



West of England Partnership

Bath & North East Somerset Council

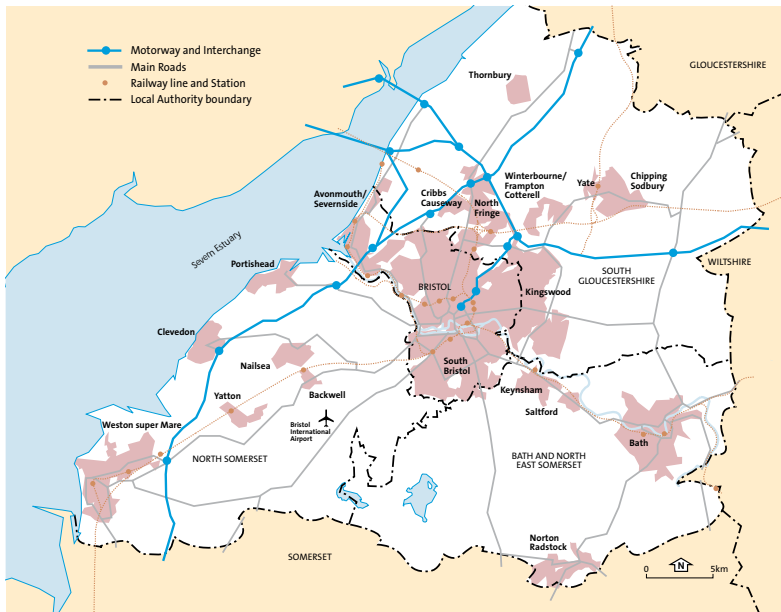


Transport News

Welcome to the fourth edition of West of England Transport News.

In this issue we have updates on our programme of major schemes and our review of progress on the Joint Local Transport Plan. We also outline work on other Partnership transport activities and look ahead to the next Joint Local Transport Plan and the new opportunities opening up with the 2008 Local Transport Act.

A special feature in this issue is the Travel + newsletter packed with updates on how the Greater Bristol Bus Network scheme is getting along.



May 2009

Features

- ❖ **Travel + Newsletter:** forging ahead with the Greater Bristol Bus Network. special feature
- ❖ **JLTP Progress Review:** We published our 'mid-term' report on the JLTP at the end of 2008. The Government Office said 'you have made considerable progress in the first two years'
- ❖ **Congestion Delivery Plan:** The West of England has been allocated over £1/2 million from the national Urban Congestion Performance Fund
- ❖ **Major Transport Schemes:** Funding bids have been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit and Weston Package major schemes
- ❖ **Local Transport Act 2008:** New bus powers are now open to local authorities; we have been looking at these and other aspects of the Act
- ❖ **Updating the JLTP:** Looking ahead to the new JLTP. Draft guidance has been published by the DfT
- ❖ **Sub-Regional Governance:** The new Joint Transport Executive Committee has been set up, a further step to more strategic decision making for the West of England
- ❖ **Cycling City:** Progress is being made on this major DfT-backed cycling project
- ❖ **Rail:** Schemes completed to improve access to stations; regional backing for Greater Bristol Metro and Portishead branch
- ❖ **Road Safety:** The West of England Road Safety Partnership welcomes the decrease in road casualties in 2008
- ❖ **Maintaining the highway:** Government award of over £1/2 million for the West of England over the next two years to work on our Joint Transport Asset Management Plan

Review of JLTP Progress

In the last edition we had a special feature about our Joint Local Transport Plan Progress Review. This looks at our achievements in implementing the plan in the first 2 years of the 5-year plan period but also focuses on present and future challenges.

