

FOSBR comments submitted in response to South Gloucestershire Core Strategy
Pre-Publication Draft (August 2010)

1. Strategy for Development—Summary Statement (para. 1.39, p. 13)

FOSBR suggests that the Stoke Gifford Transport link should serve Bristol Parkway station, in order to improve access to that station from Bradley Stoke and the new development proposed for the area east of Harry Stoke.

This would bring the Core Strategy into line with PPG 13, para. 6(1), and PPS 1, para. 27 (vii), which urges planning authorities to ‘actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges’, and with PPG 13, paras 72 and 74(4), which encourages the development of public transport interchanges.

The last sentence in para. 1.39 should be amended by the addition of the phrase ‘Bristol Parkway station’, to read as follows:

‘This will be a new public transport and road connection between Bradley Stoke, Bristol Parkway station and the A4174 Avon Ring Road to alleviate existing congestion around the Parkway Railway Station bridge, as part of the major Rapid Transit link between the Bristol North Fringe urban area and Hengrove in south Bristol.’

2. Vision, Strategic Objective and Strategy for Development (para. 4.2, p. 21)

FOSBR suggests that the proposed rapid transit from Hengrove to North Fringe should be rail-based rather than bus-based. This could be by the restoration of four tracks to the railway line between Bristol Temple Meads and Filton Abbey Wood, as recommended in Network Rail’s Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (March 2010), para. 6.9.9.1, p. 161. Such a route was the backbone of the light rail system proposed for Bristol a few years ago: these tracks could be used by tram trains, as well as by conventional rail vehicles, which could then continue on new track to serve destinations such as Bradley Stoke. Alternatively, a new light rail line adjacent to the M32 could be considered.

Secondly, we suggest the addition of a fourth bullet point mentioning the proposals to reopen stations. The Core Strategy already mentions Henbury and Charfield; we suggest that Hallen, North Filton (where the A38 crosses the Henbury Loop), Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath and Chipping Sodbury should be considered, as well as a passenger service on the Thornbury branch. These stations should also be shown on the Key Diagram.

These two changes would make the Core Strategy more effective and consistent with national policy. Trams and trains have a much better record of encouraging modal shift (from the private car to public transport) than buses, as evidenced by the success of

tram systems in Manchester and Nottingham. And a rapid transit system based on electric trams would be much greener than the diesel bus system currently proposed: the Department for Transport's paper Britain's Transport Infrastructure: Rail Electrification (July 2009) already recommends electrification of the route between Temple Meads and Parkway (pp. 17-21 and map, p. 17).

The Department for Transport's paper Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (November 2008) includes supporting economic effectiveness and growth, tackling climate change, and improving quality of life as three of the five objectives of the Government's transport policy (para. 1.5). To that end, it promotes 'policies that encourage people to make low-carbon transport choices, which will be reflected in choices of investment in developing the transport system-for example between road and rail' (para. 3.8; cf. Executive Summary, para. 9). 'Indeed, we want to encourage the use of the railways as a lower-carbon transport mode in comparison to road' (para. 5.18).

National policy supports modal shift to rail where this leads to greater sustainability, and this should be reflected in the Core Strategy.

We therefore suggest that, in the third bullet point, 'Bus Rapid Transit' should read simply 'Rapid Transit', so that the bullet point would read as follows:

'Completing delivery of the Greater Bristol Bus Network and delivering the Rapid Transit route from Hengrove - North Fringe, the Emersons Green spur, the link from Temple Meads - Emersons Green and the Greater Bristol Metro Project (see Key Diagram).'

We also suggest the addition of a fourth bullet point, as follows:

'Reopening stations at Charfield, Chipping Sodbury, Winterbourne and Coalpit Heath; reopening the Henbury Loop to passenger services, including new stations at Hallen, Henbury and North Filton; and considering restoring passenger services to the Thornbury branch.'

3. Strategy for Development: North Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (para. 4.8, p. 27)

FOSBR suggests, for the reasons given in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, that the word 'bus' should be deleted from the phrase 'bus rapid transit link' in the last sentence of para. 4.8, and that the enhanced public transport measures should include new stations at Winterbourne (on the main line east of Parkway) and at Hallen, Henbury and North Filton on the Henbury Loop.

That sentence would then read: 'This will be supported by enhanced public transport measures including quality bus corridors, a rapid transit link to South Bristol, Bristol City Centre and Emersons Green, improvements to the heavy rail system including new stations at Hallen, Henbury, North Filton and Winterbourne, and an improved cycling network.'

