

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.	Christina Biggs, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) Local Rail Services
3.	Julie Boston Bus Services

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.

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 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 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)

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR)

Statement to WECA Committee and West of England Joint Committee

Friday 30 November 2018, Kingswood Civic Centre

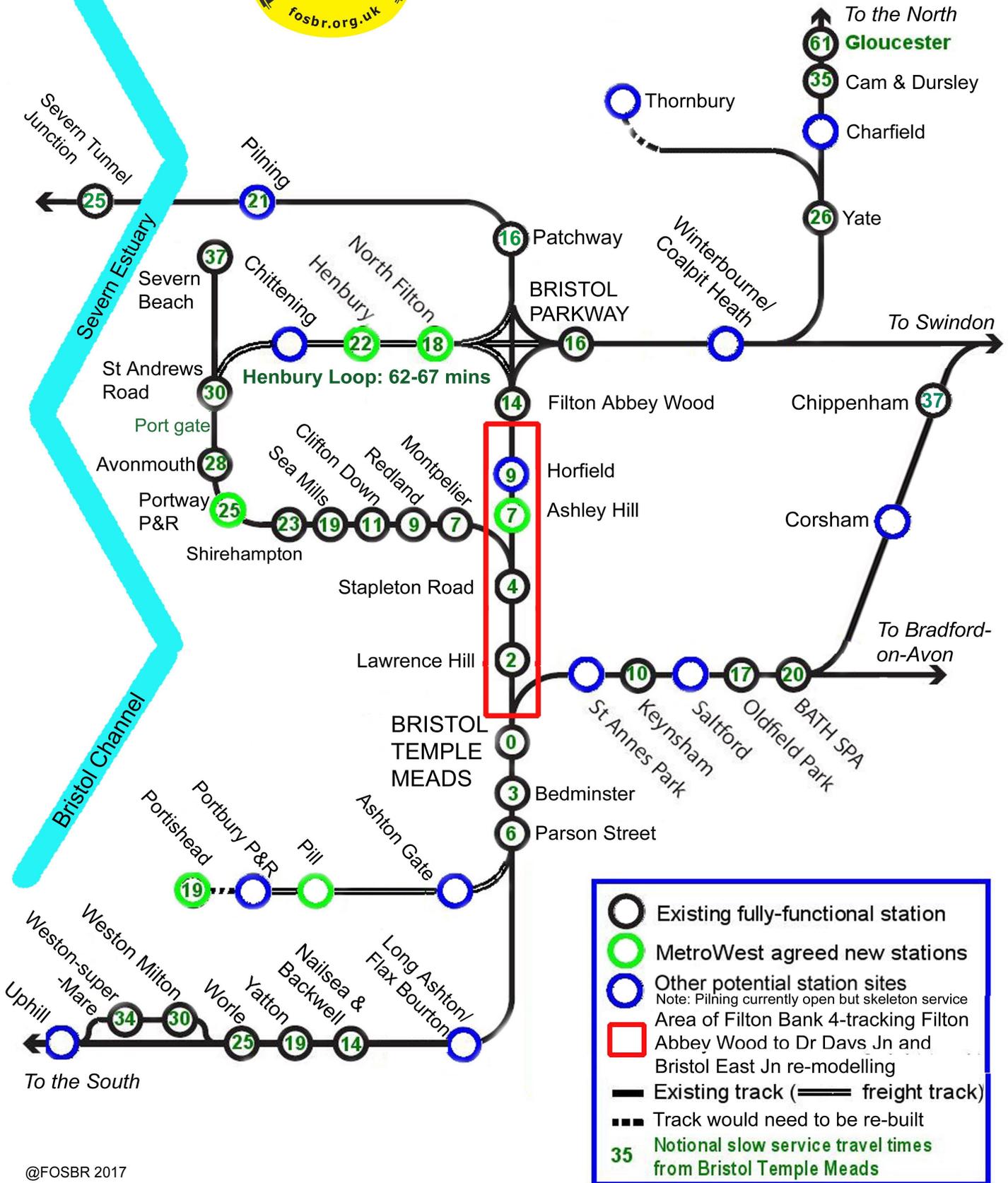


1. **Filton Bank:** FOSBR notes that the four tracks on Filton Bank are now open and looks forward to the completion of the works in early January 2019. We would like to thank WECA and WoE officers and elected members for their support for our campaign and are planning a celebration event soon to which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

Christina Biggs (FOSBR Secretary)



The Future of MetroWest Phase 3



Statement 3

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