.50 in Bristol and £5 in Bath). The residents of the majority of the geographical area of Bath and North East Somerset Council and of South Gloucestershire Council have to pay £6 ('mTicket') or £7 (cash) for a day ticket providing travel to and from Bath and Bristol.

Paragraph nine of the Bus Strategy report also contains a reference to ‘fleet investment by the operator’ – there are a number of bus operators, other than First West of England, providing commercial and contracted local bus services not only in smaller towns and rural parts of the combined authority, but also in the major urban areas.

The Bus Strategy should contain a commitment to introduce a simplified single range of multi-modal and multi-operator tickets.

Summary

The enlarged officer team of the Combined Authority responsible for delivering the ‘transport functions’ must have the required skills and expertise to address the issue of access to ‘vital’ services by residents living in the smaller towns and in rural parts of the sub-region.

Gordon Edwards CMILT

Statement 8

Statement to WECA – Councillor Jo Sergeant

(Former Bristol Library Service employee and now representing Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston Ward)

Libraries and the WECA Adult Skills budget

As Library Services across the region struggle to deliver at all their current local points because of reduced budgets, they need to explore ways of working with other service providers, or many communities could lose the provision they still have.

Smaller businesses may wish to provide support for apprenticeship programmes but don't always have suitable teaching/study space or ICT equipment.

An obvious synergy (to my mind) is that of libraries with local authority teams supporting adult education, training and skills. WECA could contribute funding to the development of local skills hubs. These could be located in a selection of existing library spaces (and/or in other community spaces if deemed appropriate).

A branch library could be the ideal study and support point for local students, apprentices and job seekers with a lack of suitable home study space or digital access. With funding from WECA and perhaps larger Bristol-based employers, some staff hours could also be provided. This could mean a collaborative project, whereby current library staff members receive training to support hub users and could be supplemented by regular visits from specialist staff.

This would allow us to keep more of our local library services and support the work of Future Bright and the Councils' Apprenticeship services. I believe it would be a very positive use of WECA funds.

I look forward to the opportunity to further explore this idea with WECA.

Councillor Jo Sergeant

Statement 9 – Cllr Paul Myers

Boost for High Streets

I particularly welcome the 'Love my High Street' funding initiative as it addresses a key issue in communities all across the West of England Combined Authority area from city centres to market towns and local centres.

In an economic climate where so many High Streets across the country have suffered from the pressures of online sales we need to help local people develop solutions. There have been successes such as Frome High Street where they have as a community been able to increase footfall with a market providing more of a leisure experience as much as a purely traditional retail experience and it is this which has attracted visitors.

Within the local authority where I'm based our High Streets in Bath, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton are beginning to feel the adverse effects of suffering trade and I see this WECA funding as a major step to help transform them into new leisure hubs fit for the digital age.

In B&NES, the proposed scheme will be feature around three locations to improve each of their local facilities. Firstly in Bath city centre, the goal is to reinforce the identity and appeal of the 'top of the town' as part of the central retail access running through the heart of the City. In Midsomer Norton, the town centre will aim to reinvent itself as a local market place. Thirdly, Twerton High Street will benefit from a community-led investment pilot.

On top of this, if approved today, there will be a 'Local High Street Vitality Initiative' which will identify quick improvements in potentially 33 local centres.

I strongly believe that our local hubs have more to offer and now is the time to take action. By following on from the success stories in places such as Frome, we can help communities transform their High Streets into leisure experiences which can draw people in both locally and from afar.

Statement 10 – Cllr Jerome Thomas

In December 2017 the Combined Authority commissioned a report to inform the development of an energy strategy for the region. This report was produced by the nationally recognised Centre for Sustainable Energy and the lead author was Simon Roberts OBE. This report, which was funded by UK tax payers and involved extensive stakeholder consultation, now seems to have been suppressed by WECA. This is in spite of the local authority representatives on the steering group all signing off the May 2018 final draft report. Is WECA embarrassed by expert suggestions that the authority needs to take decisive action to reduce carbon emissions?

