

Response to the West of England Transport Study on behalf of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR)



Ambition:

We welcome the ambitious nature of the draft study and its inclusion of a considerable number of schemes that we have previously promoted. We largely support and welcome the public transport schemes overall with some caveats and concerns. However there is not a sufficient emphasis on public transport, walking and cycling, and the modal shift from the private car is predicted to be minimal.

The study proposes road schemes of £2.8 billion - this is a third of the proposals' total cost. It includes various schemes that have previously been rejected, such as Salford bypass and the South Bristol Ring Road. We do not believe anything has changed to make them acceptable now.

We would urge that the major road schemes be removed from the plans and replaced with additional public transport measures. Road junction and other improvements should only occur to ease congestion at pinch points and to provide bus lanes or other public or sustainable transport. Where new roads are constructed, such as in the city fringes, a commensurate capacity should be transferred elsewhere to more sustainable modes to prevent an increase in overall capacity. A step change in local transport and a multi-modal solution is required, to provide infrastructure that enables a major shift away from the private car, not new roads.

The focus in the *Emerging Transport Vision* is on road schemes to increase capacity, reduce congestion and enable public transport. Rather than making travel by public transport more convenient and car travel less so, these proposals will simply make car and other journeys easier than at present. The underlying philosophy and emphasis on road building is wrong.

The road schemes are seen as required to enable public transport, suggesting that if they do not go ahead there is a risk that the public transport schemes would also fail to happen. We do not believe that public transport schemes need to or should be dependent on road schemes. New public transport options should be provided without increasing road capacity. For example orbital bus routes could be constructed without a road to provide an alternative that was more convenient than car use.

While the proposed new roads would reduce some journey lengths (avoiding some journeys into Bristol and then out), they will simply move vehicles and journeys from the urban area to the fringe and would not reduce the number of journeys or the attractiveness of car travel or make public transport any more attractive in comparison. On the contrary, extra capacity will enable easier and more numerous journeys. Instead of building new roads traffic should be reduced through measures such as instituting one-way traffic on parallel routes, congestion charging and/or low emissions zone.

Limited modal shift would result from the proposals, with a significant increase in journeys due to the proposed extra road capacity. An increase from 529,000 to 673,000 journeys is predicted, and while the percentage of car journeys falls from 65% to 51% the numbers are predicted to be static (343,850 to 343,230).

Mix:

We largely agree with the mix of public transport but with some caveats and changes in emphasis.

While supporting the concept of rapid transit, we are concerned about aspects of MetroBus; we believe that LRT to Bristol airport would be too expensive and would prefer a rapid, limited stop bus. We recognise that bus will be the core of public transport for most journeys. There are four additional new rail stations that we would urge the councils to support and build. We largely support the light rail proposals but have questions and concerns about this. We are concerned that the road schemes have been previously developed for past funding bids so can be easily resurrected and prioritised before public transport schemes, placing the latter at risk if costs increase.

Marketing and education:

We believe this is important and simple things, including signage and advertising can encourage behaviour change.

Area packages of improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and buses:

We would like to see such improvements. These should include the use of shared space, focus on making the environment a pleasant one as well as safe, and to facilitate access to bus stops and rail stations. Improvements for cyclists and pedestrians tend to have very positive benefit-cost ratios.

Strategic cycle routes:

We would support these and would want them to facilitate access to bus stops and rail stations as well as linking to key destinations. Like improvements for pedestrians they tend to have very positive benefit-cost ratios.

Park and Ride:

We wholeheartedly welcome these. We are particularly pleased to see a proposed "necklace" of Park and Ride schemes at strategic locations around Bristol's urban area, including at Yate, on the A38 to the north and south, A37, M5, M32, and A4 at Hick's Gate. However we do not support the new roads associated with them, only the creation of public transport corridors.

We welcome the indication that Hick's Gate could be served by light rail but would oppose a heavy rail station here or elsewhere if this would involve replacing Keynsham station and the proposed Saltford station.

To the list of Park and Ride sites we would recommend the addition of a Park and Ride at Pilning station. This would be adjacent to the new M49 junction and Severnside industrial parks. It would serve Cribbs Causeway, Thornbury and Severnside via orbital buses, and provide a 21 minute journey to Bristol Temple Meads.

