

Light Rail around Bristol and Bath

We want to see the budget for the light rail consultation studies in the Greater Bristol area to be fully protected and support the principles of a light rail route to Bristol Airport as a top priority and later to Bath especially from Lambridge across the City to Newbridge which could then make use of the light rail corridor to Bristol through Bitton, Saltford, Kelston, Warmley to Yate and East Bristol via Mangotsfield, Staple Hill and Fishponds as well as linking into the RUH at Weston, the new Bath Spa Art & Design College at Weston Lock and Park & Ride sites which need to be co-ordinated with the Bristol Mayor's rapid transit project. The two schemes must link to Warmley and Emersons Green. Retention of Avon Valley Railway steam services at weekends. Provision should be made for a continuous cycle/walkway between Bristol and Bath where possible. The implementation of light rail will help bring the City region into line with EU emission and clean air targets together with clean fuel buses and taxi's.

The corridor to Odd Down is welcomed however the majority of the traffic is to the Somer Valley at Peasedown, Radstock and Mid Somer Norton and therefore an extension of a rapid transit system to this area would be beneficial. What evaluation of the Somerset and Dorset railway corridor has been carried out as Norton Radstock is an enterprise zone and needs public transport improvement.

The route to Bath University seems to have gradient constraints and requires considerable engineering works and it should also be noted that all LRT schemes approved in the UK have been conurbation wide eg Midland Metro (Birmingham - Wolverhampton), Greater Manchester, Nottingham and Croydon and will require DFT funding and approvals in the long term and in the short term to be in the Metro Mayors joint transport plan.

Bus/Rail integration

This is required at Bath Spa station and other locations where light rail might possibly connect with buses. Across Europe and Greater Manchester/London rapid transit is fully integrated into the bus network. We need to make progress on bus/rail integration at Temple Meads as the proposed Temple Gate stops do not work for passengers.

On rail we welcome the work on disabled access at Stapleton Road and Patchway but the Stapleton Road temporary ramps do not provide good access without grab rails.

There should be investment in MetroWest between Westbury, Bath and Bristol currently out for consultation with the DFT as part of the GWR franchise with First Group as the operator until 2022. This could include a business unit for Bristol and Bath, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire & Greater Bristol.

SWTN also want to see the GWR franchise kept as one complete business unit and not split up as proposed by the DFT. The GWR IEP electrification programme should also be completed in the shortest possible time to assist with high technology rail job creation opportunities in the region together with the Henbury loop rail project serving the proposed Arena.

There should also be a Greater Bristol business unit within the GWR franchise with devolved powers similar to the West Midlands and Greater Manchester PTE's.

Bus proposals can be included as should future schemes eg light rail integration and the Overground rail project in Bristol.

Arena issues

A full transport plan would need to be drawn up with First Group on whichever site the Mayor and Metro Mayor decide.

Temple Meads Arena would require coach parking, MetroBus stops, coach stops in Avon Street, bus stops at this location and on Bath Road Park & Ride services from Brislington, Parkway, Portway, Ashton Vale, extra trains from

Bath and West Wilts, Taunton, W-S-M, Cardiff, Newport, Patchway, Filton, Yate, Gloucester/Cheltenham, Severn Beach via Clifton Down, Henbury loop, Portishead and Swindon.

Regarding a shuttle train from Bristol Parkway to Temple Meads, taxi ranks, ferry terminal, service coaches and car parking including disabled.

Construction of Station Street and bus interchange at the Friary is required as part of the new University campus development at Temple Meads.

Brabazon hanger option

Potential Arena will require coach parking, MetroBus stops, coach stops, bus stops at this location and on Park & Ride services to Brislington, Parkway, Portway, Ashton Vale, extra trains from Bath and West Wilts, Taunton, W-S-M, Cardiff, Newport, Patchway, Filton, Yate, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Severn Beach via Clifton Down, Henbury loop, Portishead and Swindon. There should be 15 minute frequency services on the Henbury loop serving the Arena and 10 minute shuttle bus service on main routes to it.

The IET trains will need to operate from London and South Wales via Parkway to Filton North station for the arena, services from the South West, West Midlands to the Henbury loop station, coach parking will need to be provided, taxis, bus links Greater Bristol wide, links to Cribbs Causeway and hotels will need to be addressed.

We urge the City Council, WECA and Bristol Mayor's to address a full integrated transport plan for the Arena similar to those at Manchester Victoria/Wembley.

The Arena rail services will need to be included in the new rail franchise.

Bus strategy

There should be no cuts in bus subsidies but more investment in the local bus network with the Metro Mayor and these issues must be addressed alongside any light rail proposals in Bristol and Bath especially where services like the 16 from Bristol Parkway to Longwell Green via Lodge Causeway have already been cut leaving residents with no buses. The 510/511 bus services should also be reinstated as part of an improved orbital bus network.

Passengers interchanging between bus/rail routes should have accessible toilet facilities on key routes with money for maintaining/cleaning bus shelters/bus bays. These should include facilities at Shirehampton Green, Eastville Park and Fishponds Park. One way to fund public transport would be to use money raised by parking fees instead of spending it on non transport infrastructure projects like pavement repairs. These toilets are also used by bus drivers and passengers on routes around Bristol. Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been carried out regarding the closures and any new facilities. Of course in South Gloucestershire, BANES and North Somerset have protected these facilities as part of the network.

We remind you that the tourism industry in Bristol is worth £1.3 billion and we do not want the reputation damage to Bristol so these facilities including community toilets and private sector transfers must work.

WECA Transport Forum issues

We are concerned about the lack of progress for a rail and transport forum and the need to merge the congestion task force with any WECA group. We also must address the proposed Regional Transport Board.

On integration we are concerned about the lack of integration between MetroBus and the background bus network especially around North Bristol along the Bradley Stoke corridor.

DAVID REDGEWELL South West Transport Network/TSSA/Railfuture