

Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 2nd October, 14:00 -16:00

Location: Face-to-face at County Hall, Trowbridge

Attendees:	
Name	Organisation
Cllr David Gray	Gloucestershire County Council (DR)
Cllr Manda Rigby	Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) (MR) in person
Cllr Hannah Young	North Somerset Council (HY)
Cllr Chris Willmore	South Gloucestershire Council (CW)
Cllr Tamara Reay	Wiltshire Council (TR) in person
Cllr Jon Andrews	Dorset Council (JA) in person
Cllr Andy Hadley	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (AH)
Cllr Sarah Warren	Bath North East Somerset (SW)
Cllr Kye Dudd	West of England Combined Authority (KD) in person
Ross Burton	Department for Transport (RB) online
Andy Whitehead	South Gloucestershire Council (AW)
Orlagh Phipps	Gloucestershire County Council (OP)
Pam Turton	Bath and North East Somerset Council (PT)
James White	Western Gateway STB (JWh) in person
Hattie James	Western Gateway STB (HJ) in person
Arina Salhotra	Sphere Marketing (AS)
Alice Darley	National Highways (AD)
Joe Parkes	Network Rail (MH) online
Jack Wiltshire	Dorset Council (JW) in person
Hannah Fountain	Western Gateway STB (HF) in person
Richard Pincroft	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) (RP) online
Bill Davies	West of England Combined Authority (BD)
Samantha Howell	Wiltshire County Council (SH)
Ben Kempner	Department for Transport (BK) online
Apologies were received from:	
Jessica Holroyd	Western Gateway STB (JH)
Mena Abidakun	Western Gateway STB (MA)
Jaime Rockhill	Network Rail (JR)

Mayor Dan Norris	West of England Combined Authority (DN)
Mike O'Dowd Jones	Somerset Council (MJ)
Bella Fortune	North Somerset (BF)

Actions	Allocated to	Target Date:
RB to provide information on the M4 South Coast study to AH.	Ross Burton	27/11/2024
JW to coordinate with the team on a workshop on the Business Plan.	James White	27/11/2024
HF to set up a meeting to discuss the cycling work in more details with interested members.	Hannah Fountain	27/11/2024

DATE	Number	KEY DECISIONS	STATUS:
02/10/2024	1	Approve the Business Plan for 2025/26 as set out in Table One.	Completed
02/10/2024	2	Delegate to the Programme Team to make changes as required with the agreement of the Chair and Vice Chair.	Completed
02/10/2024	3	Note progress on the Rural Mobility Pilot project, including imminent launch of the Call for Pilots.	Completed
02/10/2024	4	Delegate approval to award a total of £50,000 in funding to one or more external organisations for the development of rural pilot project proposals to Western Gateway Officers, in accordance with the project assessment criteria. This was amended to include 'having shared their work prior with members.' Everyone was in favour of this.	Incomplete
02/10/2024	5	Delegate approval to produce and distribute a final Pilot Prospectus.	Incomplete
02/10/2024	6	Rural Mobility - Allocate additional budget of £5k (to be re-profiled from elsewhere in the WG programme) to cover increased costs and project extension.	Completed
02/10/2024	7	To note the letter to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Local Transport)	Completed
02/10/2024	8	To approve sending a tailored version of the Under Secretary of State letter to all the MPs in the Western Gateway region	Completed
02/10/2024	9	To approve refocusing Regional Centre of Excellence work on providing support for the local authorities in planning for the new NPPF housing forecasts.	Completed
02/10/2024	10	To note progress on the Strategic Investment Plan.	Completed
02/10/2024	11	To note risks arising from the Strategic Investment Plan.	Completed
02/10/2024	12	Review updated draft cycle network plan and prioritisation.	Completed

02/10/2024	13	To note the progress of the programme update report.	Completed
02/10/2024	14	To note the financial update to the end of September 2024.	Completed

