

## **Pilning platform closure - statement to WEP JTB 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

On 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016 FOSBR became aware of a Network Rail “consultation” on the closure of Pilning down platform and the removal of the footbridge at the station.

On 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 Network Rail circulated below letter to an unknown distribution list asking for comments on footbridge removal with a deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016.

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/network%20code/network%20change/completed%20proposals/western/ncg12016west594%20pilning/a%20ncg12016west594%20notification.pdf>

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016 Network Rail circulated another electronic letter stating that the consultation period had ended, any objections received had been “satisfactorily resolved” and as such the works can now be undertaken.

For full text see: [http://fosbr.org.uk/files/20160525\\_pilning\\_nrnotice.pdf](http://fosbr.org.uk/files/20160525_pilning_nrnotice.pdf)

FOSBR do not believe that the footbridge removal has yet been authorized by the Office of Rail and Road.

Gantries for electrification will run through Pilning station so Network Rail would have to install a higher footbridge to the down platform. FOSBR understand that Network Rail are struggling to deliver electrification to time and budget and we do not wish to impede the electrification process. Pilning station is currently minimally used as it is served by only two trains a week, one in each direction on a Saturday. However FOSBR believe the station has great potential for workers at the expanding Severnside industrial estates if the service is increased to a sensible weekday frequency. The costs of footbridge replacement should already be factored into the electrification project.

FOSBR are submitting the following statement to the West of England Partnership Joint Transport Board meeting on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

**We understand that Network Rail have asked the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to give permission to close one platform at Pilning station. We believe that this action has occurred without proper consultation. We understand that this is due to Network Rail's reluctance to spend money to ensure this station and others, including Patchway, Lawrence Hill and Stapleton Road, are accessible. They are prepared to allow these stations to breach the obligations of public organisations under equalities legislation.**

**We would like the West of England Joint Leaders Board to confirm that they have not consented to this and to assertively tell Network Rail and the ORR that this is not acceptable.**

**Pilning has the future potential to serve the extensive industrial and housing development proposed for Severnside. It is expected that 25,000 new jobs will be created in the area. Pilning is on the line from Cardiff to Bristol so would enable workers to travel to work at Severnside from a variety of locations and give local people more options when travelling to work.**

**For that reason FOSBR would like to see Pilning station retained and have an improved service. In our response to the West of England authorities' Spatial Plan and Transport Study consultations in January we proposed that Pilning should be served by a twice daily weekday service enabling commuters from Severnside to get to work. At present there is no public transport from Severnside to Bristol's North Fringe. Severnside Community Rail Partnership have noted a large increase in passenger numbers travelling to Severn Beach and St Andrews Road (with a train only every two hours). This shows the demand is already there and will only increase.**

**FOSBR has evidence of local support for the restoration of services to Pilning and also of a lack of consultation with Pilning Parish Council on this matter.**

**FOSBR will be writing to the ORR to complain about this proposal and the lack of consultation, and to note the future potential of Pilning station and the need for local stations to be compliant with equalities legislation. We also ask the West of England to ensure that all aspects of accessibility, including (where possible), convenient interchange between rail and bus, is included in their bid for the Regional Growth Fund on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016.**

**Rob Dixon, FOSBR Chair**