

## Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

### Statements and Questions to the Board 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 with responses

#### A) David Redgewell South West Transport Network and Railfuture

Question 1 .

What progress is being made?on designing the Regional bus and coach Network jointly with Peninsula Transport Board and Swindon.

There is a need to upgrade the following Bus service to provide Cheltenham spa to Bournemouth and Poole bus and coach corridor via Swindon new Transport interchange.

With Travel shop .

This involves upgrading the bus service 51 Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station/ promenade to Cirencester and Swindon bus and coach station soon to be the new Transport interchange

Service x5 Swindon Transport hub to M Pewsey and Salisbury City centre.

And service x3 Salisbury Railway station Forecourt and city centre to Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and coach interchange and Bournemouth interchange.

The x3 operating via Salisbury Railway station Forecourt interchange.

There is also a need to improve the Bristol bus and coach station to Bath spa bus and coach station interchange x39 39 corridor and D1 D1x Bath spa bus and coach station to Bradford on Avon Trowbridge Westbury Warminster for service 24 Frome to Salisbury correction at for Bournemouth interchange Salisbury railway station or city centre interchange x3.

We need to follow Transport for Wales and Devop a Regional Express bus and coach Network.

Bristol bus and coach station and Bristol Temple meads station to Wells Bus and coach station ,Glastonbury street and Yeovil bus and coach station.

and connectivity onward to Sherborne Town Sherborne Railway Dorchester South station and Weymouth Kings Statue/ Railway station.

Bournemouth Transport interchange to Poole bus and coach station/ Swanage bus coach railway station to Weymouth Kings Statue Railway station Bridport bus and coach station Lyme Regis and Axminster for Exeter bus and coach station is important bus and Regional coach services corridor.

The Bristol bus and coach station to Weston Super Mare bus and coach station interchange is an example x1

Then service 20 Weston Super Mare interchange / Weston Super Mare Railway station to Burnham on Sea Highbridge Bridgwater bus and coach station and Taunton. 21, 21a

376, 375 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads station Wells bus and coach station Glastonbury street Bridgwater bus and coach station/ Taunton Transport hub.

Needs to become part of a network.

Linking Railway stations bus and coach station and into the Falcon coaches services network Linking Bristol Bond Street, coach station to Bristol Airport Churchill East Brent, Bridgwater , Taunton Wellington Cullompton Exeter Newton Abbot and Plymouth coach station,

The importance of the design of the Regional coach Network is very important so what progress are we making on the Birmingham Digbeth coach station, Worcester coachways , Tewkesbury, Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station, Cheltenham spa Arles Court interchange coach station Gloucester Transport hub, Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station Wotton Under / Thornbury Yate bus and coach station Uwe Bus and coach station/ Cribbs Causeway bus station Bristol Bus and coach station to Bath spa bus and coach station, via Wells bus and coach station Shepton Mallet interchange Dorchester, Weymouth Poole bus and coach station and Bournemouth interchange or via Salisbury Railway station or coach station

and working peninsula Transport Board on coach routes from Birmingham Digberth coach station Worcester coachways Tewkesbury Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station Cheltenham Arles court Transport Interchange Gloucester Transport hub Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Airport weston super mare bus and coach station Bridgwater bus and coach station Taunton Transport hub new wellington Cullompton Exeter bus and coach station Newton Abbot Plymouth coach station Liskeard Bodmin Truro bus and coach station / Camborne bus and coach station Newquay bus and coach station Penzance bus and coach station To Tiverton bus and coach station and Barnstaple.

We need a comprehensive bus and coach Network link into the Regional.

With investment in bus and coach station and interchanges.

With interchange facilities and intergrated ticketing as per the government white paper on Transport.

What is the progress on this plan in the south west Region and improvement completing the Arles court Transport Interchange Cheltenham spa coach station with bus links to Gloucester Transport hub and Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station and promenade. Cafe and Taxis rank . Salisbury coach station.

Swindon Transport Interchange needs a Bus and Travel office

Taunton Transport hub with passengers facilities cafe Tourist information centre staff accommodation waiting room facilities,realtime information systems.

Important facilities improvement at Bath spa bus and coach station upgrade seating Travel centre cafe improvement similar at Bristol bus andc station

Bournemouth Interchange Poole bus and coach station Bridport bus and coach station Swanage bus and coach station links to Bournemouth Airport and poole ferry port

Gloucester Transport hub Doors and safety systems which have been broken for a year ownership is Gloucester city council until local government re organisation.

What progress is being made on a bus and coach/ Rail Interchanges in the Region jointly with peninsula Transport Board.

And talking to the mayor of the North East Kim McGuinness about the reopening of Newcastle upon Tyne coach station Terminal buildings Toilets including Disabled Toliets changing places cafe waiting room information point realtime and disabled assistance.

