Agenda item 2 b

EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL - 27 AUGUST 2015

This document sets out details of questions notified and the written responses.

Questions received for this meeting (full question details attached):

Re: agenda item 3 – Call-in referral – West of England Joint Transport Board decision – MetroWest phase 2 preliminary business case

Questions 1 & 2 - from Christina Biggs

Questions 3 & 4 - from Rob Dixon

Questions 5 & 6 - from Brendan Biggs

Questions 7 & 8 - from Jenny Smith

Responses (from Cllr Cook, Assistant Mayor for Place)

Question 1: Christina Biggs, FoSBR

Severn Beach Line success: Given the close proximity of the Severn Beach Line and its connection to the Henbury Loop, what would the estimated BCR be if the demand forecasts use the ORR historical Severn Beach Line ridership and growth statistics of 12% per year tapering to 10% and 8% after 6 years from the 2008 introduction of the 40 minute service? Why is the success of Clifton Down station discounted as an outlier rather than considering the implications of the frequent and reliable service on the Severn Beach Line combined with the excellent rail-bus interchange at Clifton Down?

Response:

A combination of data has been used to calculate passenger demand for the project, in line with government and rail industry methodology. The data includes national rail data and local data based on annual passenger surveys; as well as rail industry passenger modelling tools. Passenger data from the Severn Beach Line therefore forms part of the data set used to forecast passenger demand for the project but it would not be considered robust to rely solely on this data.

Although the Severn Beach Line has seen very high levels of growth in recent years, it would not be considered credible to assume the same levels of growth going forward for too many years ahead. The approach prescribed by the rail industry means that demand should reduce in longer-term forecasts. Although rail patronage growth has been strong across the West of England area in recent years, average growth is much lower than that observed on the Severn Beach Line.

The success of Clifton Down station is not discounted, the Forecasting Report states that it would be inappropriate to benchmark new stations against Clifton Down given its situation as a 'destination' station surrounded by retail and leisure attractions. The new stations proposed would therefore not be similar to Clifton Down or, for example, Filton Abbey Wood which is also not benchmarked for new stations due to its role as a gateway to the MoD site.

The cost of the Loop has been demonstrated to be greater than the funding available at this time. The majority of the work required to deliver the Spur would also be necessary for a Loop. Rather than delaying the introduction of a rail service for Henbury, the Spur can be built and operated whilst the long-term prospects for the Henbury Loop can be considered by the WoE Joint Spatial Plan and Future Transport Study.

Question 2: Christina Biggs, FoSBR

Single point ridership estimates: What are the inputs to the MOIRA forecasting model used by Network Rail for estimating the additional ridership for 2021 and 2023 at existing stations quoted below in Table 3.5? In particular, have CH2MHilll or Network Rail included anywhere in their calculations what the ridership would be on the Henbury Loop from employees in Severnside living in the CPNN, who would in the case of the Henbury Spur need to travel to work by car or face a 1 hour commute by rail?

Annual trips	(trips per day)	Option 1A Spur + Yate	Option 1B Spur+ Glos	Option 2A Loop + Yate	Option 2B Loop + Glos	Option 1a_x No Constable Rd
Existing	2021	58,250 (185)	82,250 (261)	61,150 (194)	85,150 (270)	58,200 (185)
Stations	2031	78,850 (250)	115,950 (368)	83,300 (264)	120,400 (382)	78,850 (250)
	% increase	35% (+65)	41% (+107)	36% (+70)	41% (+112)	35% (+65)
New	2021	318,265 (1010)	318,265 (1010)	320,412 (1017)	320,412 (1014)	292,000 (927)
Stations	2031	547,500 (1738)	547,500 (1738)	551,450 (1751)	551,450 (1750)	507,000 (1609)
	% increase	72% (+728)	72% (+728)	72% (+734)	72% (+734)	74% (+682)

Response:

MOIRA, the rail industry's modelling tool, is based on ticketing data, including information for all journeys recorded across the most recent year. It also includes the entire national rail timetable, including every service that runs, by time of the day and day of the week.

The proposed development of the Cribbs / Patchway New Neighbourhood (CPNN) and the Avonmouth / Severnside areas is included in the demand forecasts for new stations so the journey example you have given has been considered.

Question 3: Rob Dixon, FoSBR

Demand growth forecasting: FOSBR notes that CH2MHill predict that growth in passenger numbers will be 29% to 2023 (3% per annum average) and 43% by 2031. On the other hand Network Rail's infrastructure improvements (given in the Great Western Route Study 2014) are predicated on growth 54% (4% per annum average) to 2023 and 78% by 2031. FOSBR therefore calculate that even with this cautious model, passenger numbers in 2023 would be 19% higher than CH2MHill suggest for 2023 and 24.5% for 2031. Given that the CH2MHill report acknowledges that the demand forecasts are already seen as unduly cautious, what impact would the use of these higher figures have on the BCR for Henbury Loop and Henbury Spur? Why is the projected total growth for the existing stations (35-41%) so much lower than for the new stations (at 72%?)

Response:

Although the demand forecasts assumed are considered robust, to demonstrate the impact of additional passenger demand a scenario has been looked at with 20% additional demand at new stations. This increased demand resulted in the Benefit to Cost Ratio level for the Loop still falling short of the required

2.0 threshold at this time. This is the first element of the scheme, the Loop will be re-considered as part of the Joint Transport Study and could be introduced should it be demonstrated that demand increases.

