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For the attention of Rae Billing

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WECA and North Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan consultation

Please find attached the Railfuture response to the above consultation. Whilst Railfuture is primarily concerned with railways, we recognise that many rail passengers use buses to reach trains and that many more would use both modes of transport if bus /rail interchange were easier. We have therefore commented on examples of best practice in your area and also where we consider improvements to transport coordination are needed.

If anything requires clarification, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Bray

Nigel Bray
Railfuture
Secretary, Severnside Branch.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
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1. General principles

People who use, or might consider using, buses to access railway stations need easy interchange between bus and train. Additionally, they do not want to miss their intended train because the bus has been delayed by traffic congestion. Railfuture believes that improvements to bus services should not be considered in isolation from the rail network. Road traffic management can be as important in improving a multi-modal journey as increases in the frequency of buses or lower bus fares. For instance, road works which constrict capacity seem to affect bus journey times more than they affect trips by car, because of the frequent stops the bus will make. More bus lanes on main roads which pass near stations are needed. We hope the Plan will look at the totality of travel by public transport and not just tinkering with bus timetables.

2. Specific locations

2.1 Bath Spa and Bristol Parkway stations are exemplars of best practice in bus/rail interchange, with an easy short walk to the bus station or bus stops. At both locations there is a multiplicity of routes and services on both modes. Parkway has live bus departure information in the station concourse and both stations are real transport hubs.

2.2 Bristol Temple Meads has several bus routes serving the station entrance, including the Flyer service to the airport. There are also many routes with stops in the main road at the foot of the embankment.

2.3 At Weston-super-Mare some bus routes pass the railway station, with others about five minutes' walk away in the town centre. As the town is a major centre of tourism, we would like to see more routes serving the station directly.

2.4 Keynsham station has good access from bus routes which use the road overbridge. Interchange is easier now that both platforms have step-free access.

2.5 Filton Abbey Wood station needs much closer integration with local bus services. People arriving off trains should not have to walk to Filton Avenue for onward travel by bus.

2.6 Yatton station's nameboards proclaim it is the station for Clevedon and it is indeed the nearest, at 3 ½ miles, from the latter town. Unfortunately, a bus service reinstated several years ago was later withdrawn for lack of support. Unlike Nailsea & Backwell station, now regarded as the bus interchange point for Clevedon, Yatton has a waiting room, café and reasonable weather protection.

If a regular bus service between Yatton and Clevedon is not considered to be viable, we suggest that some kind of demand responsive bus service or shared taxi scheme be investigated.

2.7 We welcome the announcement by Network Rail and YTL Developments that the new Filton North station, due to open in 2023, will connect with Metrobus routes.

2.8 We trust that when Portishead station opens, local bus routes will serve the station directly so that it becomes a transport hub.