SevernNet Transport Charter

September 2021

A vision for transport across the Portbury, Avonmouth and Severnside areas to connect business and community

SevernNet
Business & Community Together

Executive Summary

Portbury Avonmouth Severnside (PAS) needs rapid improvements to public transport and active travel to alleviate reliance on car travel, address transport poverty and support decarbonisation of transport. Better options can help address a skills shortage and wide reports of recruitment challenges. Poor transport links to key communities is an important causal factor. Improving transport will help accelerate growth and recovery across the area. Addressing smarter approaches to freight is also vital.

Key asks

- **Funding of the M49 Junction** link road enabling its opening. The lack of a junction is exacerbating congestion, causing harm to colleagues and residents, adding to freight costs, increasing risks to active travellers and delaying development.
- **An early re-start of the PAS Transport Strategy** which was put on hold due to Covid.
- **Strategic bus routes** that connect communities to jobs, to address demand; and public transport provision to connect Portbury with Avonmouth.
- **Interventions to address first and last mile**, particularly for the Severn Beach Line.
- A collaborative approach with operators to **ensure routes (bus and train) visit key stops and meet shift times** (seven days a week, 364 days per year working pattens)
- **Development of multi-modal hubs** at key transit stops across the area
- **Timely delivery of further Metro West improvements** including the Portishead Line
- **Increased services to Pilning station** which can provide mainline rail connections between Severnside and S. Wales, Gloucester, N. Bristol, N. Somerset, and the S. West.
- **Build on the active travel network** by addressing unsafe/intimidating pinch points, which may be putting people off, and leading to businesses not willing to promote walking and cycling.
- **Ongoing funding of Severn Ride & Stride**
- A collaborative approach to look at opportunities for further **transport decarbonisation and options for freight**, building upon best practice already underway across area.

Introduction

This is a working document, and we welcome your feedback

SevernNet and the PAS Area

SevernNet has been working across Portbury Avonmouth Severnside (PAS) since 2009, bringing together businesses, the community, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively, cooperating to help solve common challenges and build upon opportunities.

PAS includes a string of coastal villages, industrial estates and internationally important nature, along the Avon and Severn Estuaries including the Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area (ASEA). The area extends along the River Severn for approximately 10 miles. These areas are economically connected in a number of ways including providing work to local people, local supply networks and provision of support services.

The geographic spread runs from Royal Portbury Dock and its related villages of Pill, Portbury, Easton-in-Gordano and Abbots Leigh in N. Somerset; through Avonmouth in Bristol and its four villages (Avonmouth, Shirehampton, Lawrence Weston and Sea Mills); through to Western Approach Industrial Park in South Glos. and its related villages of Easter Compton, Severn Beach, Pilning and Hallen.

The PAS area could be described as thriving with more than 1,500 businesses employing in excess of 30,000 people, with **huge growth potential**. However, many of the area's residents experience severe economic and social exclusion, including poor access to public transport.

Transport modes

Passenger	Mode	Freight
Cars Taxi Bus Bicycle & scooter Walking	Road	HGVs, LGVs Vans Cargo bikes
Trains	Rail	Rail Freight
Ferries	Water	'Local shipping/ferries' Short Sea shipping Other Seaborne transport
Planes	Air	Air Freight

Overview

PAS is the region's Port-City Industrial area and the economic engine for the West of England [9, 10]. It's a key Enterprise Area. Despite this, **transport is a major barrier to recruitment**, growth and is exacerbating skills shortages.

How can we improve transport?

SevernNet continues to work tirelessly to improve travel and transport across PAS. We engage with stakeholders through a number of channels, including the quarterly SevernNet Transport Forum, highlighting the area's travel needs. Stakeholders include our network of local authority contacts, public transport operators, businesses, and community leaders.

We are pleased to be creating this charter, to be shared with stakeholders including the transport teams in the LAs and West of England CA. A key aim is for this to be used as a significant piece of stakeholder feedback to inform transport decisions.

Travel support and behaviour change

Alongside the need for improved transport infrastructure and services, there is also a need to promote and inform people of the options that do exist. Cycling routes for instance are not well signed or maintained.

Our work also focuses on behaviour change, where we seek to share information and support businesses, recruiters, employees, and residents to help them make sustainable travel choices and drive less where possible.

Pressure to act

With the 2030 deadline for becoming climate neutral coupled with the implementation of the Clean Air Zone, there is a growing pressure to provide alternatives to driving, especially single occupancy vehicles. We hope this charter provides insights to how more sustainable transport alternatives could be achieved.

What have we achieved so far?

SevernNet has focused much attention on transport across Portbury Avonmouth Severnside over the last 12 years.

This has been at the request of our members and community (business, residents, stakeholders) and in recognition that the poor transport infrastructure is the root cause of many of the area's challenges.

We've:

- **Regularly brought together all three local authorities, our community and other stakeholders** to share, discuss and support problem solving and action. This has enabled better understanding and improvements in a number of areas, and continues through the Transport Forum.
- **Campaigned for the PAS Transport Strategy**, supported its initial stages and look forward to its recommencement
- **Improved, where possible, the approach to traffic management** for road works to reduce severe congestion, risk to the strategic road network and consequent harms (economic, environmental and social)
- **Campaigned for the M49 Junction** and now for its missing link, and improvement in rail and bus services
- **Established private bus services** in absence of public provision, as a step to commercial services (more later)
- **Supported/ing the important 5G trial** with the Port at the centre
- **Supported/ing active travel** through campaigning for the local walking & cycling network; secured some investment; and developed the successful Severn Ride & Stride active travel support service (more later)
- **Created this Transport Charter** to support, and catalyse, stakeholder engagement to inform transport decisions for PAS

Severn Ride and Stride

The **Severn Ride and Stride project**, which has been running since February 2019, has been helping to promote and improve sustainable travel across PAS. This award-winning project has enabled SevernNet to engage with businesses and communities and support people in understanding their travel options.

The free support and resources on offer include **travel planning** and advice, **customised maps** of the area, **bike hire** (including e-bikes), **cycling lessons** and training, **bike maintenance classes**, an innovative **Bike Hub offering repairs** in Lawrence Weston (with funding support from Travelwest), ongoing **path maintenance** to support the LAs and improvements to **signage/wayfinding**.

A resident who was taught to ride a bike and is currently hiring one of our bikes

Engagement through Severn Ride & Stride is enabling more colleagues to travel into and around the area more sustainably and is **encouraging alternative options to driving/single person occupied vehicles** (SPOVs).

We are delighted to have been able to secure funding to expand and continue Severn Ride & Stride for a further period across the Bristol City Council area. We recommend that Severn Ride & Stride is supported across the whole area for at least five years to enable an ongoing transition to more sustainable modes.

