

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Statements and Questions to the Board 17 September 2025 with responses

A) David Redgewell South West Transport Network and Railfuture

Question 1.

With Regional Railway policy being important to western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board

So what action is being taken? to sort the upgrading of the Cheltenham spa Bristol Parkway station, Bristol Temple meads station weston super mare, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway, Exeter St Davids station Newton Abbott, Plymouth North Road Truro and Penzance main line and support for the petition to take the last section of the Dawish wall Parson Tunnel safety work

Which is very important to connect the Defence of United Kingdom city of Plymouth with the Mod at Filton Abbey wood with its station and CCHQ at Cheltenham spa.

Will the western Gateway Transport Board support the upgrading of Penzance, Plymouth ,Exeter st David Taunton Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Parkway Cheltenham spa Birmingham new street. Derby Leeds Manchester piccadilly/ Edinburgh Waverley route and route via Westbury and London Paddington route by talking to Regional mp and Lord Hendy Railways minister and secretary of state for Transport Hydi Alexander mp and West Country mp and also again raise the issue of the overcrowding of cross country trains arriva 1sq capital service

and the short of Rolling stock with 8 voyage unit off lease at 3 Rivers Depot.

In Burton on Trent from First Group plc Advati west coast partnership Trenitalia voyage fleet 12 again that have been transferred to Arriva Cross country trains.

This leaves passengers standing on Trains from Edinburgh Waverley Newcastle upon Tyne York Leed, Manchester piccadilly Derby and Birmingham New street to Destination in the south west and Wessex. To Bournemouth Dorset,Cheltenham spa Bristol Taunton Exeter Paignton Newton Abbot Plymouth North Station to Truro and Penzance

We also need the Department for transport and secretary of state to address the shortage of Train crew and catering on cross country trains.

Response

It is proposed that the Chair of the Western Gateway Board writes to the Rail Minister expressing support for the upgrading of key stations in the Western Gateway region and expressing concerns around overcrowding on CrossCountry services. The letter will also pick up the concerns about the accessibility of GWR train services for passengers with mobility requirements as raised in Question 2 below.

Question 2 .

On the issue of access to the Railway for passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers wheelchairs users.

We still have inter city trains on the local Train services between Bristol Temple Meads station Filton Abbey wood Bristol Parkway, Yate , Charfield for Wotton under Edge, cam and Dursley Gloucester central,Cheltenham spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury, Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forge Street.

Which mean if the train is the wrong round passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers wheelchairs users have to travel in part of train in a corridor with no wheelchair or accessible space

With Class 175 trains being delivered to First Group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR for Train services between Penzance to Plymouth and Exeter St David station to Barnstaple and Okehampton

This will displace 166 158 train units from Devon and Cornwall.

Will the western Gateway Transport Board press the Department for transport and First group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR their contract and West of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council contract to allocate the local trains with passengers with Reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers wheelchairs users can travel on the Bristol Temple meads station to Gloucester central and Worcester Forge Street Line

and press the Department for Transport and network Rail to progress access for all lifts at Cheltenham spa, Weston super mare, Bodmin Parkway, castle cary, Yeovil Junction, Dorchester South Stroud, chepstow on the Wales England Border which has a Transport Interchange under construction and access for all schemes urgently

Response

The concerns about the accessibility of GWR train services for passengers with mobility requirements are shared by the Western Gateway. It is intended to raise these issues with the Rail Minister in the letter from the Chair (see the response to Question 1 above).

Question 3 .

What progress is being made?

On coach policy in south west England with opening of the new coach stations in Salisbury the new bus and coach in Swindon which still need a coach policy for Tourist coaches the new coach station Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange coach station, and the new Taunton Transport hub opening next year.

The concern we have is the new coach routes by Flixbus we need more inspection and testing of Psvr wheelchair ramps as we have recently have had ramp failures the service operate From Penzance Bus and coach Truro, Falmouth University campus, Truro bus and coach station, Newquay bus and coach station, Plymouth coach station Exeter bus and coach station Taunton Bridgwater, weston super mare, interchanges worle parkway Bristol Airport bus and coach station Bristol bus and coach station, uwe Bus and coach station Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station Arles court Transport Interchange Cheltenham spa coach station Swindon interchange Poole bus and coach station, Bournemouth Transport hub Ringwood meeting house Lane, Southampton and London Heathrow Airport coach station London Heathrow London victoria coach station But with such a network operated by Euro coaches , FernHill Travel go ahead group South coast First Group bus and coach Divisions Newport Transport cymru coaches all run services for Flixbus coaches network.

In south west England but their need to be more Driver Training and wheelchair accessible ramp testing in Bus and coach station and interchanges as we had ramp failures and no spare coach can

this issue be addressed with Flixbus coaches network manager via the western Gateway Transport Board coach forum and Peninsula Transport Board coach forum. and the mayor of the west of England mayoral combined Transport Authority mayor Helen Goodwin.

National Express coaches limited have equalities and diversity Department and Trained staff 24 7 control centre along with Scottish City link coaches.

Can we please look at this with the Department for transport and the need for Flixbus coaches network to address equalities and diversity issues and Set up a equalities and diversity Department and not a phone line for passengers assistance based in Berlin.

