

## **Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body**

### **Statements and Questions to the Board 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 with responses**

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

#### Question 1

What progress is being on the south west coach strategy in discussions with National Express coaches limited and Flixbus coaches/ First group buses

Now that Megabus Scottish City link coaches have ceased to operate in England except the Cardiff Central to Bristol, Cheltenham spa Birmingham new street Railway station to Manchester bus and coach station.

Leeds bus and coach station Newcastle upon Tyne and Glasgow bus and coach station.

All other services are cancelled

Except the Bristol Bond Street coach station, Bristol Airport Churchill, East Brent. Bridgwater, Taunton Wellington Cullompton Exeter Newton Abbot and Plymouth coach station.

Megabus Scottish City link coaches stagecoach South West service.

The services from Plymouth coach station to Exeter, Taunton to London victoria coach station.

Service Bristol Bond Street Cheltenham spa Birmingham, Manchester Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne.

From the south west.

Cardiff, Newport, Bristol, Reading to London victoria coach station .

So what discussion are Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board have with National Express coaches limited/ Flixbus coaches/ First group plc/ Go ahead group coaches and The secretary of state for Transport Louise Haigh mp

Chief passengers and simon Lightwood mp bus and coaches minster about replacement for theses services.

In view of the loss already of

503 National Express coaches limited Penzance bus and coach station, Newquay bus and coach station, Launceston Okehampton Exeter bus and coach station, Taunton London Heathrow Airport London victoria coach station.

And megabus Scottish City link coaches withdraw on Hull Interchange.

Leeds bus and coach station Manchester bus and coach station Birmingham, Cheltenham spa, Bristol Bond Street, weston super mare bus and coach station, Bridgwater bus and coach station Taunton Tiverton Parkway Tiverton bus and coach station, south Morton and Barnstaple bus and coach station.

And also can we have an operator update at the Next coach forum please not just from CPT .

But from National Express coaches limited Flixbus coaches/ First group plc/ Go ahead group and Stagecoach South west on it coach services

As Scottish City link coaches megabus coaches were on at the last coach Forum and gave up to details of the services being withdrawn on the 4 th December 2024 in England

## **Response**

Many coach operators are invited to the coach forums, and we have previously had good attendance from City Link, GoSouthCoast, Flix bus, Pulhams Coaches, Barnes Coaches and others. We appreciate the help from CPT in circulating the meeting invite for the forums to their members. We are working with our consultants (Aecom), to revisit the feasibility study for the Cheltenham to Bristol Airport route to consider the potential implications on demand and feasibility of the recent news on service withdrawal. We are aware Peninsula Transport are progressing their own work on coaches, so we will seek to have regular updates to support the work going on. The next coach forum will be held in Bath on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025, and we will have an agenda item on there for a roundtable update from coach operators.

## **Question 2**

With the new Government proposals to put bus services under Public control by Franchising and Municipalation of public bus services

And the awarding of £ 83 million pounds bus service improvement plan money by UK government Departments for Transport Louise Haigh secretary for Transport and simon Lightwood mp buses and coaches minster.

With £14.863.806 for the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

North somerset council £4596.304

Somerset council £6 849.770

Swindon Borough Council £2,894 .900

Wiltshire Council £6.874.997

Gloucestershire £8031 694

Dorset Council £ 3.8 million.

Bournemouth Poole and Christchurch

£6.016 436

Devon County Council £11 618.699

Torbay council £2, 127,106

Plymouth city council £459 6304

Cornwall council £10 589,782

Which covers the area by the Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board plus Swindon.

But what coordination is the Regional Transport Boards going to play in making sure that Regional bus and coach services cross the county

Boundaries at present we have bus services.

Such as the 84 85 Wotton under Edge Charfield Wickwar Chipping Sodbury Yate bus station Yate railway station Yate Park and ride site Service

Has been withdrawn.

Because Gloucestershire county council public transport unit and West of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris.

With South Gloucestershire county council

Failed to reach agreement on this vital bus services corridor

And the Y6 shopping bus service.

Yate bus station to Hawkesbury Upton via Charfield and Wickwar.

Fails to run to Wotton under Edge for Shopping, Heath care surgery's Employment facilities and school and colleges KLB.

Causing this service to be raised in the Houses of Parliament rural bus service debate.

Service 91 Midsomer Norton to the Chew valley services runs through Chewton Mendip leaving passengers unable to connect with the Trunk

Bristol bus and coach station to Hengrove, Whitchurch Pensford Clutton Farringdon Gurney Chewton Mendip Wells bus and coach station Glastonbury and street, services to Bridgwater bus and coach station/ Taunton bus and coach station/ Yeovil bus and coach station. 374 375 376 run by First Group plc Wales and West buses Division.

Because Somerset council, Banes and West of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris.

Can not reach agreement.

