

**WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY:
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 October 2017**

DRAFT MINUTES

Committee Members:

Cllr Tim Ball, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Liz Richardson, Bath & North East Somerset Council
Cllr Kye Dudd, Bristol City Council
Cllr Margaret Hickman, Bristol City Council
Cllr Steve Pearce, Bristol City Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Mark Weston, Bristol City Council
Cllr Geoff Gollop, Bristol City Council
Cllr Stephen Clarke, Bristol City Council (Chair)
Cllr Paul Hughes, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Katherine Morris, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Pat Hockey, South Gloucestershire Council

Copies to:

Cllr Chris Blades, North Somerset Council
Cllr Charles Cave, North Somerset Council
Cllr Donald Davies, North Somerset Council

1	<p>WELCOME AND EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advice was given on the fire evacuation procedure.</p>														
2	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Cllr Mark Weston, Cllr Tim Ball and Cllr Steve Jones (substitute for Cllr Weston).</p> <p>Cllr Dine Romero, substituting for Cllr Tim Ball, was welcomed to the meeting.</p>														
3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>														
4	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Committee considered the minutes from the meeting of 22 September 2017.</p> <p>Cllr Paul Hughes noted a question about mayoral expenses had not been included in the minutes. It was agreed Helen Edelstyn would follow up with Cllr Hughes after the meeting.</p> <p>The Minutes were otherwise accepted as accurate record of the meeting</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the actions from the meeting of 22nd September, which will be included in a log to ensure actions are tracked.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Work programme: 'A work programme discussion to be held at WECA'</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Work programme: 'The venue of Scrutiny meetings to rotate across the region'</td> <td>Ongoing. Confirmed next meeting will be held in South Gloucestershire.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Work programme: 'Helen Edelstyn to work with the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a work programme'</td> <td>Ongoing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to circulate summary information to WECA Scrutiny'</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to provide confirmation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) figure'</td> <td>£17.27m (18 / 19 budget)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Update on skills: 'Helen Edelstyn to arrange for minutes of the skills Advisory Board to be provided'</td> <td>In progress. Noted protocol around access to information has been circulated. Scrutiny Chair has requested that access is provided to all the minutes and WECA will consider this request. Cllr Morris requested that Scrutiny receive papers for WECA Committee meetings. Noted these are publicly available but request is to circulate to Scrutiny members when issued.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to share the performance report for Apprenticeship Grants for Employers'</td> <td>In progress</td> </tr> </table>	Work programme: 'A work programme discussion to be held at WECA'	Complete	Work programme: 'The venue of Scrutiny meetings to rotate across the region'	Ongoing. Confirmed next meeting will be held in South Gloucestershire.	Work programme: 'Helen Edelstyn to work with the Chair and Vice Chair to develop a work programme'	Ongoing	Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to circulate summary information to WECA Scrutiny'	Complete	Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to provide confirmation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) figure'	£17.27m (18 / 19 budget)	Update on skills: 'Helen Edelstyn to arrange for minutes of the skills Advisory Board to be provided'	In progress. Noted protocol around access to information has been circulated. Scrutiny Chair has requested that access is provided to all the minutes and WECA will consider this request. Cllr Morris requested that Scrutiny receive papers for WECA Committee meetings. Noted these are publicly available but request is to circulate to Scrutiny members when issued.	Update on skills: 'Chris Jennings to share the performance report for Apprenticeship Grants for Employers'	In progress
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	Regional Strategy: 'Jessica Lee to explore opportunity to share information on the Regional Strategy with Parish Councils'	In progress
	Regional Strategy: 'Jessica Lee to share information about business engagement'	In progress
	Regional Strategy: 'Jessica Lee to share responses to the Regional Strategy discussion document with the Scrutiny Committee'	In progress Consultation report to be shared.
	Cllr Morris requested reports for Scrutiny Committee be shared in good time	
	Action. Helen Edelstyn to follow up with Cllr Hughes regarding Mayoral Expenses question	
5	ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC	
	No public questions had been received.	
	Public statements had been received from Christina Biggs (FOSBR), Robert Dixon (FOSBR) and David Redgewell (Bus Users UK). The Chair invited attendees to speak in the order their statements had been received.	
	Christina Biggs (FOSBR)	
	Christina Biggs spoke about infrastructure feasibility studies. She was disappointed to see these did not include any rail studies, for example the Henbury Loop. In her opinion a previous report on the Henbury Loop was flawed in relation to estimated usage. She was also disappointed to see that the Thornbury line had not been considered. She requested a dialogue with WECA on these matters.	
	Robert Dixon (FOSBR)	
	Christina Biggs spoke on behalf of Robert Dixon. She spoke about the Joint Transport Study and welcomed the inclusion of six stations. She noted proposals today are looking at road schemes. In her opinion the funding should be spent on rail.	
	The Chair thanked Christina for her comments and confirmed the statements would be appended to the minutes.	
	David Redgewell (Bus Users UK)	
	David Redgewell spoke about the Temple Gate/Temple Meads works. In his opinion the design moves bus services further from the station. He noted that plans were being developed by consultants rather than WECA officers. He was also concerned about changes to Scrutiny arrangements at Bristol City Council. For a wheelchair user the bus services are in his opinion too far from the station, for example at Redcliffe Church. He also spoke about Stapleton Road station plans which in his opinion will not have suitable disabled access. He requested a written response and a site visit to Bristol Temple Meads.	