MetroBus:

- Support for proposed routes but reservations about the expensive and unnecessary infrastructure previously associated with MetroBus:

We largely support these proposed routes, particularly the orbital ones, and support the concept of rapid transit. We are keen to see a mix of limited stop routes as well as regular services to create a network of orbital and limited stop bus routes that provide interchanges with rail and local buses.

We would welcome a network of enforced dedicated bus priority lanes, which could be used by taxi and emergency services to avoid delay for critical journeys.

However, we have been very concerned about and do not support further construction of excessive "over engineered" infrastructure that has occurred with the current MetroBus schemes. We note that the building of the interchange with the M32 at Stapleton was against the advice of UWE transport planners who suggested a cheaper and less environmentally damaging option. MetroBus must not be used as a way to build new highway capacity for cars. We believe that better use can be made of existing highways infrastructure and urge that this happen. We are not opposed in principle to MetroBus, but would want to see a more cost effective approach than seen in current schemes.

- LRT route to Bristol airport should be a limited stop bus route instead

We would ask that the proposed LRT route to Bristol airport be a limited stop bus route instead to reduce its high cost and the consequent impact on funding for other schemes.

- Integration with heavy rail and LRT:

It is vital that local and rapid or MetroBus routes are integrated with heavy rail and LRT through interchanges at or adjacent to existing and proposed rail stations.

Additional bus services and proposals we would like to see:

In addition to the proposals we note and would like to see the following:

- A gap in the proposed orbital bus route at Severnside should be filled

We would want to see an orbital bus route completed by linking Severnside with Cribbs Causeway and the North Fringe. Severnside is poorly served by public transport and this would continue otherwise.

- Limited stop bus to link Severnside to Thornbury and Yate

We want to see Severnside linked to Thornbury and Yate to enable access to the industrial development and to the rail network at Pilning and Severn Beach.

- An extensive network of bus lanes with restrictions on parking or car access as required
- A comprehensive review of the bus network is needed to produce a network of mixed rapid, limited stop services and local stopping services, that integrates with current and proposed rail and LRT stations.
- Integrated bus-rail ticketing to include bus and rail timetables and route maps.

New stations and Rail Improvements:

We wholeheartedly welcome the inclusion of proposed new stations and rail improvements and propose that five other new stations are required.

- New stations should also be built at:
 - Coalpit Heath (an area planned for development), which would also serve Emerson's Green. Four tracking on Filton Bank and passing loops at the station (as in the past) would reduce congestion around Westerleigh junction and enable slow trains to be overtaken by fast ones.
 - Chittening (on the Henbury Loop LRT/ heavy rail link) for the Severnside industrial area -

see below)

- near Long Ashton, as proposed by the developers, if "The Vale" development goes ahead
 - Uphill / Locking, Weston-Super-Mare: either at Uphill Junction or Locking housing estate.
 - Corsham (Wiltshire), to be developed jointly with Wiltshire, as this will have a direct mitigating impact on road traffic in to Bath.
- Pilning station:

We want to see the replacement of the bridge at Pilning station to enable its use for travel between the adjacent Severnside industrial estates and villages, and the North Fringe and South Wales. This should be made a Park and Ride, which would be adjacent to the new M49 junction, serving Cribbs Causeway, Thornbury and Severnside via orbital buses.

Up to 25,000 jobs are predicted for the area. The West of England authorities previously asked for an improved service to be included in the Great Western franchise.

Although Severn Beach Station is relatively near to Pilning, the service there is currently only two hourly and unreliable, with only an hourly service planned under MetroWest Phase 1, due to the dependence of the Port of Bristol on the level crossing at St Andrew's Gate. To provide a long-term solution for Severnside we urge that consideration be given to providing alternative road access to the Port at other locations such as St Andrew's Rd station.

- Rail services should be at least every 20 minutes; LRT should be considered to enable improvements if this does not negatively impact on service quality.

Rail Development Study:

We welcome moves by Bristol City council to conduct a long-term rail development study but would urge that this is done at regional level. The public should be asked which stations they support in their area and would like to see opened. That support should be added to further work to look at the viability of all stations. This should include a study of the potential for rail development, including potential demand, the wishes of the public and the impact on road congestion. Otherwise we foresee decisions being taken in favour of previous road schemes and about rail that cannot or will not be amended in the light of changing circumstances.

