

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Statements and Questions to the Board 2nd October 2024 with responses

A) David Redgewell, South West transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

Question 1

With Government review into Railway project following the scrapping of the Restoring the Railway fund by the Chancellor Rachel Reeves.

But all public Transport projects are being reviewed by Transport Secretary Louise Haigh MP and Lord Peter Hendy the Railway Minister.

What representation has Western Gateway Transport Board made to support the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset Council and Gloucestershire County Council to retain the major investment by the Department for Transport in the Metro West railway project.

For which £35 million pounds is paid in

The provision of Local Railway services across the Region.

Between Bristol Temple Meads station Keynsham, Oldfield Park Bath Spa, Freshford Avonclife Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury Dilton Marsh Warminster and Salisbury with some services to Frome.

Bristol Temple Meads to Filton Abbey station Bristol Parkway railway station Yatton, Charfield new station planned

Cam and Dursley, Gloucester central Cheltenham Spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forge Street.

Seven Beach, St Andrews Road, Avonmouth, Portway Park and Ride Shirehampton Sea Mills, Clifton Down, Redland, Montpellier, Bristol Stapleton Road Bristol Lawrence Hill Bristol Temple Meads station Bedminster Parson Street, Nailsea and Backwell, Yatton for Clevedon Worle Parkway Weston Milton Weston Super Mare, Highbridge and Burnham on Sea, Bridgwater and Taunton. Some services.

With the proposal to extend the network and construction underway

On the Bristol Temple Meads station to Pill and Portishead line planned

And Bristol Temple Meads to Henbury line

There is a very urgent need to the Western Gateway Transport Board to making the social and economic growth and Climate Change case.

For Metro West Railways project to

Reopen the Bristol Temple Meads station to Pill and Portishead line

The Bristol Temple Meads station to Ashley Down station opened on 28th September 2024 to Filton Abbey Wood and Filton North platform Arena station and Henbury for Cribbs Causeway shopping centre and Bristol Zoo

As part of a longer plan to reopen Henbury loop line to Avonmouth.

And Charfield station for Wotton Under Edge on the Bristol Temple Meads station to Gloucester central and Cheltenham Spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester line.

With also a proposed new station at Stonehouse Bristol Road.

The Department for Transport has been supporting the Extension of Metro West railway Network services from Taunton to a new station at Wellington via Tiverton Parkway and Cullompton New Station to Exeter St Davids and Exeter Central.

Metro West railway south.

Metro west railway is Region project well before Restoring your railway project and is about support access to school College university work health care hospital shopping and leisure and Tourism facilities.

With growth in the North fringe of Bristol new employment and houses and Arena at Filton and Henbury.

Development at Portshead .

Charfield for Wotton under Edge.

Stonehouse Stroudwater

New homes at Wellington and Cullompton.

Future options including the reopening of Bath spa to Swindon line station at Corsham, Chippenham existing and Royal Wotton Bassett.

A very important Regional Transport Network.

The case for metro west Railways Network in the Region should be made to the Department for transport and Department for Housing and local Government by western Gateway Transport Board.

Along with investment in Bristol Temple meads, Bath spa , Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury Frome Bruton castle cary Yeovil pen mill, Dorchester west and Weymouth line .

Working with Peninsula Transport Board.

Who also have 2 key projects

Cornwall metro.

And The Plymouth North Road to Tavistock railway line .

So what representation been made to the Regions mps and by councils and support this Regional Transport and connectivity project to the secretary for state for Transport Louise Haigh mp and Railway minister Lord Peter Hendy.

Especially as all of the project predate Restoring your railway schemes

For these project to continue in the Autumn spending review.

Response

The Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body has been asked by its constituent authorities to write a letter of support to the Minister for Rail for the Portishead Line. This is under preparation.

The Western Gateway is strongly committed to promoting the regional rail network recognising the importance of connectivity, support for economic growth and decarbonisation through a modal shift to rail. To this end the Western Gateway has funded development work for the Heart of Wessex Line, Cheltenham Spa bay platform and is currently funding Strategic Outline Business Cases for the Dorset Metro and West of England Line.

