

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Statements and questions to the Board meeting on 30 September 2026

David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and RailFuture Severnside

Question 1

With National Express coaches limited

Now withdrawing alot of it Rural and secondary Network,

Which receives some bus operators grant as a register Bus and coach services.

Having seen Both the London victoria coach station to Swanage bus and coach station route cut back to Bournemouth interchange and Poole bus and coach station.

and service the London victoria coach station to Salisbury coach station service terminate at Southampton central coach station.

Although both service could have through ticketing arrangements with Swanage bus and coach station connection by 40 morebus to Poole bus and coach station or 50 to Bournemouth interchange coach and Bus station,

Salisbury city centre to Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and coach station, on x3 Salisbury Reds part of the go ahead group South coast buses and coaches Division.

But other services cut Back do not have replacement services,

101 102 104

The Penzance bus and coach station to Truro bus and coach, Plymouth coach station Exeter bus and coach station Taunton Bridgwater bus station ,weston super mare bus and coach station interchange Bristol Airport Bristol bus and coach station ,Gloucester Transport hub Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange coach station, Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station to Birmingham Digberth coach station.

Have lost Evening and nights services

Weekend services via Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange.

The Bath spa bus and coach station to Box ,Corsham, Chippenham, London Heathrow Airport and London victoria coach station. Lost its Evening services.

403 Services at Risk are the service

For Weymouth kings statue, Dorchester South station, to Poole bus and coach station and Bournemouth interchange coach station to London victoria coach station,

035

The Weymouth kings statue Dorchester South station to Bournemouth interchange bus and coach station section,

Services

502

Bideford, Barnstaple bus and coach station, south Molton, Tiverton bus and coach station, Taunton Transport hub new opening soon, Bridgwater bus and coach station, weston super mare bus and coach station, to London victoria coach station or the Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange coach station and Birmingham Digberth coach station, 105

401

Trowbridge ,Melksham Devizes to London Heathrow Airport. London victoria coach station Gloucester Transport hub, Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station, Swindon London Heathrow Airport London victoria coach station,

404 406

Plymouth coach station, Totnes, Paignton bus and coach station, Torquay Lymington Road coach station, Exeter bus and coach station to London victoria coach station via Heathrow airport,

We have lost the 507 London victoria coach station, London Heathrow Airport, Taunton, Exeter bus and coach station Okehampton Launceston Newquay bus and coach station Penzance bus and coach station

515 Southampton central coach station to Plymouth coach station, Truro and Helston service via Bournemouth interchange coach station Poole bus and coach station, Weymouth kings statue, Dorchester South station, Bridport bus and coach station and Exeter bus and coach station,

With National Express coaches limited

Now looking at Reducing its old National bus company Region and social Network with a lost of £23 million pounds to operate the services but still carrying 17 millions passengers across England into Scotland, Wales and Ireland/ Northern Ireland.

Their a need to protect the social coach network, like the Rural and Regional Railway network. Simliar to the Networks in Wales, with Trans cymru coaches, Scotland Scottish City link, Ember coaches Flixbus coaches network by Transport for Scotland, funding schemes and travel passes In Ireland/ Northern Ireland Translink ,

Coach cards unlike Rail cards use to be

Subsided by uk government Departments for Transport

But on the First of April 2026

Disabled Senior and student Coach cards, when up by 50% from £15 to £30

Whist rail cards were frozen and Disabled bus cards were made to be valid for 24 hours.

So what action is western Gateway Transport Board with Peninsula Transport Board taking to raise the funding issue of need to fund Regional connectivity and coach services in south west England to the rest of the UK and Ireland with the Regions mps ,

Transport Authority's local Authorities,

Secretary of state for Transport Hydi Alexander mp for Swindon, lord Peter Hendy Railways minister and minister in Lords for Transport and bus and coach minister simon Lightwood mp. and Prime minister Andy Burnham mp .