This is what the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) had to say:



Overall progress *“we consider that your LTP2 strategies are being delivered and that you have made considerable progress in the first two years of LTP2 both in delivery and keeping the majority of your targets on track”*

Targets *“18 of the indicators are reported as being ‘on track’ which shows a considerable progress over the first two years of JLTP”*

“particularly pleased to see the continued increase in cycling - a trend generally not found elsewhere in the South West”

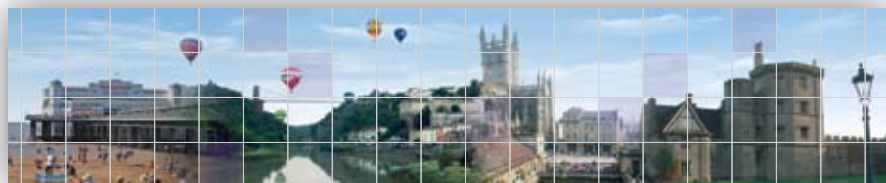
“... ‘the school run’ is a major cause of congestion, at least in the am peak, so it is gratifying to see that you have already met your 2010 target”

Transport priorities *“We are pleased to see that, as a Partnership, you have made considerable progress in your area in relation to three of the four “shared priorities for transport”, namely Delivering Accessibility, Tackling Congestion and the Network Management Duty and Road Safety. You are to be congratulated on these improvements, which will help to enhance the lives of residents of the four unitary authorities covered by the West of England Partnership”*

“Your work on improving accessibility to healthcare and employment is highly commendable”

“... the relationship between traffic and air quality is very complex and requires a considerable effort in terms of data collection and modelling to provide rigorous results. That, coupled with the pressures on growth in the urban core areas, is a considerable challenge and you are not alone in finding the targets set difficult to achieve”

Link to GOSW letter: www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/ltp2/southwest/



Congestion Delivery Plan

We reported in the last edition on the reward funding received from the DfT for our Congestion Delivery Plan. A further £536,879 has recently been allocated to us to make further progress in 2009/10 on schemes to improve traffic flow and promote alternatives to the car. This additional funding will be targeted at a range of measures including increasing capacity at junction hotspots to help ease congestion on busy corridors.

Updating the JLTP

The current JLTP has less than two years to run and so we are turning our minds to the next plan. Draft guidance has been published by the DfT and more policy advice is set out in their ‘Delivering a Sustainable Transport System’ (DaSTS).

For the new, updated JLTP we will need to have a strategy looking ahead 10 or perhaps 20 years with a shorter term implementation programme. We are encouraged to “take a fresh look” at policies and implementation proposals and be innovative with our consultations. The updated JLTP should ensure value for money, affordability and deliverability and be based on realistic estimates of likely funding. The shared priorities of the current JLTP will be replaced with five key goals and a range of ‘challenges’:

- ❖ Climate change
- ❖ Support for economic growth
- ❖ Equality of opportunity
- ❖ Better safety and health
- ❖ Quality of life

Look out later in the year for more news on the new JLTP and how to get involved.



Major Transport Schemes

The South West Region has given its backing for major transport scheme investment of over £600 million in the West of England. Our schemes appear in the Region's 'South West Regional Funding Advice 2009-2019' (RFA) submitted to the Government in February. If the Government agrees to the RFA priorities it will pave the way for 11 West of England schemes (see list below), although each will require the submission and approval of a detailed business case to reassure the Government that they provide value for money.

	RFA Investment £ million		
	Next 10 years	Post 2019	TOTAL
Greater Bristol Bus Network	42.34		42.34
Bath Transportation Package	48.65		48.65
Rapid Transit Ashton Vale to Temple Meads & Bristol City Centre	43.17		43.17
Weston Package	19.32		19.32
North Fringe to Hengrove Package	168.08		168.08
Portishead Rail Corridor	25.26		25.26
South Bristol Link Phases 1 & 2	47.27		47.27
Greater Bristol Metro Rail Project	12.50	4.84	17.34
M5 Junction 21 Bypass	40.00	11.04	51.04
Callington Road Link/ Bath Rd Improvements	5.00	64.60	69.60
Rapid Transit Emerson's Green - Temple Meads	3.00	70.98	73.98
West of England Total	454.59	151.46	606.05

We are pressing ahead creating the Greater Bristol Bus Network (see Travel+ newsletter for detailed update). Planning applications have been submitted for parts of the Bath Transportation Package and the outcome is awaited.