Furthermore as part of the emerging Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan there are a number of rail proposals that we are currently assessing and prioritising.

Question 2

In view if the Government Department for Housing and local government request to look at local government

To look at Regional Devolution Deals

And the importance of Regional Transport and connectivity in south west England.

With importance Regional Transport Board like Transport for the North

And Midlands connect.

What discussion are taking place with Gloucestershire county council, South Gloucestershire county council Banes Bristol city council North Somerset council west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris. Wiltshire Council Dorset Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch

Swindon and Devon and Cornwall Plymouth and Torbay Peninsula Transport Board Greater south West Partnership And Western Gateway partnership to look at Transport and planning and homes Devolution deals in south west England.

With bills on Great Britain Railways and Renationalise of the Railways in England.

Bill on buses Franchising and Municipalation of bus and Regional coach services.

So what discussion are taking place on Transport Boards in south west England and Devolution.

Inview the strong case being made for Regional Transport Devolution in The North of England and the Midlands.

Response

Agenda Item D sets out the implications and next steps on the revised housing forecasts in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Western Gateway will actively engage with the local authorities' transport and planning teams on this. Regional Centre of Excellence work will be refocused on providing support for the local authorities in planning for the new NPPF housing forecasts.

The picture and timescale on devolution is unclear. It is a commitment in the Western Gateway's Business Plan for 2025/26 (see Paper A) to assist and provide advice for new combined authorities on a common view and the importance of planning for the wider regional picture.

Question 3

With the importance of Regional Transport and connectivity.

And the new Labour government policy in the of move fast and fix it .

With great work carried out on the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board on Express coaches services and Bus and coach station and interchanges investment in Cheltenham spa, Arles court Transport Interchange Salisbury coach station

Both still finishing construction.

And Taunton Transport hub due to open in spring 2025 new facilities at 3eston super mare bus and coach station interchange and at worle Somerset.

Yeovil bus and coach station.

Planned rebuild.

Bus and coach station improvement planned in Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station,

Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station and Cinderford bus station.

Salisbury railway station Swindon bus and coach interchange Gloucester Transport hub and station interchange under construction.

We are very concerned about the loss of Regional bus and coach services.

Which was raised by Somerset mp Sarah Dyke mp Glastonbury and Somerton and simon opher mp for Stroud.

We have both loss major bus service

Like the bus corridor from Stroud bus and coach station to Wotton under Edge Charfield Wickwar chipping Sodbury, Yate bus station.Yate railway station yate Park and ride. 40 84 85 corridor.

But also importance coach services from London 4eston4a coach coach station to Taunton, Exeter bus and coach station, Okehampton Launceston Newquay bus and coach station and Penzance bus and coach station

National express coach services 503

The megabus Scottish City link coaches service has been withdrawn

Birmingham, Cheltenham spa, 4eston super mare bus and coach station, Bridgwater, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway.

South Morton and Barnstaple bus and coach station

The Regional bus coach Network. Is very important to part of the Region without bus and coach services especially in parts of Gloucestershire, south Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon to Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch and Dorset

North Devon and Cornwall. With no railway Network.

Regional bus links are also very important to link into Railway services and coach services.

So what representation is western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board making to the government about funding for Regional coaches services which need public funding for regional services coach services as these are not financial sustainable to run without public finance to National Express coaches limited and Scottish City link coaches megabus.

But with Regional cross boundary bus services and the Railway network form an 4eston4a4d network for south west England.

But we need revenue support from bus and coach services in this year's

We welcome the new Franchising consultation and the bus bill but buses and coaches need revenue support

In financial statement in October 2024

So what lobbying has western Gateway Transport Board peninsula Transport Board and West of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris and the Transport Authorities of Wiltshire and Swindon Gloucestershire, south Gloucestershire county council Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch North Somerset council Banes and Bristol city council.

I also a need to include import Regional bus and coach services in the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board area .

For example important Region services

Salisbury to Bournemouth.

Cheltenham spa to Cirencester and Swindon bus and coach station.

Bristol bus and coach station via Bristol Temple meads station 374 375 376

To Taunton Town soon to be bus and coach station.

