



BRISTOL RAIL BRANCH

Secretary: Ms G Burrows, 1 Blake Place, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 5AU, Tel. 07902 027 378

STATEMENT TO WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER: ITEM 3

The ongoing inadequacies in provision of rail services in the Bristol area illustrate how the travelling public and our environment are at the mercy of decisions made on the basis of profitability, rather than need or sustainability. The Bristol Rail Branch of the Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers' Union represents 1200 rail workers and their families in the region, and we therefore hold a major stake in the development and future of our regional public transport system.

Bristol and the South-West urgently need a system for developing public transport networks in the region, funded by government, local authorities and the privatised rail and bus companies, and giving passenger groups and local organisations a say in the planning and co-ordination of public transport services.

To this end, we urge the four local authorities in the West of England Partnership to use the opportunity offered by the Local Transport Act to establish an Independent Transport Authority. The role of this body would be to encourage the maximum use of public transport throughout the region, and to promote growth of a sustainable public transport network, rather than the current piecemeal and erratic approach. Representation on this body should be offered to the South-West TUC, transport unions, passenger groups, local authorities and transport operating companies, to ensure maximum participation of all parties with a stake in public transport in the area.

The work of the ITA would include:

- Monitoring performance and regulation of transport operating companies with respect to fares, timetables and service
- providing investment to improve all aspects of the local transport system such as bus and rail stations, bus stops and cycle paths
- offering assistance to passenger groups and other interested parties on the best way to provide, plan and pay for local public transport services
- subsidising bus, rail and community transport initiatives
- ensuring that up-to-date information is available about local transport services
- providing assistance for people with disabilities through special-needs transport services.

Ms Glen Burrows, Secretary, RMT Bristol Rail

11th December 2008