Item No	Notes / Actions
1	<p>Welcome, apologies and introductions.</p> <p>MR welcomed everyone. Everyone gave a round of introductions. MR asked how people wanted to conduct future Board meetings for maximum benefit. She asked for people to send through suggestions for her to collate with JW.</p>
2.	<p>Actions and Minutes of Previous Meeting</p> <p>These were agreed to be an accurate record. All actions closed.</p>
3.	<p>Public Questions</p> <p>David Redgewell raised the lack of subsidy for coaches, which means there's been a loss of services across the South West.</p> <p>Christina Biggs of Bristol Rail Campaign raised the imbalance in the train fare structure. She also raised linking local stations to regional routes, as people at station Metro West have to go South to go North ahead.</p> <p>Gary Byard of Bristol Bus Network raised the issue of reduction in coach services from Cheltenham - Bristol. Used to be 6/day now only 4 and stops at 8.30pm on weekdays which isn't good for evening leisure or longer work days.</p>
	<p>Updates from Associate Members</p> <p>Ross Burton from Department for Transport (DfT)</p> <p>RB ran through the five government objectives on British Rail Service and improvements to bus services. There is a piece on transport transforming infrastructure and addressing inequality, as well as making transport greener and more integrated. The Secretary of State's new motto is to 'move fast and fix things.'</p> <p>They are currently working on and preparing the budget, but conversations are still ongoing. The department is also doing a capital review. There are also discussions beginning on the integrated national transport strategy. We are still awaiting on budget for STBs.</p> <p>MR asked whether there is a date regarding STB funding.</p> <p>RB said no sense of that yet, but hopeful for the New Year.</p> <p>AH asked when we might have information on the M4 South Coast study.</p>

RB said he will come back on this.

MR said we need direction from government to allow growth and a housing agenda, as it's not possible to live without housing without that infrastructure. They hope at central government level there is that joined up thinking.

RB said that is understood and he will try and push for more clarity where possible.

Action - RB to provide information on the M4 South Coast study to AH.

Matt Haywood at Network Rail:

MH said they are waiting to see what picture looks like for enhancements funding and so they are in a period of building cases. Regarding industry reform, there's been the creation of Shadow GBR. An integrated body of that kind is the future of the railway industry structure following the various reviews over the last few years. The formal establishment of GBR will require a fairly complex bill and the new government set out two railway bills going through legislation. The first of those is the public ownership bill and which will effectively allow franchises to transfer back to public operation and operate indirectly through DfT. That has been through the House of Commons and is in the second reading in the House of Lords. The other bill to set up GBR proper will take a little bit longer and therefore the establishment of Shadow GBR is intended to allow some of those sort of forward-looking whole system decisions to be made. That is a joint venture between Network Rail and DfT, and what's called the operator of last resort.

MH said that they now have a Saturday service between Bristol and Oxford.

They are drawing near the end of the period of cross country's emergency timetable as well, which will have affected some in the region with better news on the horizon. Great Western also has a proposal to introduce some new trains a constraint to improving services is due to the rolling stock that is required to operate those services. There is decarbonisation work that is being conducted with Western Gateway and partner organisations. We will be sharing the final Wiltshire Strategic study report this week. It will set out a vision for service improvements that support sustainable growth in Wiltshire and will allow the rail network to play its full role in that and includes some recommendations that will be very familiar. An hourly train between Paddington and Westbury, which was in the divisor gateway interim feasibility study and increasing the frequency of the Transworld service as well. There are a couple of high priority interventions investments.

In the Wiltshire study, there are is a new platform at Westbury. It's in the devices interim feasibility study. Increasing the Westbury platform is one that will be jointly looked at.

Joseph Parkes, Network Rail

In the middle of undertaking what we're calling the Salisbury Area strategic study, which looks at the future requirements for the Salisbury cycling area.

In the next 30 years we will be linking into Wiltshire strategy as well as Wessex's West of England line strategy that was published a few years ago and the general rolling stock changes.

There are pieces of analysis from internal economic and passenger analysis teams. That will feed into the strategy and we are also waiting for some outputs from engineers. Looking to see if there are any track layout changes or signalling changes required to help deliver those services. Hope to share something in the next few months. Number of SOBCs which Western Gateway has been helping us to fund and deliver. The Heart of Wessex line SOBC is looking up Weymouth up towards Gloucestershire.

There is the Tisbury loop SOBC, previously known as the Soles, Salisbury T Oval Service enhancement SOBC. They are looking at modelling performance as we know it is a problem area for performance on the West of England line. They are currently remitting engineers to allow some intervention assessments for that and then we can build the strategic outline business case around that. The final SOBC is Dorset Metro, looking at additional services between Wareham and Brockenhurst.

A timetable has been completed and we're at a similar stage with the Tisbury stuff with waiting for engineers.