375 To Bridgwater bus and coach station. 376 to Yeovil bus and coach station via Wells bus and coach station Glastonbury and street.

First Group plc Wales and West buses

Bath spa bus and coach station to Corsham and Chippenham for Calne and Swindon bus and coach station

X 31 55 .

Favesaver stagecoach west

620 Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach to Tetbury chipping Sodbury Yate bus station Westerleigh puckchurch Wick Lansdown and Bath spa bus and coach station.

Stagecoach west

Service D 1 Bath spa bus and coach station to Bathampton, Winsley Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge , warminster for Salisbury 24 .

24 Frome to Salisbury.

First Group plc west of England buses

South west coaches Beeline

Poole bus and coach station to Weymouth Town centre to x51 x53 Bridport bus and coach station to Lyme Regis and Axminster.
First Group plc west of England buses.

126 Weston super mare bus and coach station to Wells Bus and coach station.
First Group plc west of England busez

Theses are important bus and coach services that need cross boundary funding by local authorities and need finance support via the Department for transport in bus service improvement plan funding replacement for bus services improvement plan funding replacement and the £2 fare cap

Cross boundary bus services can be difficult to fund but vital to the west country communities and Seston5a

For social mobility, economy Development access to work school College university heath provision hospital basic food shopping's.

The Network of bus and coach services and stations and interchanges needs to be fully accessible to passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers.

Is very important so what discussions are the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board and local Authority and west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Carrying out with the Regions mps Department for transport and secretary of state louse Haigh mp and buses and coaches minster simon Lightwood mp

Response

At the previous request of the constituent authorities the Western Gateway has not undertaken work on bus services. Instead the focus has been on coaches. An update on the Western Gateway coach Strategy work in included in Paper G. We have received the feasibility study of first of three priority routes (Gloucestershire to Bristol Airport linking Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud, Wotton under Edge, Thornbury and Bristol) identified in the Strategy and this is under review by Western Gateway officers. We are about to commission feasibility assessment of the other two priority routes from the Strategy. These are the South Coast to Central Route linking Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Warminster, Frome, Bath and Bristol and the Gloucestershire to South Coast Route linking Cheltenham, Cirencester, Tetbury, Malmesbury, Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge and towards Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch.

The Western Gateway has established a Southwest Coach Sector Forum bringing together coach operators, industry bodies, the local authorities and other key stakeholders. The next meeting is scheduled for 22nd October 2024. The meeting will focus on summarising the work that has been done since the previous forum and outlining plans for the next phase of work.

Peninsula Transport have decided not to formally join in with the Western Gateway's coach work at this stage but will continue to attend the Coach Forum.

Recognising other STBs are working on buses and DfT guidance recommending this as well the Business Plan for 2025/26 (see Paper A) includes assisting local authorities in working together on bus franchise and enhanced partnership proposals to help integrate and coordinate services across the region. This will be subject to funding and resource in 2025/26. There are no current resources available to undertake this role.

Question 4

Will the western Gateway Transport Board,
With its Regional coach and bus study with Peninsula Transport Board.
Look at talking to the Department for transport and buses and coaches minister Steven Lightwood MP
About the need for Regional coaches services and cross boundary bus services.
We have recently seen cut backs in megabus Scottish city link.
Coach service from the North of England and the Midlands in
Number of coaches operating from Birmingham Railway station interchange to Cheltenham spa
Arles court coach stop and Bristol Bond Street.
So passengers can no longer use early morning service and later Evening services to and from
Bristol
Inter city cross country train Arriva 1sq capital service do not operate late services out of Bristol
Temple meads to Cheltenham spa and Birmingham New street via Worcester.
So a good coach Network is essential
We have lost the through megabus Scottish City link coaches service from
Birmingham to Cheltenham spa.
Bristol, Glastonbury, Bridgwater, Taunton, Wellington Tiverton parkway Tiverton south
Morton and Barnstaple.
And Loss of National Express coaches 503 From London Glastonbury coach station to Taunton, Exeter
bus and coach station, Okehampton Launceston Newquay bus and coach station
We also have the loss of any public bus services between Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station
Wotton under Edge Charfield Wickwar chipping Sodbury, Hawkesbury Upton yate bus station, Yate
Railway station yate Park and ride site.
Cross boundary bus services are very important in south west England
And like the 51 Cheltenham spa to Cirencester and Swindon bus and coach station.
There does not appear to be funding to improve important cross Regional bus service.
In areas where there are no railway services.
The Regional bus and coach Network can not be left to the commercial network.
Will the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board
I lobby the MPs and Secretary of state for Transport Louise Haigh MP and buses and coaches minister
Steven Lightwood MP for funding for Regional cross boundary bus and coach services to protect the
Rural bus and coach station network.
Such as the new 161 Birmingham Digbeth coach station, Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach
station, Swindon bus and coach station, Southampton coach station, Ringwood meeting house Lane
Interchange and Bournemouth coach station.

