

Statement to Joint Transport Executive Committee

West Of England Partnership, November 12th 2009

South Bristol Link

At Item 9 of this meeting, you will be asked to note (and, by definition, approve) the steps being taken by officers to consult the public over the next stage of the South Bristol Link proposal. Once that consultation is out of the way, as the officer's report tells you, you will "receive a further report seeking approval to submit a bid to DfT in March 2010".

Before that happens, I hope you will, even at this late stage, require

An analysis of the impacts of this one remaining option - set against a similar analysis of a 'do minimum' scenario i.e. how things might be if the Link is not progressed, but other current schemes like the Hengrove to North Fringe BRT continue.

I ask, because neither the public nor yourselves have ever been asked an opinion on a 'do minimum' option, and yet I'm assured that it is, and remains, an option. In fact 'do minimum' did figure in parts of the Options Appraisal that you commissioned from Mott MacDonald, and it performed quite well against all five of the options that were then on the table.

All that's on the table now is one single hybrid road/rapid transit option, which was not part of the Mott MacDonald study - so in spite of all the investment and time, there's still no clear answer to the most fundamental question:

What do we get from this scheme that we wouldn't get anyway?

I suggest that among the answers would be:

- New traffic patterns that offer relief in some places, but intolerable increases in others - among them, King George's Road and Callington Road/Bath Road
- A substantial net rise in road traffic, emissions, pollution
- Longer peak hour journey times into Bristol
- Significantly more congestion in the Cumberland Basin road network; and at the A4 and A37 junctions
- A very expensive and little used subsidised BRT route between Hengrove and Ashton Gate.

These predictions are drawn from your own consultants' reports on broadly similar proposals for the South Bristol Link, in particular the Options Appraisal report.

If DfT officials ask that same fundamental question when they consider the bid, they won't see an answer; they won't see evidence of consultation, they won't see evidence of the councils making an informed evidence-based judgement.

Therefore, I do suggest that you add to your recommendation for Item 9, something along these lines:

Members were concerned that under the current 'South Bristol Link' proposal:

- *Neither the 'northern' option nor the 'do minimum' scenario had been fully appraised, and*
- *That the 'do minimum' option had not been offered in this or any previous public consultation*

and asked officers to extend the current consultation so that more data (just as provided for the previous 'Options Appraisal') could be furnished to enable a fair comparison of these options.

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