Matt Haywood, Network Rail

Looking to replace rolling stock, and ageing diesel trains across much of the much of the Western Gateway area and the opportunity to deliver more sustainable train fleets and deliver timetable and service improvements at the same time. Working in early 2030s to find some new rolling stock to replace many of those services and we're working very closely with DfT, SWR and GWR to make the case that we should be looking at something which is not a diesel train and that will require structures and charging infrastructure as well. Members can be aware that there's an opportunity to influence the decision that needs to be made around rolling stock replacement. STB and individual authorities will be consulted.

AH asked whether there was the opportunity to reassess the value of rolling stock to encourage sustainable journeys and will there be opportunities to integrate services better in GBR trains.

MH said the theory is having a single guiding mind will allow that kind of decision-making which can sometimes be difficult at the moment. Bikes on trains continue to be a hot topic.

Cllr Reay said their second point is notwithstanding the cancellation of the RYR programme, the caution RYR case was at the DMT and has been there for a long time. Do you have any advice on where that is, where that might go now, particularly given the Bristol Oxford service enhancement that you've spoken about?

MH said that part of RYR needs to stand on its own two feet, but in that sense, it's no different than it would have been. Had they approached a new station proposal before RYR there would have been communication around the decisions from the point of view of rail and it's intuitive that since there is no fund there now, noted were the opportunities. It's with a new service such as the Bristol Oxford service. That makes a case for that service and having that introduced permanently. It makes a case strongly for a caution station. It will involve another process of submission because the RAR programme is no more.

Cllr Rigby said the Gloucester to Weymouth line mentioned is not encouraging people to get on the train. They are being challenged very firmly about growth, housing and jobs. They want to stop unnecessary car journeys. How can they best work them to understand this? She also asked for an update about rail freight.

MH said we have a good collaborative approach to understanding the role of the railway. He said they are trying to get into the realm of spatial planning as well as strategic rail planning.

They have the Southwest Freight Forum with Peninsula Transport and they have identified key opportunities in terms of specific markets and specific terminals, and have a wider imperative to up the level of rail freight and the modal share of freight volumes in a less centralised market, so private entities can make their own decisions about what is economical, therefore they can provide the capability, the network and to get freight onto the railway. The investment will be beneficial. It is hard to sell investment in the railway network to support rail freight, but they have a pipeline of schemes. It is still an important focus.

JP said that the Wessex team are working with National Highways on the corridor between Southampton and Basingstoke trying to reduce road congestion with freight.

CW asked if there is a timeline around when you'd like to see any of the suggestions, we've got regarding rolling stock.

MH said they're working closely with operator colleagues to embark on stakeholder engagement activity.

JP said there is work looking into it in terms of decarbonization point of view and there will be opportunity to input into the conversation.

CW said A417 scheme in Gloucester is going well and an award was recently won for this work.

Alice Darley, National Highways

AD provided brief verbal update as paper updated already submitted prior to board meeting.

	<p>RIS - still uncertain as to investment programme beyond March 2025. Hoping for clarity following budget.</p> <p>A417 - making great progress. Team have won an award.</p> <p>All noted and no questions for AD.</p>
5.	<p>Business Plan - Paper A</p> <p>JW said the plan has had to be produced at short notice. It is based on the funding of 996k. The plan is shaped around the government's five missions. The plan has set out scenarios for present funding, 20% more funding and 20% less. A page 1 summary has been produced as required by DfT on their specific template with very limited space. Tried to strike a balance between supporting new the government agenda and the STB work currently being undertaken.</p> <p>DECISION: JW asked the Board to retrospectively approve the Business Plan which was submitted to DfT on 30th September.</p> <p>DECISION: JW asked the Board to delegate the Business Plan to the Programme team to make changes as required with the approval of the Board and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby thanked officers for meeting challenging timeframe to produce this.</p> <p>Cllr Willmore proposed having another aim, which is to have a visionary workshop to discuss the detail of the Business Plan. MR supported this.</p> <p>Everyone was in favour of these decisions, there were no objections.</p> <p>Cllr Reay - questioned trans-Wilts reference in summary table. JW responded this was drafted before report released, so things have moved on a bit.</p> <p>Cllr Gray - while we had challenging timeframes to deliver this list, feels we don't have enough emphasis on the growth and housing delivery agenda and the transport infrastructure needed to support that. Feels these things should be given priority.</p> <p>Cllr Rigby - understand we are agreeing recommendations 1 and 2 but adding a third one - visioning workshop.</p> <p>Cllr Hadley - why did DfT ask us for 20% flex? With additional funding should we be thinking really about innovative new proposals, rather than just more of the existing?</p> <p>Action: JW to coordinate with the team on a workshop on the Business Plan.</p>
6.	<p>Rural Mobility - Paper B</p> <p>HF ran through the Rural Mobility project. HF also asked for the Board to approve delegation of the authorities to award 50k in funding to external organisations for the development of the rural mobility pilot project proposals and for the Board's approval to delegate and distribute a final project prospectus.</p> <p>Due to the extension and costs of the project, HF asked if 5k could be transferred from elsewhere in the project to the rural mobility work. HF also asked for the Board to</p>