Response

Please see the answer to Question 3 as this covers the same issues.

Question 5

In view of the need to fund key Regional bus and coach corridor and interchanges such Cheltenham
spa Arles court Transport Interchange hub
Salisbury coach station, Swindon bus and coach station interchange.
New interchange at Swindon Exeter bus and coach station, Gloucester Transport hub Glastonbury
super mare Transport hub
New Transport hub in Taunton.
And improvement at Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station, Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and
coach station.

To name a few Regional interchange and the rebuilding of Yeovil bus and coach station.
The is with the buses bill and Devolution bill .
Needs for the western Gateway Transport Board to look at very important Regional buses service
And way to invest in cross country boundaries Regional bus service
Such as Cheltenham spa to Cirencester and Swindon bus and coach station.
Service 51
Swindon to Pewsey and Salisbury x5
X3 Salisbury town centre to Ringwood meeting house Lane and Bournemouth interchange and centre.
Service between Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station and Wotton under Edge Charfield
Wickwar chipping Sodbury Yate bus station and Bristol.
Gloucester Transport hub and Bristol Bus and coach
Bristol bus and coach station to Bristol Temple meads station via Whitchurch Pensford Clutton to Wells bus and coach station, Glastonbury street Somerton to Yeovil bus and coach station 376 , 374 to Taunton Town centre 375 to Bridgwater bus and coach station
First Group plc west of England buses .Poole bus and coach station to Weymouth interchange, Weymouth interchange to Bridport bus and coach station to Lyme Regis and Axminster station.
Gloucester Transport hub to Tewkesbury and Worcester crown point bus and coach station.
We need a Regional connectivity study
For Regional coaches services Regional bus service connections into Railway services, coach services and Ferry and Airport.
Will the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board.
Work on Regional key bus route strategy.
Gary Byard
Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign.
Rosa Kell Somerset catch the bus campaign.

Response

Please see the answer to Question 3 as this covers the same issues.

Question 6

What involvements has western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board.
Had working with the States of Jersey and Guernsey on the Franchising of the channel island ferry services for the ports of Poole and Portsmouth.
To St Peter's Port and St Hiller
And the new for major improvement in Bus and coach services to and from Poole Harbour and Poole Railway station including accessible Taxi's
Cycling provision.
Including input with Dorset Council and Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch council.
Their a very urgent need for surface access Transport plan for the Ferry links to the islands.
Gary Byard Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign.
Rosa Kell Somerset bus partnership.

Response

The Western Gateway STB has had no discussions with the States of Jersey and Guernsey.

The Strategic Cycling Network (see Paper F on the agenda) includes cycling routes to Poole. Funded by the Western Gateway, Network Rail are starting work on the Dorset Metro Strategic Outline Business Case which includes enhanced services to Poole. As mentioned in the response to Question 4 the Western Gateway, as part of the Coach Strategy work, is about to commission feasibility assessment for the South Coast to Central Route linking Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch, Blandford Forum, Shaftesbury, Warminster, Frome, Bath and Bristol and the Gloucestershire to South Coast Route linking Cheltenham, Cirencester, Tetbury, Malmesbury, Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge and towards Bournemouth, Poole, Christchurch.

B) Linda Cohen

Today I spoke to shop keepers in Wotton under Edge for whom the removal of the 84/85 has been the final death knell.