We advocate the West of England authorities having a unified team of rail development officers, working jointly with Network Rail to plan such future schemes.

Last year FOSBR carried out a survey of the public, which had 800 respondents. This has confirmed the support for stations proposed as part of the MetroWest project, notably Portishead. It has also uncovered a high demand for commuter travel in places to the north of Bristol, such as Thornbury, Charfield and Winterbourne. The public gave support to stations at Severn Beach, Pilning, Charfield and Winterbourne/Coalpit Heath. There is also significant support for Saltford, Ashton Gate, Long Ashton and St Annes.

Henbury Loop

We believe the opening of the Henbury Loop should be a priority, either as a heavy rail route or LRT. As well as improving transport around North West Bristol, it would allow the Portbury Park and Ride to be used by people travelling to and from the North Fringe. A station should be included at Chittinging to serve the Severnside industrial area. The possibility of remodeling the track layout of the Filton “diamond” should be explored to enable Bristol Parkway to be served by some services using the Henbury Loop.

Concerns about the potential location of Saltford and St Annes stations:

- We would object to Saltford and Keynesham stations being closed and replaced by a new station equi-distant between the two at Pixash Lane. This would only encourage car journeys to the station and be convenient for no one. We would expect Saltford station to be sited in the village in at or very close to its previous location. In order to show the feasibility of new stations, we would encourage Railsys modeling studies to investigate timetabling solutions from Temple Meads to Bath involving a train stopping at all new and old stations (say at xx:10) to be followed by a semi-fast service (at xx:20) rather than a non-stop service.
- We are open to alternative locations for St Annes but would not support its location at or near to Hicks Gate. We would expect the proposed Park & Ride here to be served by the proposed A4 LRT route (if opened) in addition to local bus and MetroBus. Connection with heavy rail should be available via an interchange with buses and LRT at Keynesham station.

Freight management:

We support the the development of freight consolidation centres but note the absence of any mention of rail freight. It is vital that the authorities consider access to rail at key industrial locations, such as Severnside, and as a minimum set aside and protect land for this purpose.

Access to the Port:

To enable a more regular passenger service to Severnside (including the Henbury Loop) we urge that consideration be given to providing alternative road access to the Port at other locations such as St Andrew’s Rd station. The local authorities should support government funding to improve access to the port, as has happened at Felixstowe and Southampton.

Light Rail:

We are aware that capacity constraints limit the potential for improvements in rail service intervals. We would therefore support the use of light rail on the Severn Beach line and Henbury Loop to overcome these capacity constraints through street running, but only if this leads to such improvements without any reduction in service quality. We recognise this is likely to be more affordable and achievable than the capacity infrastructure required for heavy rail improvements.

We greatly welcome the proposals for LRT with some caveats.

- LRT on the Severn Beach Line / Henbury Loop:

The map indicates a different route and fails to show the Severn Beach line. We want to be reassured that this does not indicate any deterioration in service or replacement by an alternative route. If converted to LRT we would want to see improved service frequencies on these lines.

- We do not support the development of an LRT route to Bristol Airport. We would support a rapid bus route instead, to reduce its high cost and the consequent impact on funding for other schemes.
- We welcome the proposals to develop LRT networks to serve North Bristol and the A4 corridor.
- We welcome the proposal to develop an LRT network to Emerson's Green, with the following caveats.
- It is vital to ensure that when developing any routes the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are carefully and sensitively considered and met, particularly in the case of LRT for East Bristol. We believe that it is possible to achieve this. Such a scheme would also require extensive consultation and a willingness to consider changes. Ultimately we believe that hard decisions need to be made.
- LRT or rail should be developed from Yate to Thornbury

We would urge that the authorities develop either rail or LRT between Thornbury and Yate, the two major population centres of South Gloucestershire, using some of the existing but redundant railway line to Tytherington quarry. In the meantime we would support an improved bus service to link the two towns to each other and Severnside.

