

# **Statement to BANES Cabinet**

## **from Transport South West Transport Planning Network**

### **1 Buses in Greater Bristol and Bath**

We still have a number of concerns about the bus network at Brislington, Radstock, Farrington Gurney, Whitchurch and Clutton – specifically the 178 Bristol to Bath via Radstock and the effects of the 379 Fastbus on 376 Bristol Wells and 178.

We welcome the slight improvements to Sunday services but are concerned that the verbal report to the Safer Communities Committee came with no written report meaning that stakeholders cannot easily participate.

We are now concerned about consultation on Keynsham local services, the 20 orbital services in Bath and the 76 Bath.

We would like to see this all included in the Greater Bristol Review as it affect both Bristol and Somerset.

We are extremely concerned about lack of through ticketing on service 178 and 376 and 379 Wessex Connect and First from the 1<sup>st</sup> April within the context of the Greater Bristol Bus network.

We are concerned about the recent contracts to Webber and Wessex connect, in terms of through ticketing and staff being tuped from one company to the other to protect jobs. First Group have 8,500 in the West of England. Each time services are cut – on rail and bus – staff lose their jobs, and therefore need to be tuped to new undertakings.

### **2 Rapid Transit and prioritisation of funds**

We are very concerned that while we support rapid transit, that with 40 to 50 % cuts in the region, we are not going to afford all the rapid transit lines. Therefore we feel that Hengrove hospital to Cribbs and Emersons Green line is laudable and supportable and should be a top priority, along with the circle from Temple Meads via Cabot Circus and the centre to Ashton Vale. However this should be able to track-shared with the Portishead project and any tram train proposals.

While it is desirable to have a rapid transit link from Whitchurch hospital we cannot see that this is a top priority in the same way, especially as the housing is not going to be built at Yarnley. There is a real risk we think that this public transport scheme could revert to a pure road scheme – the idea of a Barrow Gurney Bypass or of a orbital freight route was NOT in the minds of regional bodies when awarding this money to access the new South West Bristol extension.

The South Bristol Ring Road is supposed a boulevard serving new housing with rapid transit, not a bypass.

### **3 Portishead Railway**

We therefore feel that the Portishead Railway line RFA2 project is fast-tracked as soon as possible. This is at Grip2 status which means that it is being worked up now and is getting all-party support in the House of Commons. The concept that this could be a bus-way instead of a railway line is a non-starter, because the buses or rapid transit vehicles would be stuck in the congestion at Leigh Woods or Clifton Bridge. There may also be landscape objections if a bus-way was attempted, as well as safety issues with bus rapid transit right next to freight trains.

### **4 Delivery considerations for rail and rapid transit**

As an organisation recently been set up to look at planning issues in the context of public transport, it would be very useful if you could make clear what legislation you are using for the various rapid transit and rail projects, so that that public can understand and participate in the process.

With the Westbury Bypass, local people found it necessary to use a planning solicitor to get their views across in the context of a specialist organisation.

## **5 Type of vehicle for rapid transit**

We fully support real rapid transit as in the mock below and as in the presentation given to the Regional Transport Board and the RDA. However we are very concerned at the erosion of quality to London-style bendy buses on tarmac roads, as in the photo below from the Bath package exhibition. We do believe that the Bath Package (line 1) is a good idea but – as per Mrs Lock's letter of CfBT – much more work needs to be done on the design of vehicles, stations, track and cycle track.

We are alarmed at the lack of interchanged work at Bath station – it is stalled on lifts, cafes, toilets. The bus station awaits completion because of the needed demolition of the ramp. Can we please have an update on this front? Rail and bus union colleagues are hearing many complaints on this subject. The BANES cabinet and WoE need to have start dates for more work ASAP!!

## **6 Integrated transport authority**

We are still convinced that an ITA is needed to deliver public transport to this growing and major urban area. Bristol has lost out too many times to getting the equality of public transport that it needs.

We note that in the Quarterly High Level Report on the North Fringe to Hengrove Package that the risk of "failure of participating authorities to agree funding, scope, continuity options, mode of operating regime, procurement etc.", and "sufficient procurement funding not identified to facilitate service provision and maintenance" are listed. These risks would in our view be much diminished with an ITA in place and may apply to other rapid transit bids and rail projects.

The sheer number of different officer teams involved to deliver rapid transit and rail or even contracted bus services, let alone working cross-boundary and with adjacent shire authorities too, makes governance and coordination so unwieldy. It seems to unfair to the public not to set up an operational body similar to Solent Transport Partnership or the South East Wales Transport Alliance. Please do go to their web sites!!!

## **7 Somerset Core Strategy**

We note the lack of public transports mention in the Somerset Core Strategy with some concern – what is the point of planning without transport being in the picture from the start?

## **8 Rolling stock**

We thank the officers for writing to Lord Anois about the rolling stock issue which is by the day becoming urgent. Can you please send this to all MPs in the sub-region and to the Welsh Assembly Government.

We maintain that those with ITAs or equivalent are doing better on rolling stock than us!