PAS strategy

The local authorities, led by BCC, have recognised that the **PAS area is significant in terms of employment and regeneration and is inadequately served by public transport** [1]. A PAS Transport Strategy is being developed but has faced a major set-back as officers were taken off the project over the last eighteen months.

We recommend that the PAS Transport Strategy is restarted as soon as possible. While the strategy is on pause, a key purpose of this Charter is to summarise the current situation in PAS.

The importance of sustainable travel

The significant lack of public transport in PAS effectively excludes non car-owners from work in many places and the reliance on car journeys is adding to congestion and pollution burdens [6.]. Poor transport provision and insufficient safe active travel routes have **knock on effects for businesses in the area impacting training and employment** opportunities. Decarbonisation of transport across the area is essential to enable PAS to progress towards net zero by 2030.

What we cover in this Charter

In this Charter we will describe the challenges and opportunities that exist for:

- Decarbonising Transport
- Road Infrastructure
- Integrated Transport Facilities
- Rail & Bus services (Public Transport)
- Active Travel (walking, cycling and scooting)
- Freight Transport

Decarbonising transport

We're in a climate emergency. This charter has been developed with this in mind and starts with Decarbonising Transport. Progress to date is limited by factors including:

- **Facilities/alternative modes available** to car drivers/others who would be prepared to travel more sustainably if they reasonably could
- **Availability of alternative fuels** and availability/ affordability of supporting vehicles and infrastructure
- **Availability of sufficient electrical power** to support widespread electrification of fossil powered vehicles and plant
- **Technological limitations** today e.g. enabling greater use of green hydrogen for appropriate applications

<u>What has been / is being achieved?</u>

PAS hosts a number of best-in-class enterprises enabling transition to decarbonised freight including:

- GENeco's electrification of its vans and bio-methane powered vehicles including HGVs. The power and fuel is locally generated and produced.
- GENeco supported work with CNG Fuels and others incl. Lidl, to pilot bioCNG for use in freight fleets. Its success is enabling two CNG fuelling stations in PAS. A number of distributors have signed up and are converting fleet.
- The Bristol Port Company is converting vans to electric and working on further decarbonisation with its Air Quality Plan. Colleagues are also encouraged to use pool e-bikes around the dock estates where and when feasible.
- 5G innovation pilot to understand how smarter working / tracking could improve/reduce traffic movements
- SevernNet and Severn Ride & Stride works with the business and residential community to enable sustainable and active travel into/across PAS; providing information, encouraging options for rail/bus use and last mile; and more.

This is a snapshot of progress to date and plans to further support transport decarbonisation across PAS.

We believe initiatives such as Future Transport Zones (FTZ) can help inform progress and we would like to see increased collaboration with stakeholders including WECA.

Road infrastructure

PAS has, and continues to see, **extensive development which is dependent on the local road infrastructure** to support the developments and their additional traffic from colleagues, visitors and freight.

On paper, the area appears well served by the Strategic Road Network (SRN) connecting to the rest of the UK in all directions, and supported by the A403, the main A-road artery along the coast.

In reality, **there are a number of significant challenges which have reduced the resilience of the road network** considerably. Failure of the system at one or more key points can cause major congestion, bringing the network to a standstill.

There are also a number of local congestion hot spots which can cause delays and frustration.

Delays have a high economic cost and add to concerns for driver welfare as well as increased local emissions and stress for the village communities.

<u>Challenges</u>

- **Lack of a functioning M49 Junction** is adding to journey times, putting additional stress on the A403 and M5 J18, B4055 and M5 J17, and the Western Approach and Central Park estate roads. Potential express bus links are also impacted; and the increased HGV load locally impacts the attractiveness of active travel
- **The A403 coastal road continues to deteriorate** despite extensive reconstruction a few years ago. This is assumed to be a combination of traffic loads and the marshy conditions upon which it is built. The A403 is highly sensitive to any interruption to traffic flows including frequent roadworks (repairs/utilities for developments).
- **There is no resilience over the Avonmouth Bridge** which is a single point of failure.
- **J19, M5 was of significant concern** with its lack of capacity causing considerable tailbacks. Recent adaptations have enabled some relief, but it remains inadequate.

Road infrastructure continued

Challenges (continued)

- **Lack of facilities for truck/van parking** is a major problem across many of the industrial estates. In some areas including Avonmouth Way (Avonmouth) and Govier Way (Western Approach) this causes restricted road width and dangerous conditions. Cycle paths are often blocked by parked up vans and trucks. This is also a major health hazard as personal waste is often left at the side of the road. Attempts have been made to increase availability/visibility of facilities, but LA processes seem to block prompt action.
- **The removal of the Severn Tolls** has reduced the incentive for many travellers to car share or seek alternative modes
- **Residential villages are blighted by 'rat running'** drivers seeking alternatives.

Significant development along Severn Road (in between Chittening Road and Hallen) exceeds the carrying capacity of this road and is a major cause for concern.

What needs to be done?

- **The M49 junction must be sorted out** as a matter of urgency. Unless resolved soon it is unlikely to be open until 2023.
- Stakeholders must be brought together to **discuss the A403** and how it can be made fit for purpose.
- **Plan for M5, J19 redevelopment must be supported**.
- For longer term resilience **a second Avon crossing is required.**
- A working group including LA members, blue light services and industry stakeholders must work to **urgently address facilities for truck/van parking**; enforcement must be stepped up where possible; and businesses must take more responsibility for the impacts of their/suppliers/customers drivers.
- Single passenger car drivers must be encouraged to find **more sustainable travel options/car share.**
- Stakeholders must be brought together to **review Severn Road** and how the unfolding situation can be managed.

The incomplete M49 junction

Integrated transport facilities

An essential ingredient in improving transport provision across PAS is enabling what is available to work better together and be better integrated. This should also make journeys easier for travellers.

We understand that a number of these areas are being developed further within West of England CA's Future **Transport Zones (FTZ) project. We welcome the opportunity to support this** and seek mutually beneficial opportunities for piloting across PAS.

Areas we have discussed in our Transport Forums include:

- **Smart ticketing** across public transport options and potential links to alternatives including taxis
- **Intelligent mobility services**
- **Transport nodes** serving multiple modes in key locations

Park and ride transport nodes have the potential to better service the area as multi-modal nodes including:

- **Portway** with its planned train station supporting cars, walking and buses to/from Bristol. Facilities for cyclists and public transport to/from Avonmouth and industrial areas are required
- **Pill/Portbury** – to link to rail, bus, walking & cycling options
- **Pilning** - a multitude of inward and outward journey options could be available
- **Severn Junction** (or somewhere in the vicinity of the Newport end of the bridge)

Public Transport

Public transport (rail and bus services) is limited in PAS and needs improvement to support colleagues journeys to/from work and enable more sustainable travel. There are a number of bus services, but these do not always link up the areas where colleagues live or meet shift time requirements [1, 11]

Key areas for improvement

Orbital routes are required that connect colleagues with workplaces:

- Connections that create a **direct link to North Somerset from Avonmouth**
- **Direct links between South Wales and Gloucestershire** and PAS e.g. Pilning Station
- Links to target **residential populations** with high density and unemployment
- Additional connections to Severnside/Western Approach including direct links to **South Bristol, East Bristol and North/West Bristol**

Increased frequency of services that meet shift times. Many businesses in PAS operate a 24/7 shift cycle, 364 days a year, whereas public transport becomes less frequent at evenings, weekends and public holidays.