Opposition to the proposals to build new roads, new motorway junctions and smart motorways

The list of proposals is extensive and expensive: the completion of the South Bristol link from Hicks Gate via Whitchurch to Hengrove; new motorway junction on the M4 & link to Yate & Emersons Green; Saltford bypass; improvements to the A38; Callington Road link from A4 to Wells Road; new M5 motorway junction and link to Nailsea; managed motorways, etc.

Some of these, such as the South Bristol link and Saltford bypass, have been proposed and repeatedly rejected in the past. We do not believe that the situation has changed and that they are any more acceptable now.

In view of the councils past work on these and the involvement of Highways England in developing this consultation these schemes are likely to be shovel ready and prioritised. We see this as inappropriate and would urge that public transport schemes are prioritised.

We would oppose these schemes as we believe they will simply stimulate car use. We would, however support the Callington Road link if this is used as a route for a rapid bus or light rail route. Road junction and other improvements should only occur to ease congestion at pinch points and to provide bus lanes or other public or sustainable transport.

We would like to see restrictions on road traffic:

- One-way traffic on parallel streets to enable LRT or bus improvements, e.g. Whitehall Road & Church Rd;
- Limiting space and changing the balance of convenience in favour of public transport
- An extensive network of new bus lanes with restrictions on parking
- City centre traffic free areas

Consideration and implementation of the following in order to change the balance in favour of public transport:

- Devolved bus and rail powers
- Integrated bus-rail ticketing
- A comprehensive review of bus services to ensure routes are as effective as possible
- Air quality review and action plan
- Low Emissions Zone to improve Air quality
- Employers parking levy, and note that in Nottingham this raises £9million per annum.
- Congestion charging

BULLET POINTS FOR QUESTIONS Note: the response was submitted via online form.

Question 6: What kind of schemes would be most appropriate to deliver an upgrade to sustainable travel between the East Fringe and Bristol City Centre:

High frequency limited stop buses to link: 1) Keynsham, Yate, Bristol Parkway, a new station at Coalpit Heath, and proposed St Annes station with the East Fringe; 2) New Park and Ride locations as proposed; 3) LRT on A4 corridor and any other locations.

Improved frequency rail services at all rail stations - at least every 20 minutes.

New stations at Coalpit Heath, St Annes, Saltford

LRT where proves practical: one-way parallel streets may enable LRT, e.g. Whitehall Road & Church Rd.

New bus lanes with restrictions on parking

Underground LRT is suggested in the Transport Vision document! Unfortunately, while we would support this it is probably not realistic. There may be no harm in asking for it?

Integrated bus-rail ticketing

Devolved rail and bus powers

A review of bus services to ensure routes are as effective as possible; the provision of local feeder routes into limited stop routes.

Question 8: Are there any other schemes you would like to see in the package?

- New stations should also be built at:
 - Coalpit Heath (an area planned for development), which would also serve Emerson's Green. Four tracking on Filton Bank and passing loops at the station (as in the past) would reduce congestion around Westerleigh junction and enable slow trains to be overtaken by fast ones.
 - Chittening (on the Henbury Loop LRT/ heavy rail link) for the Severnside industrial area
 - near Long Ashton, as proposed by the developers, if "The Vale" development goes ahead.
 - Uphill / Locking, Weston-Super-Mare: either at Uphill Junction or Locking housing estate.
 - Corsham (Wiltshire), to be developed jointly with Wiltshire, as this will have a direct mitigating impact on road traffic in to Bath.
- Pilning station reinstatement and Park and Ride: We want to see the replacement of the bridge at Pilning station to enable its use for travel between the adjacent Severnside industrial estates and villages, and the North Fringe and South Wales. This should be made a Park and Ride, which would be adjacent to the new M49 junction, serving Cribbs Causeway, Thornbury and Severnside via orbital buses.

We understand that if the bridge is replaced now it will avoid the need to spend £3-5 million on a Network Rail station study that would be required to enable the station's future improvement.

Up to 25,000 jobs are predicted for the area. The West of England authorities previously asked for an improved service to be included in the Great Western franchise.

Although Severn Beach Station is relatively near to Pilning, the service there is currently only two hourly and unreliable, with only an hourly service planned under MetroWest Phase 1, due to the dependence of the Port of Bristol on the level crossing at St Andrew's Gate. To provide a long-term solution for Severnside we urge that consideration be given to providing alternative road access to the Port at other locations such as St Andrew's Rd station.

