Railfuture Severnside

Submission to Glos County Council on the 2027-2043 LTP Strategy – part of the set of LTP draft documents

The Vision sets a target for increase in passenger rail journeys of 112% - more than double the current number. But the policies are too vague to achieve that.

Objective 1, policy 2: instead of 'advocating' and 'supporting' new rail infrastructure, the county should be 'planning', 'joint funding', and 'commissioning business cases' for it. A good model is Devon and their development of new rail stations and services as the Devon Metro.

Objective 1, policy 6: We strongly support the use of rail for freight shipping, for the flows and locations for which it makes sense. But the LTP should be more specific: it should refer to grants or loans for private companies to develop rail freight loading / unloading facilities.

Objective 2, policy 8: We strongly support the proposal for at least two trains per hour at all stations. However, the LTP should state clearly: either that this will be achieved through financial support by the county, or from other sources.

Objective 6, policy 25: Challenging targets are set for carbon emission reduction. But the LTP doesn't say how the emissions be monitored. Air quality in terms of nitrogen dioxide and particulate concentrations, as surrogates for carbon emissions might be a way. Our main comment here is that other parts of the LTP are inconsistent with the objective. There will be 'targeted highway improvements' (pages 11, 36) combined with strategic improvements by National Highways. But that policy combination is very likely to lead to an increase in road traffic and car use, as it always has in the past. County funding for new roads should be limited to maintenance, and new capital spending should be on sustainable modes, including joint-funding of new stations.

Objective 8, Outcome 3, and Objective 11: It should be emphasised in this section that journeys by public transport need to be accessible to all from end to end. So rail stations must be raised to the railway's Access For All standard, to which the county may contribute funding; and the trains must be accessible to all from the platforms.

Objective 9, policy 40. We strongly support the concept of dedicated bus links as extensions of the railway. However, to take full advantage through ticketing is needed, with the towns at the end of the 'bus branch lines' being National Rail destinations. We urge the county to work with GWR and the DfT on through ticketing and real-time information.

Objective 9, policies 41, 42. We strongly support the development of the station interchanges described. But the LTP to encourage model shift, should acknowledge the

need for new rail / bus / cycle / car parking hubs at strategic locations such as major new residential and retail development, and major road junctions.

6. Transport in a local context. We strongly support the increase in train frequency at the stations referred to, but more detail is needed on how they will be achieved; for example, the LTP should state that the county is willing to jointly fund the necessary business cases.

On access to stations, it's important that the LTP acknowledges that a significant proportion of passengers will want to drive to, and park at, their local station. So highway signage and adequate car parking is important. A useful target would be to ensure every station is road-signed from the nearest A road(s).

6. Transport in a local context, page 63. On the question of short links from stations to nearby towns: the LTP should recognise that some of the links previously existed as railways, and we propose that in those cases, such as Kemble to Cirencester, the railway route is excluded from development and that any new road or cycle track is routed so as to allow passive provision for a future railway. The LTP should acknowledge the progress made by the Cirencester Community Railway in promoting a light rail link to Kemble.

General comment: We support the inclusion of a new station south of Gloucester in the scheme list. It is difficult to see how the 112% increase in rail passengers can be achieved without new residential, retail and commercial development areas having a nearby station. We hope that funding for new and improved stations will be inspired by the example set by the West of England CA.

The schemes list contains a large number of roundabout and junction improvements and road widening. Those are surely incompatible with the targets sets for carbon emissions reduction in Objective 6. Those 'improvements' will simply encourage more traffic with consequent loss of air quality leading to poor health outcomes for the local community and increases in local carbo emissions.

Therefore it is important that the funding is redirected to public transport, especially rail and station enhancements.

We would like to see the Schemes List revised in the light of the feedback on both consultation stages of the LTP.

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