

# South West Transport Network **Statement** for

*Bristol City Council Full Council on 26 May 2015*

*BaNES Full Council on 21 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Full Council on 27 May 2015*

*South Gloucestershire PTSE on 24 June 2015*

*South Gloucestershire Transport Forum on 8 June 2015*

*North Somerset Full Council on 24 May 2015*

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## MetroWest bus and rail and the Combined Authority

With a new government elected in London with a mandate on devolution to the City Regions as outlined by Greg Clark, the new communities and local government secretary, there is a need for the city region and the neighbouring shire counties (Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire) to come up with a fully funded plan in times of deep austerity. This is likely to require the implementation of a Delivery Authority on the ground. This may be in the shape of a Combined Authority with transport delivery powers or may take a different form, just as long as the Transport Authority has a full range of powers and access to appropriate funding.

The top priorities are:

### Bath

- Upgrading and improving the bus services in Bath (including rebranding and re-trimming of the fleet jointly with First Group, which must be done in conjunction with refurbishment of the vehicles).
- Reopen the café and toilets at Bath Bus Station.
- Prioritise an East-of-Bath Park and Ride, bus-based to start with but later with rail access.

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- Reopen Corsham and Salford stations.
- Make Bath Spa railway station ticket barriers operational for 18 hours a day.
- Provide more bus priority measures in Bath.
- Complete the Transport Plan in Keynsham including new bus hub.
- Deliver electrification of local lines including the line between Newbury, Westbury and Bathampton.
- Extend MetroWest to Frome, Warminster and Swindon from Bath (Phase 3).

## North Somerset

- Sort out a new control centre for First Bus at Weston-super-Mare railway station, including passenger facilities for information once the First Travel Centre and the Tourist Information Centre have been closed (end of May and September respectively).
- To work in partnership between North Somerset Council, the West of England Partnership and bus operators including partnership working between Crossville and First Group as per the arrangements in Bridgwater where there is a joint company.
- To invest in a new bus-rail interchange including disabled facilities at Weston-super-Mare station as well as new ticket barriers.

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- Improvements to the 126 service between Weston, Locking, Banwell, Cheddar and Wells including diversion via the railway station.
- Improve bus links between Yatton and Clevedon to act as a rail-head for the town.
- Improve bus facilities at the Six Ways terminal in Clevedon including reopening the waiting and toilet facilities.
- Making the reopening of the Portishead line a top priority whilst protecting rail freight facilities.
- New railway station at Ashton Gate funded by Bristol Sport.
- Upgrading disabled ramps at Nailsea and Backwell station.
- Late night bus from Bristol to Weston on Friday and Saturday night (up to 2am?)
- Protect site of Flax Bourton station for future development.
- All new local units for the Bristol Area as well as the mainlines to Exeter and Cardiff need to be upgraded with disabled facilities and increased passenger comfort before the carriages are rebranded in the green colour.
- Extend MetroBus to Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.

## South Gloucestershire

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- Protect the existing bus network, invest in newer vehicles with leather seats and wifi especially on routes to Thornbury and Yate and the 319 from Kingswood to Bath.
- Maintain and clean bus shelters.
- Provide Bus Priority on the A38 between Aztec West and Bristol City Centre
- Extend MetroBus to Thornbury and Yate.
- Improve bus station at Cribs Causeway.
- Support government funding for new bus station at UWE.
- Reopen the Henbury Loop, including new stations at Filton North, Charlton Hayes and Henbury (current proposals include removing one of these which we feel would be counter-productive).
- Fully integrate the Henbury Loop with MetroBus at Henbury and Filton North
- Improve Patchway Station including waiting facilities, disabled facilities, toilets and car-parking.
- Improve bus interchange at Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Parkway (where there are plans for a remodelled bus-rail interchange).
- Bus priorities on Gypsy Patch Lane.
- RPZ around Southmead Hospital.
- Consider car-parking charges to cover the cost of maintaining car parks.

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- Fully support any branding concepts for public transport in the region, including Green Capital, MetroWest and Greater Bristol Bus Network.
- Develop Tourism-related transport policies.
- Improve Bus Links to Gloucester from Bristol, Yate and Thornbury.

## Bristol

- Put pressure on Central Government to make Temple Meads a fully functional railway station fit for purpose in the 21st century with a regional transport hub, a good intermodal transport interchange, shopping facilities, hotels, flats and access to the Arena.
- Improve (or where absent, provide) disabled access to local railway stations: Lawrence Hill, Bedminster and Parson Street.
- Continue to improve Bristol Bus Station: doors, cleaning and painting.
- Provide and Park and Ride on the North Side of the city (around Filton, offering access to both bus and rail services).
- Invest in a proper local bus/MetroWest/national rail/ferry interchange at Temple Meads.
- Provide revenue protection on the Bristol to Taunton line and Severn Beach line to collect all fares.

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- Improve the City's bus fleet, providing 100 new hybrid buses for MetroBus and the inter-urban fleet in conjunction with First Group, Wessex and Stagecoach (and also A-Bus, National Express Kingsferry and RAPT Bath).
- Improve bus interchanges in the city centre, Broadmead, Old Market, Eastgate, Bedminster and Kingswood.
- Open the Romney Avenue Bus Gate as a matter of urgency.
- Improve bus cleaning at all depots in Greater Bristol, including Lawrence Hill.
- Decide on the future of Muller Road bus garage relocation.
- Introduce smart ticketing including bus-rail-ferry combined options.
- Make the Freedom Pass zonal and introduce children's and senior citizen's fares.
- Introduce a new PRZ around Southmead Hospital.
- New bus station at Southmead Hospital.
- Build new Portway Park and Ride railway station (without closing the existing Shirehampton station).
- Ashley Hill and Horfield stations to be opened.
- Henbury Station to reopen — will need car parking and bus interchange.
- Ashton Gate Station funded jointly with Bristol Sport

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- **Transport Security:** work with BTP, Avon and Somerset Police, and the Port Police to improve CCTV, transport safety measures, revenue protection and remove graffiti from bus and rail vehicles and infrastructure.