- Rail services should be at least every 20 minutes; LRT should be considered to enable improvements if this does not negatively impact on service quality.
- Freight management:

We note the absence of any mention of rail freight. It is vital that the authorities consider access to rail at key industrial locations, such as Severnside, and as a minimum set aside and protect land for this purpose.

- Access to the Port:

To enable a more regular passenger service to Severnside (including the Henbury Loop) we urge that consideration be given to providing alternative road access to the Port at other locations such as St Andrew's Rd station. The local authorities should support government funding to improve access to the port, as has happened at Felixstowe and Southampton.

- Yate to Thornbury LRT/Bus

We would urge that the authorities develop either rail or LRT between Thornbury and Yate, the two major population centres of South Gloucestershire, using some of the existing but redundant railway line to Tytherington quarry. In the meantime we would support an improved bus service to link the two towns to each other and Severnside.

- A gap in the orbital bus route at Severnside that should be filled

We would want to see a complete orbital route linking Severnside with Cribbs Causeway, South Gloucestershire and the North Fringe. Severnside is poorly served by public transport and this would continue otherwise.

- Limited stop bus to link Severnside to Thornbury and Yate

We want to see Severnside linked to South Gloucestershire, Thornbury and Yate to enable access to the industrial development and to the rail network at Pilning and Severn Beach.

- An extensive network of bus lanes with restrictions on parking or car access as required
- Comprehensive review of the bus network to produce a network of mixed rapid, limited stop services and local stopping services, that integrates with current and proposed rail and LRT stations.

- Integrated bus-rail ticketing to include bus and rail timetables and route maps.

Consideration and implementation of the following in order to change the balance in favour of public transport:

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- Integrated bus-rail ticketing
- A comprehensive review of bus services to ensure routes are as effective as possible
- Air quality review and action plan
- Low Emissions Zone to improve Air quality
- Employers parking levy, and note that in Nottingham this raises £9million per annum.
- **Congestion charging**

Question 9: Do you have any other comments about the proposed transport vision?

Ambition:

- We welcome the ambitious nature of the vision
- We welcome and largely support and welcome the public transport schemes with some caveats and concerns.
- However the study is focused is on road building (£2.8 billion - a third of the proposals' total cost) and insufficiently focused on public transport, walking and cycling.
- The road schemes are billed as enabling public transport: we do not believe that public transport schemes need to nor should be dependent on road schemes. New public transport options should be provided without increasing road capacity.
- The road schemes and the proposals overall would not create a modal shift, reduce the number of car journeys or the attractiveness of car travel or make public transport any more attractive in comparison. On the contrary, extra capacity will enable easier and more numerous journeys.
- Road schemes include various schemes that have previously been rejected, such as Saltford bypass and the South Bristol Ring Road. We do not believe anything has changed to make them acceptable now.
- The new roads would simply move vehicles and journeys from the urban area to the fringe
- Instead of building new roads traffic should be reduced through measures such as instituting one-way traffic on parallel routes, congestion charging and/or low emissions zone.
- We would urge that the road schemes be removed from the plans and replaced with additional public transport measures. Road junction and other improvements should only occur to ease congestion at pinch points and to provide bus lanes or other public or sustainable transport.

Mix:

- We largely agree with the mix of public transport and welcome the schemes but with caveats and changes in emphasis:
- While supporting the concept of rapid transit, we are concerned about the risk of MetroBus being unnecessarily "over-engineered".
- We are concerned that the road schemes have been previously developed for past funding bids so can be easily resurrected and prioritised before public transport schemes, placing the latter at risk if costs increase.
- We believe that LRT to Bristol airport would be too expensive and would prefer a rapid, limited stop bus.
- We recognise that bus will be the core of public transport for most journeys.
- There are four additional new rail stations that we would urge the councils to support and build.
- We largely support the light rail proposals but have questions and concerns about this.

Marketing and education: We believe this is important and simple things, including signage and advertising can encourage behaviour change.

Area packages of improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and buses: We support and note that improvements for pedestrians and cyclists tend to have very positive benefit-cost ratios.