It seems the regional authority's response to climate change is to bury its head in the sand. Meanwhile Bristol Council is showing real leadership by signing up to an ambitious 2030 target for trying to achieve carbon neutrality – these are the kind of targets we need to be working to meet to have any chance of preventing the runaway climate change that will destroy the natural environment as we know it and jeopardise the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people across the world and here in the UK. I call on the Combined Authority and Metro Mayor to release the document immediately, respond to its findings, and provide an explanation as to why this important public document was stifled.

Councillor Jerome Thomas

WECA Committee, 30 November 2018

Statement 11

Statement by Anthony Hick

Chair of the Whitfield Tabernacle Trust

Love our High Streets – Kingswood

I welcome the award of £10M for high street renewal in the West of England and more specifically the nomination of Kingswood to be South Gloucestershire's pilot.

I am interested to know the process following today's decision and in particular:

- How WECA and South Gloucestershire Council will arrive at the decision on how to allocate the funds between the proposed projects.
- What percentage share of the £10 million will come to Kingswood.
- How the Kingswood 'share' will that be further divided between the projects mentioned in paragraph 2.11 of the report.

Clearly I am interested to know how much is for Whitfield Tabernacle and the method and timing of its disbursement.

Anthony Hick

Chair of the Whitfield Tabernacle Trust

WECA Committee, 30 November 2018**Statement 12****Statement by Councillor Pat Rooney**

on behalf of the six councillors representing Kings Chase and Woodstock wards covering Kingswood town centre

Love our High Streets – Kingswood

We welcome the award of £10M for high street renewal in the West of England and more specifically the nomination of Kingswood to be South Gloucestershire's pilot.

Involve the community and its representatives

However, we want to register our concern about the 'top down' approach adopted so far with this pilot. We expect WECA and South Gloucestershire Council to be much more collaborative taking this forward. The outline business case referenced in paragraph 2.11 of today's report has been worked up and submitted without any reference to the local elected councillors or the key community organisations with which we are heavily involved. We find it strange to read that the pilot will be "*partly delivered by the community*" when the community has not been involved to date.

We and our community partners have the local commitment, local knowledge, local experience and local track record to help drive this pilot to success. We therefore expect to be fully involved both in its development from hereon and in its delivery.

Aspirations

We want Kingswood to benefit from the West of England vision to "*be one of Europe's fastest growing and most prosperous city regions with the gap between disadvantaged and other communities closed and a rising quality of life for all*".

We have always had high aspirations for Kingswood town centre and have worked with community partners to make improvements where we can. But with public money so tight, we have been unable to achieve all that we would like. This pilot should go some way to take forward our past efforts for our community. Kingswood is a major gateway to South Gloucestershire and beyond, sited on

the main A420 – we want to become a favoured destination, not just somewhere to drive through (and pollute).

Among the things we would like to see are:

- A resolution to the long-running saga of the Whitfield Tabernacle. We have been working on this for many years, including pursuing its owners and helping to drive the creation of a Trust on which some of us serve as Trustees.
- Addressing the blight of properties falling into unsightly disrepair, such as the once prestigious Linden Hotel as well as long-term empty buildings at key high street locations.
- The redevelopment of our main shopping centre which could have a big stimulus to the local economy. In addition, local companies should be utilised during construction to boost the local economy further.
- Affordable homes that are well designed and good quality.
- Consideration of a Business Hub or small Science Park to help business start-ups as these seem to be few in number compared to other areas. It could also be a meeting point for business interaction and highlight Kingswood's manufacturing heritage.
- Enhanced public transport provision from neighbouring communities. For example the bus link with Hanham and Keynsham is now hourly.

