

Media Release

25 July 2014

Success on the Severn Beach line

The Severn Beach line continues to be the region's rail success story. The recent full one day count of all passengers using the line, organised by the Sevenside Community Rail Partnership, showed that over 5,000 passengers a day are now using the service – up 16% in 12 months. The count also revealed that 75% of journeys are now wholly within the inner zone - between Temple Meads and Clifton Down and that half the passengers use the line for short local journeys, not to or from Temple Meads

Partnership Chairman Keith Walton put the growth down to a number of factors - “the trains operated by First Great Western are usually reliable and punctual, and information screens on platforms can immediately warn of any delays; Bristol City Council has provided monitored CCTV at the inner zone stations; and the Partnership has worked with local communities and schools to brighten up the stations with artwork and gardens, so the stations now provide a safer and welcoming environment. Fares are also affordable.”

The increase in passengers means trains are now busy throughout the day. The main two morning commuter trains from Severn Beach now each carry around 300 passengers, while the 8.03 service from Temple Meads to Avonmouth also carries 300, with over 100 getting on at Stapleton Road; a large number of whom are school children. To cater for the growth in passengers, First Great Western has had to put larger capacity trains on the most popular services. Dan Okey, First Great Western Regional Development Manager commented “the Severn Beach line is one of the fastest growing branchlines on our network, but it hasn't happened by accident. This is a superb example of how, by working together, local authorities, rail partnerships and train operators can improve services and make public transport a more convenient and attractive option for customers. We appreciate the continued efforts of the Sevenside Partnership and Bristol Council to constructively work with us to deliver real improvement.”

Cllr Mark Bradshaw, Bristol's Assistant Mayor for Place commented “this impressive growth in passengers shows how valued the Severn Beach Line is to a growing number of daily passengers. The original decision to invest, and subsequent improvements, have been strongly justified by the continued popularity of the services. We are

ambitious for MetroWest Rail with half hourly services, CCTV in all the stations and the prospect of smart-ticketing to make local rail even more convenient and attractive. Severnside Community Rail Partnership is a valued advocate for local rail. We will continue to work with First Great Western, Network Rail and government to secure these improvements."

The annual summer count is carried out largely using volunteers drawn from the local community. Keith added that "this year 45 helpers were needed on the count day to ensure an accurate and reliable picture of passengers using the line. We are very grateful for all their help, without which the count would not happen"

Notes for Editors

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership is a Community Interest Company. It works with local communities and partners to deliver quick wins and small scale initiatives that make local rail services more attractive and bring passenger benefits The Partnership covers the network of local rail routes radiating from Bristol.

For more information on the Severn Beach line passenger counts and on the work of the Partnership contact the Chairman Keith Walton – keith.severnside@btconnect.com
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