

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Statements and questions to the Board meeting on 24 June 2026

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and RailFuture

Question 1

What progress is western Gateway Transport Board,

Making with the Department for Transport and Arriva Cross country trains arrive 1Sq capital.

On leasing the 6 additional units stored

at Derby works owned by Beacon leasing .

Whist passengers stand on trains from. Penzance, Plymouth North Road, Exeter St Davids station, Taunton, Bristol Temple meads station, Bristol Parkway Birmingham New street, leeds ,York leeds ,Newcastle, Edinburgh Waverley

Bournemouth Central, Southampton central, Southampton central, Reading Birmingham central, Derby, Manchester piccadilly Newcastle Central Edinburgh Waverley service Aberdeen.

and what progress is being made on replacement of Inter city Express trains on Local Metro west railway Network service from Bristol Temple meads station to Filton Abbey station Bristol Parkway, Yate Charfield for Wotton under Edge new station, cam and Dursley Gloucester central, Cheltenham spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester Shrub Hill ,Worcester Forge Street, no lifts

and on Bristol Temple meads station, Bristol Lawrence hill, Bristol Stapleton road Ashley Down Filton Abbey wood extension to Filton North Brabazon and Henbury.

On theses routes if passengers with reduced mobility wheelchairs users and partly sighted passengers are unable to leave to the train if the First class carriage is off the platform and wheelchair passengers have travel in corridors with no wheelchair accessible space just a universal Toilets.

Now the 175 are being delivered from works are major rebuilding.

When will the local 158 ,165 166 units return to the Bristol city Region for Regional services as this trains Tsi Prim compliant.

Western Gateway STB Response:

The Western Gateway is not currently engaged with CrossCountry, GWR and the Department for Transport (DfT) on issues surrounding capacity, rolling stock or specific rail services.

To note the Great Western Railway franchise will transfer to Great British Railways (GBR) in December 2026 followed by CrossCountry in late 2027. Operational issues, including rolling stock allocations on regional and local trains will then be GBR's responsibility.

The Western Gateway is not directly involved in the provision of lifts or step-free station enhancements. However, the proposed Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) list, Paper B for this Board meeting includes prioritisation for step-free access at stations within the West of England area, and separately, within local stations in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. We fully support measures to improve access and have previously written letters of support for Access for All bids.

Question 2.

Will the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Helen Goodwin and western Gateway Transport Board ,

Support the Welsh government and Transport for Wales application to the Office of Road and Rail for the new

Carmarthen, Swansea High Street Cardiff Central Newport Monmouthshire seven Tunnel junction Pilning Patchway Bristol Parkway Filton Abbey wood, Bristol Stapleton road, Bristol Lawrence hill, Bristol Temple meads station.

Which is 2 hourly service being object to by the Department for Transport using First group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR on the ground of Revenue extraction on the Route

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Western Gateway STB Response:

The South Wales Metro proposals is being developed by Transport for Wales (TfW) which will also see six new stations built along the South Wales Mainline between Cardiff and Severn Tunnel Junction. New services will be required to serve these new stations. In addition, there are also the aspirations of services running through from Bristol towards Swansea and Carmarthen. While these proposals are in South Wales and a matter for Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government, there are implications on the rail capacity of the line through the Severn Tunnel and into Bristol.

The Western Gateway believes that there is a shared objective of providing improved rail connectivity between the Western Gateway area and into South Wales. This is regardless of the rail operator that operates the service (Transport for Wales / Great British Railways). It therefore encourages both the West of England Combined Authority and Transport for Wales to work together on improvements to cross-boundary rail services and connectivity, to meet rail aspirations on both sides of the Severn Estuary.

The proposed Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) list which is presented at this Board (Paper B) meeting does include the South Wales Metro as a prioritised project.

Question 3.

What progress is being made on the North south Coach corridor

From Birmingham Digberth coach station or Queen way interchange Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station and Arles court Transport interchange Cheltenham coach station

Gloucester Transport hub, Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station to Bristol bus and coach station uwe and central Bus and coach station to Salisbury coach station Ringwood meeting house Lane coach station and Bournemouth interchange.

Or the Birmingham, Digberth coach station, Tewkesbury, Cheltenham spa, Cirencester, Swindon bus and coach station, Marlborough, Pewsey Salisbury Ringwood meeting house Lane Bus and coach station and Bournemouth interchange.

Operated by National Express coaches or Flixbus or upgrading service 51 stagecoach west Cheltenham spa Town centre or Royal Well bus and coach station, Cirencester, leachlade cricklade Swindon bus and coach station, x5 Swindon bus and coach station, Swindon GWH, Marlborough Pewsey Amesbury Salisbury city centre x5 x3 Salisbury Railway station Salisbury city centre Fordingbridge, Ringwood meeting house Lane, Bournemouth Transport interchange.