	<p>The Chair thanked David for his comments and confirmed that his statement would be appended to the minutes. He confirmed that Scrutiny Committee would support openness and transparency. He agreed to discuss a written response with officers.</p> <p>Cllr Dine Romano asked if David Redgewell was satisfied with the logic for moving the bus away from the station? David responded that he felt that the original scheme left the bus stops closer to the station, but in his opinion this had been changed without public consultation.</p> <p>Cllr Geoff Gollop confirmed that Bristol still have Overview & Scrutiny Management and that he hoped David would be taking the opportunity to address the next meeting on 1st November. He clarified that Scrutiny are not a decision-making committee, they can comment on schemes and make statements and questions, but decisions lie with the Executive Member – in this case the Mayor of Bristol. He would hope that the Mayor and WECA office is in constructive dialogue with FOSBR.</p> <p>Action. Chair to discuss written response to David Redgewell with officers</p> <p>Action. Officers to provide Scrutiny Committee with summary of arrangements for dialogue with groups such as FOBSR and Bus Users US and others</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>PETITIONS FROM MEMBERSHIPS</p> <p>There were no petitions.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>WEST OF ENGLAND DRAFT JOINT SPATIAL PLAN</p> <p>North Somerset Councillors joined the meeting for discussion of this item.</p> <p>Laura Ambler, Interim Head of Housing and Planning at WECA, introduced the report which will be considered at the West of England Joint Committee meeting on 30th October and drew attention to the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report introduces the publication version of the JSP. The Committee had previously discussed the framework and emerging issues at their meeting on 22nd September and the discussion had been very helpful. • The JSP is a statutory plan and as the first in the country of this nature it has come under significant external scrutiny including the planning inspectorate. • There have already been three rounds of consultation. This next stage of consultation will be under regulation 19 of the town and country planning act. The publication version of the JSP will be published on in November and consulted on through the January. The plan and responses to the consultation will then be submitted to the Secretary of State in March. An independent planning inspector is then appointed and if the inspector finds the plan sound it can be adopted by the four authorities. • Attention was drawn to the strategic priorities, critical issues and the policy framework. • The committee were reminded that this plan fulfils the duty to co-operate and that the Joint Committee will consider publication of the plan at their meeting 30 October. <p>In response to questions from Committee members the following points were clarified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The job number is 82,500 and there is a requirement for homes and jobs to align.