Their also an urgent need for passengers with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers wheelchairs users for Newcastle upon Tyne city council and mayor of the North East mayoral combined transport Authority Kim mc Guinness.

Response

Thank you for raising these important issues. Accessibility is one of the over-arching objectives of our Strategic Transport Plan and we support all measures to improve access to bus and coach for all. We will raise the issues of driver training, access ramps and the treatment of equalities and diversity issues in our next Coach Forum on 14th October 2025 and seek feedback from Flixbus and other operators. We will also seek opportunities to advocate for access and equality issues through the Integrated National Transport Strategy and consider what accessibility policies emerging from the INTS and the Bus Services Bill could enable better provision in our region.

While not focused specifically on access for disabled users, our recently published audit of 21 coach parking facilities in WGSTB also identifies over 50 potential improvements to be made to improve operation and passenger experience at these sites. Starting at the Coach Forum on 14th October, we will be seeking opportunities to make these changes with partners.

Question 4 .

What progress is being made on Regional bus and coach services The Cheltenham spa Cirencester Swindon Transport hub bus service 51 improvement and Swindon Transport hub to Marlborough Pewsey and Salisbury Transport hub x5 Salisbury Red Salisbury x3 Salisbury Railway station Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and coach station and Bournemouth interchange.

What progress is being made on upgrading this route National Express coaches limited service from Birmingham Digberth coach station to Worcester crown point bus and coach station Tewkesbury Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station Swindon Interchange Southampton central coach station and Bournemouth interchange or via Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station Dursey may lane bus and coach Wotton under Edge yate bus station, Bristol bus and coach station, Bath spa station.

Warminster Salisbury coach station Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and coach station Bournemouth Transport interchange Poole bus and coach station.

Service operated by National Express coaches limited Flixbus coaches network or Go ahead group. Along with the Southampton central coach station, Ringwood meeting house Lane Bournemouth Transport hub Poole bus and coach station, Weymouth kings statue Railway station Dorchester South station, Bridport bus and coach station, Exeter bus and coach station Torquay coach station Paignton bus and coach station Totnes and Plymouth coach station.

Response

As reported to the Board under Paper E the Western Gateway is committed to undertaking work on buses and in particular cross boundary services. With the arrival of two new Transport Officers in September 2025 this work is now starting. One of their first tasks will

be to pick up on the recently published Transport Select Committee report on the future of local bus services. They will look at ways to help our local authorities address the challenges identified in the report, focusing on bus devolution, cross-boundary infrastructure and cross-subsidy planning. We will also use our Regional Centre of Excellence to support the call to expand the national Bus Centre of Excellence. It should be noted that several of the locations listed in Question 4 lie outside of the Western Gateway region and will be for neighbouring STBs to pick up.

B) Rosa Kell, Catch the bus campaign submitted by David Redgwell

Question 1

What progress is being made on a bus and coach strategy for Western Gateway Transport Board work with Peninsula Transport Board especially on bus services from Weymouth and Dorchester South railway station to Yeovil bus and coach station then connections on 376 Yeovil bus and coach station to Ilchester Somerton, Street, Glastonbury Wells bus and coach station Farringdon Gurney Clutton Pensford Whitchurch Hengrove Knowle Totterdown Bristol Temple Meads station and Bristol Temple Meads station.

Taunton Transport hub / Bridgwater bus and coach station Walton Glastonbury Wells bus and coach station, Pensford Whitchurch Hengrove Knowle Totterdown Bristol Temple Meads station, Bristol bus and coach station.

Weymouth Dorchester South station Yeovil bus and coach station Wells bus and coach station Radstock Bath Spa bus and coach station and Bristol Bus and coach station Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station Gloucester Transport hub Cheltenham Spa Arles Court interchange, Tewkesbury Worcester coachways and Birmingham Digbeth coach.

And an integrated Bus coach railway all operator public transport tickets for south west England and Wessex.

And an investment programme in Regional Bus coach and interchange like Taunton Transport hub, Bridport bus and coach station, Wells bus and coach station Bath Spa bus and coach station Cirencester Forum interchange.

Response

As reported to the Board under Paper E the Western Gateway is committed to undertaking work on buses and in particular cross boundary services. With the arrival of two new Transport Officers in September 2025 this work is now starting. One of their first tasks will be to pick up on the recently published Transport Select Committee report on the future of local bus services. They will look at ways to help our local authorities address the challenges identified in the report, focusing on bus devolution, cross-boundary infrastructure and cross-subsidy planning. We will also use our Regional Centre of Excellence to support the call to expand the national Bus Centre of Excellence.

C) Wells Bus User Group - question raised in the Board meeting chat on 25 June 2025

Can we do something about trains Bristol Weston to Minehead to relieve the bus 28 overcrowding

Response

The bus service 28 from Taunton to Minehead lies outside of the Western Gateway region and is one for the Peninsula Transport STB to pick up. Whilst GWR and CrossCountry train

services link Bristol Temple Meads with Taunton no services currently extend to Minehead on the West Somerset heritage railway. The Western Gateway will be supportive of proposals to extend services should they come forward.