Regional connectivity by coach services by National Express coaches, Flixbus coaches, and the Bristol to Plymouth coach station, Falcon coaches services by stagecoach South west, Scottish City link coaches, give people and community's links to jobs Employment opportunities Schools college's University's Hospital health care facilities shopping facilities links to families and friends.

It's very important action is taken now by the Regional Transport Boards and mayoral Combined Transport Authority mayor Helen Godwin to protect the Region coach Network.

And invest in bus and Coach station interchange facilities, like Taunton Transport hub, Cheltenham Arles court interchange coach station needs the cafe opening,

*Bath spa bus and coach station and Bristol Bus and coach station need investment as Does.
Yeovil bus and coach station and Bridgwater bus and coach station, Cheltenham spa Royal Well
bus and coach station,*

*And through Ticketing and improvement to bus 51 ,Cheltenham spa Cirencester, Lechlade
Cricklade Swindon bus and coach station*

*X5 Swindon bus and coach station, Marlborough, Pewsey Amesbury Salisbury, x3 Salisbury
Railway station Salisbury city centre, Fordingbridge, Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and
coach station, Bournemouth Transport interchange,*

National express coach services feeder service includes 374 375 376 376 a

Bristol bus and coach station to Wells Bus and coach station, Glastonbury and street,

X1 Bristol bus and coach station to Weston Super Mare bus and coach station interchange.

X39 39

Bristol bus and coach station to Bath spa bus and coach station

Western Gateway Response

We are aware that National Express made changes to their coach network earlier this year. Western Gateway has written to the coach operator asking to provide additional advance warning of any future changes to the coach network, to both the Sub-national Transport Body and partner authorities in future, including through the Coach Forum that the Western Gateway administers.

Coach operators, however, such as National Express and Flixbus are commercial operators and due to being long-distance services, are generally not financially supported by individual local authorities. The changes that have been made to routes and services are commercial decisions by the operator, with decisions made to reduce services where revenue is not covering their operating costs.

Western Gateway will continue to work with coach operators through the Coach Forum. Given the limited resources the Western Gateway has and the withdrawal of funding by Central Government from March 2027 it is unlikely the STB will not be able to provide financial support. Looking ahead this will be a responsibility for future devolved Strategic Authorities to consider the role of Coach services in the region.

The Western Gateway will, however, write to the Secretary of State for Transport setting out concerns over the need to protect the region's coach network, the need for funding and good interchanges. The letter will also pick up issues raised in Question 2.

Question 2

*With overcrowding and standing on cross country trains Arriva 1sq capital service network From
Penzance, Plymouth North Road Exeter St Davids Taunton, Bristol Temple meads station, Bristol
Parkway Cheltenham spa Wiltshire Parkway to Birmingham New street, Manchester*

piccadilly Leeds Newcastle upon Tyne Edinburgh Waverley and Aberdeen/ Glasgow central station and from Bournemouth Central ,Southampton central ,Oxford, Birmingham New street Newcastle Central Edinburgh Waverley routes,

What action is western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board working with England, Economic Heartlands, Midlands connect and Transport for the North, and English mayor's including mayor Helen Godwin of the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority doing to get the Department for Transport Railways operations to allow the 6 stored voyager units in Derby work 30 carriages to put in service on these routes

Can the issue again be raised with the Regions mps and Secretary of state for Transport Hydi Alexander mp for Swindon and lord Peter Hendy Railways minister, Along with need to transfer 28 class 158 units from Transport to Wales cambrian coast network replaced by new train to First Group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR service in the Region and the metro west railway Network service operated around Greater Bristol Bath Wiltshire, Swindon, Gloucestershire and Somerset, in the new Portishead l and Henbury lines,

And Henbury new loop service to Avonmouth, Bristol Temple Meads station to Filton Abbey wood, Bristol Parkway yate Charfield for Wotton under Edge and cam and Dursley Gloucester central, Cheltenham spa Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Worcester Shrub Hill Worcester Forgate Street The also an urgent need to invest in London Waterloo to Salisbury Yeovil Junction Axminster Exeter Central Exeter St Davids station Main line in Tracks trains and catering services restored, By the Department for Transport run south western railway,