- The Joint Transport Study has been carried out in parallel with the JSP and indicates some of the transport mitigations required to support the JSP. Further work, including funding for these mitigations, will be taken forwards through the JLTP.
- Officers have been working with statutory agencies and utility companies to develop an infrastructure delivery plan to be published with publication version of JSP.
- Housing for universities and older people has been included in evidence base and in housing numbers
- Green belt is national policy with which this plan must comply. The plan tries to protect overall function of Bristol and Bath greenbelt, some modest release (6.5%) proposed
- Without the JSP there is no framework to leverage investment to the region. More susceptible to section 78 appeals.
- Affordable housing is defined through our evidence base as those not able to buy or rent.
- Officers are developing a green infrastructure plan which will set out mitigations and how we might do this strategically. This will need to flow through into local plans.
- It was clarified that the JSP is owned by the four local authorities

Following discussion by the Committee the following points were noted and passed on to the Joint Committee meeting on 30th October 2017:

WECA O&S commended officers for the work, time and effort that has gone into developing the West of England Joint Spatial Plan. WECA O&S was pleased that comments previously made relating to place making had been considered as part of the published Plan. WECA O&S called for the quick and appropriate adoption of the Plan, but with regard to the following points:

- **Climate change** should be strengthened as an integral part of the Plan. This should include how it will ensure long term resilience and climate change mitigation action; action on air pollution should be an important part of this and must be considered as an integral part of any planned development.
- Plans for **transport** should consider:
 - the use of Park and Rides as genuine transport hubs linking multiple modes of transport e.g. bus and rail for example a query was raised as to why First Bus were to be allowed access to the Long Ashton Park and Ride, which limited its use as a nodal transport hub
 - orbital routes, and not just radial
 - rail infrastructure for example Henbury Loop
 - future transport modes including electric cars / autonomous vehicles

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to Greenbelt development should be appropriate and sound. Greenbelt land should only be utilised in exceptional circumstances and after appropriate local consultation. • Greater clarity requested on the definition of 'affordable housing'; this should include truly affordable housing for the regions key workers. The Plan should also consider the housing needs of older people and students • Development of the Joint Local Transport Plan should run in parallel and support the delivery of the Joint Spatial Plan • Digital connectivity should be integral to the Plan • The Plan should plan for and enable future technological change e.g. driverless cars • A step change will be required across the region to ensure the deliverability of the Plan. WECA will need to maximise all possible funding pots, including new Government initiatives • O&S considered it important that all public consultation on the Plan from this point was noted carefully and where appropriate changes were made to the Plan to reflect public views. <p>Action. Comments from Overview & Scrutiny to be shared with Joint Committee in advance of their meeting 30th October 2017</p>
	<p>There was a short break.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>FUNDING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FEASIBILITY STUDIES</p> <p>Chris Jennings, Interim Head of Business & Skills at WECA, introduced the report which will be considered by the WECA Committee on 30th Oct 2017 requesting release of £6m to take forwards feasibility studies and business case developments, plus funding towards the next contract for Real Time Bus information. He drew attention to appendix C which lists all the proposed schemes. He noted that over a third of the funding is directed at rail, with £2m to take forwards planning at Temple Meads and £350k to look at mass transit options which could be a mix of solutions.</p> <p>In response to questions by Committee members the following points were clarified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schemes have been put forwards by transport leads in the local authorities and we are not aware of any duplication with other requests for funding. • No decision has been taken by the Mayors/Leaders about investing equally in the different authority areas, the focus has been to ensure the benefits of investment are shared across the region. • This funding is for schemes within the West of England Combined Authority area. • Mass transit could include a number of options including tram and light rail. The JTS proposes a network of mass transit corridors and we have looked at examples of European Cities with similar challenges.

- There is a stakeholder group for the Joint Transport Study and Joint Local Transport Plan which ensures everyone has the opportunity to provide input.
- These are schemes identified as priorities by the individual councils as the key ones to start. There is opportunity as we identify JLTP to identify any gaps and identify other schemes.

Following discussion by the Committee the following points were noted and passed on to the WECA Committee meeting on 30th October 2017:

The WECA O&S supports the proposed expenditure set out in the Business Case Funding for Infrastructure Projects report. The WECA O&S wishes to make four points in relation to the recommendations. These points are:

- Business cases should not duplicate work already done by Constituent Councils
- The feasibility studies for mass-transit corridors should be broad in scope to ensure connectivity across the region, and not just into city centres. Specifically, the business case should consider the use of Callington Road as an exclusive mass transit route.
- The RTI proposals should consider RTI in train stations
- All business cases / feasibility studies should consider the affordability of public transport, where this is relevant

Action. Comments from Overview and Scrutiny to be shared with WECA Committee in advance of their meeting on 30th October 2017

9 WECA AND MAYORAL BUDGET OUTURN 2017/18: REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING APRIL 2017 TO SEPTEMBER 2017

Tim Richens, Interim Head of Investment and Corporate Services at WECA introduced the report that will be considered by the WECA Committee on 30th October 2017. This is the first outturn budget report for the financial year 17/18 and has been produced as part of regular financial monitoring and revenue reporting.