- These should include the use of shared space, focus on making the environment a pleasant one as well as safe, and to facilitate access to bus stops and rail stations.

Strategic cycle routes:

- We support these and would want them to facilitate access to bus stops and rail stations as well as linking to key destinations.

Park and Ride:

- We wholeheartedly welcome these and are particularly pleased to see a proposed "necklace" of Park and Ride schemes at strategic locations around Bristol's urban area.
- We do not support the new roads associated with them, only the creation of public transport corridors.
- We welcome the indication that Hick's Gate could be served by light rail but would oppose a heavy rail station here or elsewhere if this would involve replacing Keynsham station and the proposed Salford station.
- We would recommend the addition of a Park and Ride at Pilning station, adjacent to the new M49 junction and Severnside industrial parks, serving Cribbs Causeway, Thornbury and Severnside via orbital buses, and providing a 21 minute journey to Bristol Temple Meads.

MetroBus: Support for proposed routes but reservations about the expensive and unnecessary

infrastructure previously associated with MetroBus

- We support these proposed routes, particularly the orbital ones, and the concept of rapid transit to create a network of orbital and limited stop bus routes that provide interchanges with rail and local buses.
- We would welcome a network of enforced dedicated bus priority lanes, which could be used by taxi and emergency services to avoid delay for critical journeys.
- However, we have been very concerned about and do not support further construction of excessive "over engineered" infrastructure that has occurred with the current MetroBus schemes. We would want to see a more cost effective approach than seen in current schemes.
- MetroBus must not be used as a way to build new highway capacity for cars: better use can be made of existing highways infrastructure and urge that this happen.
- LRT route to Bristol airport should be a limited stop bus route instead
- Integration of local and MetroBus services with heavy rail and LRT is vital

New stations and Rail Improvements:

- We greatly welcome the inclusion of proposed new stations and rail improvements but suggest that other five other new stations are required at Coalpit Heath (an area planned for development); Chittening (on the Henbury Loop LRT/ heavy rail link for the Severnside industrial area); near Long Ashton, as proposed by the developers, if "The Vale" development goes ahead; Uphill, Weston-Super-Mare; Corsham (Wiltshire), to be developed jointly with Wiltshire.
- Pilning station: We want to see the replacement of the bridge at Pilning station to enable its use for travel between the adjacent Severnside industrial estates and villages, and the North Fringe and South Wales. This should be made a Park and Ride, which would be adjacent to the new M49 junction, serving Cribbs Causeway, Thornbury and Severnside via orbital buses.

We understand that if the bridge is replaced now it will avoid the need to spend £3-5 million on a Network Rail station study that would be required to enable the station's future improvement.

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- A station should be included at Chittening to serve the Severnside industrial area.
- The possibility of remodeling the track layout of the Filton “diamond” should be explored to enable Bristol Parkway to be served by some services using the Henbury Loop.

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- We would object to Saltford and Keynesham stations being closed and replaced by a new station equi-distant between the two at Pixash Lane, which would only encourage car journeys to the station and be convenient for no one.
- We are open to alternative locations for St Annes but would not support its location at or near to Hicks Gate. The proposed Park & Ride should be served by the proposed A4 LRT route, local bus and MetroBus. Interchange between LRT, heavy rail and buses should be available at Keynesham station.

Freight management: We support the the development of freight consolidation centres but note the absence of any mention of rail freight.

- It is vital that the authorities consider access to rail at key industrial locations, such as Severnside, and as a minimum set aside and protect land for this purpose.
- We urge that consideration be given to providing alternative road access to the Port at other locations such as St Andrew’s Rd station to enable a more regular passenger service to Severnside (including the Henbury Loop).
- The local authorities should support government funding to improve access to the port, as has happened at Felixstowe and Southampton.

Light Rail:

We are aware that capacity constraints limit the potential for improvements in rail service intervals and that light rail overcome these constraints through street running. We recognise LRT is likely to be more affordable and achievable than the capacity infrastructure required for heavy rail improvements.

We greatly welcome the proposals for LRT with some caveats.

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- We welcome the proposal to develop an LRT network to Emerson's Green, with the following caveats.
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