Dorset metro Brockenhurst to Bournemouth, Poole Wareham for Swanage, Westbury extra Platform on the metro west railway Bristol Temple meads to Salisbury railway services. Devizes Parkway , Corsham ,Saltford Ashton Gate, Stroudwater stonehouse Bristol Road need progressing The Taunton to Minehead link and the Plymouth metro Ivybridge to Tavistock via laira station. On the Cheltenham spa ,Bristol Temple meads station to Taunton, Exeter St Davids Plymouth North Road Truro and Penzance line ,Torbay line Dawish sea wall and parsons Tunnel is a top Regional Priority. With Edingswell Wellington Cullompton, We a south west investment program in Region Railway network under Great Britain Railways, cross country train Arriva 1sq capital service and First Group plc Greater Western trains company limited GWR,

Western Gateway Response

We are aware of recent issues with the performance of CrossCountry train services and the disruption caused to passengers. The Western Gateway will write to the Secretary of State, as part of the letter on coach services, setting out our concerns and the need to release more rolling stock.

We acknowledge train carriages are owned by Rolling Stock Operating Companies, with rail passenger companies then leasing these to run services. The issue relating to Voyager units relates to funding decisions taken by CrossCountry, as leasing additional vehicles creates additional cost. The Voyager fleet at present are undergoing a mid-life refurbishment, and this in part may be the reason for a shortage on some trains as additional vehicles are out of service.

There are, however, wider challenges on CrossCountry services regarding delayed and cancelled services. The recent disruption to their operating centre at Birmingham New Street a few weeks ago led to severe disruption to all CrossCountry services and led to issues for passengers who had limited alternative routes to take.

The CrossCountry franchise is due to become part of Great British Railway (GBR) towards the end of 2027, and unfortunately it is unlikely that CrossCountry will be able to resolve all these problems by the end of the franchise.

In relation to other lines and services the Western Gateway is actively involved in the West of England Line Stakeholder Advisory Board and leading with the Peninsula Transport the A303 West of England Line Corridor Task Force. Through the Western Gateway's Strategic Investment Plan (see Item 6, Paper B on the Board agenda) we are providing business case development funding for the Heart of Wessex Line and Westbury Platform 0 and the Melksham Line.

Looking ahead with further devolution there may be the prospect of more involvement by Strategic Authorities in rail operations. In the meantime the Western Gateway will continue in its role promoting rail schemes with cross boundary, region wide and national benefits.

Margaret Willmot

I questioned the Western Gateway STB at their June meeting about their ongoing support for the M4 to Dorset Coast Strategy despite the acknowledgement from National Highways that one of the key components of that package, namely a Salisbury Bypass, would not be deliverable.

I feel that the June response from the Western Gateway STB shows a lack of understanding of the traffic situation in Salisbury, since it is being assumed that it will be possible to remove local traffic from the A36 through Salisbury in order for more strategic traffic to take its place. However housing developments around Salisbury are planned to add thousands of houses and associated parking spaces to green field sites around Salisbury. Three major sites currently being developed (St Peter's Place, Wilton Gate & Chapel Gate) will between them add 2,000 houses and more sites are in the pipeline. The transport assessments for these sites all predict that there will be more traffic added to the existing road network. **Do the Western Gateway STB believe these transport assessments are incorrect and what steps are proposed to reduce local traffic on the A36?**

Western Gateway response

As part of a study into road connectivity between the M4 and the Dorset coast, National Highways recommended a route which will deliver more reliable journey times, bring economic benefits, improve safety for road users and reduce the impact of traffic on local communities.

The A36 remains the main arterial route through Salisbury, and although there will be no revision or updating of the study recommendations, it is vital that National Highways continue to maintain and improve the route through the city. They have now started work on a package of improvements.