He identified the three key elements to report. Mayoral Budget, Combined Authority Budget and Capital budget and drew attention to the following points:

- Mayoral budget. The most significant cost was the mayoral election and this came in under estimate.
- Combined Authority budget. Key changes/variances to note:
 - Staff budget. Overspend of £170k. This budget was set pre-mayoral election under interim arrangements to deal with statutory functions. As we start to implement powers and take forwards new opportunities such as housing deal and transport functions we are looking at a budget overspend. This is linked to significant opportunities around transport and housing.
 - Suppliers and Services. Underspend. Set up costs for WECA have been reimbursed to councils (£500k each). Set up of new offices came in under budget. Concessionary Fares budget also underspent – will be working

with South Glos to understand reduction in patronage/use of diamond passes primarily within Bristol area.

- Income. Business rate retention pilot has generated significant benefits from each of the councils (c£18m). WECA receives a 5% share, of this. WECA also receives interest on balances, for example investment funding from government which is invested in safe investments in accordance with treasury strategy.
- Capital budget. Largest elements are highways and transport grants and pothole action fund which is passed to councils.
- Proposed staffing resources. Resources required to support housing and transport work currently covered with interim support. Resource is also required for business & skills and democratic services
- There will be opportunity to rebalance resources as WECA also supports the West of England LEP and Invest in Bristol and Bath. We will have opportunity to share back office functions and any underspends in LEP and IBB will be passed back to the four councils
- WECA works closely with constituent councils to use their staff where they have skills and knowledge, noting that if staff are seconded to WECA we have to reimburse councils for their costs

In response to questions by Committee members the following points were clarified:

- The staffing costs of £1.2m per year represent the net amount.
- Highways and transport grants are passported across to the Councils – as part of the devolution deal we receive about £250m per year additional funding which is passported through,
- WECA is negotiating with the Skills Funding Agency regarding arrangements for the transition of the Adult Education Budget to ensure that any additional costs are transferred to WECA as part of this grant in 19/20
- The largest element of the additional resource will support infrastructure, housing and planning and figures represent total employer costs (salary, NI, Pension)
- Funding for staff comes from business rates retention and interest earnings, and not from gainshare funding. The revised full year staffing cost is therefore £1.256M, noting that if the budget is approved it will take time to recruit to posts so we estimate the outturn will be £1.159M in 17/18
- A Medium Term Financial plan will be developed as far as is practical as part of the 18/19 budget.
- The concessionary fare underspend is £522k out of £13.2m.

Following discussion by the Committee the following points were noted and passed on to the WECA Committee meeting on 30th October 2017:

The views of WECA Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) are:

The WECA O&S supports the Mayoral Budget Outturn 2017/18: Revenue and Capital Monitoring April 2017 to September 2017, but wishes to make two points in relation to the recommendations. These points are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WECA O&S would like a greater understanding of the reasons for the reported underspend caused by a reduction in take up of Concessionary Fares. It is keen that officers explore the issue in further detail to establish why the underspend and drop in take up is occurring.• The budget envelope for WECA staff needs to be sufficient to ensure it has the appropriate level and calibre of staff to deliver its functions effectively. <p>The WECA O&S welcomed confirmation that there will be a Medium Term Financial Plan developed as part of the 2018/19 Budget.</p> <p>Action. Comments from Overview and Scrutiny to be shared with WECA Committee in advance of their meeting on 30th October 2017</p> <p>Action. Officers to prepare report on concessionary fares underspend, reasons why and how to use this</p>
14	<p>AOB</p> <p>Document packs. It was noted that there had been confusion regarding pagination of papers and agenda items numbers where papers being prepared for WECA and Joint Committee. Officers are investigating solutions.</p> <p>Meeting dates. The Chair will be moving the dates of future meetings to enable more pre-scrutiny.</p> <p>Paper publication dates. It was noted that WECA and Joint Committee papers are published five clear working days before each meeting. It was requested that papers are circulated to Scrutiny members.</p> <p>Access to information. The Chair drew Members' attention to the protocol for requesting information from WECA. Access is being requested to Advisory Board minutes.</p> <p>Action. Officers to investigate solutions for issuing document packs</p> <p>Action. Chair to discuss revised dates for circulation to members</p> <p>Action. Access to information will be requested to advisory board minutes</p> <p>The Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.18</p>

