

Ref: JD/amm

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Mr C. Knight  
head of Traffic & Transport  
Bristol City Council  
Wilder House  
Wilder Street  
Bristol, BS2 8PH

Enterprise House  
Easton Road  
Bristol BS5 0DZ  
Tel: 0117 955 8211  
Fax: 0117 955 1248

Dear Colin,

## **Rapid Transit – Ashton Vale to Temple Meads**

First is pleased to offer its support to Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils in their submission of the Major Scheme Business Case for the Rapid Transit route from Ashton Vale to Temple Meads.

First continues to work closely with the four councils in delivering improvements in the quality and reliability of public transport travel in the West of England sub-region, is represented on the Project Team for the Rapid Transit scheme and has actively supported the development of the Programme Entry submission.

The rapid transit proposal will be of great benefit to the traveling public in Bristol and North Somerset. It will offer a high quality, fast and reliable alternative to private car use, tackling congestion and reducing car dependency. In particular, together with the Bath Transportation Package, the route also forms the vital first stage in a wider network to achieve a significant shift in travel behaviour back onto public transport, and the ability for services from further afield to use the segregated route will spread these benefits over a significantly wider area.

First sees the West of England Rapid Transit concept as combining the best features of other bus-based rapid transit routes in the UK, including a route segregated from general traffic, high specification stops and interchanges, comprehensive marketing and publicity, and new, state of the art vehicles.

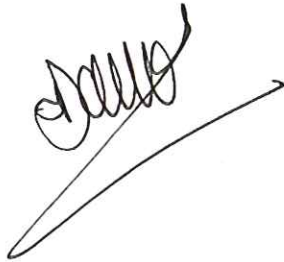
First confirms its commitment, subject to approval of the business case and its own verification of patronage and running costs, together with the implementation of an appropriate operating agreement for the rapid transit corridor, to invest in most appropriate vehicles to operate the core rapid transit service. These vehicles would complement the investment in route

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Oldmixon Crescent, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 9AY

infrastructure, being of a very high specification, building on that demonstrated by vehicles already in operations in Leeds, York and shortly in Swansea. First would also ensure that its existing services from further afield intended to utilize the new rapid transit infrastructure will meet an appropriate quality vehicle specification.

We look forward to the future delivery of the major scheme framework including the Bath Transportation Package, Weston Package and Rapid Transit routes, and are keen to build on and enhance our existing partnership arrangements with the four councils to help deliver better transport across the West of England sub-region.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Davies', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Justin Davies  
Managing Director  
First Bristol / Somerset & Avon Ltd.