Because of new Bristol bus and coach station via Birmingham and Leeds bus and coach station by Flixbus coaches network and National Express coaches.

## Response

An update on work on the Western Gateway Coach Strategy can be found in Paper C to the Board. This includes the two routes coming up from the south coast to Bristol Airport and Gloucestershire are probably not suitable for end-to-end coach services. Alternative options integrating bus, rail and coach are being investigated, dependent on internal resources.

As part of the Regional Centre of Excellence programme for 2025/26 the Western Gateway is committed to undertaking work on buses and in particular cross boundary services. A new Transport Officer post to lead on this work is currently being advertised.

## Question 2

What progress is being made on the metro west railway Network and the reopening of the Bristol Temple meads station Bedminster Parson street Pill and Portishead railway line and reopening date set for services to operator .

And a future station at Ashton Gate.

On Bristol Temple meads station to Bristol Lawrence hill Bristol Stapleton Road Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood station Filton North for the Arena Henbury and loop line.

Cheltenham spa and Weston super mare station lifts .

Devize Parkway station and Westbury platform.

A lift Bridge at Bristol Lawrence hill Station.

And the removal of Inter city Express trains on the local Metro west railway Network around Bristol.

On the Bristol Temple meads station to Filton Abbey station and Bristol Temple meads station to Filton Abbey station Bristol Parkway railway station yate Charfield for Wotton under Edge new station Cam and the Dursley Gloucester central Cheltenham spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forgeate Street local Metro west railway Network.

With short platforms and no disabled access to seating area's.

And extra Rolling stock for cross country trains arriva 1sq capital

Penzance to Plymouth and Edinburgh Waverley via Bristol Temple meads station and Birmingham New street..

Bournemouth Central to Newcastle Central service.

## **Response**

MetroWest is a West of England Combined Authority scheme and this question has been redirected to their officers.

Network Rail will be providing an update at the Board meeting on their projects.

As part of the Business Plan for 2025/26 the Western Gateway is committed to commissioning work for reinstating Platform 0 at Westbury station. Work is expected to start in late June 2025 with completion by the end of October 2025. A report will be brought to the December 2025 Board meeting.

Question 3 .

Now reads what discussion have taken place with the Department for Transport and the importance of maintenance repairs and construction of new lifts at station such as Bristol Parkway station or new lift Bridges at weston super mare station in Somerset or Dorchester South station in Dorset . Bodmin Parkway in Cornwall ,Torquay in Devon Yeovil Junction and castle Cary in Somerset, Trowbridge in Wiltshire After the Department for categories with Network Rail Western route and First group plc, National company as a inconvenience for 6 months after the lift were not working for 6 months.

Hospital Schools college's and Housing Associations/ company make lifts top priorities for repair within hours .

Has Western Gateway Transport Board peninsula Transport Board taken this up the Railway minister lord Peter Hendy and the Department for Transport Simpiar arrangements apply to Disabled toilets at Railway station and Bristol Bus and coach station

## **Response**

The Western Gateway Board are deeply concerned about accessibility and the importance of ensuring all residents have access to public transport networks.

Through the Western Gateway Rail Strategy, for example, the Sub-national Transport Body is supportive of proposals to make stations fully accessible.

Individual schemes are for the relevant Local Authority, Network Rail and train operating companies to pursue. Previously the Western Gateway has written letters of support for Access for All schemes and the STB will continue to do this. Several of the locations mentioned above are included as part of schemes listed as priorities

in the Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan and they will be supported through this process.

## **B) Barbara Lawrence**

I am part of the cross boundary campaign group who collectively argue that it is critical that the 84/5 bus route Wotton under Edge to Yate should be restored as a matter of urgency.

Our well used bus route which connected 11 towns and villages was axed at the end of August 2025. This indefensible action resulted in loss of employment or apprenticeship opportunity, reduced educational choice and removed socially and economically necessary benefits to our communities and businesses.

WECA Mayor Helen Godwin realises that interconnectivity at every level is crucial and that bus travel drives growth. She committed to work across councils and it is apparent that she has worked constructively to this aim since day 1 of her term of office.

New Liberal Democratic led administration in Gloucestershire Council Council and Cabinet lead for Transport Cllr Roger Whyborn has also committed to work collaboratively with WECA and South Gloucestershire Council in reaching a final solution to restoring connectivity for the 11 communities on the 32 mile round trip.

Question.

We have had isolation, economic hardship and social exclusion imposed on our communities due to elected decision makers inaction and by using cross county boundary issues to sever the shared services and amenities which was mutually beneficial to us and our close neighbours.

What action and timeframe do Western Gateway membership recommend to reinstate a regular timetabled bus route that all 11 communities will benefit from.

