

WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 OCTOBER 2020

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REPLIES

QUESTION 2

Question from: Christina Biggs (Friends of Bristol Suburban Railways)

Subject: Rail projects

Question:

Q1. What are the respective scopes of:

- a) the Strategic Rail Investment Programme; and
- b) the Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study,

and when will the outcomes of each be published - could an interim report be published at the next set of WECA meetings?

Q2. In view of:

- i) the Climate Emergency Action Plan's commitment to reduce car use and increase the uptake in public transport;
- ii) the investment of WECA in the East of Bath access; and
- iii) the proposals for bypasses at Winterbourne-Frampton Cotterell and at Coalpit Heath-Westerleigh,

is it intended that the scope of the Strategic Rail Investment Programme and/or the Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study will be extended to include:

- a) a new station at Corsham, as promoted by Wiltshire Council; and
- b) a new station at Coalpit Heath, with a passing loop, on the level ground at Ram Hill?

REPLY:

Q1: As noted in the Strategic Rail Paper submitted to the June 2020 Committee, WECA are developing a 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan. This will be presented to the December Committee.

In order to support the development of a prioritised set of options for enhancing the rail network in and connecting to the West of England, a demand study (the Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study) was undertaken to identify the priority routes for current and future demand. The output from Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study has been considered in the development of the 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan.

Q2: As part of the 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan, options for enhancing services between Bristol and Bath Spa to Westbury, Swindon and Oxford are being considered. Services to Swindon and Oxford could serve a new Corsham station which is one of 17 new station proposals in the Swindon and Wiltshire LEPs rail strategy. Wiltshire Council's Restoring Your Railway bid for Restoring Great Western Main Line Services will also benefit Corsham. WECA will continue to work with neighbouring authorities on rail proposals as part of the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body.

The Greater Bristol Area Rail Feasibility Study did not identify the need for a new station at Coalpit Heath and as such this does not form part of the 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan. The 25 Year Strategic Outline Business Case for longer term rail investment will consider a range of schemes which could include Coalpit Heath.