

Radstock – Frome Railway, Feasibility Study by Halcrow on behalf of Bath & North East Somerset U. A.

- The report emphasizes distance to Bath: surely time is more important to a commuter (see p3, 1.2).
- There is no mention of a possible service Radstock / Frome / Westbury / Melksham / Chippenham / Swindon (see p7, 3.1). It seems as though the only possible routes lead towards Bath / Bristol.
- A new platform at Mells is feasible and would be nearer the village, not at Mells Road. Potentially, this would increase the user level.
- The NCN path should not be a problem. A Section 106 exists which permits the cycleway to retain its current benefits.
- The Report only considers a chord to Frome station and reversal, ignoring the possibility of a platform behind the Cheese & Grain building. (see 3.2.1)
- Use of a platform behind the Cheese & Grain building, with easy access to a large car-park, would simplify operations and save land purchase for the chord and costs of a bridge. (see p8, Infrastructure)
- Destinations beyond Westbury are not considered (e.g. Reading / London) (see p13).
- Using the information in the Report only, a Radstock / Westbury shuttle is probably the preferred compromise, calling at stations to Frome (Cheese & Grain) and direct to Westbury (see p16) Extend to Bristol and / or Chippenham later.
- An increase in the size of parking area at Radstock would help revenue and might also be useful for 'bus passengers (see p17). Should not B&NES be involved and consider full inter-modal travellers?
- Station operating costs are claimed to be significant. How can this be, as only CCTV, lighting and a 'help' facility are needed. Perhaps local 'Friends' could improve appearance and therefore encourage users.
- There is no investigation of the benefits of track-laying to lighter than “Network” standards, with upgrading only when traffic is proven
- Did Halcrow contact ATOC or study the Connecting Communities Report?
- The costs are very “broad-brush”, so a break-down is certainly required. However, it goes against the McNulty Report to have such a large Management & Contingency Budget (2/3 of the total capital). (Appendix, Table A.1). It is actually 2/3 of the capital budget.
- ‘Soft’ benefits are not mentioned, such as Regeneration in Radstock. Better transport means improved access for everyone, commuters and tourists alike. Welton Bibby is moving to Westbury in January and will need their current skilled staff.
- Trains are more likely to be DDA compliant. ‘Buses might be, but access is still difficult.
- In conclusion, I must say that the most important point is that Halcrow did not attempt to suggest alternatives, when faced with a potential difficulty. Surely this is why consultants are employed?

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