Services operate by go ahead group South coast.

David redgewell South west transport Network and Railfuture.

Western Gateway STB Response:

Due to less DfT funding than expected for 2026/27 and loss of staff resources the north south strategic coach work route has been on hold.

Nonetheless the Western Gateway STB, along with Peninsula Transport STB, continues to operate the Coach Forum, which covers updates and sharing of best practise relating to coach services in the region.

As part of the Rural Mobility Pilots, the Western Gateway is funding a pilot project in the Cotswolds that shares real-time parking information with coach and tour operators. This project is currently underway.

The proposed Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) list which is presented at this Board meeting (Paper B) does include a prioritised proposal for a new coach service between Gloucester/Cheltenham and Bristol via Chepstow and Forest of Dean.

Statement/Question to Western Gateway STB, meeting 24/6/2026 From Margaret Willmot

This STB has policies (A8, NS1) within its Strategic Transport Plan (2024 – 2050) to work with National Highways to assess and deliver appropriate recommendations from the M4 to Dorset Coast Study.

This studyⁱ proposes various recommendations along 'Route Package 5' which runs from the M4 via the A350 to Warminster, A36 to Salisbury, A338 to Ringwood and A31/A35 to Dorchester. [M42DC, p.12].

Route Package 5 recommends a 'strategic highways scheme' at Salisbury and the Stage 3 Assessment reportⁱⁱ produced to back up this Study refers to a Salisbury Bypass [S3, concept 16a in Table 6-2]. This is further described as a 'modern single carriageway bypass' [S3, para 6.4.1.5] which would impact on an SSSI and would be near ancient woodland [S3, Table 7-7]. Numerous benefits would accrue to Salisbury including a reduction in through traffic [S3, Table 7-7] and opening up the possibility of various projects to reduce severance and improve active travel options in and around the city [S3, Table 6-4, e.g. concepts 43a, 43b, 44,45,47a, 47b, 48, 49a, 49b].

In December 2025 National Highways disclosed that there were ‘insurmountable limitations on constructing a bypass for the city’ⁱⁱⁱ. It is unclear, and National Highways have never disclosed, what bypass route they had in mind, but the route of the former Salisbury Southern bypass proposed in the 1990s has been unavailable for at least 15 years due to housing developments.^{iv}

Through National Highway’s complaints process I have pointed out that the Study Team should now be reappraising Route Package 5 in the light of this information, since other packages (e.g. Route Package 1) may now be preferred. However National Highways have declined to revisit the recommendations from their study as they are a ‘reflection of the work undertaken at the time’. The Independent Complaints Assessor has not upheld my complaint – although they concede I have valid concerns they say they lack the technical expertise to overrule the findings of the study.^v

National Highways have mistakenly assumed in their appraisal process that a route was still available for a Salisbury Bypass. As a resident of Salisbury I am concerned that proceeding with the other elements of Route Package 5 will result in more traffic on existing roads through Salisbury which already experiences one of the highest levels of delay and slowest traffic speeds on this route [S3, paras 3.3.2.11 – 3.3.2.12]. The A36 through Salisbury is also an Air Quality Management Area, something which can only get worse if steps are taken to funnel even more traffic this way.

Question: Will the Western Gateway STB review its support for the outcome of the M4 to Dorset Coast Study in the light of National Highway’s disclosure that at least one key component of Route Package 5 – namely a Salisbury Bypass – is undeliverable?

Western Gateway STB Response:

The Western Gateway supports the recommendations of the M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Connectivity Study. Route Package 5, the recommended option, performed best against the objectives of the Study. It includes the primary recommendation to develop a strategic highways scheme at Salisbury to address the issues associated with long-distance traffic routing through the city centre. Whilst this leave options open for further development work it should not be read as just providing a bypass.

It is recognised the A36 through Salisbury is a challenge for the area with the need to consider a broad suite of indirect measures to remove some local traffic from the A36 including local road, active travel and public transport measures.

National Highways are looking at how and when different aspects of the package could be brought forward for the route in the future and we look forward to engaging in more detail on this.

ⁱ M42DC, available at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/m4-to-dorset-coast-strategic-study/>

ⁱⁱ S3, available at:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/m4_to_dorset_coast_stage_3_asses

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/press/national-highways-unveils-investment-in-a36-improvements-in-salisbury/>

^{iv} See map showing sections of the route no longer available

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k7Z0vfBL7N-JkOz9dlvgybi1GkkU4g6s/view>

^v ICA report available at

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oNAYM4KFDwUu6cH_wmy0gFpsAsGiryts/view