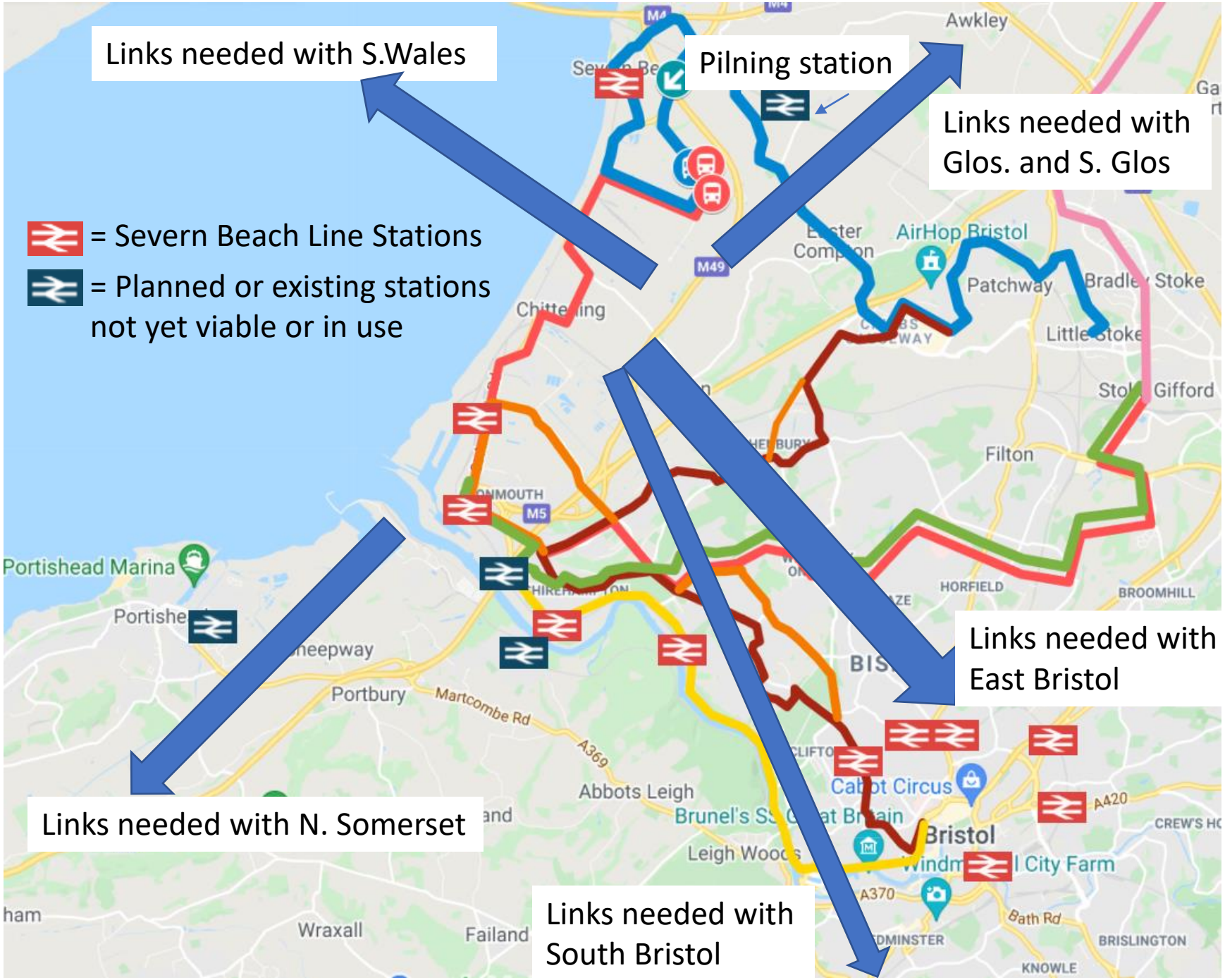
Views in the area

In the Lawrence Weston Community Plan 2018-2013, published by Ambition Lawrence Weston, the following findings were gathered about the current transport situation from surveying local residents:

- 63% agree that public transport links to jobs are a problem
- Bus services are seen as expensive, unreliable, intermittent and do not take residents to all jobs in PAS i.e. No3. bus only goes as far as Kings Weston Lane.

West of England Mass Rapid Transit

We acknowledge discussions around mass transit and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of such a scheme for the benefit of PAS.



Public Transport Map & missing links

We identify several missing links to key residential communities, with recruitment opportunities. We have postcode data that helps us identify the areas in need of direct links.

Key communities were identified by the Portbury Avonmouth and Severnside Transport Study, which face deprivation and unemployment [13.] that include:

- **North/West Bristol**: Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston
- **East Bristol**: Lawrence Hill ward
- **South Bristol**: e.g. Hartcliffe & Withywood, Knowle and Bishopsworth
- **N.Somerset**: Weston-Super-Mare, Pill
- **S.Glos:** Patchway, Severn Beach and Pilning

Passenger Rail

The **Severn Beach Line** is the principal way to reach the area by train. Patchway station is another option but would require a lengthy connection via no.12 bus or cycling/scooting.

Services on the SBL generally run hourly into Avonmouth station; with approx. every other train continuing on to St. Andrew's Rd Station (close to the Kings Weston Lane) industrial area including Asda and Accolade Wines) and onto Severn Beach station near the Western Approach Industrial Park area (WA).

These services are not frequent enough to meet the needs of businesses, however, **In December 2021 the long-awaited frequency improvements will be introduced**, enabled by the extensive infrastructure enhancements by Network Rail across the Bristol region.

These will provide half hourly services into Avonmouth and hourly services to Severn Beach. This increase in service provision is welcomed, although it is noted that **planned services will not meet shift requirements over the weekends and may not adequately serve evening shifts.**

Work is also required to support last mile journey provision (which in many cases is more like 2+ miles) to capitalise on this service improvement.

