

**Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR)
Questions to West of England Partnership Strategic Leader's Board (SLB)**



**Friday 9th January 2015, 2pm-4pm at the Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road,
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ.**

Preamble: FOSBR is encouraged that both MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 are being progressed and is delighted that top-up capital funding from the Local Growth Fund has been secured for both MetroWest Phase 1 (£8.5m) and Phase 2 (£3.2m) as reported in the Transport, Planning and Skills update for this meeting.

1. MetroWest Phase 1 subsidy funding

FOSBR note that an estimated total £1.1m subsidy per annum (for between 3 and 5 years) needs to be pledged by the four authorities (ie £275k each pa) by October 2015 in order for the plans to progress. FOSBR recommends that the four partner authorities set aside this annual sum in the 2015/6 budget to invest in the staffing and governance of MetroWest leading up to the delivery date of 2019 and 2023 respectively.

2. Ashton Gate

FOSBR urge WEP to consider the wide range of uses that the stadium is aiming to host in the week such as conferences, music events and rallies, as well as users of Ashton Court leisure facilities, customers and staff of the Winterstoke Rd shops and car workshops and residents of Long Ashton and Ashton Gate. FOSBR urge WEP to consider the "civic pride" impact of a modern rail station within walking distance of two high-capacity venues serving the whole of the West of England. FOSBR note the Halcrow New Stations study requested by Bristol City Council into Ashley Hill, Horfield and Ashton Gate was due in January 2014 and is still not published.

3. Ashley Hill and Horfield&Lockleaze

FOSBR note that CHM2HILL are being tasked to investigate the reopening of Ashley Hill and Horfield&Lockleaze stations as part of MetroWest Phase 2.

4. MetroWest Phase 2: Henbury Loop

FOSBR welcome plans for new stations at North Filton and Henbury as part of the Henbury Loop and the commissioning of a study in October 2014 by Network Rail into the infrastructure needed to facilitate the freight and passenger traffic at the Port of Avonmouth. FOSBR note with dismay that Network Rail have secured permission to demolish the station building at Avonmouth despite the plans for a Henbury Loop.

5. Network Rail plans for Temple Meads station

FOSBR note that the ambitious and costly Network Rail plans for the renewal of the Temple Meads station comprise only like-for-like on building of waiting room facilities and transport interchange.

Ten New Year 2015 Questions from FOSBR to the four WEP leaders:

- 1. Have the leaders of the four authorities commenced discussions on the best way to allocate the expected MetroWest Phase 1 £1.1m pa annual subsidy between the four councils, and will they ensure that this funding will be recommended by officers to the budget committees of the four councils in the 2015-6 budgets?***
- 2. What is the publication date for the delayed Halcrow New Stations Study, and if this is not imminent, what work is being done to assess the business case for Ashton Gate, and to secure passive provision in both the timetable development (as a 3 minute "ghost stop") and infrastructure (including the favoured Baron's Close site) of MetroWest Phase 1?***

- 3. Which contributors to the potential footfall at Horfield&Lockleaze and Ashley Hill are being considered (eg does this include Southmead Hospital, Horfield Leisure Centre, City of Bristol College, Gloucester Rd Cricket Ground and the Bristol Rovers football ground?) and what sites will Network Rail definitely give passive provision for? Has CHM2Hill investigated the optimum solution to the gradient and curvature issues in terms of seeking derogation and partial engineering-out of gradient and curvature, and the economy of scale in building both stations at the same time?**
- 4. Further to the request by Bristol City Council to South Glos to include Charlton Halt as a potential central site serving the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood Development Scheme, has any work been done to investigate the likely cost of building a station there which would overcome the drainage issues (eg by comparison with Haddenham&Thame station?)**
- 5. What progress has been made by Network Rail in their study of the infrastructure needed to secure delivery of the Henbury Loop passenger service despite the freight road and rail traffic at the port?**
- 6. Will WEP seek for Access for All funding to ensure that the Filton Bank stations are upgraded to full disabled access when the Filton Bank four-tracking is delivered?**
- 7. Will WEP negotiate urgently with Network Rail to secure the threatened Avonmouth station building as a future hub for the Henbury Loop service including ticket office, waiting room, and café as at Weston super Mare?**
- 8. Will WEP ensure that the study into the extension of electrification to Weston super Mare, Severn Beach and Portishead be completed in time for inclusion of electrification when MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 are being delivered, to secure economy of scale?**
- 9. Will WEP seek funding to ensure that the Bristol Temple Meads station plans include provision of a transport interchange on Plot 6 so that full rail-bus interchange is feasible for disabled and young family users, and waiting room facilities for passengers bound for the South West?**
- 10. Will WEP seek to secure rail powers and democratic governance as a Combined Rail Authority so as to avoid the present situation of being required to beg for funds from the four councils and to plead with Network Rail for station reopenings, infrastructure and preservation or extension of strategic buildings?**

Christina Biggs
Secretary, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways
Monday 5 January 2015