4. Strategy for Development: North Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (para. 4.13, p. 28)

The references to improved transport for Patchway in this section are rather vague ('new transportation infrastructure . . . a new transport package'). It should be a priority to improve access to and services from Patchway station, both to relieve pressure on suburban services from Bristol Parkway (already overcrowded at peak times) and because Patchway is more conveniently located for the northern part of the area. Paragraph 6.31 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006) identifies Patchway station as an interchange, and para. 6.23 commits the council to improving its train services. As para. 6.32 states: 'The Council will continue to promote the refurbishment and enhancement of Patchway Station which, given its location in relation to Bradley Stoke and Filton Northfield, has the potential to make a significant contribution to the transportation objectives of the Plan.' In view of the development proposed for the area, that commitment should be maintained.

We suggest the following addition after the last sentence in para. 4.13: 'Access to Patchway station will be improved and the frequency of train services enhanced.'

5. Strategy for Development: North Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (paras 4.16–17, p. 28)

For the reasons given in our representation made in response to para. 1.39, FOSBR believes that the Stoke Gifford Transport Link should serve Bristol Parkway station.

We also suggest that access to Filton Abbey Wood station should be improved, to make it more accessible from UWE and the sites proposed for new development, both on foot and by public transport.

It would be worth considering a bus service from Abbey Wood to Parkway which would serve these locations and link them to the national rail network, or the proposed rapid transit route could be adapted to link these two stations.

We suggest that the following sentence should be added at the end of para. 4.16: 'Improvements will be made to the access to Filton Abbey Wood station from the surrounding area, including UWE and the sites proposed for development.'

We also suggest that the words 'Bristol Parkway station' should be added to the second sentence in para. 4.17, as follows: 'This will include the Stoke Gifford Transport Link, a new public transport and road connection between Great Stoke Way, Bradley Stoke, Bristol Parkway station and the A4174 Avon Ring Road.'

6. East Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (para. 4.21, p. 29)

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways suggests that, for the reasons given in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, the word 'bus' should be deleted from the

phrase 'bus rapid transit link' in para. 4.21.

We also suggest that the alignment of the old Midland Railway from Mangotsfield to Yate should be reserved for use by this link.

7. Yate and Chipping Sodbury (para. 4.24, p. 30)

FOSBR welcomes the commitment to improvements to the rail service from Yate in para. 4.24. These improvements should include the installation of a turnback facility which would enable the current services from Weston to Parkway to be extended to Yate and terminate there, as recommended in the West of England Partnership's Joint Local Transport Plan 2 and Network Rail's Greater Western Route Utilisation Strategy, para. 6.9.10.1.

We also suggest that a new station should be opened at Chipping Sodbury. There is ample land at the old station site for this; if track capacity is an issue, a new platform could be built on a siding, so that trains would not have to wait on the main line. The station could be served by extending the current service from Weston-super-Mare, so that alternate trains could terminate at Yate and Chipping Sodbury. The two stations could be linked by a bus service serving the central and residential areas of both towns.

These measures would address the current overcrowding on peak services from Yate and traffic congestion in the area, which would be exacerbated by the development proposed.

We suggest that additions should be made to the penultimate sentence in para. 4.24 so that it would read as follows:

'This new development will support a package of transport measures, including: improved local bus services connecting residential areas with the town centres, station and employment areas; more frequent bus services to key destinations; improvements to the rail service from Yate, including the Yate turnback; a new station at Chipping Sodbury, and improved links into the Greater Bristol Cycle City network.'

8. Thornbury (para. 4.25, p. 30)

FOSBR suggests that consideration should be given to restoring passenger services to the Thornbury line, with new stations at Thornbury, Tytherington and Iron Acton. This line is still in situ as far as Tytherington and is used for occasional quarry trains; it could be served by extending the trains from Weston-super-Mare which currently terminate at Bristol Parkway (as an alternative to turning them back at Yate).

This would support the proposed development, improve access to Thornbury, and relieve traffic congestion on the A38.

We suggest the addition of the following sentence at the end of para. 4.25:

‘Consideration will be given to restoring passenger services to the Thornbury railway line.’

9. Severnside (para. 4.26, p. 31)

FOSBR suggests that public transport provision in the area should be improved by developing Severn Beach as a railhead station, with a car park provided on the land formerly occupied by railway sidings, bus services from the surrounding area, and a more frequent train service. Severn Beach station was identified as a public transport interchange in para. 6.31 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006).

It may also be appropriate to consider providing a new station between St Andrew’s Road and Severn Beach, to serve employment sites in that location and reduce commuting by car.

We suggest the addition of the following sentence at the end of para. 4.26: ‘Severn Beach station will be developed as a railhead for the area.’

10. Chapter 7: Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility (para. 7.1, p. 52)

FOSBR supports the broad thrust of this paragraph. However, for the reasons given in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, we suggest that the word ‘bus’ should be deleted from the phrase ‘Bus Rapid Transit route’ in the third bullet point in para. 7.1.