Funding bids have now been submitted to the DfT for Rapid Transit Ashton Vale to Temple Meads & Bristol City Centre and the Weston Package, and we look forward to these two schemes achieving early 'programme entry' status. Consultation on options for the South Bristol Link ended on the 31st March and we are now carefully considering all the responses.

With our other 6 major schemes we are continuing with all the technical work needed to prepare and submit detailed funding bids.



Local Transport Act

The Local Transport Act came into effect in November 2008 and provides new powers to improve bus services. It strengthens 'Voluntary Partnership Agreements', the kind we now have with bus operators in the West of England. It will also be easier to introduce statutory 'Quality Partnership Schemes' and move towards 'Quality Contract Schemes' (similar to franchising a network of services).

The new Act also sets the framework for reviewing and updating our JLTP. It also offers the opportunity to set up new 'Integrated Transport Authorities' with wide responsibility for local transport policies, plans and services, and powers to act for the 'economic, social and environmental well being of their area'.



Sub-Regional Governance

The 2008 Local Transport Act allows local authorities to carry out a review of existing decision-making and delivery arrangements, possibly taking at least two years, and come forward with alternatives. One option would be an Integrated Transport Authority but there are others.

The West of England's Joint Transport Executive Committee met for first time in April this year. The Committee is a really important step for the four Councils working closely together on a transport agenda. The Committee will meet at regular intervals to progress our major transport schemes and consider closer working on other transport issues. Meetings will be held in public and the Committee will welcome representations from stakeholders and members of the public.

For further details visit: westofengland.org/meetings/joint-transport-committee

Rail

The South West Region has given its support to two major rail schemes in the West of England: the 'Greater Bristol Metro' and the re-opening of the rail line to Portishead. Both are included in the list of priorities in the Regional Funding Advice submitted to Government.

The Metro would bring more frequent services, new rolling stock and infrastructure, including improved facilities at Weston-super-Mare and Yate for local trains. Network Rail are carrying out a new study, funded by North Somerset Council, into the technical aspects of re-opening the Portishead line.

Working with our partners we have made good progress with enhancing stations on the Severn Beach Line, financed through the DfT 'Access for All' Fund. This includes refurbished shelters, new lighting, cycle parking and passenger information. As reported in the last edition the frequency of Severn Beach line services has been enhanced with the help of funding from Bristol City Council. Early indications are that daily patronage on this route has gone up by 22% since 2006.



Cycling City

'Cycling City' is a £22.8m scheme aimed at doubling the number of cycling journeys in Greater Bristol by 2011. A 'Delivery Strategy' has been drawn up targeted not only at existing cyclists but getting new people to cycle. With our partners we plan a mix of new and better infrastructure, publicity and events, training and a package of 'smarter choices' such as working with employers and personalised travel planning.

Road Safety

The latest statistics on road traffic casualties show a general downward trend in 2008. This news was welcomed at the March 2009 meeting of the West of England Road Safety Partnership. However the Partnership recognised that continuing efforts are needed, especially to reduce the numbers of motorcyclists and cyclists involved in collisions. Another target group is young drivers in deprived areas and the Government has awarded Bristol City Council up to £49,000 of Road Safety Partnership Grant to work with the University of West of England on 'social marketing'. This will look at ways and means of making these drivers more safety conscious.

Maintenance

Highway authorities are being encouraged to prepare 'transport asset management plans' aimed at looking after a very valuable resource - our highways. This covers not only carriageways but also footways, bridges, signs, bollards, fences and a whole host of other transport 'assets'.

The four West of England highway authorities have prepared a Joint Transport Asset Management Plan setting out how investment in maintaining our highway infrastructure will be directed at achieving best value for money. This is a 'living' document that will be updated as more information becomes available. Handling information on the condition of the area's infrastructure is a major challenge and we have been awarded £534,500 by the DfT to help us with this task over the next two years.

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England
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North Somerset Council

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South Gloucestershire Council

www.southglos.gov.uk

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