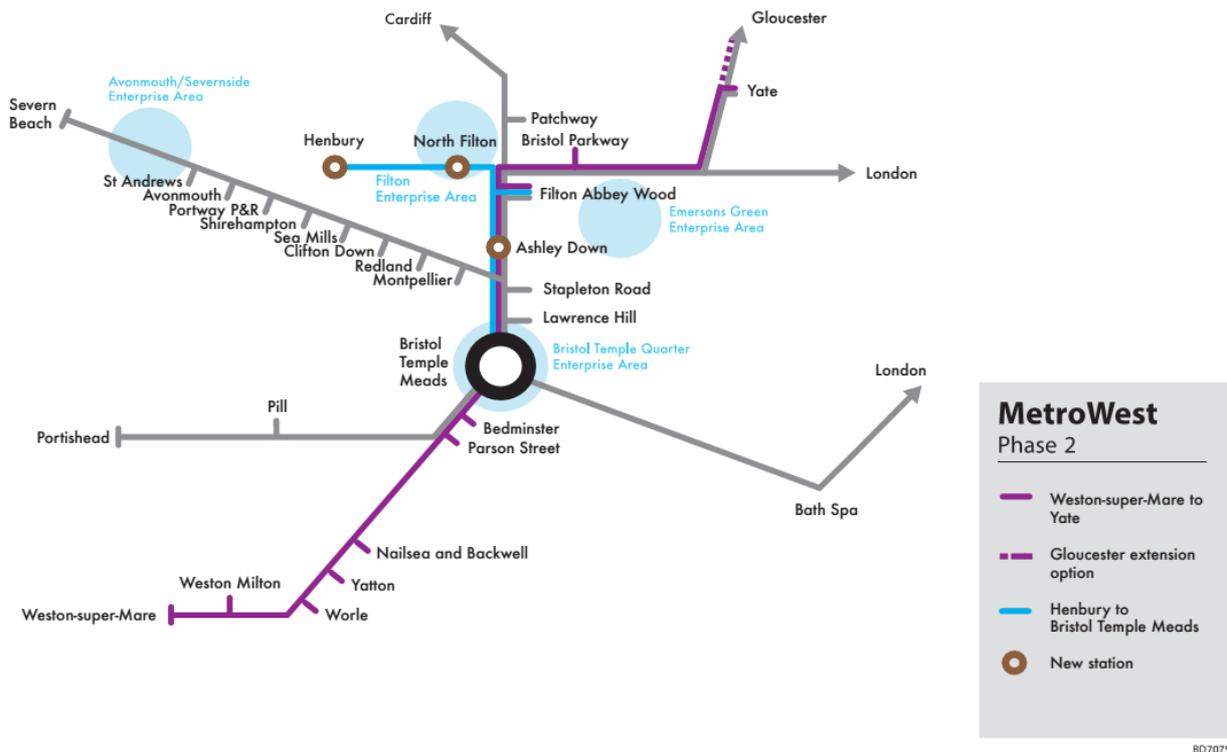


MetroWest Phase 2 Briefing Note Jul'15

Introduction

On 17th July the WoE Joint Transport Board endorsed the Preliminary Business Case for MetroWest Phase 2 and agreed to take forward the Henbury spur with an extension to Yate. It was also agreed that the Henbury Loop and a station at Constable Road (Horfield) would be considered further as part of the ongoing West of England spatial plan and future transport study.



Issues

What's the scheme?

MetroWest Phase 2 is a £43m scheme for half hourly train services to Yate, an hourly spur service on the reopened Henbury Line and new stations at Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down. Services will start in 2021.

Will more people be able to use the train?

Yes. For the first time in over fifty years the residents of Henbury and Ashley Down will have a regular train service. For the new residents of the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood it is even better, with new stations at Henbury and North Filton and direct train services to Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood. The frequency of trains at Yate will increase from hourly to half-hourly, providing more choice and seating capacity.

In addition, MetroWest Phase 1 will have re-opened the Portishead Line and improved service frequencies along the Severn Beach Line, starting in 2019.

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Where will the money come from?

In 2013 the Department for Transport devolved major transport scheme funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships. £81.4m was devolved to the West of England for the period 2015/16 to 2024/25. £48m is prioritised for MetroWest Phase 1 and, from April 2021, £36.4m for Phase 2. The remaining funding requirement for Phase 2 will be provided by the Local Growth Fund, developer contributions and Bristol City/South Gloucestershire Councils.

Why is it costing so much?

Rail schemes are not cheap; they are designed to a high specification and to stringent safety standards. In accord with Network Rail's Governance for Rail Investment Projects (GRIP), current cost figures for Phase 2 include a 40% risk/contingency budget.

Can't it happen any sooner than 2021?

There are no shortcuts in delivering rail schemes. Rigorous rail industry project management processes (known as GRIP) guide design and delivery. All eight GRIP stages must be followed. In addition, compliant Business Cases must be produced and planning processes and environmental requirements strictly followed. All these take time but they ensure that rail schemes deliver value for money, are affordable and deliverable.

What will the new stations look like?

North Filton and Ashley Down will have two platforms on the running lines; Henbury will have a single bay platform on a new, separate siding on the north side of the mainline. Stations will be fully accessible. Facilities will include a shelter, information points, lighting, CCTV, cycle racks and, depending on passenger numbers a peak time ticket office. There will be a 30-space car park including disabled spaces and a bus stop at North Filton and Henbury.

What's a spur service on the Henbury Line?

The proposed spur service on the Henbury Line will see trains leave Bristol Temple Meads, calling at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Ashley Down, Filton Abbey Wood, North Filton and Henbury. At Henbury the train will run into the new bay platform and then reverse for the journey back to Bristol Temple Meads. The out-and-back trip takes just under an hour.

Do the Henbury Line services call at Bristol Parkway?

No, they would go direct to/from Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood so as to provide the quickest possible journey times to/from Henbury and North Filton and to maximise patronage. There will be new direct local bus services and the Cribbs Patchway MetroBus Extension linking the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood with Bristol Parkway.

What is the impact on freight?

Network Rail has confirmed that with the bay platform at Henbury, existing and anticipated freight train paths will be safeguarded. Unlike the Loop, Spur services would not have any adverse impact on the entrance to Avonmouth Docks.

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Are all the developments taking place along the lines included?

Yes. All developments in the council's core strategies and Strategic Economic Plan are in the appraisals.

Why is a spur proposed on the Henbury Line and not a loop?

The Preliminary Business Case undertook extensive and detailed investigations into the case for both Loop and Spur options on the Henbury Line using up-to-date data. The work undertaken by Network Rail and consultants concluded the Loop service did not have the required Benefit Cost Ratio [BCR] to be accepted as a scheme under the WoE Assurance Process or DfT criteria; on the other hand, the spur does meet the acceptance criteria with a BCR greater than 2.0, which unlocks the aforementioned funding.

Does the spur prevent introduction of a loop at a future date?

No it does not. The designs for the new stations at Ashley Down and North Filton are the same for spur and loop. The design for Henbury station can safeguard future conversion to a loop or combined spur plus loop operation.

Why was Constable Road Station dropped from the scheme?

All of the options assessed were significantly over the £43m scheme budget, so the project team was asked to consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of the scheme components. Constable Road Station was by far the most expensive of the new stations and generated the fewest passengers; hence, it was removed from this phase of MetroWest. With the removal of Constable Road Station, the BCR was improved and the Henbury Spur-based options brought within budget. The BCR for the Henbury Loop-based options was also improved, but still remained well below 2.0; further, these options remained significantly over-budget.

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