For the reasons given in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, we also suggest the addition of a fourth bullet point mentioning the proposals to reopen stations. The Core Strategy already mentions Henbury and Charfield; we suggest that Hallen, North Filton (where the A38 crosses the Henbury Loop), Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath and Chipping Sodbury should be considered, as well as a passenger service on the Thornbury branch. These stations should also be shown on the Key Diagram. The fourth bullet point would read as follows:

‘Reopening stations at Charfield, Chipping Sodbury, Winterbourne and Coalpit Heath; reopening the Henbury Loop to passenger services, including new stations at Hallen, Henbury and North Filton; and considering restoring passenger services to the Thornbury branch.’

11. Policy CS7: Strategic Transport Infrastructure (p. 51)

FOSBR suggests, for the reasons set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, the addition of a new sub-paragraph, between sub-paras 8 and 9, mentioning proposals to reopen stations. The Core Strategy already mentions Henbury and Charfield; we suggest that Hallen, North Filton (where the A38 crosses the Henbury Loop), Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath and Chipping Sodbury should be considered, as well as a passenger service on the Thornbury branch. These stations should also be shown on the Key Diagram. The new sub-paragraph would read as follows:

‘Reopening stations at Charfield, Chipping Sodbury, Winterbourne and Coalpit Heath; reopening the Henbury Loop to passenger services, including new stations at Hallen, Henbury and North Filton; and considering restoring passenger services to the Thornbury branch.’

For the reasons set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, we also suggest that the word ‘bus’ should be deleted from the phrase ‘Bus Rapid Transit route’ in sub-para. 11.

We support the following policy set out under the heading Safeguarding Land: ‘Rail track beds and associated land will be safeguarded for their continuing use or reuse for public transport or rail freight, or foot and cycleways.’

12. Figure 2: Strategic Transport Infrastructure Proposals Diagram and inset (pp. 54–5)

For the reasons set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, FOSBR suggests that proposed new stations at Hallen, North Filton, Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath, Chipping Sodbury, Iron Acton, Tytherington and Thornbury should be shown on these maps.

13. Tackling Congestion and Improving Accessibility (paras 7.3–9, pp. 56–8)

(a) For the reasons set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.2, FOSBR suggests that para. 7.3 should express a preference for a light rail rapid transit system rather than a bus-based system. It is unlikely that the bus-based system currently proposed will be funded, and likely that the new government will change the funding criteria that previous favoured bus schemes over light rail, as highlighted in the All-Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group’s Light Rail in the City Regions Inquiry (February 2010). We suggest that the second sentence in para. 7.3 should read as follows:

‘The original bid for a bus-based system is unlikely to be funded, however, and so the opportunity will be taken to develop a light rail system.’

(b) We support the proposed Greater Bristol Metro project set out in para. 7.4.

(c) In relation to para. 7.5, we suggest that multi-modal interchanges should also be considered for Patchway and Filton Abbey Wood stations, and for the new stations proposed for Henbury, North Filton and Chipping Sodbury, with the first sentence of para. 7.5 amended to read as follows:

‘Multi-Modal Interchanges will also be enhanced or developed at The Mall, UWE, Emersons Green East, Parkway, Patchway, Filton Abbey Wood and Yate Stations and at locations along the route as appropriate.’

(d) We suggest that the sixth bullet point in para. 7.6 should include a new station at North Filton (where the A38 crosses the Henbury Loop), for interchange, and perhaps also at Hallen; and that the station proposed for Henbury should have a bus or rapid transit link to Cribbs Causeway. The Henbury Loop may also need to have its capacity expanded, especially where it passes under the South Wales main line south of Patchway, because of the additional freight trains that will run as a result of the Bristol Port Company's recently approved Deep Sea Container Terminal. We suggest the sixth bullet point in para. 7.6 should be amended to read as follows:

'Land will be safeguarded to enable the future provision of stations at Henbury and North Filton on the Hallen Freight Line subject to a satisfactory business case, with a bus or rapid transit link to Cribbs Causeway. Consideration will be given to a station at Hallen.'

(e) We suggest that an additional bullet point should be added to para. 7.8 providing for a new station at Chipping Sodbury, as set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.24, as follows: 'Provision of a new station at Chipping Sodbury'.

(f) We suggest that para. 7.9 should include consideration of a passenger service for the Thornbury branch, and new stations at Winterbourne and Coalpit Heath.

We suggest that the last bullet point of this paragraph should be expanded to read as follows: 'safeguarding of 0.84ha of land at the former Charfield station and adjoining land to the south east for the provision of a passenger rail station and a car park/interchange; consideration of new stations at Winterbourne and Coalpit Heath'.

A new bullet point should be added to para. 7.9, as follows: 'Consideration of reopening the Thornbury branch to passenger service, with new stations at Iron Acton, Tytherington and Thornbury.'