Services 51 Swindon bus and coach station to Cirencester and Cheltenham spa promenade

With no Evening and very limited Sunday services.

Because Gloucestershire county council, Wiltshire Council and Swindon borough Council can not reach agreement on cross boundary services.

343 Worcester crown point bus and coach station to Upton upon seven used to run to Tewkesbury for Gloucester Transport hub and Cheltenham spa.

Because Gloucestershire county council and Worcestershire county Council.

Can not reach agreement.

With the need for good Regional bus and coach services and interchanges with Ferry services/ Bus and coach services Airports

What work is western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board undertaking to make sure like Scotland and Wales have full integrated Transport Network in south west England and also to make the difficult local Authority's coordinate bus fares and cross boundary bus services.

Following the fares flexibility in the secretary of state for Transport Louise Haigh mp and passengers in chief allowing local fares setting in the Regional and Franchising and Municipalisation of bus and Regional coach services.

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

### **Question 3**

With the delivery of more trains for south west England cover by western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board.

By the Department for transport to First Group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR and inter city cross country train Arriva 1sq capital services

For Penzance to Truro Plymouth North Road Exeter St Davids Bristol Temple meads station route with Cross country train Arriva going North to Birmingham New street Manchester Piccadilly Leeds Newcastle upon Tyne and Edinburgh Waverley/ Glasgow Central

What progress is being made?

On transferring 158 166 train units from Devon and Cornwall that are based to The Greater Bristol metro area

Bristol Temple meads station to Filton Abbey station Bristol Parkway railway station, Yate Charfield new station Cam and the Dursley Gloucester central Cheltenham spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forgate service.

Bristol Temple meads station to keynsham Oidfiled Park Bath spa Freshford Avonclife Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury Dilton marsh warminster and Salisbury line / Frome line .

Taunton, Bridgwater Highbridge and Burnham on sea, weston super mare, Worle parkway Yatton for Clevedon Nalisea and Backwell Parson street Bedminster Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton Road, Montpellier sea Mills Shirehampton Portway park and ride site , Avonmouth Dock St Andrews Road Seven Beach ine

Bristol Temple meads to Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood line for Filton North and Henbury for Cribbs causeway and Bristol zoo

The Bristol Temple meads station Station to Bath spa, Trowbridge Westbury Frome , Castle Cary Railway Yeovil pen mill Dorchester west and Weymouth Town line

Cardiff Central, Newport Bristol Temple meads station Bath spa Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury warminster Salisbury, Southampton to Portsmouth line .

All need extra rolling stock so hopefully working with the Department for transport and First group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR 158 166 165 .

Can transfer to these routes

Even with 12 extra sets on Inter city cross country train Arriva 1sq capital service voyager trains

Transfer from First Group plc Advanti west coast partnership Trenitalia.

There is not enough trains

For Penzance to Plymouth Bristol Temple meads station Cheltenham spa

Birmingham New street Manchester piccadilly/ Leeds Newcastle upon Tyne and Edinburgh Waverley route

And the Edinburgh Newcastle upon Tyne Leeds Birmingham New street to Oxford Reading Southampton Parkway Southampton to Bournemouth Central Route

Is western Gateway Transport Board peninsula Transport Board pushing to secretary of state Louise Haigh mp chief passenger and Railway minister lord Peter Hendy for more Rolling stock.

And the rest of Inter city Express trains fleet.

Rolling stock is also required from the London Waterloo to Salisbury Yeovil Junction Axminster station and Exeter Central and Exeter St David route Including Electrical trains .

Is this issue being addressed by First group plc MTR and The Department for transport.

Including the provision on Train catering on this inter city train route and on the London water to Bournemouth Central and Weymouth route .

There is a very urgent need for more Rolling stock for Railway in south west England

So what action is western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board taking with the Regions mps and The Department for transport and secretary of state for Transport Louise Haigh mp and Railway minister lord Hendy for modern trains. And accessible trains and Railway

## **Response**

The Western Gateway STB understands that a fleet of Class 175 diesel multiple units is moving across from Transport for Wales to Great Western Railway. Although these are primarily aimed at services in the far South West they will reduce rolling stock pressures in the Western Gateway area.

The Western Gateway STB is fully supportive of Great Western Railway's Project Churchyard for a new rolling stock fleet of electric and battery powered trains. We understand a business case has been submitted to the Department for Transport. If successful the new fleet will start appearing from 2030.

The draft Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan includes in its 38 priority proposals Network Rail's proposal for the provision of traction power infrastructure to support the

removal of diesel only passenger rolling stock upon life expiry in the early 2030s. This will require additional infrastructure to power new rolling stock provided through Project Churchward or other sources. This is likely to involve sections of overhead line and new third rail electrification which may be used to power trains directly and/or to charge on-board batteries. Subject to approval by the Western Gateway Board the Strategic Investment Plan goes out to consultation on 20 December 2024.