<u>Key needs / requirements</u>

- **Severn Beach Line serving shift patterns 7 days per week, 364 days per year**
- **Quality modal hubs** built into existing stations with caged cycle parking and hop-on hop-off bike and scooter sharing available to address last mile journeys
- **More connectivity through North Bristol** (e.g. via 'Henbury Loop')
- **Portishead line** to be reinstated with good connectivity into workplaces with supporting last-mile solution.
- **Direct link from Wales**, Glos. and S. Glos, into PAS (e.g. **Pilning**)

MetroWest

We welcome the MetroWest project which will improve rail services to PAS (as mentioned above) including:

- Increased services on the **Severn Beach Line** (SBL)
- New **Portway Station**
- Opening of the **Portishead Line**

<u>Room for Improvement</u>

Increased services on SBL will be a great benefit, but services decrease in evenings and at weekends, which will not adequately meet the 24*7*364 day shift patterns in PAS. **We recommend a timetable that accommodates demand created by varied shift patterns.**

The new Portway station needs to include **'last mile' links** to enable the local community to access the station.

The other stations on the **SBL also need improved connectivity** to make onward travel viable, including **bike/scooter sharing and secure cycle parking.**

CCTV to give confidence and security for lone travellers.

Rail - Severn Beach Line

This route is of great importance, connecting Bristol's neighbourhoods with the large number of employers in Avonmouth and Severnside.

Good news

As previously mentioned, the upgraded services on the Severn Beach Line (SBL) are set to increase in frequency from Dec 2021. [7.]

Will services meet shift times?

Much of the work across PAS is based on shift work based on continental hours (06-14,14-22,22-06) or variations thereof.

The current proposed timetables on SBL will not be adequate to meet these shifts with the weekend notably offering fewer services. If employees cannot rely on trains to support 'their working week', rail will be disregarded as a travel option.

St. Andrew's Rd station

St Andrews Rd needs modal hub infrastructure, and a bus stop.

Modal hubs at stations

While the SBL is a great asset, **options are limited for continuing a journey** from stations. There is an urgent need to improve the options for onward travel from stations. These include bus services available to link destinations between Avonmouth and Western Approach, and filling the gap left by the fact that **there are fewer services to Severn Beach**. **Currently only 3 buses a day connect Avonmouth with Western Approach** to serve continental shift times.

We recommend e-scooter and [e-]-bike sharing be made available to assist with 'last mile' travel supported by secure cycle parking. Options for DDRT might also be considered.

Direct trains from Weston-Super-Mare

The new timetable shows some direct services from Weston-Super-Mare to Avonmouth via Bristol Temple Meads, however, the journey time could be around an hour, which is likely to be too long for many commuters.

Rail - Henbury Loop

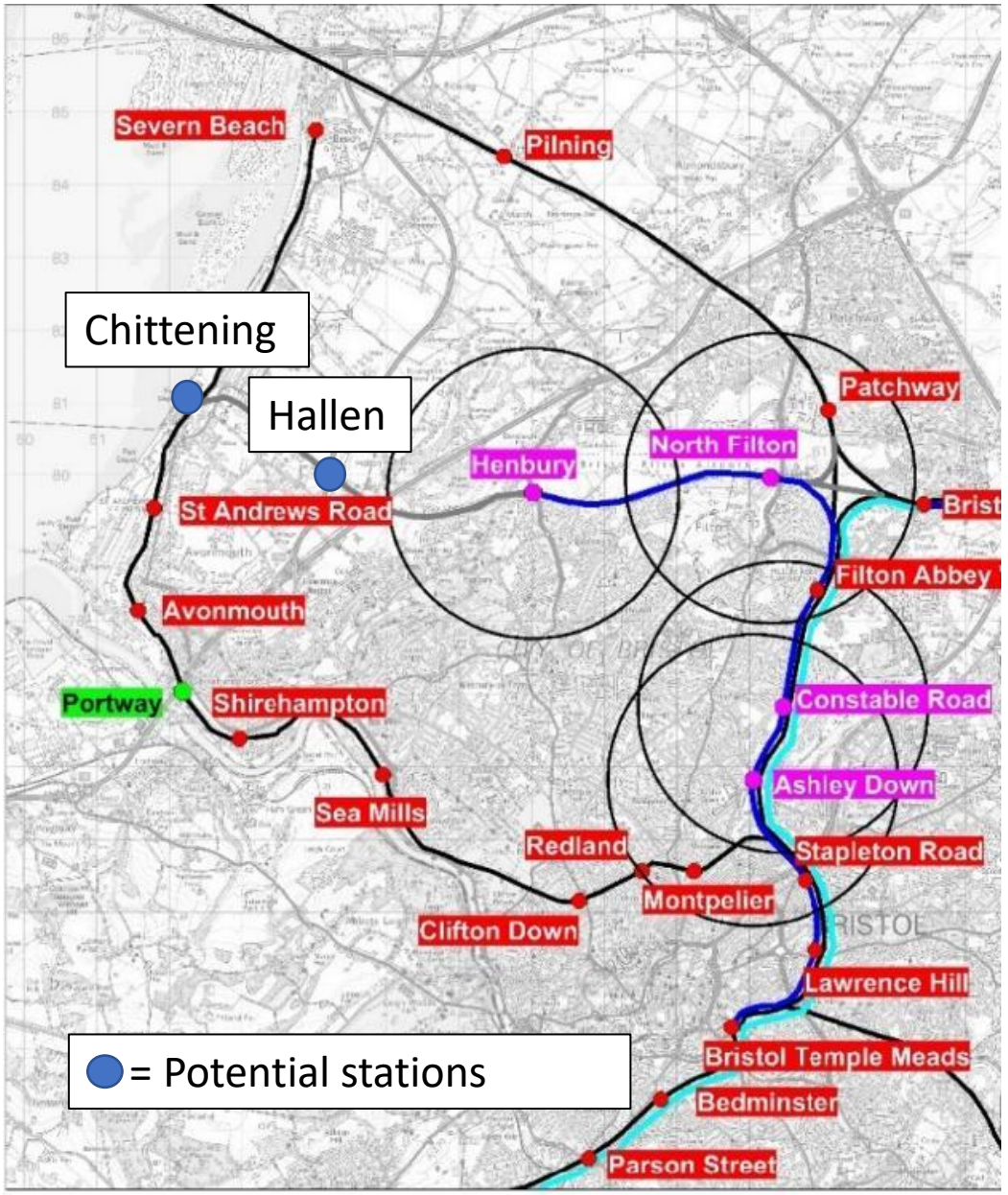
The Henbury Loop or **Filton to Avonmouth Line** was previously used for passengers, but now currently only carries freight [2.].

If the route were opened up to passenger services, the line could help address the area's transport needs, with many workplaces around Chittening and Cabot Park.

In 2015 the loop was considered under the MetroWest project. It was decided against, favouring a 'Spur' instead, despite the huge potential to service the enterprise zone on the coast [3., 4.]. The line will carry passengers to stations at North Filton and Henbury requiring connecting services into PAS.

<u>Opportunities</u>

Since the line exists already, there is potential for passenger trains. It seems the case needs to be made with more compelling data, as consultants cited low predictions of passenger numbers on the line if it were made into a loop, but the data they used may have been 'pessimistic' [3.].



