

**West of England Partnership
Joint Scrutiny Committee
5 March 2010**

Rail Actions

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on actions being taken on various rail issues in the West of England.

Issues

Network Rail, First Great Western and Cross Country Memorandum of Understanding

2. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between the West of England Partnership, Network Rail, First Great Western and Cross Country. It intends to promote effective co-ordination and co-operation between the three organisations. It includes consultation on timetable changes, investment and planning decisions, input into the Joint Local Transport Plan and co-ordinating data collection. The MoU will be signed at the 18 March 2010 meeting of the Joint Transport Executive Committee.

Letter to Lord Adonis

3. The four Executive Members for Transport wrote to Lord Adonis, Secretary of State for Transport, on 29 January 2010 regarding rail issues in the West of England. To date no formal reply has been received. Chris Mole, Under Secretary of State for Transport is now expected to provide a response.

Route Utilisation Strategy

4. The final version of the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) will be published on 1 March 2010. It will set out proposals for improving rail services and infrastructure over the period to 2019. It should be noted that inclusion in the RUS is not a guarantee that a scheme will be funded and implemented. Likewise the absence of a scheme from the RUS does not mean that the scheme, subject to funding, will not proceed.

High Speed Rail

5. The Government is expected to produce a White Paper response to High Speed Rail (HSR) proposals in March 2010. To push forward the case for High Speed Rail to the South West of England and South Wales a Great Western Partnership action group has been set up. The officers involved are from Bristol City Council, Cardiff County Council, Swindon Borough Council, South East Wales Economic Forum, South West Regional Development Agency, the West of England Partnership, South West Wales Economic Forum and South East Wales Transport Alliance.

Sevenside Community Partnership

6. The Sevenside Community Rail Partnership published its annual Progress Report in January 2010. During 2009 the Partnership won the Network Rail Community Engagement Award for the Sevenside Community Stations Programme and came second in the national Community Rail Awards for work with local schools at Weston Milton station.
7. Projects for 2010 include working with the Ministry of Defence on promoting train services for the 1,500 staff being relocated to Abbey Wood, leaflet promoting use of Parson street station, promotional literature for enhanced Summer Sunday Severn Beach service, simple ticket machines (based on car park machines) likely to be installed at Redland, Clifton Down and Montpelier and further landscaping work and improvements on going at Stapleton Road.

Severn Beach Line

8. Bristol City Council has started discussions with First Great Western over the agreement for a three trains every two hours service on the Severn Beach Line. The existing agreement ends in May 2011.

Rail Asset Register

9. The Rail Asset Register was reported to the 13 March 2009 meeting of this Committee and subsequently sent to the four councils for their information and use. Updates are to be provided on a six monthly basis as required. There are no updates to report.

Recommendation

10. That members note the report and give their views.

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