Both Wiltshire Council's adopted Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the emerging Salisbury Transport Strategy have sustainable transport at their core, with a focus on increasing opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and other alternatives to private car use.

The ambition is that, over time, these measures can help reduce the number of local vehicle trips using the road network in and around Salisbury, including the strategic road network.

In the light of progress being made by National Highways and Wiltshire Council there is little to be gained by revisiting the transport assessments used as part of the evidence base developed for the Study.

Further information

Although the preferred route recommendation is subject to further review by government and other stakeholders, the full M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Connectivity Study report has been published and is now available to view at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/m4-to-dorset-coast-strategic-study/>

None of the recommendations of the study are yet committed for delivery, and any major road improvements would be subject to development assessments over the coming years, with the earliest likely construction being in RIS4 (2031 onwards) or RIS5 (2037 onwards).

Where feasible, National Highways is looking to take forward some of the recommendations from the study in the next five years – however, these are small-scale improvements focused on improving safety and targeted schemes which reduces congestion, rather than major improvements.

In the meantime, National Highways announced an initial £23 million [package of improvements](#) for the A36 in Salisbury in December, and that work is now ongoing.

As part of this investment, National Highways, responsible for England's major A roads and motorways, is carrying out a number of schemes which will reduce congestion, improve safety, create more reliable journey times, and ultimately support Salisbury's long-term economic growth.

Rosa Kell, Somerset catch the bus campaign, Somerset bus partnership, Dorset catch the bus campaign.

Question 1 ,

What progress is being made on an integrated Transport plan across the western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board area ,

On a Regional integrated Transport strategy for south west England

With government Transport policy and the prime minister Andy Burnham mp and Swindon mp and Transport secretary Hydi alexander,

Plans to improve Regional bus and coach services on key Regional cross Boundary services, Like 374 375 376 376 a

Bristol bus and coach station to, Bristol Temple meads station to, Totterdown Knowle ,Hengrove,Whitchurch, Pensford Clutton Farringdon Gurney Chewton Mendip Wells bus and coach station, Glastonbury and street to Taunton Transport hub, Bridgwater bus and coach station, Somerton and Yeovil bus and coach station 376a via Paulton.

And midsomer Norton.

Key Routes like

X51 x53 Weymouth kings statue Dorchester South station or via West bay to Bridport bus and coach station, Lyme Regis, Axminster Railway station for Exeter by south western railway service, and to Chard and Taunton. By x30 .

X1 Bristol bus and coach station to weston super mare bus and coach station, weston super mare bus and coach station 20 to Burnham on sea, 21 Highbridge, Bridgwater bus and coach station and Taunton Transport hub.

All theses bus are run by First group plc South and West buses Division

Key Corridors 41 Tewkesbury to Cheltenham spa, 51 Cheltenham spa Town centre, Cirencester leachlade and cricklade, Swindon bus and coach,

X5 Swindon bus and coach station to to Malborough Pewsey and Salisbury

X3

Salisbury Rail station Salisbury city centre to Fordingbridge Ringwood meeting house Lane bus and coach station to Bournemouth interchange bus and coach station.

The coach network in the south west Region is under threat operated by National Express coaches limited,

Loss £23 million pounds on 17 million passengers.

What is western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board

Doing to protect the National Express coaches services,

Between London victoria coach station and Bournemouth, Poole Dorchester and Weymouth, London victoria coach station to Bridgwater bus and coach station, Taunton Transport hub, Tiverton bus and coach station, south Molton Barnstaple bus and coach station Bideford, London victoria coach station, to Swindon bus and coach station, Stroud Merry Walk bus and coach station Gloucester Transport hub.

London victoria coach station to Cirencester, Chalton kings, Cheltenham spa Royal Well bus and coach station, Arles court interchange Cheltenham spa coach station, Gloucester Transport hub, Newent ,Ross on wye bus and coach station and Hereford.

