

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FoSBR)

Statement to WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 27th January 2021 0 at 10.30 am via Zoom



1. North Fringe Public Infrastructure Package

This package, part of the Investment Fund proposal, requires funding to develop a revised, more comprehensive, Transport Assessment (TA) for the YTL Brabazon arena and associated facilities which have recently been awarded planning permission. The original TA for the planning proposal was rushed and not sufficiently detailed.

The application for this package clearly sets out that "The focus of the transport strategy will be on sustainable measures and limiting the use of car borne trips as far as possible supporting the climate change agenda". It also notes that this investment project is linked to the re-opening of North Filton railway station (part of MetroWest Phase 2). However looking through the project scope, it appears that the study will concentrate solely on highway aspects and it is not easy to see where public transport will be considered within this Transport Assessment.

We consider that the role of both rail and bus/ metrobus needs to be considered as part of the transport mix - and the study should look at ways that rail and bus provision can be maximised so as to reduce the need for more roads with all their attendant congestion problems.

With respect to rail transport, we strongly suggest that the consultants be asked to include the effect of the Henbury Spur rail service on the road infrastructure requirement in the TA. In addition, we suggest that not only the presently envisaged hourly service should be taken into account - but also the effect of increasing frequency to a 30-minute or even 15-minute service. Operationally it is possible to at least have a 30-minute service on that line. Going further, the TA should also investigate the effect of opening the Henbury Spur right through to Avonmouth (the Henbury Loop) or even going eastwards through the Filton Diamond to Parkway, on transport requirements for the North Bristol Fringe. Rail is uniquely suitable for moving a large amount of people to and from the Arena and strategically timed rail services could do much to minimise the number of cars travelling to large events.

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