

David Redgewell statement

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 afterwards 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 the Emersons Green Science Park and the Avon Valley Railway rail services should be run during the weekend, school holidays and for special events (gala days etc). Provision should be made for a continuous cycle/walkway between Bristol and Bath where possible but with double-tracking being designed in where available. 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 light rail system should include the link up to Whitchurch via the former North Somerset Railway corridor to Callington Road thence on the ring road to Hengrove to the Whitchurch airport new housing development site and then to Bristol airport using design studies from the Avon County Council "Westway" light rail project as a template. This information could also be used as part of the current Bristol airport light rail study which proposes the use of the South Bristol link corridor on the A38 and Long Ashton P& R.

The light rail 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. A study needs to be carried out on these corridors.

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 retained as one complete business unit and not split up as originally 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 Filton 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

The Mayor and Metro Mayor should draw up a full transport plan with First Group and YTL if the Filton arena proposals are taken forward.

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

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

This location would need 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 Class 800 IEP trains should 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.

If the Filton arena plans fall through for any reason then a Temple Meads Arena would need 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.

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

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

All stations on the reopened Portishead line should be fully disabled accessible as should Nailsea & Backwell station and lifts should be provided at Weston-Super-Mare station.

Bus strategy

Whilst there has been some investment in the rail network including Stapleton Road, Patchway station car park and Portway Park & Ride we are concerned over the lack of an overall bus strategy. Some bus shelters need upgrading, bus flags require repair/replacement and many don't have working lighting or real time information screens. There shouldn't be any further cuts in bus subsidies but more investment in the local bus network instead so the Metro Mayor must address these issues alongside any light rail proposals for 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 10 Lyde Green - Southmead hospital bus service should be reinstated as part of an improved orbital bus network. We are also concerned about the limited frequencies on routes 36, 96 and 179 to Radstock and reduction of the 17 service from Kingswood to Southmead to hourly (Monday - Saturday evenings) and cut on the later Sunday evenings.

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 alone is worth £1.3 billion and we do not want any reputational damage to Bristol with these closures so these facilities including community toilets and private sector transfers must work. Also, visitors to Weston-Super-Mare arriving by coach should not have to face an individual 20p charge to use the toilets on arrival after a long journey as many are in large family groups. Coach drivers should be able to issue free tokens to coach users to help visitors who are after all contributing a great deal to the North Somerset/Weston-Super-Mare tourism economy. BANES toilets should also be free at the P & R sites if possible.

It is very important that the new Weston-Super-Mare bus station is built to be fully accessible to allow enough bus interchange capacity for routes around the town.

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 within 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.

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