



## **Preamble**

FOSBR is encouraged that both MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 are being progressed and would urge the elected members of the four partner authorities to support the plans financially. We note the following issues that need attention for the next iteration of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 plans:

### **1. MetroWest Phase 1 subsidy funding**

FOSBR note that the WebTag estimate of £1.9m for the annual subsidy needed for MetroWest Phase 1 as calculated in the Preliminary Business Case and recently endorsed by the WEP Joint Transport Board is acknowledged to be unduly pessimistic. FOSBR consider that the lower (+5%) figure of £1.1m per year = £275k per council per year is more realistic, given the high actual footfall on lines such as the Severn Beach Line and the newly reinstated West Wilts Swindon-Melksham line. FOSBR would urge WEP to use the data from these success stories to revise upwards the likely footfall and therefore to negotiate with DfT to accept the lower subsidy. FOSBR would recommend that the leaders of the four partner authorities negotiate soon the allocation of the subsidy with each other and engage soon in their individual budgeting processes to set aside the appropriate revenue sums in the 2015/6 budget, with a view to WEP using this income between 2015 and the delivery date of 2019 to invest in the staffing and governance of MetroWest.

### **2. Ashton Gate**

FOSBR note the reference in the MetroWest Update to the difficulty in building a business case for this station due to occasional large events. However, FOSBR would urge WEP to consider the footfall that could well arise from residents within the catchment area such as Long Ashton, Spike Island and Bedminster, the employees and customers for the large concentration of stores in Winterstoke Road, including car repair workshops where car drivers may well wish to leave their car for an extended period and travel by public transport. FOSBR also urge WEP to consider the wide range of uses that the stadium is aiming to host in the week, not just football games but potentially conferences, music events and rallies, as well as the regular footfall that could arise for users of Ashton Court leisure facilities. FOSBR also urge WEP to consider the “civic pride” impact of a modern rail station within walking distance of two such high-capacity venues that serve such a wide area.

FOSBR would therefore urge WEP to be more specific in the promise to “future-proof” the Metro West , by ensuring that the timetable currently being worked up has enough slack to accommodate a “ghost” stop at Ashton Gate until the station is built. FOSBR would urge Halcrow in its New Stations study on Ashton Gate adopt a “can-do” approach to this in the view of the high popular demand and political status of Ashton Gate, and for WEP to seek suitable sources of funding for the infrastructure required.

### **3. Bedminster**

FOSBR note that Bedminster is being considered in the plans for MetroWest Phase 1 (although not in the favoured options), and that the proposed Portishead train could stop at both Parson St and Bedminster. FOSBR continue to urge that Bedminster is included in the favoured option due to its capacity as a rail-bus interchange and its excellent disabled access.

### **4. Ashley Hill and Horfield&Lockleaze**

FOSBR note that CH2M are undertaking work on Ashley Hill and Horfield, in addition to the high level New Stations Halcrow study commissioned by Bristol City Council. FOSBR notes the large likely footfall from the City of Bristol College and the Gloucester Rd cricket club for the former and Southmead Hospital, Lockleaze

residents and Horfield Leisure Centre for the latter. FOSBR understands that the gradient issues cited early in the study can be solved by a combination of derogation of the gradient and curvature standards and judicious partial engineering-out of the gradient and curvature, which require additional capital costs. However, FOSBR would challenge the requirement for ongoing extra staffing costs due to the relatively low gradient. FOSBR would urge Halcrow and CH2M to consider the likely effect of these two stations on reducing congestion on the A38 corridor which is already severe and likely to become worse when the CPNN is built. FOSBR urge WEP to think holistically about the considerable benefit of an efficient suburban rail network across the Bristol travel to work area in causing permanent modal shift, including a direct service from Yate to Horfield. FOSBR continue to request at the least passive provision for both Ashley Hill and Horfield, but not for the securing of passive provision to result in more delay to the building of these much needed stations.

## **5. Filton Bank**

FOSBR note the current issues with poor disabled access to Stapleton Rd, Lawrence Hill, Filton Abbey Wood and Patchway and would urge WEP to take the opportunity of the four-tracking on Filton Bank to secure better disabled access for suburban rail services as well as IEP.

## **6. Henbury Loop**

FOSBR fully support the plans for the new stations at North Filton, Henbury, Ashley Hill and Horfield as part of the Henbury Loop. FOSBR are much encouraged that Network Rail have commissioned a study funded by the Port into possible infrastructure around Avonmouth and St Andrews Rd to resolve the concerns of the Port with regard to the interaction of road and rail freight with present and future passenger services on the Henbury Loop. FOSBR would urge WEP to press for an efficient infrastructure and timetabling solution to this Port traffic issue and to secure the necessary capital funding for this as part of MetroWest Phase 2. In view of the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood Scheme currently at the planning application stage and subject to Section 106 "Framework Agreement" negotiations between S Glos Council and the developers, FOSBR would urge WEP to recognise the considerable benefit that a regular rail service would have both to the developers and to the inhabitants of the new build, and therefore to bring MetroWest Phase 2 into tandem with Phase 1 so that the rail stations are built before the new houses, so that the inhabitants of CPNN start their residency with good travel habits from the start.

## **Summary**

FOSBR are fully in support of the MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 plans and continue to urge that WEP stand by the plans as originally drafted by Halcrow, and actively seek the funding of infrastructure solutions to ensure delivery of the original vision in its entirety, and therefore the maximum modal shift to rail for the congested Greater Bristol Area.

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