Rail - Henbury Loop continued

If passenger services extended beyond Henbury this would offer increased connectivity to Hallen, the workplaces in Chittening and surrounding industrial parks by **linking into the Severn Beach Line**.

There would be opportunities for new stations by Hallen and Chittening that would improve accessibility for these poorly connected areas, while giving the possibility of **more services to St. Andrew's Rd and Avonmouth.**

<u>Connecting Severn Beach to Yate</u>

The WECA Strategic Rail Investment Plan outlines the potential for infrastructure link, or 'Chord', to link southbound trains from Severn Beach to 'turn left' onto the Henbury Loop at Hallen Marsh Junction, allowing for connectivity through to **Yate**. The timeframe for this appears to be 2030+. **We would welcome this link being realised to increase access to the workplaces around Severn Beach.** However the link is only viable if the line East of Henbury is opened to passenger services. This link would have less impact on the Port operations which are interrupted by the level crossing in Avonmouth.

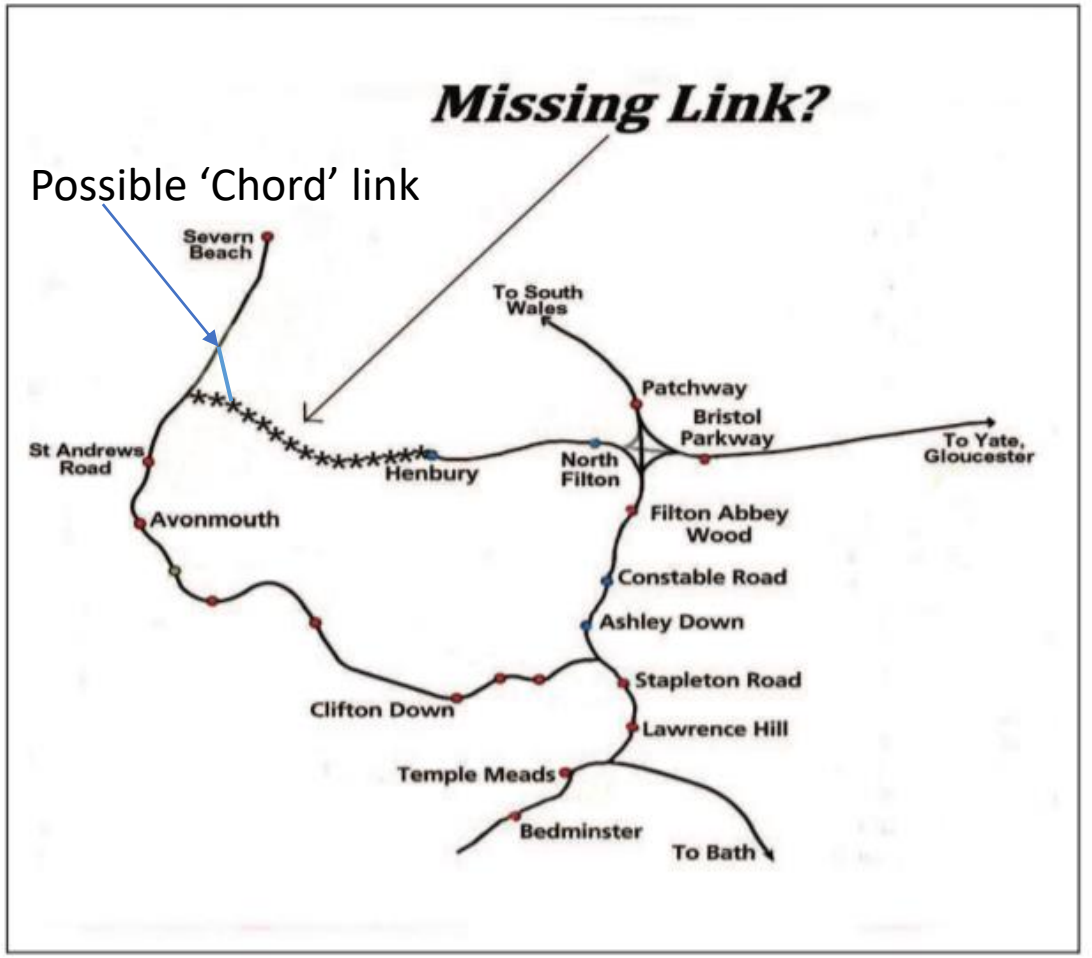


Image from FOSBR

Rail - Pilning Station

Pilning station is in close proximity to Western Approach Industrial Park, Central Park, Central Avenue and the yet to be developed Westgate, which lies between the M49 and the villages of Pilning and Easter Compton.

It is also close to the nationally important Wave Hub attraction recently opened; and to the new location for Bristol Zoo.

Pilning Station is significant for the opportunities it offers for supporting sustainable travel and access to employment for people on the **South Wales Mainline,** which includes the significant populations of **Cardiff** and **Newport;** and connecting other stopping services using the Severn Tunnel junction.

This stop could offer realistic sustainable journey times for colleagues seeking to work/working in the area, where today the alternative is to journey by car, increasing pressure on the road network [5.]; or choosing to work elsewhere.

There is substantial support for Pilning Station from the business community and the Wave, as well as local residents.

Pilning Station today is only used for a couple of services a week. The potential is there, but work is required with rail operators and transport teams to demonstrate the business case. Pilning Station Group have been leading engagement to date.