London victoria coach station to Bristol bus and coach station, Bath spa bus and coach station, Weston super mare bus and coach station interchange Bridgwater bus and coach station Taunton Transport hub, Exeter bus and coach station Torquay,coach station Paignton bus and coach Totnes ,Plymouth coach station Liskeard, Bodmin, Newquay bus and coach station, Truro bus and coach station Camborne bus and coach station, Falmouth bus and coach station to Penzance bus and station.

Trowbridge, Melksham Devizes Swindon bus and coach station to London victoria coach station

All these routes service Heathrow Airport London,

All these rural coach routes could be cut or reduced.

These coach services provide vital links to access to colleges, universities Hospital, link court services shopping centre, Tourist facilities.

The Birmingham Digbeth coach station Cheltenham spa Arles court 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 Exeter bus and coach station Plymouth coach station, Truro bus and coach station to Penzance bus and coach station,

Some routes also Flixbus coaches network links into Cornwall.

The London Waterloo to Salisbury Yeovil Junction Axminster Exeter Central Exeter St Davids station

South west Railway route is another major investment issue with a hourly and 2 hourly Train services. Yeovil Junction to Exeter Central

No buffet facilities.

With no investment in passing loops rolling stock or Electrification of the route, With Rolling stock that could be used off lease in Bournemouth west Depot

These railway corridor needs major investment

Along with investment in Weymouth Yeovil Pen mill, Westbury Bath spa, Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Parkway and Gloucester central.

On the Region coach issue will Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board lobby The Region mps and Secretary of state for Transport Hydi Alexander mp for Swindon, lord Peter Hendy rail minister and simon Lightwood mp buses and coaches minister and the mayor of west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Helen Godwin.

Western Gateway response

We are aware that National Express made changes to their coach network earlier this year. Western Gateway has written to the coach operator asking to provide additional advance warning of any future changes to the coach network, to both the Sub-national Transport Body and partner authorities in future, including through the Coach Forum that the Western Gateway administers.

Coach operators, however, such as National Express and Flixbus are commercial operators and due to being long-distance services, are generally not financially supported by individual local authorities. The changes that have been made to routes and services are commercial decisions by the operator, with decisions made to reduce services where revenue is not covering their operating costs.

Western Gateway will continue to work with coach operators through the Coach Forum. Given the limited resources the Western Gateway has and the withdrawal of funding by Central Government from March 2027 it is unlikely the STB will be able to provide financial support. Looking ahead this will be a responsibility for future devolved Strategic Authorities to consider the role of Coach services in the region.

As indicated in the response to David Redgwell's questions the Western Gateway will write to the Secretary of State for Transport setting out concerns over the need to protect the region's coach network, the need for funding and good interchanges.

Question 2

With Government Transport policy on equalities and safety for women and girls and other protected characteristics.

What work is Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board with the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority

On security on the bus coach Ferry and railway network ,

Working with Gloucestershire police, Avon and Somerset police, Wiltshire Police Dorset and Devon and Cornwall Police and the British Transport police.

We have recently seen the security officers withdrawn from Bristol bus and coach station and Bath bus and coach station,

And revenue protection officers withdrawn from First Group plc South and West buses Division in Greater Bristol, Bath Somerset and Dorset.

Has Western Gateway Transport Board looked at extension of Travelsafe officers in Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole across the Region.

British transport police are looking at a new police station at Yeovil Pen Mill and have police station at Taunton Railway station not being used .

Will Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board look at Regional plan for Transport safety and security responsibility across the Region with police and crime commissioner,

Western Gateway response

There are various initiatives taking place within individual transport authorities, including being led by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority through their Enhanced Partnership to work with the Police & bus operators to deliver a Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) action plan and provide enhanced driver training.

As a strategic body the Western Gateway is not directly involved in issues relating to safety and security at transport facilities in the region – these are the responsibility of the relevant bus operator or local authority who operates these facilities.