Appendix 1 : Public Statements

Statements Received

	Name, organisation
Item 1	Christina Biggs, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railway (FOSBR) <i>Reaction to Joint Transport Study September 2017</i>
Item 2	Robert Dixon, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railway (FOSBR) <i>Statement about the West of England Transport Study</i>
Item 3	David Redgewell, SWTN <i>Bristol Temple Meads</i>

Statement 1

Christina Biggs, Friends of Suburban Bristol Railway



Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR)

Statement to WECA Infrastructure Advisory Board, Monday 23 October 2017

Reaction to Joint Transport Study September 2017: FOSBR welcomes the determination of WECA to proceed with developing transport studies, but would challenge the assumption that the first of the schemes to be advanced should be MetroBus, bus-based Park and Ride and road bypass schemes ahead of rail schemes. We note there is still no regional rail strategy in the JTS. We note that the Joint Spatial Plan was only released on Friday 20 October so we cannot comment by the 12 noon Friday 20 October statement deadline for this advisory board.

1. MetroBus: We are alarmed at the proposed rolling-out of the MetroBus schemes to Thornbury, Severnside and Keynsham, when there are existing or unexploited freight lines for each of these destinations. We question the safety of the MetroBuses in the guided busways, especially when entering the flanges and mounting steep and curved bridges such as the one at Ashton Vale.

2. Rail element: We note that this study claims to have ambition and yet is only suggesting the same six new rail stations proposed in the December 2016 pre-consultation draft, and that the September 2017 version is now explicitly excluding the two rail schemes (Henbury Loop and the Thornbury Line) which are the most inspiring to the public. We note that the total budget for the Joint Transport Study is £8.9bn, of which only £1bn is allocated to rail. We note that the Rail 1 element for just six stations is £50-80m, and the Rail 2 element "improvements to existing stations" at £626 million should be covered by the GWR Franchise and not funded by WECA. Instead, this could fund the Portishead line at the £100m re-costing, the Henbury Loop at £48 million, the Port St Andrew's Gate access bridge at £128 million, and the Thornbury Line at £38 million (costed in WEP 2012 Halcrow report).

3. Henbury Loop We note that the very low BCR for the Henbury Loop was arrived at by assuming a train subsidy for 30 years due to low ridership, whereas the Henbury Spur subsidy was assumed to be taken into the GWR franchise after 3 years due to higher ridership. If the projected Loop ridership is an underestimate as asserted at the time, then the 30 year trainset hire cannot be assumed. The Phase 1 BCR was calculated differently as it did not include trainset hire – for Phase 1 it was assumed that the trainset hire would come out of the four councils' revenue funding of £1.1 million per year. We accept there is an issue with the 63 minute run-time, but suggest reversing the trains at Bristol Parkway to overcome the timetabling and low ridership issues. We would also want WECA to challenge the Port study £128m figure for creating a rail cutting at St Andrew's Gate level crossing, and to investigate alternatives such as a bridge at St Andrew's Rd Station north of the conveyor belt silo. Finally we note that Severnside industrial development is growing fast, and should give an even better business case for the Henbury Loop, especially if opening a station at Chittening.

4. Portishead Line We would like to participate in the re-scoping discussions on Portishead line, chiefly our idea of implementing our proposal for long weekend closures, given the present lack of use by Portbury Dock of their purchased freight paths. We have presented data that shows that the Port make very little use of their purchased freight paths and that in winter 2017 the trains have been running only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, albeit more frequently in summer 2017. If the weekend possessions for works to the line were from Friday to Monday, this would double the length of time during the line closures, and more than halve the number of weekend closures needed.

