

West of England Partnership: Rail Meeting

Held on 24 April 2009 at GOSW's offices, Temple Quay, Bristol

Present:

Speakers

Brian Welch	Department for Transport
Claire Burch	Network Rail
Malcolm Drury	First Great Western
Phil Dominey	South West Trains

Local authorities

Cllr Charles Gerrish	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Jon Rogers	Bristol City Council
Cllr Brian Allison	South Gloucestershire Council
Peter Dawson	Bath & North East Somerset Council
David Bishop	Bristol City Council
Karuna Tharmananthar	North Somerset Council
Peter Jackson	South Gloucestershire Council
Chris Sane	South Gloucestershire Council

West of England Partnership

Terry Wagstaff	Chief Executive
Barbara Davies	Head of Joint Transport Team
Pete Davis	Major Schemes Co-ordinator
Bill Davies	Transport Policy Group Leader
Sally Gregory	Policy Officer

Plus 11 members of the public

Brian Welch, Department for Transport (DfT)

Brian said that in the last 12 months the DfT had been:

- Developing their Sustainable Transport System, a cross-modal view of transport, and finished the first stage;
- Progressing MAAs by identifying priorities and key transport objectives;
- Working on RFA2 proposals for rail work with colleagues in the regions, with synergy apparent between RFA2 and MAAs;
- Revising their policy for funding local and regional enhanced rail services, which was issued after Xmas and made clear that there was no DfT budget for enhanced services before 2014, leaving the onus on the promoter (ie a local authority or PTE) to identify the need and to take responsibility for the funding for the next 3 years.

His role was to guide local authorities or PTEs through the process for funding new or enhanced services. He also welcomed the further engagement on RFA/MAA schemes.

Claire Burch, Network Rail

Claire gave a presentation on the Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) (attached) and then addressed questions. She said that James White represented the West of England Partnership on the wider stakeholder group for the RUS. Network Rail was looking at options around Bristol and working with James on the Bristol Metro.

Claire gave Cllr Jon Rogers reassurance that all the issues would be captured, but noted the need for them to work with other modes and that the RUS was a high level, long term strategy. Claire said that they had worked with North Somerset Council on the Portishead line and now needed to get to the next level of detail.

Jenny Raggart of the Campaign for Better Transport asked what constituted the positive aspects of the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR). Claire said that the main side was costs and it depended on the scheme. If a scheme included infrastructure, there would be a bigger impact. In relation to changes to timetables, all resources had to be taken into account and benefits would be considered across the board. The performance base used delay in minutes.

Claire confirmed that when considering growth in this area, Wilts and Mendip were being considered as well as the West of England area itself. They were considering taking the Metro further out.

Malcolm Drury, First Great Western

Malcolm spoke to his presentation (attached).

He said that every route into Bristol Temple Meads showed growth and there had been 40% journey growth in the Bristol Travel to Work Area. Resource heavy rolling stock was a consideration. They were working hard with Network Rail and were encouraged by the progress so far on the RUS.

Phil Dominey, South West Trains

Phil also gave a presentation (attached).

Cllr Brian Allinson asked when people were likely to see improved rolling stock in this area. Malcolm thought that next year there was likely to be improved leased rolling stock, with new rolling stock from 2011/12. There were limited resources available, but reliability had been improved.

Cllr Jon Rogers said that people were sharing an excitement about the future and this was apparent in rail staff, who were committed to the rail industry. He hoped they could bring the same enthusiasm to bus colleagues. He noted improved reliability on the Severn Beach line but was concerned that 30 – 40% of passengers were travelling free. Phil said that there were more revenue resources for the Severn Beach line and they would be addressing these revenue capture issues.

Cllr Charles Gerrish raised the great frustration felt about the signalling work required in Bristol and stressed the need to bring it forward as soon as possible. The planned growth would increase the demand for further stations to be reopened. It was important that public transport was available from the initial occupation of new developments, otherwise people got into other habits, such as driving to work.

Cllr Brian Allinson said that the Yate turnback was vital in relation to development in the Yate area and Claire Burch confirmed that it was included in the Bristol Metro. Bristol resignalling had been put back to CP5 (2014 – 19). Some of it would be carried out earlier, as part of other work. Bristol to Bath was in CP4 and electrification was seen as a priority. One of the reasons for delay was changes in technology; for example, the

European Rail Traffic Management System involved technology in the trains, rather than on the track. There were a number of initiatives which needed to be brought together. Cllr Charles Gerrish expressed frustration because there was already a need for the signalling work.

All parties agreed with the need to maintain a consistent dialogue and the usefulness of representatives from all of the organisations attending together.

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