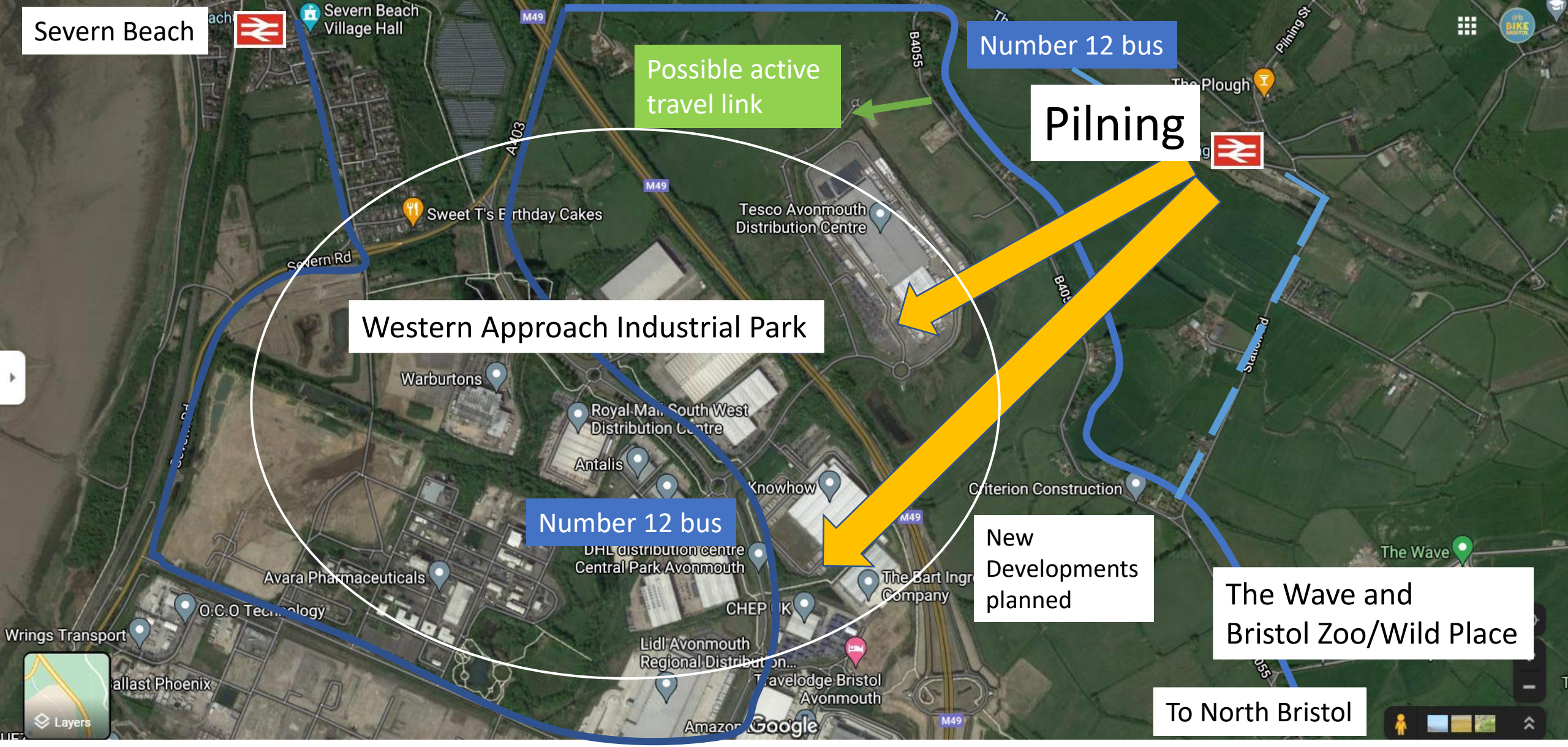
We recognise Pilning station as a significant link. We need to see this recognition reciprocated by LAs/WECA and dialogue progressed with Network Rail and operators about how to increase services.

Opportunities

Pilning could become a significant multi-modal hub for this area serving both journeys to work, local residents and leisure travellers accessing the Wave and Bristol Zoo, with linking bus services and active travel facilities.

There could be potential for a park and Ride at Pilning.

Note: Westbound services are currently not possible since the footbridge was removed. A footbridge will need to be reinstalled to make services to Pilning viable.



With Pilning operating frequent services, Western Approach Industrial Park would benefit from the ready links via the Stagecoach no.12 that passes through Pilning and potential walking, cycling and scooter links. This area is earmarked for future developments and requires numerous travel movements for commuters to the large workplaces.

Rail - Portway station

We welcome the news that this new train station will be built on the SBL by Portway Park and Ride. This will offer more sustainable travel options. Some thought is required as to how this station can complement and enhance existing services in the area and around Avonmouth Station; and improve traveller journeys to/from the industrial and residential areas.

Bus connectivity to surrounding villages is poor. While there are bus routes in the vicinity they do not call directly and the P&R. **We recommend consideration of adjusting the route slightly of the First 3/4 and Stagecoach 10/11** so they call at Portway station/Park and Ride. **We also see an opportunity for the X5 from North Somerset to call here** (more in bus section)**.** There may be opportunities for more express services or scheduled coaches to stop here too.

Having caged cycle parking and access to hop-on hop-off scooter and bike sharing schemes is essential to improving the functionality of this new station.

The new timetable planned for the SBL indicates that Portway will have fewer trains stop than other stations, notably after 8.30pm Mon-Fri. **If the station becomes a modal hub it may be important to ensure all trains stop at Portway**.

Basic cycle parking is apparently being installed, however, SevernNet & Sustrans did a study to determine whether people would consider leaving a bike at a station to facilitate multi modal journeys (e.g. walk>train>bike) that concluded people would be much more likely to use parking if it was 'caged'. **We therefore recommend caged cycle parking is installed**

<u>Park and Ride</u>

We recommend the Portway Park and Ride features cycle parking on-site, to facilitate multi-modal journeys.

Rail – Portishead line

We welcome the planned reopening of the Portishead line as part of MetroWest with stations at Portishead and Pill. **Early thought must be given to opportunities for onward travel options from these stations.** The planned opening date is 2024 so we would welcome a timely delivery of this route to help alleviate the growing pressure on surrounding roads.

Links from Pill station to Royal Portbury Dock and to Avonmouth will be essential to serve employment sites at Portbury Dock and Avonmouth / Severnside and take cars off the road. This will require active travel facilities and/or integrated bus services which stop either side of the Avonmouth Bridge. Potential for a new station at Dock Rd to serve port employees should be explored and there could also be a potential rail P&R there for commuters coming off the M5. The opening of Ashton Gate station in South Bristol would also enable increased access to the line, which would be welcomed.

Buses – challenges and opportunities

Public bus service provision across PAS is generally very poor, although some improvements have been made.

There are very limited services to Royal Portbury Dock. These often end with a last mile that requires crossing J19 M5 roundabout or require an extensive diversion on foot.

The industrial areas close to Avonmouth Village and St. Andrew's Rd (up to Kings Weston Lane) are relatively well served, including services from Bristol City Centre. **Industrial parks and workplaces further north and east in Avonmouth and Severnside have no provision.**

The Western Approach area has seen some bus service improvement facilitated through the success of works buses and the SevernNet Buzz (more below).

The services available are not sufficiently meeting the needs of the PAS area. Most services **fall short of reaching many of the industrial parks and workplaces and/or meeting shift times.** Strategic routes need to be prioritised to ensure recruitment can meet demand of employers and support growth in this economically important area.