5. Thornbury - We note that during October 2017, Network Rail have been clearing the line to Tytherington Quarry, and that a 2012 Halcrow report commissioned by WEP costed the Thornbury Line at £38 million for an extension as far as the old station site in the centre of the town. We propose that a site at Grosvenor Road Roundabout is optimal as it is adjacent to the majority of existing and proposed railway development and has an attractive prospect and entrance to the town. We have visited both rail tunnels under the A38 and M5 and can confirm they are in good condition. Rail capacity is much less an issue on a branch line and could eliminate the need for a turnback at Yate. The fourth platform at Bristol Parkway should also help with capacity at Westerleigh Junction.

Christina Biggs (FOSBR), Friday 20 October 2017

Statement 2

Robert Dixon, Suburban Bristol Railway

Statement about the Final version of the Transport Study

A) Overall issues with the transport study -

1) Transport and the Spatial Plan:

In our response to the consultation for the Joint Spatial Plan, FOSBR stressed the importance and role of public transport in sustainable development. There are already high levels of congestion with a major impact on the environment and quality of life. We advocate a transport-focused approach to planning and development.

We strongly oppose any such new road building to open up development sites. This encourages car use and is against the spirit of the Joint Local Transport Plan, which prioritises public transport and sustainable transport modes.

We reiterate our concerns about the extension of the urban area around South Bristol. The area around Whitchurch should not be developed further. It suffers from considerable congestion. Further development is being used as an excuse to extend South Bristol Link Road and build the Whitchurch bypass. However the provision of a public transport alternative could enable some sustainable development to take place in the Whitchurch area.

While we would prefer not to see development in other areas to the south west of Bristol in the Green Belt, we would be more supportive of this due to the proximity of existing public transport routes and the potential for new ones.

We support development in the other settlements and locations identified in the spatial plan: Portishead and Pill; Yatton, Nailsea and Backwell; Avonmouth and Severnside; Keynsham and Saltford; Yate/Chipping Sodbury; Charfield. These locations are close to or on railway lines and have good bus services. We would also support development in Clevedon and Thornbury because they have potential for improved public transport links.

2) Public transport proposals are less well developed than road schemes

We welcome the extent of public transport proposals but are concerned that many, in particular the rapid transit proposals, are as yet undeveloped and vague. We are also concerned that the only schemes that appear to have been worked on at present are road schemes, many of which are long-standing ones, and some of which (such as the resurrected South Bristol Ring Road) have previously been rejected.

We continue to oppose road improvements except in order to improve public transport e.g. widening bus lanes, and *not* to increase capacity for private vehicles, since numerous studies show that this ultimately increases car use and congestion. The Transport Strategy must focus on providing alternatives to the private car instead. Many recent public transport grants, such as for MetroBus, have been used to increase general highway capacity: a strategy that simply encourages more car traffic with limited modal shift and no reduction in delays to bus services.

There is too much of a focus on MetroBus and road schemes. With the exception of improved facilities and six new stations, rail has largely been ignored. While we support the premise of the light rail schemes we remain to be convinced that the authorities will have persistence to pursue this and the funding required.

3) Carbon Reductions:

It was noted during the consultation that the plan makes the assumption that car journeys will reduce as a proportion of journeys but will stay broadly the same. It is disingenuously argued that there is a modal shift but it appears highly unlikely that there would be a significant reduction in carbon emissions.

Rather than taking the action required, the report makes the assumption that new technologies will ride to the rescue like the proverbial knight in shining armour. We have known of the need to reduce carbon emissions for 30 years but this has failed to happen as yet. To ensure reductions we should pursue public transport options that are known to have a positive impact, rather than placing hope in technologies that may never deliver.

Categories on which schemes are judged: It should be noted that the items associated with economic growth are ones that are associated with road access and more likely to give positive results to such schemes.

Roads as promoting carbon reductions?!

