

Statement of the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance on the South Bristol Link

The TfGB asks you to reject the officer recommendation to approve the South Bristol Link and to bring forward the Portishead rail reopening scheme for programme entry this spring instead. We understand the need to put forward a transport project as soon as possible in order not to lose Government funds. However, we advise you against approving the proposed South Bristol Link in the absence of any evidence of 'potential' regeneration or economic growth (for which we have been waiting since 2007) and in view of the uneconomic nature of the Bus Rapid Transit element now revealed by the officers report. Work undertaken since the consultants' appraisal has revealed the Link section of the BRT to be a very weak link in the proposed Rapid Transit network. The proposed 5 minute frequency is now reduced to 18 minutes and every third Bus. It will carry only 100 passengers in the peak. The presence of the 'free' to use road and cycle path alongside the BRT has the effect of reducing BRT patronage.

Portishead is more popular with the public than the SBL and so less likely to result in public opposition which will delay the project and increase its cost. It is also cheaper and you have been asked to make cuts in your transport programme. Unlike the Link, Portishead does not involve the opening up of the countryside to development, nor encourage car commuting or increase traffic. A successful Portishead could lead to further rail station and line re-openings elsewhere. Please abandon the South Bristol Link today and spend the next year undertaking consultation with local residents and businesses to produce a more informed and better targeted transport /economic plan for South Bristol. This could be put forward for programme entry next Spring.

Discussion could include:

A toll system for Barrow Gurney with exceptions for locals to dissuade journeys through the village. To be undertaken as a six month trial and the results monitored. To see if there are better and quicker ways of reducing traffic rather than waiting six years for the SBL or longer for a by-pass.

An ultra light tram route from Queens Road Withywood to Hengrove Park (to link with the Hengrove to Northern Fringe BRT). Some of the rest of the land now laid aside for the road to be as a linear park and some as small retail with a local public space like a new Withywood village square or landscaped area.

A tram/train apprenticeship or training course could be introduced at the new Hengrove College.

West of England Partnership could introduce a new half price card/reduced fares for local residents who are unemployed or students to ensure better access for those without a car to training and jobs.

Work with local businesses wishing to expand to ascertain their precise access, transport and training needs. **Traffic surveys to be carried out** in those residential and retail streets (Kings Head Lane, Highridge Road, Whitchurch Road and Grange Road) which experience rat running and heavy traffic on route to A38.

Our comments on the objectives of the South Bristol Link

To improve accessibility to BIA – We support only improved public transport access as more passengers by car means more traffic on local roads. At current passenger levels, a BRT to BIA would be a waste of money and there is plenty of scope for improving their Flyer bus by reducing fares, creating more stops and promoting it more vigorously. The proposal for the Flyer to use the BRT route would result in even less bus

patronage as it would take longer to get to Temple Meads (its most popular stop) and miss out Bedminster Parade (its second most popular stop).

To improve accessibility to the City Centre – we do not support increased car travel to the Centre and the City Council are currently consulting on ways to keep cars out in order to give priority to buses. We support increased public transport and essential business traffic. Building a road that ends at the Hartcliffe Way roundabout will simply deliver more traffic to all the exits off it and particularly in the direction of the city centre.

To support regeneration and economic growth – A road is not a precise instrument for delivering jobs. Transport monies need to be more effectively targeted to achieve an economic result. Neither your officers, the consultants nor GWE Business West, have put forward any evidence of what type of regeneration the road will bring. The evidence we need is – which companies might expand and create more jobs for local residents and which companies will simply leave the area after selling their land for housing or office development with jobs will go largely to outsiders (e.g. Wills building and Cater Park Service station both for housing and Somerfield for a new council headquarters).

The projects that are currently regenerating South Bristol are council or voluntary sector led with years of joint working between local councillors, the local MP, Council officers and local residents. There are many examples- the thriving Gatehouse Centre, the new Withywood Centre, Hengrove Hospital, the new Academies, the Hartcliffe campus are all public sector led. The main private investment in recent years in areas such as housing has been retail and entertainment – in Hengrove and Imperial Park. The Council owns a lot of the land in this area and should use planning powers to give South Bristol development of a higher quality.

To reduce congestion: New roads increase car journeys, encourage car commuting and hence lead to more congestion. Now is a good time to look at ways of reducing road capacity to see if we can achieve a ‘reducing’ traffic effect. This could be tried at Barrow Gurney by introducing a six month toll trial. Any profit could be used to carry out the Parish Councils Airport Association proposed cycling and walking project (£1m) or to subsidise local buses. **Rat running on Kings Head Lane, Highridge Road, Whitchurch Road and Grange Road** needs to be monitored to establish the composition of traffic so solutions can be found. The report does not demonstrate any significant reduction in traffic on **Hartcliffe Way, Winterstoke Road or Parson St** due to the construction of the road.

To improve accessibility to the trunk road network. We and the Highways Agency do not support more cars on the trunk road network. Where on the network do we need more cars at peak times? Business needs access to the network but its needs have to be precisely assessed and catered for.

To facilitate the RSS development area – this objective for the SBL has been dropped by both North Somerset and Bristol City Council. The irony is that a road through the Greenbelt will create access for new development which our councillors say they want to resist.