Key gaps in services

1. Few direct services linking PAS with areas in the West of England that have high unemployment and recruitment opportunities. These include Bristol's most deprived communities [8.]. These areas outlined in the PAS Transport Study [13.] that could be within reach of PAS include:

- **North/West Bristol**: Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston
- **East Bristol**: Lawrence Hill ward
- **South Bristol**: e.g. Hartcliffe & Withywood, Knowle and Bishopsworth
- **N.Somerset**: Pill, Easton-in-Gordano and Weston-S-Mare

2. No direct service from City Centre to Cabot Park, Chittening, Severn Road or Western Approach

3. No direct link from North Somerset to Avonmouth and Severnside

4. No direct link between South Wales e.g. Chepstow, Newport and Cardiff

5. Limited short hop services/Park and Ride shuttle to villages

SevernNet Flyer and SevernNet Buzz

In 2014 funding was secured from the Coastal Communities Fund to establish a shuttle service linking Avonmouth villages with Avonmouth and Severnside. Through partnership working between SevernNet, Esoterix Systems, Wessex Bus and employers, the SevernNet Flyer was launched. Volumes grew until funding ran out. The service was re-launched as SevernNet Buzz supported by BCC/Innovate UK funding and Nisbets. Smart ticketing was trialled. The service was withdrawn when funding ceased and volumes were insufficient for commercial operation.

With Lidl's relocation to Western Approach from Weston, it was agreed to relaunch the SevernNet Buzz to connect villages from Patchway to Avonmouth with Western Approach. A partnership between Lidl and Tesco with Stagecoach, Esoterix Systems and SevernNet enabled a cost-sharing model between colleagues using service and Tesco & Lidl.

In October 2020 the SevernNet Buzz ceased as Stagecoach modified two services (10 and 11/12) to serve key shift times for Western Approach businesses.

The SevernNet Buzz v2 was developed to meet the demands of distribution businesses, by analysing postcode data, and was successful in meeting shift times and a route which suited a number of employees.

By collaborating with the bus operator and other partners a new public route was developed that was shown to be viable. This demonstrates the acute demand from employers, and that with support and close collaboration, new services can be created to address the needs in PAS.

This process is lengthy and time consuming. A wider strategy for supporting improved bus routes is needed.

<u>Other Works Buses</u>

A number of employers and/or their recruitment companies run private services to connect particular locations to the business and try and help fill vacancies. These include Lidl's service to Weston and Amazon's services to Central Bristol and S. Wales.

There may be opportunity to build upon these.

Bus Routes – approx. & subject to change

Brown: Stagecoach **No.12** (timetable)
Parkway > Severn Beach
Departs approx. Mon-Fri: hourly 0513-2143, Sat: hourly 0745-1915

Light Blue: Stagecoach **No. 11** (timetable)
Parkway > Avonmouth
Mon-Fri: half-hourly 0603-1943, Sat: hourly Sat 0613-2101, 0928-1728, Sun: two-hourly 0928-1728

Yellow: Stagecoach **No. 10** (timetable)
Thornbury > Severn Beach
Only 3 buses a day reach Severn Beach (Western Approach) arriving: 0537, 1342 and 2207

Dark Blue: First **No. 3&4** (timetable)
Bristol City > Cribbs Causeway
Note: only the 3 (dashed) serves Avonmouth **arriving** Mon-Fri: every 30 mins 0519-2317, Sat: 0558-2317, Sun: hourly 0607-2317

Light Green: First **Portway Park and Ride**
Teal: Newport bus **T7** (timetable)
Pink: National Cycle Network

X5 bus – Weston-Super-Mare to Bristol

X5 Link from Weston Super Mare

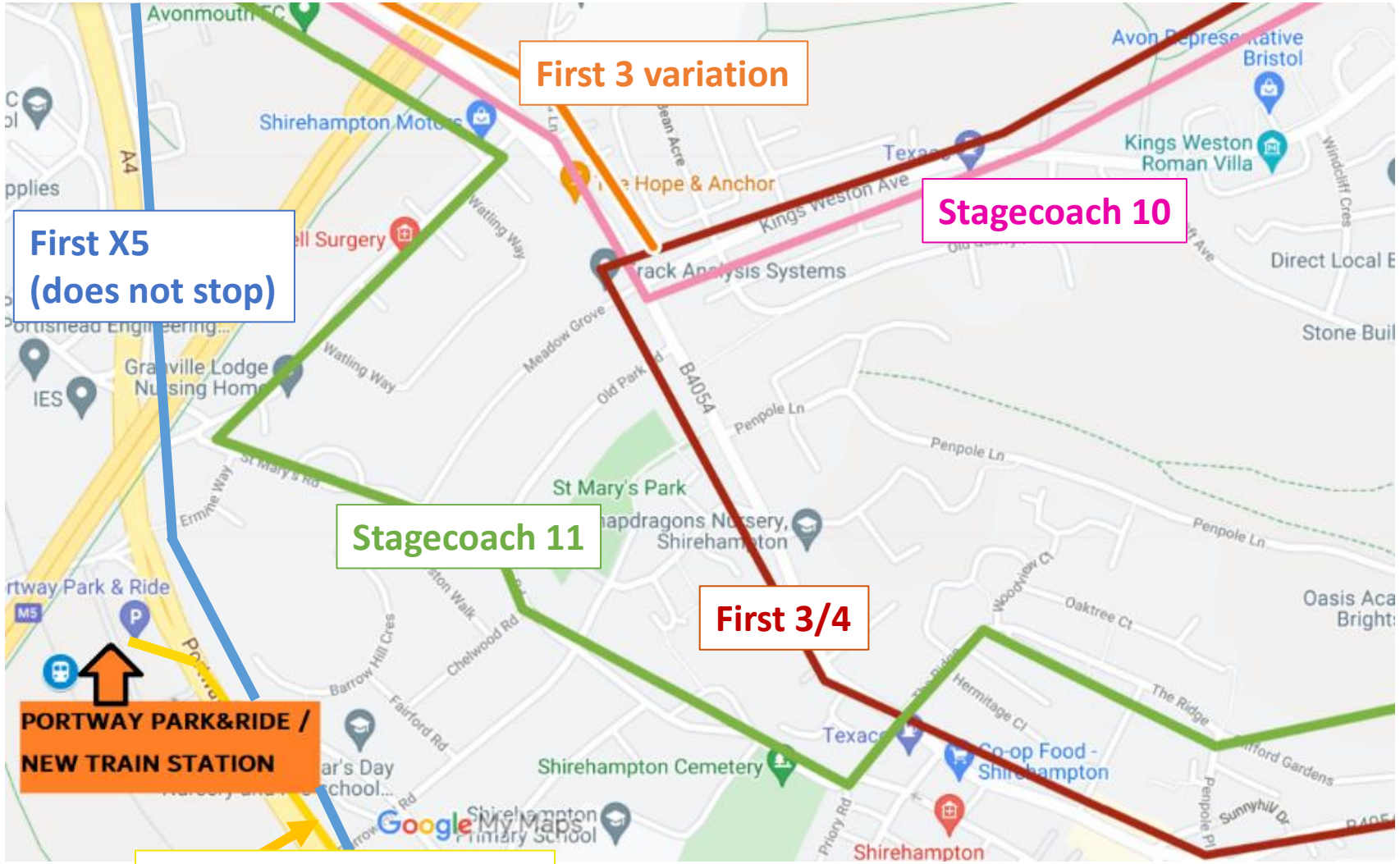
There is a recognised gap in this service to connect North Somerset and Weston Super Mare to the PAS area, particularly for the purpose of employment.

