

**A summary of the statement to West of England Partnership, November 12th 2009  
- Robert Dixon, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways**

**1) Network Rail use out-dated passenger figures from 2007**, which exclude the 40% increase in passenger numbers on the Severn Beach line and high growth elsewhere. It means that their estimates for 2019 are inaccurate.

We ask that you challenge Network Rail's use of outdated statistics in the strongest terms. They must be asked to use up-to-date and good quality data that reflects current demand.

**2) The quadrupling of the line from Bristol Temple Meads to Bristol Parkway - "Filton Bank" is vital for the region and a top priority.** Network Rail acknowledge it is a 'key requirement' for the railway which would impact nationally, and is needed to provide sufficient capacity for services planned after electrification. Without it there can be no increase in the number of services and no improvements in local, regional and intercity services.

We hope to see a cross-party and cross-authority consensus of support for this proposal. We urge the Partnership to press for quadrupling of Filton Bank as an urgent priority.

**3) Network Rail propose only an hourly minimum service specification for the Severn Beach line - less than the current service** (every 40 minutes).

The current service supported by Bristol City Council would not be compatible with Network Rail's proposed clockface services. Network Rail fail to mention the current service, the council's support for it, or the inclusion of a half-hourly service to Avonmouth in the Joint Local Transport Plan.

Please request that Network Rail acknowledge these issues and make a half-hourly service the minimum required. We would also like you to support a study into the double-tracking of the line between Montpellier and Clifton Down to ensure that a half hourly service can be maintained.

**4) Network Rail does not support and would not deliver the Partnership's Greater Bristol Metro.** A cross-city service would not be provided; services to Bristol Parkway would not be extended to Yate; the infrastructure works required to enable an half hourly service to Weston are not considered to be cost effective.

Network Rail imply that the scheme as a whole cannot be publicly funded. A withdrawal of funding and the subsequent failure of the whole scheme seems likely. This also applies to the Portishead line which is not supported by Network Rail either.

**Network Rail's strategy is weak since**

- it fails to account for recent growth
- it fails to examine the needs of the West of England sub-region.
- it examines the component parts of schemes rather than considering them as a whole. The Severn Beach line has shown that improvements result in benefits to the whole network.

**We would like the partnership to**

- restate their support for the aspirations within the Joint Local Transport Plan
- put pressure on Network Rail to incorporate the quadrupling of Filton Bank, the Greater Bristol Metro, Portishead and the redoubling of Clifton Down to Montpellier within the strategy
- ask Network Rail to re-evaluate the needs of the West of England area, using up-to-date passenger figures, and examining the benefits of a package of measures rather than the component parts of schemes.
- Make Network Rail aware of the importance of half-hourly and cross-city services
- lobby the Department for Transport to overcome Network Rail's antipathy and to promote our region's aspirations for rail services.
- Move towards an Integrated Transport Authority - only this will ensure the sub-region's voice is heard in the decision-making process and transport is prioritised and properly coordinated.