

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR)

Suggestions for MetroWest Phase 3



To serve as a detailed proposal for the Enhanced MetroWest option from West of England (WEP) Joint Transport Study, and the Rail component of the West of England Devolution Deal March 2016; informed by FOSBR Jan 2016 Rail Map survey (800 respondents).

MetroWest Phase 3 Executive summary:

- **Reopen stations at Ashton Gate, Charfield, Coalpit Heath, St Anne's, Chittening, Salford, Corsham and Uphill, plus Park and Ride stations at Portway and Portbury.**
- **Extend local services to serve these new stations: Henbury Loop plus Clifton Down return; Weston super Mare to Chippenham via Corsham; Portishead to Cheltenham.**
- **Promotion of rail-bus interchange so that there is complete coverage of the West of England area for commuters wishing to travel to work by public transport.**
- **Station upgrades to include better waiting facilities, disabled access and CCTV.**

Introduction: MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 are together an exciting £100m local rail package, already funded under the City Deal and proceeding through GRIP stage 3. Phase 1 consists of reopening the Portishead Line (and reopening stations at Portishead and Pill) and hiring 6-7 extra trainsets to provide a half-hour clockface service from Bristol Temple Meads to Portishead, Avonmouth and Bath, with two of these being through trains. MetroWest Phase 2 consists of reopening Ashley Hill, North Filton and Henbury and hiring 2-3 trainsets to provide an hourly service to Henbury and an extra return service from Temple Meads to Yate or Gloucester.

This proposal also draws on the principles of the **Good Transport Plan for Bristol** by linking this rail backbone to other forms of sustainable transport, and suggests that this would give the commuters of the travel-to-work area a viable alternative to the private car and therefore deliver a permanent and significant reduction of the current critical-path road congestion.

Notes:

1. **Governance:** For this comprehensive MetroWest to be effectively delivered, the Combined Authority arrangements should have a transparent and publicly accountable governance, with a team of transport planners to consult the public and stakeholders on developing a region-wide and ambitious sustainable transport strategy and to develop links with employers and schools to improve Bristol's transport options and reduce air pollution. Develop funding streams such as a workplace parking levy on car commuting.

2. **Rail-Bus interchange:** As rail cannot reach every community, make sure bus services call at local train stations, and provide signage to help passengers plan an integrated journey.

3. Suggested new train services for Phase 3:

Henbury Loop linking to a Clifton Down return journey (using Clifton Down turnback) – this solves the time wastage involved in the of the 63 minute Henbury Loop trip and gives a more frequent service to Clifton Down;

Weston super Mare to Chippenham – to serve St Anne's Park, Salford and Corsham. This would avoid the need for a Bathampton turnback;

Portishead to Cheltenham via Yate and Gloucester (extension of the proposed Phase 2 service) – serving Coalpit Heath and Charfield - this uses the Filton Bank to allow fast trains to pass slow trains so no need for a loop at Coalpit Heath;

Commuter trains (initially peak-only and/or request) to serve Pilning, which would also provide a better service to and beyond Severn Tunnel Junction, using the passing loop at Pilning if necessary.

Uphill station could be served by Cross-Country trains and/or a local service round the Weston Loop. The service would depend on the location – whether Uphill itself, Uphill Junction or Locking.

B Specific schemes:

1. Completion of Henbury Loop

Network Rail are making this line suitable for passenger train diversions (“passengerisation”), which means there is no reason why a Loop service cannot be instigated during rail Control Period 6 (2019-2024). The infrastructure that would be needed to include Bristol Parkway should be investigated. The growing need for Severnside employee commuting should also be addressed by considering service enhancements to both Severn Beach and Pilning, as Pilning would have no implications for Port access.

2. Service and station upgrades:

- Interchange hubs (including Park and Ride) connecting rail, bus, taxi, cycling and ferry routes;
- Rail and bus timetables to fit with each other and with working shift patterns;
- Extra rail services to Severn Beach Station at shift change times, in addition to the hourly service proposed by MetroWest Phase 1;
- Pilning station must not be closed: Services should be restored as a trial request stop for workers in Severnside, and to enable commuting from the Thornbury area;
- More rail-bus connections to serve Bristol Airport from stations such as Nailsea and Backwell;
- Filton Abbey Wood as rail-bus interchange for Southmead Hospital and Horfield;
- Temple Meads spatial development including rail-bus interchange on the Friary, taxi access, and access for bus services to and from South Bristol at the rear;
- Other rail-bus interchanges: Avonmouth, Pilning and Severn Beach for Severnside; Henbury for Cribbs Causeway; Bristol Parkway, Park and Ride at Portbury and Portway, and a Park and Ride at Pilning to serve both east and west-bound commuters should an M49 junction be completed;
- Full disabled access to all stations, including CCTV and waiting shelter facilities;
- Freight: realistic assessment of necessary train path frequencies so as not to inhibit planning for passenger routes that share freight lines (such as Portishead and the Henbury Loop). Reopen discussions with Port of Bristol on provision of 24-hour road freight access (eg bridge) to Port.

3. Station reopenings (in alphabetical order):

Ashton Gate on the Portishead line, to serve the Stadium both for sports events and the proposed weekday conferences, Ashton Court events, the Winterstoke shopping outlets and car workshops, Spike Island and Hotwells residents; to connect to a MetroBus stop.

Charfield, which is favoured by S Glos to serve towns such as Wootton-Under-Edge and Thornbury;

Chittening: the previous site is on a National Cycle Network stub and is accessible to industrial estates both to the north (by public right of way) and south (via the cycle underbridge) of the station site. Station stopping patterns and connecting shuttle bus to be timed for workers' shift patterns;

Coalpit Heath (to serve Winterbourne and Emerson's Green);

Corsham, a long-term aspiraton of Wiltshire County Council;

Saltford, as promoted by the current station reopening campaign;

St Anne's, a more recent campaign to serve this urban area on the badly congested A4.

Uphill, to serve Weston General Hospital and Weston College; optimum location to be determined.

4. Further phases: Rebuilding lines to Thornbury and/or Clevedon; light rail for selected new routes; electrification of the MetroWest network, subject to technological advances such as battery trains.