## All Greater Bristol and Bath Authorities

- **Protect and fund the local transport network,** building on the successes of the last few years.

## Detailed Priorities

We welcome the proposals for the new station site in Quays Avenue, Portishead and the progress on reopening the branch line between Portishead and Bristol Temple Meads, Bath Spa/Clifton Down/Severn Beach as part of MetroWest Phase 1. We would like to see a full transport interchange at Portishead for bus/rail/taxis/walking and cycling. Also an M Shop for selling tickets/public transport information/toilets and a café. We would like to see a similar arrangement at Pill and provision made for a future station at Ashton Gate to be funded partly by Bristol Sports and interchange with MetroBus. Other provision needs to be made for disabled access at Parson Street and interchange at this station and Bedminster.

On the Severn Beach line provision needs to be made for waiting shelters at Severn Beach, maintain and enhance the station building at Avonmouth (by restoring the original station canopy to a design matching photographic evidence from the 1960s) as this station is an ideal interchange point for Henbury loop services with connections to bus

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services 41, 501 and 502. We welcome the new station at Portway Park & Ride and station facility improvements at Clifton Down including a ticket office. Revenue protection is a major problem on the route.

The Direct Award from the DFT will allow the Secretary of State to devolve rail and public transport powers to Devon and Cornwall and the Bristol/Bath City Region travel to work area (extending into the counties of Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon including the Weymouth line into Dorset) so it is important to take up the Government's offer to create a combined authority for the Bristol/Bath City Region taking over the powers of the West of England LEP on transport, planning, strategic housing and waste management. This would give the Combined Authority specific responsibility for public transport delivery, which in the context means taking overall control of the MetroBus and MetroWest projects along with the Greater Bristol bus network

It is important, despite the protests in Stapleton and Frenchay, that we focus on the total public transport package for Greater Bristol/Bath. The scheme North-South includes bus interchanges at Whitchurch Hospital (South Bristol), Bedminster, Redcliffe Hill, City Centre, Bus Station Lewin's Mead/Haymarket, UWE Frenchay (providing the plans can be developed for the new University bus station site), Bristol Parkway station, Bradley Stoke Willowbrook Centre, Aztec West and Cribbs Causeway and rail interchanges at Bedminster, Parson Street and Bristol Parkway with future options at Filton North and Henbury on the Henbury loop and interchange with coach services at Bristol bus and coach station, Aztec West and Cribbs Causeway.

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The environmental impact of the Stoke Lane Frenchay allotments will need to be carefully examined to include Cotswold stone on any walling around the Stoke Park estate and rural fencing around the allotments and tree planting. We welcome the saving of the oak trees and landscaping. There must be a commitment to no Park & Ride sites in this area from South Gloucestershire Council, the Mayor of Bristol and the West of England Partnership. This section of the route needs a careful review in the light of local concerns from residents in Downend, Frenchay and Stapleton but it is very important that we don't lose the £190 million funding in the City Region as the project is not just about MetroBus but improved interchange and connection facilities with rail/local bus and ferries and is supported by First Group, Wessex Connect and RATP Bath Bus Company.

RailFuture, Bus Users UK (Sevenside), South West Transport Network, TfGBA and FOSBR and the public transport unions have been calling for a fully integrated MetroBus/MetroWest rail and bus network across Greater Bristol to be fully integrated into a public transport system for the City Region as the Green Capital of Europe 2015. All the listed groups are also pressing for the urgent establishment of a combined transport authority as soon as the General Election is out of the way, with the support of North Somerset, BANES and South Gloucestershire. We also need to set up a Public Transport Forum for Bristol and the City Region as supported by the Mayor and Full Council

We are very concerned about the loss of bus services No 5 to Downend, 36 to Brislington Tesco and South Bristol Hospital, night services on the 90 to Knowle, 1 and 2 to Southmead and Westbury on Trym, and the uncertainty over the 87 and 88 Bristol to Dursley due to budget cuts by the Mayor

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(£350,000 cut) and South Gloucestershire Council (£590,000). Bus services are as important to the citizens of Greater Bristol the libraries in the City and Kingswood (South Gloucestershire).

There are alternative services to Brislington (Callington Road) provided by the NHS trust, but these are not coordinated with the Greater Bristol Bus Network (these need to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and have through-ticketing arrangements). The A-Bus services sponsored by Tesco and Sainsburys also need to be registered and provide through tickets. The new 600 service provided by Severnside around Fishponds/ Downend and UWE also need to be registered.

As more and more RSZ schemes are created by our local authorities, it is increasingly vital that sufficient funds are found to improve bus and rail services to a point where more people feel confident about using public transport rather than private in order to go about their business.

As a final point, we need to be clear that the MetroBus project will entail the procurement of 50 hybrid gas/electric vehicles. At the moment there are only 5 in the successful Clean Fuels Bid from the Department for Transport, which means that we need to resource a further 45 vehicles as well as two bus depots in order to bring the service into operation.

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**with Jenny Raggett (TFGBA),  
Nigel Bray (Railfuture Severnside,  
and John Hassell Bus Users UK**