While we acknowledge the possibility that, in the short term, new roads may reduce congestion on existing streets, it is generally recognised that road construction leads to more traffic, increasing carbon emissions and reducing air quality. However the report states (Appendix A, p.A2) that each road scheme has either a neutral or positive (!) impact. The idea that new roads will play a positive role in reducing carbon emissions and enable modal shift by creating space for public transport is fantasy and would be laughable if it was not so serious. All they will do is create more space for more traffic.

B) Rail Proposals:

While we welcome the proposals as far as they go, six new stations and new facilities is insufficient and derisory. The proposals fail to recognise the fact that the existing rail lines are the only method of truly rapid transit that avoids road congestion and is currently available. They fail to use the network to its potential. Rail and public transport should be given more priority at the expense of new road schemes.

In addition to new stations on existing lines our priority is the Henbury Loop - MetroWest Phase 3. Unsurprisingly the Loop is dismissed as a result of the earlier flawed study by CH2MHill - see below.

New stations on existing lines:

We support the six stations proposed by the West of England authorities (Ashley Hill, Ashton Gate, Charfield, Constable Road (Horfield), Saltford and St Annes). We also recommend stations at Chittening on the Henbury Loop (for Severnside); Coalpit Heath (for Winterbourne and Emerson's Green); Corsham; Long Ashton / Flax Bourton; Uphill (Weston-super-Mare).

We would urge that these reopenings are considered as a package rather than individually.

We urge that Pilning's service be increased (as previously supported by the West of England authorities) to provide a commuter service and Park and Ride site for access from Thornbury, South Gloucestershire and South Wales.

Cost:

The cost of a station is small when compared to the proposed road schemes (7-14 stations for the price of *East of Bath Link*) and has the result of reducing reliance on the private car rather than maintaining it. For example, a station at Coalpit Heath with an estimated cost of £5-10 million, would not only serve the proposed development area, it would provide opportunities for interchange with MetroBus and standard bus services, providing a link to the Science Park and housing at Emerson's Green and reducing congestion on the ring road.

Congestion: a problem that *can* be resolved:

The argument that rail lines are congested is true. However this should not be used as an excuse not to make further improvements. Rather government should be pressed to provide funding for schemes such as the remodelling of East Bristol junction.

Creative ways can be also found to avoid congestion. Examples include running from Weston-super-Mare to Chippenham and Portishead to Yate and Gloucester or Cheltenham; Henbury Loop services could run from Bristol Temple Meads via Henbury to Clifton Down.

A station at Coalpit Heath would provide an opportunity to reduce congestion between Bristol Parkway and Westerleigh Junction by building the station on passing loops, as was the case in the past.

Access to Severnside has not been considered:

We are also concerned at the lack of support within the document for rail freight, in particular action to support a terminal at Avonmouth and road access to the Port of Bristol. Access to the port at Avonmouth is via level crossings over the Henbury Loop and Severn Beach rail lines. This restricts access. Increased passenger services have understandably proved to be of concern to the port.

FOSBR support the proposed expansion of the Port of Bristol and want to ensure that road access is adequate and does not restrict their business or rail improvements. We urge the West of England to press government to fund improved access and a new rail freight terminal.

Henbury Loop:

We are not surprised to see that the Henbury Loop has been dismissed as poor value for money in view of the previous study by CH2M Hill. We would remind WECA that this was widely condemned as flawed at the time and subject to a call-in by Bristol City councillors, who voted to reject its findings and to support the Loop rather than the spur. At the time the Department for Transport recommended to Charlotte Leslie (MP at the time) that the Loop be reviewed by an independent consultant.

Reasons for the Loop -

Henbury Loop is needed to enable **access to Severnside**, which is due to expand considerably (25,000 jobs) and can only be reached by public transport with great difficulty. It is a social equity measure as well as a transport proposal. The Loop would

provide improved access for those in Henbury, Filton, Patchway, Horfield, Lockleaze, Easton, Lawrence Hill, and other areas that would connect well with the loop by bus.

We also need this to enable a modal shift. The WECA Spatial Plan / Transport Study assumes that car use stays static - that isn't good enough. Without significant modal shift we will not meet carbon targets because transport is such a large proportion of CO2.