Some successes

Despite the tight funding, we can point to some positive examples of the community working together with us, which should encourage the Combined Authority to accept us as key partners:

- Working closely with the Friends of Kingswood Park including an annual litter pick and 3-monthly walkabouts of the town centre with police, council officials etc. designed to tackle small problems that have a big impact.
- Liaising with local businesses to revitalise the Kingswood Business Association, which has been largely led by local councillors and runs events such as the Christmas snowman hunt.
- Actively pursuing improvements, in some instances with delegated grants, including: upgraded CCTV, bus stop signage, evening taxi marshal scheme and preventing dangerous u-turning.

- Campaigning to retain this building (Kingswood Civic Centre) for council use, recognising its important contribution to civic pride and its impact on local employment and retail.

We trust that WECA will want to dispel the impression that it is imposing these pilots on communities in a top down way. In Kingswood's case we are ready, willing and able to work with partners to use this pilot and any other strategy to boost our past and existing efforts to transform our town for the better.

Councillor Pat Rooney

on behalf of the six councillors representing Kings Chase and Woodstock wards covering Kingswood town centre

WECA Committee, 30 November 2018

Statement 13 – Cllr Gary Hopkins

Item 13 – Transport Functions

This has for some years been an aspiration for many in the West of England. With the passing of the Bus Bill this is now something that can be comparatively easily delivered.

I note that the possibility is mentioned in your report on future options.

The argument against is that financial risk is transferred to the Authority but that is false. At the moment the Authority takes the risk of bidding for and implementing infrastructure, which in the case of GBBN produced considerable benefits and is looking promising for MetroBus despite the negative influence on delivery and budget since the introduction of the Mayoral system in Bristol.

The near monopoly bus operator in Bristol, First Bus, takes the profit from the routes they want and fails to provide a reliable service either on a daily or long term basis. The authority gets the political blame without taking control.

The only way that as an Authority WECA can guarantee the public benefits from the public investment that it must make in public transport is to introduce franchising.

This will deliver the trust in the service which is vital to getting long term public buy in. We must control routes, timetables, fares and emissions to make the bus service a real service.

Gary Hopkins Lib Dem Cllr Knowle ward Bristol.

Statement 14

30 November 2018

Statement 14 – Andrew Shore

Back before WECA existed, there was a regular forum facilitated by South Gloucestershire Council, known as the Public Transport Forum.

This was a very useful forum that brought together councillors with council officials from the transport department, along with members of the public and representatives of the bus and train operators in the area.

Sadly this forum got disbanded by South Glos – the last one was back in February – but I was promised, both by South Glos and the Metro Mayor, that it would be replaced with a new forum facilitated by WECA – to perform a similar function, but across all the constituent areas.

I thought that a combined forum might be even better than the old one – as, for example, bus services often start and finish in two different council areas.

However, it is now 18 months since WECA was formed, 9 months since the last forum in South Glos, and 5 months since I flagged my concerns to Mayor Bowles, from which I was promised a new-approach forum would be held in October 2018.

Sadly, October has passed, as has November, and I have still not seen any firm news of this forum.

I feel this forum is really important, and am disappointed that it doesn't appear to be a priority of WECA. I was hoping the creation of WECA (which as a tax payer, creates an extra layer of local authority and associated expense) would provide an enhanced experience. But, as things currently stand, I feel the creation of WECA seems to be falling short, and in this particular regard it seems to have created a 'hole' compared to what we used to have.

Whilst WECA may be active in longer-term, more strategic, and perhaps aspirational thinking on transport, there also remains a number of issues and opportunities to be addressed in the shorter and medium-term, for which a replacement of the Public Transport Forum – crucially with public engagement - I feel is essential and well overdue. For example I have concerns with how the Metrobus services are adversely impacting on other services, such as the soon-to-be reduced in frequency X73 bus service.

We all know Transport is a big issue in this area. So please can WECA and the three constituent Councils reflect on this and quickly agree a way forward to get suitable public transport forums operational again.