## **Response**

As part of the Regional Centre of Excellence programme for 2025/26 the Western Gateway is committed to undertaking work on buses and in particular cross boundary services. To this end the Board at its meeting on 25 March 2025 agreed the recruitment of an additional Transport Officer. Unfortunately, due to the approval processes at the accountable body taking longer than expected there has been a delay in advertising the role. Adverts are now out and it is hoped to have the new officer in post by September 2025. The delay means starting the bus work is on hold until then although the ideas for the work programme will continue to be developed including recommendations from the Coach Strategy. With specific reference to the 84/85 route this is a matter for bi-lateral discussion between the West of England Combined Authority and Gloucestershire County Council. We are delighted these discussions are now bearing fruit.

## **Questions submitted to the 25 March 2025 Board but not received in time to provide a response**

### **Rosa Kell Somerset Catch the Bus Campaign and Somerset Bus Partnership Devon 7and Cornwall Catch the Bus Campaign.**

With the government intergrated Transport white paper consultation document out and access for all design schemes in south west England by  
Network rail Western route and Network rail wessex routes .  
And Untill summer 2025 now that the Railway Act to renationalise the Railways is pasted.  
South west Trains is run by First group plc First Group plc MTR South western railway company Ltd  
and First group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR.  
And inter city cross country train Arriva 1sq capital services .  
Till 2027 .

What progress is being made on Bus coach railway interchanges with new lift footbridges at  
Castle cary Railway station  
With the urgent needs for a bus turning circle and drop kerb and Castle kerbs and shelters on the  
main A371  
For the number 1 bus that links  
Castle cary Railway station to the Bath and West showground Evercreech and Shepton mallet  
interchange.  
and Castle cary Railway station Castle cary Town centre and Yeovil.  
And buses to Glastonbury festival.  
The bus turning circle been put in but Castle cary Railway station , still has no lift Bridge.

Torquay with the need for urgent lifts added to the Bridge.

and a buffet reopening.  
Bodmin Parkway station.  
the railhead for Bodmin Town .  
Wadebridge bus and coach station and Padstow Historic railway station bus Terminal terminal. Go  
ahead group Plymouth city bus go Cornwall Service 11  
Which also needs upgrading to modern interchange.  
Par for the Newquay  
Mid Cornwall metro.  
And the bus service to Fowey service 25 go Cornwall.  
Lostwithiel.  
Bridgwater with the need for lifts to be added to the Bridge for access to the Town centre by bus  
1Town service first Group plc buses and 375 Bristol bus and coach station Bristol Temple meads  
station Wells bus and coach station, Glastonbury and street that passes the station.  
Weston super mare .  
Which urgent need a lift Bridge to link to the Town centre and Bus and coach station.  
Rail Air bus link to Bristol Airport A 3. Bus service.  
Yeovil Junction railway station needs lifts on the Exeter central to Waterloo main line via Axminster  
and Salisbury.  
And bus link to Yeovil bus and coach station and Yeovil pen mill station.  
Dorchester South station

With to Bus link to Bridport bus and coach station Lyme Regis Town and Axminster station. Service x51 x53 Bournemouth Central Transport interchange. Weston super mare Railway station has no access Bridge still Stroud has no accessible Bridge . But the Bridge is being restored. But with out a lift . Cheltenham spa Railway station has not lifts still Dispite being a major inter city cross country train Arriva 1sq capital service station. It also has services by First Group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR and Transport for Wales and buses by stagecoach west.

Trowbridge for the Melksham line . No intergrated Transport Interchange with a lift Bridge. We need the Railway white paper to transfer station access for all schemes timetable input on Regional railway services and tickets to mayoral combined transport Authority. Similar to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council services around Greater Bristol from Bristol Temple meads station to weston super mare and Taunton. To Clifton Down and severn Beach To Filton Abbey wood station. To Gloucester central Railway station Cheltenham spa, Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forgate Street Line. The consultation finishes on 18 th April 2025 .

What is the update on making these stations fully accessible.

When is any construction work  
Planned on these Footbridges with accessible lifts and Transport interchanges.

## **Response**

The Western Gateway Board are deeply concerned about accessibility and the importance of ensuring all residents have access to public transport networks. Through the Western Gateway Rail Strategy, for example, the Sub-national Transport Body is supportive of proposals to make stations fully accessible. Individual schemes are for the relevant Local Authority, Network Rail and train operating companies to pursue. Previously the Western Gateway has written letters of support for Access for All schemes and the STB will continue to do this. Several of the locations mentioned above are included as part of schemes listed as priorities in the Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan and they will be supported through this process.

## **Question 2 .**

With megabus Scottish City link coaches withdrawing from England on 4th December 2024 Except the Falcon coaches services part of megabus Scottish City link coaches. But to continue as part of stagecoach South west Falcon bus and coach Network.