We have talked much about the loss of access to education and employment but now that the buses have gone the harsh reality of our oldest residents not being able to access Wotton shops and residents from the south of Wotton no longer making the trip has had an immediate and detrimental effect on our retail economy on .

There is now some talk of the possibility of funding to extend the 40. Can we please have some clarity about what the various councils are prepared to contribute. Gloucestershire County Council have written to Dan Norris / WECA and been clear in their determination to try and effect a solution.

Can the conversation begin before our community loses those precious retailers on which we all depend, and our most vulnerable residents are further disadvantaged and cast adrift to live out the rest of their lives dependent on the good will of neighbours for the odd lift but otherwise confined to their homes.

Response

At the previous request of the constituent authorities the Western Gateway has not undertaken work on bus services. Instead the focus has been on coaches. An update on the Western Gateway coach Strategy work is included in Paper G. Emerging work on a priority route from Gloucestershire to Bristol Airport Link linking Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud, Thornbury and Bristol does include options for serving Wotton under Edge. This work will be reported to the Board.

Recognising other STBs are working on buses and DfT guidance recommending this as well the Business Plan for 2025/26 (see Paper A) includes assisting local authorities in working together on bus franchise and enhanced partnership proposals to help integrate and coordinate services across the region. This will be subject to funding and resource in 2025/26. There are no current resources available to undertake this role.

C) Barbara Lawrence

I live in Gloucestershire with close proximity to the South Gloucestershire county

boundary and I am part of a campaign group looking to save our bus route from Wotton under Edge to Yate

After 18 months of temporary funding extensions our lifeline 84/5 bus route was axed on 31st August 2024

Our respective longstanding closely connected communities share strong social interaction, together with shared services, employment, apprenticeship, and educational opportunities, GPs, dental services, pharmacy and other amenities

LTAs, WECA, Gloucestershire County Council and also South Gloucestershire County Council failed to collaborate, get everyone on the same page during the 18 month timeframe and in so doing failed to consider the negative impact that had a number of consequences devastating people on both sides of our cross county boundary

The need for LTAs to successfully work toward a common goal which is in turn mutually beneficial to preserve a public transport service for communities on the edge of regions is vital

Instead they chose to fund an inadequate community flexible WESTlocal bus which has severed community cohesion and resulting in dire consequences

Removal of employment opportunities access to apprenticeships and to education with inability to access onward travel links. It has created areas of isolation to many elderly, disabled and more vulnerable people who rely totally on public transport to access affordable shopping, attend medical appointments and for social wellbeing

There is a downturn in local business and reduction in economic activity because our fundamental 84/5 bus route has been axed by authorities elected to represent us and understand our communities best interest

Please can all authorities involved consider the proposal for 40 Stroud Merry Walks bus route to Wotton under Edge be extended to Yate. This would enable our cross boundary connectivity to continue

Can I request your support on implementing an incentive for LTAs to work together successfully toward a common goal in making cross boundary bus services stronger to build more connected communities

Response

Please see the answer to Question C) as this covers the same issues.

D) Christina Biggs, Bristol Railway Campaign

Bristol Rail Campaign

Statement to the Western Gateway

Wednesday 2 October 2024, Trowbridge

Ashley Down Station and matters arising



It was fantastic to attend the reopening ceremony of the railway station at Ashley Down on Friday 27 September and to further celebrate the occasion by catching the first public train from Temple Meads on Saturday 28 September 2024.

Timetable

We are aware that the initial service from Temple Meads to Filton Abbey Wood, with occasional runs from Bath via the Rhubarb Loop, is an interim service waiting to be extended to Portishead to the south and Henbury to the north as part of MetroWest Phase 2, and we are of course eager for the Portishead Line to receive full funding in lieu of the Restoring Your Railway fund.

In the meantime, we would like to see more through services introduced to support the North Bristol commuter stations of Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Ashley Down, Patchway and Pilning. As Transport for Wales propose a new stopping rail service introduced from Cardiff Central to Bristol Temple Meads, we would encourage Western Gateway to support these plans. As the new service would be separate from the existing Bristol Temple Meads to Cardiff Central GWR services, the Cardiff services could be given fewer stops to reduce the journey time. We would also like to see the West of England Combined Authority facilitate the addition of stops on the MetroWest Phase 2 service to Gloucester, at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, as well as at Ashley Down.