Issues with the CH2M Hill Report about Henbury Loop & Spur -

1. **how best to provide access to Severnside was not even considered** - it wasn't an objective of Phase Two as it was considered that it had been dealt with by improving the service on the Severn Beach line! This needs to be taken into consideration.
2. **Forecast figures are low** - based on outdated Network Rail figures - by using updated figures passenger numbers would be 19% higher for 2023 and 24.5% for 2031; these figures had already been exceeded at most regional stations by 2013-14. This weakened the benefit-cost ratio.
3. **Unrealistically low predicted passenger numbers** that compare badly to existing stations; when comparing them to stations the report says are similar we thought they would be 30-40% higher
4. **Unrealistically low growth predicted at existing stations** - only an extra 2-3% was predicted; since the improved service on the Severn Beach Line resulted in a 37% increase this seems ridiculous.
5. **Unrealistically low differences predicted between Loop and Spur** - unlikely in view of easier access to Severnside, which is inaccessible by bus. This will have weakened the benefit-cost ratio.
6. **Comparison timings for bus and train are wildly inaccurate or simply impossibly inconvenient**; it fails to mention that most of the industrial sites are not served by bus; car journey times are not given.
7. The cumulative effect of this is that **the study expects the local authorities to pay to run the service for 30 years and includes this cost accordingly.**
8. **The argument that WoE can only approve schemes with a benefit-cost ratio exceeding 2:1 is false.** Other authorities, such as Manchester and Birmingham, allow the building of strategically important schemes (e.g. Docklands Light Railway) that do not meet this requirement. The assumptions of revenue support are also likely to be incorrect due to inaccurate predictions and lack of strategic thinking about access to Severnside.

C) RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Increased emphasis on rail and other public transport schemes and the removal of road schemes** to ensure a significant modal shift and reduction of carbon emissions without relying on dubious future technological improvements
- **That WECA commission a review of Henbury Loop by an independent consultant.** This was recommended by DfT to Charlotte Leslie (MP at the time). This would include the factors not considered by CH2M Hill's report such as the impact on access to Severnside, realistic passenger growth figures (rather than the Network Rail's disputed figures that had already been exceeded on local lines), realistic passenger demand figures (new ones were *much* lower than existing stations and the impact on existing stations was a handful of new passengers), consultation with business and stakeholders (not carried out by CH2M Hill), etc.
- **lobby government** (and Network Rail) to pay for public transport measures, improved road access to the Port of Bristol, resignalling, East Bristol junction and improvements at Temple Meads station

- **Inclusion of FOSBR's MetroWest Phase 3** package of stations
- **Safeguarding the rail line to Thornbury** to enable future development
- Continuing and **ongoing review** of opportunities for rail & integration with other modes

- Rob Dixon, Chair of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways

Statement 3

David Redgewell, SWTN

Temple Meads

We are very concerned that despite assurances in the current plans that there would be adequate space for all buses travelling through Temple Gate including MetroBus that on Friday 20th October 2017, we were advised that the buses would first of all be dispersed for 12 weeks whilst the bus platform was being built on the main A4 Bath Road and that the No.1 & 904 to Brislington would be moved away from the station to Victoria Street and Redcliffe Way. This is too far for people with luggage, pensioners, disabled people and those with children.

Bus Users UK, Transport Focus, SWTN, TFGBA and FOSBR were all assured that we would have a bus/rail interchange at Temple Meads on Temple Gate and in future on the Friary with ferry link. To our shock it now appears there will not be enough bus space on the Bath Road in the final scheme and the present bus stops which will now need to be retained may now become cycleways. As this is a design/build/operate contract we would request an urgent scrutiny of the plans by WECA Scrutiny Panel and Place Scrutiny/OSSM on Bristol City Council.

Please would you advise us as the plan to close bus stops comes into place from 26th October 2017 and the alternative stops may in future become permanent well away from the station defeating Government policy on bus/rail integration. A good example of best practice in the new bus station at Penzance.

Stapleton Road station

We are still concerned about a lack of progress on disabled access to the platforms, waiting shelters and poor state of the approach road which has recently been flooded and not acceptable for wheelchair users and passengers with luggage. Station lighting is also not working on the approach road.

DAVID REDGEWELL SWTN