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

With all the megabus Scottish City link coaches network with including the Plymouth coach station, Exeter bus and coach station, Bridgwater, Taunton to London Victoria coach station service withdrawn and all connection from

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

Withdrawn

Just one Scottish City link service to Edinburgh bus and coach station, Glasgow bus and coach reminding.

And the loss of the 503 National Express coaches limited service from Penzance bus and coach station, Newquay bus and coach station, Launceston, Okehampton, Exeter bus and coach station, London Heathrow Airport, London Victoria.

What discussion are now taking place urgent with the Department for transport and secretary of state, Hydi Alexander MP for Swindon and bus minister Stephen Lightwood MP.

Over replacement coach services by National Express coaches limited and Flixbus coaches network joint with Berry's coaches and First group plc over replacement coach services

And the Network Regional STB in England

Which will require public subsidies.

Like the Regional bus network.

With subsidies just announced by the Department for transport for south west England with need to be coordinated by Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board across the south west to make sure bus and coach services cross country boundaries.

## Response

An update on work on the Western Gateway Coach Strategy can be found in Paper C to the Board. This includes the two routes coming up from the south coast to Bristol Airport and Gloucestershire are probably not suitable for end-to-end coach services. Alternative options integrating bus, rail and coach are being investigated, dependent on internal resources.

As part of the Regional Centre of Excellence programme for 2025/26 the Western Gateway is committed to undertaking work on buses and in particular cross boundary services. A new Transport Officer post to lead on this work is currently being advertised.

## Question 3.

What progress is being made at reopening catering services at bus and coach station and Railway stations in south west England.

Working with the Department for transport, Network rail, Wessex routes and Western routes.

First Group plc, MTR South Western Railway company Ltd, SWR

First Group plc, Greater Western trains company limited, GWR and First group plc properly and Amey property Group

And inter city cross country train Arriva 1st class capital services.

Buffets at Bridgwater, Taunton Towards Penzance platform.

Yeovil Pen Mill.

Warminster.

Torquay.

Paignton.

Warminster.



And on Trains between London Waterloo Salisbury Yeovil Junction  
Axminster Exeter Central and Exeter St David station.  
London Waterloo to Bournemouth Poole and Weymouth.  
Operated by First MTR South Western Railway company Ltd.  
But soon to be the Department for transport railway operations from May 2025  
And the Regional coach station at Plymouth coach station run by Plymouth city council.  
Taunton new bus and coach station.  
Run by Somerset council opening Spring 2025 .  
Yeovil bus and coach station under Reperation. Cheltenham spa Arles court Transport Interchange  
which is major coach station for the Gateway to south west England and the cotswolds  
But with lots of extra National Express coaches services to London victoria coach station London  
Heathrow Airport Gloucester Transport hub Ross on wye bus and coach station and Hereford bus  
and coach station.  
Penzance bus and coach station Plymouth coach station Exeter bus and coach station Taunton ,  
Bridgwater bus and coach station Bristol bus and coach station, Cheltenham spa Arles court  
interchange coach station and Birmingham Digberth coach station.  
New Cardiff Central to Bristol bus and coach station Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange and  
Birmingham summer row interchange.  
But we need the x94 Gloucester Transport hub to Cheltenham spa Town centre.  
24 ,7 bus to call at the Transport hub at Arles court interchange coach station.  
Bus 100 Cheltenham spa Town centre to Arles court Transport Interchange to run on Sundays and 99  
Oxford bus company Pulham coaches go ahead to run Gloucester Transport hub to Gloucestershire  
Royal Hospital Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange coach station Cheltenham Hospital and  
Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station.  
Service k Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station to call at the Arles court Transport  
Interchange on its way to and from Benhall.  
Operated by Oxford bus company Pulham coaches go ahead group.  
And a Taxis rank.

We welcome this coach station as way forward across south west England.  
But we need a design bus service in the New interchange from Day one  
That is why we welcome the work on a bus and coach strategy for Western Gateway Transport  
Board and Peninsula Transport Board areas .  
To co ordinate bus services Across the south west Region, Somerset being in 2 Transport Board areas  
Banes council North Somerset council and Somerset Council and the west of England mayoral  
combined transport Authority.  
Need a Regional co ordinated bus and coach Network.  
We welcome this work  
And would ask to to ask the Region mps to Including coach funding and service levels agreement for  
Region coach network in England similar to Transport for Wales and in Northern Ireland.  
Please also respond to Government while papers on Railway services Devolution of Train services,  
fares and stations and access for passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers  
wheelchairs users for lifts and disability access.

## **Response**

Catering services are an issue for the train, bus and coach operators to address.  
The STB will be supportive of proposals that come forward.

Please see previous responses on coach and bus services on the work of the  
Western Gateway.