14. Policy CS8: Improving Accessibility (p. 59)

FOSBR suggests that the proposed walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure should improve connections with the local rail network, as supported by paras 6.30–32 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (2006).

We suggest that the first bullet point under sub-para. 3 of Policy CS8 should be expanded to read as follows: 'the provision of, and integration of walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure into the local network, especially to improve connectivity with the local rail network'.

15. Minerals (para. 8.21, p. 67)

Cattybrook Brickworks is adjacent to the South Wales main line. FOSBR suggests that consideration should be given to serving the Brickworks by rail, both to transport clay to

the works and to transport the finished bricks from the works. This would both reduce carbon emissions and reduce lorry movements on local roads. National policy is to favour the use of rail for freight where possible.

We suggest the addition of the following sentence at the end of para. 8.21:
'Consideration should be given to serving the Brickworks by rail, both to transport clay to the works and to transport the finished bricks from the works.'

16. Policy CS25: Communities of the North Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (p. 109)

FOSBR suggests that the improved pedestrian and cycle routes proposed should include improved routes to Bristol Parkway, Filton Abbey Wood and Patchway stations. These stations should also be served by bus services linking with the areas of proposed development.

We suggest that sub-para. 13 of CS 25 should be expanded to read as follows: 'Provide convenient and safe routes across the locality for pedestrians and cyclists as part of an integrated transport network, including improved access to local stations, and safe crossings to break the barriers of major roads and rail corridors'.

17. Communities of the North Fringe of Bristol Urban Area (para. 12.23, p. 116)

For the reasons set out in response to para. 1.139, FOSBR suggests that the Stoke Gifford Transport Link should serve Bristol Parkway station.

We suggest that the second sentence in para. 12.23 should read as follows: 'The proposed route runs from the Local Plan site 13 - Harry Stoke to Great Stoke Way, via Bristol Parkway station'.

18. Policy CS28: The University of the West of England (p. 118)

FOSBR suggests that access from UWE to Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Parkway stations should be improved, both for pedestrians and by means of bus or rapid transit links.

We suggest that the third bullet point in Policy CS28 should be expanded to read as follows: 'Improved public transport connections to and through the site and stopping points, including the provision of the Cheswick bus link, a potential rapid transit route (as part of the Bristol North Fringe to Hengrove Rapid Transit route), an improved bus interchange, and improved access to Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Parkway stations both by public transport and on foot.'

19. Policy CS30: Yate and Chipping Sodbury (p. 131)

For the reasons already set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.24, FOSBR suggests that a new station should be provided at Chipping Sodbury, and that

the enhancements at Yate station should include the Yate turnback.

We suggest that sub-para. 3 of CS30 should be expanded to read as follows: 'Make provision for and seek contributions towards the improvements of the Yate rail services, including the Yate turnback, the station facilities, car park and passenger interchange, and delivery of a multi-modal interchange at Nibley (including a Park & Ride)'.

A new sub-paragraph should be added to read as follows: 'Make provision for a new station at Chipping Sodbury, with a bus link to the town centre and areas proposed for development'.

20. Policy CS32: Thornbury (p. 140)

For the reasons set out in response to para. 4.25, FOSBR suggests that consideration should be given to reopening the Thornbury branch line for passenger services.

We suggest that a new sub-paragraph should be added to Policy CS32, as follows: 'Consider reopening the Thornbury branch line to passenger services, with stations at Iron Acton, Tytherington and Thornbury.'

21. Severnside (para. 17.20, p. 153)

For the reasons set out in our representation made in response to para. 4.26, FOSBR suggests that Severn Beach station should be developed as a railhead, and that consideration should be given to opening a new station to the south, to serve local employment sites.

We suggest that the last sentence of para. 17.20 is expanded so as to read as follows: 'Improvements to the railway line which runs from Severn Beach to Avonmouth and Bristol, including developing Severn Beach station as a railhead by providing appropriate parking and bus services, and considering a new station between St Andrew's Road and Severn Beach, are supported in the long term.'

22. Appendix 2: Replaced Local Plan Policies (Table A1, p. 179)

FOSBR suggests that Local Plan Policies T1 and T2 should remain in force. They are generally stronger than the equivalent policies in the Core Strategy, including, for example, the promotion of interchange facilities at Patchway and Filton Abbey Wood station, and the possibility of a rapid transit route from Mangotsfield to Yate. These policies should continue to be saved until their provisions are set out in replacement policies either in the Core Strategy or in other DPDs.

We therefore suggest that mention of Local Plan Policies T1 and T2 is deleted from Table A1.

23. Key Diagram (p. 182)

FOSBR suggests that the Key Diagram should show the new stations proposed for Hallen, Henbury and North Filton; Charfield; Winterbourne, Coalpit Heath and Chipping Sodbury; and Thornbury, Tytherington and Iron Acton.