

Mass Transit and Rail Update

Mass Transit Background:

Scheme Objectives:

- Creating a step change in the mass movement of residents and visitors across the region to address existing congestion issues and provide new capacity to sustainably facilitate growth in Housing and Employment across the West of England;
- Driving inclusive growth: enabling as many people as possible to contribute and benefit from growth;
- Environment for business growth: supporting businesses to grow and for residents to progress their careers;
- Investing in infrastructure and housing for future growth, delivering on regional plans;

Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) contained a proposal to study the following options for a Mass Transit scheme:

- Potential technology options for each route and/or the entire network;
- Potential alignment options and station/stop locations;
- Patronage forecasts;
- Benefits assessment;
- Funding options;
- Environmental impacts.

A Mass Transit scheme had the potential for making positive changes to air quality and congestion in the region as well as better opportunities to move people around, thus stimulating regeneration. Four main transit routes have been identified for further investigation: Airport corridor, North corridor, East corridor and A4 corridor.

Other systems have been assessed to investigate potential capacity and revenue costs. The aim for the region would be for a medium sized city style solution, not a full sized metro such as the London Underground. Indications are that such a system would cover its costs and also generate some revenue surplus dependent on the system selected which could be used in part to finance the system. Other financing options are being assessed and there is potential for some form of public-private partnership.

All options are still being considered. Above ground systems such as Trams and Bus Rapid Transit are included for further investigation as are underground options due to the physical difficulty of delivering above ground services in some areas. Underground running should be seen as maintaining the level of segregation desired so could be considered for certain sections of routes or whole corridors. All technology options are considered for underground options including trams and rubber wheeled systems.

We envision the network as building on our existing rapid transit network – Metrobus, Metrowest and also schemes planned and proposed as part of the JLTP4 to extend Metrobus routes and deliver further park and ride sites. These schemes would be delivered while the mass transit is developed and delivered. The feasibility study indicates that there is merit in exploring options further with all options showing reasonable business cases but further work is required to assess the various options.

Next Steps:

The next step is to produce a Strategic Outline Business Case. Funding has been part approved for this by WECA with further funding allocated. The aim is to commission this to start in the Autumn, expected duration of the SOBC is around 12-18 months.

There is a need to fully understand the likely demand and a key part of future work will be creating a new demand model with up to date data potentially using mobile phone data and Highways England data to inform the development of proposals as well as considering what demand would be in 10-15 years. This will be considered as part of the SOBC but may not be fully in place as part of the SOBC. Any modelling will have to meet DfT WebTag guidance.

Rail Update:

Metrowest Phase 1:

The government has made £32m available for Metrowest Phase 1 to resolve the current funding gap. Some further work is required to secure this funding and WECA are also committing £6m to the project. Scheme development is progressing and the OBC is due for approval at WECA committee on 19th July.

Metrowest Phase 2:

Outline Business Case has been submitted to WECA and further funding provided to develop the Full Business Case. Scheme estimated cost has increased from £43m to £54m. An allocation has been requested from the WECA investment fund for £11m to bridge the funding gap. Main impact within Bristol is delivery of Ashley Down station. Cabinet recently approved starting engagement on station design and associated adjacent highway measures.