Zonal fares

We would also suggest that the fare structure in the region should be equalised.

At present, there are big price differences between similar journeys, with some fares being quite low while the cost of some short journeys in the central area is too high. On the Severn Beach Line, fares have been subsidised for many years and this has helped support a huge growth in passenger numbers.

However, other suburban routes have not had this benefit. These fares are typically more than double those for comparable journeys on the Severn Beach line, as shown in the table below. The fare from Temple Meads to Ashley Down (£3.50 single) is significantly higher than for nearby Montpellier (£1.50 single). The fare from Bedminster to Lawrence Hill, at £4.70 for a 2.8 km journey, compares very unfavourably with Lawrence Hill to Montpellier (£1.50 for 3km). For comparison, a similar journey across London by tube would cost less than £3. We think these anomalies should be cleared up as a matter of urgency.

| Station | Distance from Temple Meads (km) | Single Fare |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Lawrence Hill | 1.6 | £1.50 |
| Bedminster | 1.2 | £3.20 |
| Montpelier | 4.6 | £1.50 |
| Ashley Down | 4.6 | £3.50 |
| Sea Mills | 6 | £2.00 |
| Filton Abbey Wood | 6.2 | £4.60 |

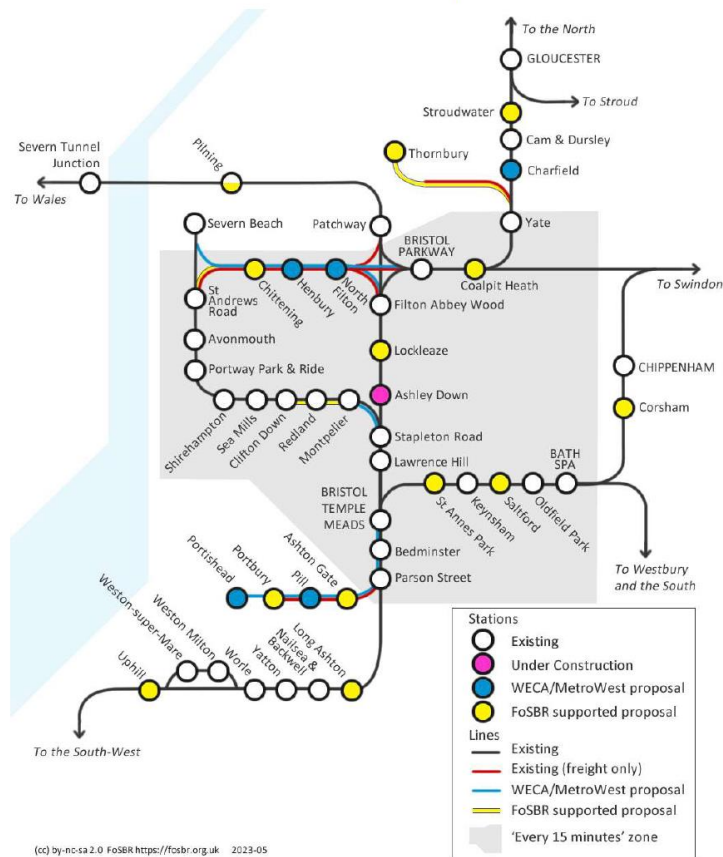
Bristol Rail Campaign believe that the zonal fare system similar to that used on the Severn Beach Line should be extended to cover all local services. An example of a three zone system might be:

Zone 1, bounded by Clifton Down, Filton Abbey Wood and Parson St;

Zone 2, bounded by Severn Beach, Bristol Parkway, Keynsham, Portishead and Nailsea and Backwell;

Zone 3, bounded by Charfield, Bath and Yatton.

We believe that such a system would encourage cross-city and other local journeys, simplify fares, and be fairer and easier to understand.



Christina Biggs, Bristol Rail Campaign (new name for FoSBR)

Response

The Western Gateway supports Transport for Wales' proposal for more services to Bristol and the opportunity this presents for stops at Ashley Down station. The zonal fares proposals is noted.