The Western Gateway will though support initiatives to tackle violence against women and girls and people with protected characteristics. To note South Western Railway and Network Rail Wessex are now White Ribbon accredited for their commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. This comes with a three-year plan which will see action to prevent and combat gender-based abuse across the South Western Railway and Network Rail Wessex network. The Community Rail Network, which represents community rail partnerships and local station groups across the country, are also active in encouraging White Ribbon accreditation amongst its members and the Western Gateway will support the community rail partnerships in our region to do this.

Given the limited resources the Western Gateway has and the withdrawal of funding by Central Government from March 2027 it is unlikely the STB will be able to provide financial support for this work. Looking ahead this will be a responsibility for future devolved Strategic Authorities to consider safety in the region.

Gary Byard, Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign, Blind and Partly sighted passenger

With the cuts taking place on the National Express coaches limited Network and Flixbus coaches network

From, Birmingham Digberth coach station or Birmingham interchange Flixbus coaches, Some coach services start from Leeds bus and coach station Newcastle, Manchester coach station.

We have seen with Great concern to passengers the loss of coach services from Cheltenham Arles court interchange coach station, Gloucester Transport hub to Bristol bus and coach station, Bristol Airport, weston super mare bus and coach station, Bridgwater bus and coach station, Taunton Transport hub, Exeter bus and coach station, Plymouth coach station Truro bus and coach station and Penzance bus and coach station corridor.

National express coach services lost

£23 million pounds carrying 17 million pounds passengers

We have no Evening services now between Bristol bus and coach station Gloucester Transport hub and Cheltenham spa Arles court interchange coach station and Cheltenham Royal Well bus and coach station now that 21 20 , 1 o'clock coach services all withdrawn with no late Railway services from Bristol Temple meads station, Bristol Parkway station to Gloucester central and Cheltenham spa, and Birmingham New street.

I view of the National Express coaches limited Regional and Rural coach routes service cuts and Flixbus coaches network limited Rural service

Will Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board.

Raise the very urgent funding needs of Rural coach network with the south west mps secretary of state for Transport Hydi Alexander mp for Swindon, simon Lightwood mp buses and coaches minster lord Peter Hendy Railways minister.

Regional connectivity by the coach networks are funded by the Welsh government including T7 Chepstow bus and coach station to Bristol bus and coach station

In Scotland Ireland and Northern Ireland,

But not in England.

And call a Regional coach network forum with passengers groups stakeholders Regional bus and coach providers

Western Gateway response

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Question 2,

Arriva group 1sq cross country trains

Is very important provider on Passengers Railway services between Penzance bus and coach station ,Truro Plymouth coach station, Newton Abbot, Paignton, Torquay Exeter St Davids Taunton, Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Parkway Cheltenham, Birmingham New street to Manchester piccadilly, Leeds Newcastle upon Tyne Edinburgh Waverley, Glasgow central Aberdeen,

Bournemouth Oxford, Birmingham and Newcastle upon Tyne Edinburgh Waverley,

But with passengers standing on trains for 4 hours.

Will Western Gateway Transport Board and Peninsula Transport Board write to the Region mps the mayor of west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Helen Godwin and Hydi Alexander mp for Swindon and lord Peter Hendy Railways minister.

To get the 30 carriage off lease in Derby works in to passengers service.

Theses are off leased Advati west coast partnership Trenitalia voyager train units ,

We do need to wait to Great Britain Railways in. 2028 2029 to make progress on cross country trains network.

Gary Byard Gloucestershire catch the bus campaign.

Member of Gloucestershire community rail partnership.

David Redgwell Kindly

Helped me submit my Questions as I a partly sighted passenger.

Western Gateway response

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Looking ahead with further devolution there may be the prospect of more involvement by Strategic Authorities in rail operations. In the meantime the Western Gateway will continue in its role promoting rail schemes with cross boundary, region wide and national benefits.