The reason for the growth rates being lower for existing stations than for new stations is that the figures assume a transfer of existing passengers to the new stations. Overall the growth in demand across the network remains the same.

Question 4: Rob Dixon, FoSBR

Journey time savings: Given the importance of journey time savings to calculate the scheme benefits and that FOSBR note the incorrect rail and bus travel times used for the proposed new stations and Temple Meads, Clifton Down and Severnside, could these figures be corrected and the impact on BCR shown?

Response:

The journey times used in the calculations take into account a range of car and bus journey times, including at congested times, as well as bus frequencies and walking times at either end of a journey.

Question 5: Brendan Biggs, FoSBR

Revenue protection: Given that the twice-annual passenger counts carried out on the Severn Beach Line by the Severnside Community Rail Partnership indicates that only 70% of fare revenue is currently collected, and that a smartcard scheme is currently being developed, what is the projected fare capture for the planned improvement in revenue protection schemes from 2021?

Response:

A combination of data has been used to calculate passenger demand for the project which includes national and local rail data and, rail industry modelling and forecasting tools. Although ticket data from the Severn Beach Line forms part of this data set, its influence on the overall figures is limited.

It is acknowledged that there is likely to be some fare evasion on the Severn Beach Line which is why it is important that the demand forecasting uses an average fare across the West of England area. We are keen to see improved collections of fares on the Severn Beach Line but the Preliminary Business Case does not make any assumptions about this.

The link between raising fares and increasing revenues is not a straight one as increasing fares can discourage some passengers from using the service. It may be that a reduction in demand could be offset by the remaining passengers paying a higher fare but it could be that both passenger demand and revenue decreases. If assumptions were made about reducing fare evasion, they would apply to all options for the scheme and would therefore not benefit one option more than another.

Question 6: Brendan Biggs, FoSBR

"Option 3" Henbury Loop alone: Is there an economic reason to conflate the Yate/Glos and Henbury Spur options – has the economic case for Henbury Loop alone been considered separately from the Yate and Glos options? Could WEP ask for an annual subsidy from Glos in the case of opting for a Glos (and therefore also a Cheltenham) turnback?

Response:

The MetroWest rail project is a package of measures, separated into two phases. Phase 2 includes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Henbury Line as well as improved services to Yate. It would not be appropriate to present these elements individually as the measures have been planned to operate as a package, with new local services providing interchange opportunities for enhanced longer-distance services. Removing half-hourly services to Yate would not improve the business case for the Loop.

Discussions will continue with Gloucestershire County Council on the potential for extending the Yate service to Gloucester and how the costs of this could be met. The Loop could be considered as a future phase of the project following the introduction of a Spur.

Question 7: Cllr Jenny Smith

Given the acknowledged impact that the South Glos Filton Airfield development of some 5700 homes will have on the traffic in Southmead and the surrounding area does the Mayor believe that the Scrutiny resource available to WoE was sufficient to inform the decision-making process in the development of the rail options at Henbury that could and should have a positive impact on traffic between Southmead and Avonmouth and Southmead and the city centre?

Response:

The proposed development of the Cribbs / Patchway New Neighbourhood (CPNN) has been included in the demand forecasting for the project so the travel demand it is likely to create has been taken into account in the Preliminary Business Case. Although a reopened Henbury rail line would connect CPNN residents to the rail network, rail alone cannot mitigate against all new travel demand that this development will create.

A wider package of measures is therefore required and Bristol City Council is working in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council to identify an appropriate package of mitigation measures, of which the Henbury line forms part.

The Forward Plans for the Joint Scrutiny meetings on 8 December 2014, 8 September 2014, 30 June 2014 gave specific notification of the MetroWest Phase 2 business case going to the Joint Transport Board in March 2015. In fact the programme slippage to the July 2015 Joint Transport Board meeting gave additional time for members to make enquiries if they wished. The Joint Scrutiny Committee received

regular updates on the progress and timescale for development of the business case for MetroWest Phase 2 at their meetings.

Question 8: Cllr Jenny Smith

If the Henbury Loop is not proceeded with what plans are there to improve traffic links to the city centre via Pen Park Road, Cribbs Causeway – Passage Road and the Gloucester Road?

Response:

Without intervention, the transport impacts of new developments to the north of the city on our highway network will be significant, regardless of the extent and timing of rail services. We plan to make positive interventions that seek to address the cause and not just the effects of congestion if we are to be serious in bringing about sustainable development that safeguards the city for future generations.

To mitigate the effects of the CPNN development on the highway network, Bristol City Council has successfully negotiated £9.5m of funding for public transport, walking and cycling interventions. Improvements will be made to the main links between the area and the city centre via Cribbs Causeway / Passage Road, the Gloucester Road and Pen Park Road, which will seek to move more people, move more people, more reliably and more safely around our transport network.

Bristol City Council, in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council, are developing a transport model which will help us identify the types of interventions required to minimise delay to public transport and make it attractive to passengers. The package of measures are expected to include bus priority measures, signal control, crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, and; improved network management including variable message signage and smart traffic signals to link and control junction operations.

The Henbury Spur is the first element of this scheme, the long-term prospects for the Henbury Loop will be considered by future transport studies.