approve delegation of the authorities to award 50k in funding to external organisations for the development of the rural mobility pilot project proposals.

CW raised that the brief covers the niceties of life rather than the necessities, and the accessibility point is missing with regards to the public getting to workplaces, doctors etc.

CW also raised the concern about community grants going on other priorities, and there not being enough of a support mechanism for community groups to navigate the legal minefield.

HF replied that the Rural Mobility grand challenges do cover the daily life aspect.

HF said that the second question regarding funding is a risk. One of the steps to achieve that is the 50k funding.

KD raised that 50k is not much money, it may be received as that by community groups in terms of pitching and may discourage them.

AH raised whether meaningful work could be undertaken with the small amount of money.

HF said there is a large technical report that covers these concerns and delves into timeframes and previous successes and downfalls.

DG said they would like to see the list of schemes that are being proposed to be moved forward.

HY said there is a question about how we sustain what we have.

MR asked if anyone was in favour of the recommendations and decisions.

RECOMMENDATION: Note progress on the Rural Mobility pilot project, including imminent launch of the call for pilots

DECISION: Delegate authority to Western Gateway Officers to award a total of £50,000 in funding to one of more external organisations for the development of the rural mobility pilot project proposals, in accordance with the project assessment criteria

DECISION: Delegate approval to produce and distribute a final Pilot Prospectus

DECISION: Allocate additional budget of £5k (to be re-profiled from elsewhere in the WG programme) to cover increased costs and project extension.

There were no objections.

There were some queries about the amount of funding offered for the schemes. HF advised leaving the funding as is until we get an understanding of the range of submissions. AH queried how the schemes would be measured in terms of sustainability, innovation and whether the funding would enable meaningful projects. HF confirmed there is a large technical report that fleshes out these. The timeframe for the pilots is

	<p>between 1-3 years. HF said that the comprehensive report will help with the sustainability analysis.</p> <p>HF raised whether there should be a dedicated member on areas of rural mobility.</p> <p>MR suggested we amend the recommendations slightly and keep 1,3 and 4 to same. For recommendation 2 we amend this to include 'having shared their work prior with members.' Everyone was in favour of this.</p>
8.	<p>Letters to the Under Secretary of State - Paper C</p> <p>JW said this is a short letter so cannot capture everything being undertaken, and just sets out some key pieces of work.</p> <p>Cllr Reay said she was surprised the Stonehenge A303 scheme was not included.</p> <p>Cllr Young - welcomes letter, especially for raising profile of WGSTB in government (as currently less recognisable than other STBs) and showing we are important.</p> <p>Cllr Gray - keep focus on growth and housing to speak the right language to power.</p> <p>CC flagged some other schemes that could be used to drive growth agenda.</p>
7.	<p>Revised Housing Figures - Paper D</p> <p>JW ran through the housing figures and highlighted some of the key challenges, which focus on the most rural parts of the Western Gateway geography. JW then ran through the next steps work on refocusing the Regional Centre of Excellence work. There is a small amount of budget for this.</p>
8.	<p>Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) - Paper E</p> <p>HF ran through the programme delivery and the implications of not hitting the delivery dates. They will have an initial draft prioritisation list by the end of the month.</p>
10.	<p>Strategic Cycle Network - Paper F</p> <p>The regionally significant routes for cycling are in their final version now. They are indicative and will be solidified in the next stage.</p> <p>Cllr Willmore would value another meeting to review in more detail.</p> <p>Action: HF to set up a meeting to discuss the cycling work in more details with interested members.</p>
11.	<p>Programme Update - Paper G</p> <p>JW referred to the paper. There were no questions on the programme update.</p>
12.	<p>Finance Update - Paper H</p> <p>JW referred to the paper and gave a quick overview.</p> <p>All noted and no questions/comments.</p>

