

West of England Joint Leaders Board on Thurs 17 July

Bristol City Council Full Council Thurs 10 July

South Gloucestershire Council Full Council Wed 16 July

BaNES Cabinet on Thurs 10 and Wed 16 July

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Building on the Success of the Greater Bristol and Bath Bus Network Upgrades

Both the new fares policy and the delivery of new and refurbished buses have had a significant impact on the ridership figures for First and Wessex's local bus services. This has also entailed the provision of what is now a fully DDA-compliant fleet in the Bristol and Bath Travel-to-Work Area. Disabled access is also improving in terms of Community transport and the local taxi fleet—with the notable exception of South Gloucestershire, about which, more, later.

To make the best use of this progress we now need to bring the commuter bus network into the picture along with improvements to fleet and services in Bath and Weston-super-Mare. The fleet upgrade should include leather seats, wifi, re-trimming, complete repainting and branding, in line with the practice in Cheltenham, Exeter and York. This "widening circles of improvement" approach is what characterised the improvements to London's transport network driven by the city's Mayors—starting with the inner core services and working out into "Green Line" territory.

In the local region key commuter routes need to be identified for upgrading. We have already seen massive improvements to the

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renumbered services from Bristol to Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead, with new vehicles, new routes and new timetables. Routes which should receive the same kind of treatment are:

- 376 Bristol to Street via Knowle, Hengrove, Whitchurch, Farrington Gurney, Wells and Glastonbury.
- 379 Bristol to Bath via Pensford, Paulton, Midsomer Norton and Radstock
- 37 Bristol to Bath via Old Market, St. George, Hanham, Longwell Green, Bitton and Kelston
- 319 Cribbs Causeway to Bath via Bristol Parkway, UWE, Downend, Staple Hill, Kingswood, Cadbury Heath and Bitton
- 309, 310 Bristol to Thornbury via Bishopston, Filton, Patchway, Cribbs Causeway, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Rudgeway and Alveston
- 311 Thornbury to Dursley via Charfield, Kingswood (SG), Wotton-under-Edge, Cam
- X? Bristol to Gloucester — new service
- 635 Bristol to Chippenham via Kingswood, Warmley and Marshfield
- 47 X47 Bristol to Chipping Sodbury via Fishponds, Downend, Coalpit Heath and Yate
- 46 Bristol to Yate via Stapleton, Frenchay, Hambrook, Winterbourne, Frampton Cotterell and Coalpit Heath
- 126 Weston-super-Mare to Wells via Locking, Winscombe, Axbridge and Cheddar

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- 161 Wells to Frome via Shepton Mallet, Stoke St Michael and Nunney
- ? Bristol to Shepton Mallet
- 21 Weston-super-Mare to Taunton via Brean, Burnham-on-Sea, Highbridge, Huntspill, Pawlett, Dunball, Bridgwater, North Petherton and Monkton Heathfield
- 265 265A Bath to Warminster and Salisbury via Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge and Westbury
- 231 X31 Bath to Chippenham via Batheaston, Box, Rudloe and Corsham
- 173 Bath to Wells via Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Chilcompton and Gurney Slade
- 184 Bath to Frome via Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Chilcompton, Coleford and Mells
- 267 Bath to Frome via Midford, Norton St Philip, Rode and Beckington

The list is not exclusive, but these represent the commuter routes in greatest need of upgrade and redesign.

Branding is also a significant issue in the Bristol/Bath/Weston/Wells region and we need to make greater use of the TravelWest and West of England brands. Branding can be complex but should not be complicated. If we are going to use sub brands (such as Buses of Somerset or Buses of Bath) these need to be clearly unified by the TravelWest brand along with the company logo (for both Wessex and First).

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The local rail network also needs to be brought into the same branding style. In the build up to the delivery of MetroWest, the TravelWest brand should be applied to rail stations, trains and network facilities. The current "First Great Western Central" is highly confusing and completely meaningless to most people, and as such it does pretty much the opposite of what we might expect from a brand.

The preferred statutory structure for management of local transport would be best served by a Statutory Quality Partnership rather than the Quality Contract which was proposed by the recent report commissioned by Bristol City Council and the West of England Partnership. As far as management is concerned the ideal structure is a combined authority with a Transport Board to manage the operations of the local rail, bus and ferry services.

With the Fares Review we need to make sure that we have integrated ticketing across the region with a tourist ticket which can be purchased in Dorset, Gloucestershire, Devon and Cornwall, Somerset, Wiltshire or Greater Bristol at the same rate, for both weekly and daily journeys. This ticket should be intermodal, with rail and ferry services and should include discounts for disabled people, OAPs, students and families.

On the issue of Safe Travel, we need to be aware and increasingly vigilant about the prevalence of tagging and other unauthorised graffiti on transport infrastructure in sensitive areas of the city region, such as Stokes Croft (which impacts on perception of the Bus and Coach Station), Temple Meads, Easton, and Oldfield Park in Bath amongst

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others. There have been several arrests recently following a spate of bus-shelter spray tagging in Stokes Croft and we need the councils to follow up such incidents with the BTP and Avon and Somerset and press for prosecution as well as putting in place procedures to ensure the prompt repair of damaged bus shelters and real-time information points. This vigilance may require additional CCTV on stations and around areas where tagging is prevalent.

In response to the consultation on the Bath Transport Strategy and the BaNES Core Strategy, we welcome the upgrade of the bus services and the cheaper ticketing (although this needs to be better defined around Peasedown St John which should be included as part of the outer Bath fringe), We would like to see more bus lanes on the Upper and Lower Bristol Roads and on London Road.

As far as the rail network is concerned, we are highly supportive of the MetroWest plans to open stations at Saltford Parkway, Corsham and upgrade Keynsham and Oldfield Park. However, we are concerned about the role of Bathampton which, whilst desirable as a station for the East of Bath and the Park and Ride, cannot be served as a shuttle service at the same frequency as the bus service due to the line capacity constraints. It would work well as an additional stop on a Bristol to Bedford service via Corsham and Swindon, and on existing services to Southampton, Weymouth and London Waterloo. As with all parts of the MetroWest project, this will have to go through the 9 GRIP stages and must be shown to have a strong business case rather than just being an adjunct to a road scheme between the A36 and the A4.

South West Transport Network **Statement** for

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We welcome the ongoing work on the Bath Transport Strategy, but would like to see the Community Transport incorporated along with the Bristol MetroBus project, which should be fully integrated with the commuter bus network and the rail network providing useful interchanges across the entirety of the Bristol and Bath city region.

I referred to an issue with DDA compliance in the South Gloucestershire taxi fleet above. This is most particularly problematic at Bristol Parkway Station where only 35 out of 400 vehicles are compliant—a nasty surprise for any disabled passengers arriving from other areas of the country where DDA compliance is now taken for granted. Of course we welcome the fact that taxi fares in South Gloucestershire are not set to rise, but this cannot excuse the lack of disabled accessible vehicles.

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