The First **X5** service originating in Weston-Super-Mare, calling at Clevedon and Portishead, passes through Avonmouth and onto Bristol City Centre but does **NOT** stop. **We see an opportunity to increase connectivity by working with First so X5 will call at Avonmouth and/or Portway Park & Ride/Portway Train Station**

X5 should stop

Pins show bus stops

Portway Park & Ride



Several buses pass close to the Portway Park & Ride and site of the new train station.

The Stagecoach no.10 (Pink) & no.11 (Green) as well as the First 3 (Orange) & 4 (Brown) do pass close to **Portway Park & Ride** and the site for the new **Portway train station,** but **do not stop there**.

There's an opportunity, if viable, to have the buses reroute to call at the Portway Station to further create a 'mobility hub' and help residents use this as an interchange.

T7 - Newport Bus … and Stagecoach 10

T7

The T7 connects Chepstow with Bristol. It passes though Severnside but doesn't stop making it unviable for commuters to the industrial parks e.g. Western Approach.

We recommend working with Newport Bus to allow for the T7 to stop in Western Approach. To be viable this may require the opening of the M49 Junction.

Stagecoach no.10

With only three services a day to Western Approach, **the viability of increasing frequency of services** to Western Approach, with its large number of workplaces, should be assessed.

Active Travel

Overview

Neighbouring residential communities including Lawrence Weston and Shirehampton are geographically close to the industrial areas and workplaces in PAS, but are criss-crossed by major roads and motorways. This can be perceived as a barrier to active travel (walking, cycling and scooters). Where there are paths in place, they are often in need of improvements and suffer from gaps that make overall routes inconsistent. [6., 12]

Significant freight movements requiring people to share space with HGVs in the area discourage walking and cycling [11.]. **It is therefore essential to have a safe, navigable and attractive network of active travel paths.** Thought needs to be given to improving safe access into workplaces where this is especially challenging, for example into Royal Portbury Dock.

We are creating an Active Travel Inventory to log the status of the network and are working with Sustrans to maintain and improve the existing routes. The Severn Ride and Stride project continues to promote active travel across PAS.

Priorities

- **A network of safe paths** that separate cyclists from heavy traffic and HGVs. They should be well signed and properly maintained
- **A focus on Interchanges and mobility hubs** that embrace cycling and scooters, particularly at train stations on the Severn beach line
- **Improvements on a strategic east-west route** (the Portway, A4 and St. Andrew's Rd, A403) to increase safety and appeal of this route for commuting
- Continued **funding for the Severn Ride and Stride project**

Active Travel – map

Solid pink showing on-road routes and dashed pink showing ‘traffic-free’ routes. Several gaps remain

A network of safe paths

The routes outlined below have been identified by both SevernNet and by Sustrans in their 2015 audit. Our SevernNet Active Travel Inventory will cover the network in more detail.

Kings Weston Road

This road is dangerous for cycling and makes it difficult for employees to access Access 18, Cabot park and other sites. There is a good section of segregated path alongside Access 18, but north and south of this short section, cyclists have to share the narrow road with fast commuter traffic and freight.

Lawrence Weston Rd

A safer alternative to Kings Weston Rd, that could benefit from improved access to workplaces, such as GENeco. Improved lighting and a vehicle barrier to prevent anti sociable behaviour are recommended. We are continuing to work with Sustrans to improve this essential link between Lawrence Weston and Cabot Park.

Avonmouth Way

A safe and wide shared path or cycle lane is needed here to help people walk and cycle on this road busy with HGVs and vans. Pavement parking is an issue. This route should be completed as part of a new development recently granted planning permission.

Portway (A4)

This path is an essential ‘traffic free' link connecting the city centre to Avonmouth, however towards Avonmouth it becomes poor and needs widening. Crossing points are dangerous in places.

St. Andrew’s Rd (A403)

The shared path alongside this busy road is in places unsuitably narrow, poorly maintained and junctions are difficult to cross. Shared active travel path often parked on by HGVs.

Active Travel - Interchanges and mobility hubs

We recognise that the availability of bike and scooter sharing at train stations and bus stops would improve connectivity and viability of active travel. ‘Last mile’ solutions are needed to enable people to travel from stations onward to workplaces. **We would like to see stations on the Severn beach Line have secure cycle parking and bike/scooter sharing available.**

<u>Portway – a potential mobility hub / interchange</u>

With increased services on the Severn Beach Line promised for December 2021 and proximity to Portway Park & Ride, the new Portway train station looks set to be a key exchange for multiple modes of transport. **We would support the Portway Park and Ride being considered for an early trial of a mobility hub.**

In addition to working to ensure local bus routes call here, we seek to ensure this hub embraces cycling and scooting.

It will be key to have secure cycle storage that allows for ‘Dutch style’, or bike-train-bike journeys, especially as GWR may start clamping down on bike over crowding on trains. After surveying potential users, we found **caged cycle parking is preferable**, or essential for many respondents to consider this method.

We support the work Cycling Works Bristol are doing to facilitate cycle access to Park & Rides.

A high quality strategic cycling corridor connecting the city to PAS

<u>A high quality strategic cycling corridor connecting the city to PAS</u>

We identify the importance of a high quality, safe and appealing cycling/scooting path, that allows for rapid travel into PAS. This will require the Portway/A4 and St. Andrew's Rd/A403 paths to be improved.

Portway

The Portway/A4 has a 'shared path' of varying quality, that connects the west of the city centre (around Create Centre) to Avonmouth, however, the route has a number of issues. The path is shared, which impacts the safety of pedestrians and speed at which cyclists can travel. This is compounded by the varying width down to 1 meter in places. **We therefore recommend segregation on the Portway between pedestrians and cyclists.** We also **recommend the route is widened** to a minimum standard and **crossing points are improved** as several are dangerous with poor visibility for drivers. Give ways could be adjusted to give riders priority.

We support the CyclingWorks campaign which identifies the significance of such an east-west route.

St. Andrew's Rd

Similarly, there is already a shared path heading north from Avonmouth to Severn Beach, however it is of varying quality, dangerously narrow in places and it is non-segregated, adding to conflict/safety concerns. Crossing points are a concern, with very wide bell mouth side roads to cross, which can be intimidating and dangerous.

Freight

The Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body is in the process of developing a Freight Strategy for the South West together with Peninsula Transport SNTB and is consulting with stakeholders.

Freight section to be completed

Innovative freight haulage and delivery facilities

- Including Freight Consolidation centres / arrangements
- Backhauling arrangements

Rail Freight Services

- Railhead facilities supporting frictionless transfer between modes
- Parity between cost of modes

Waterborne Freight Services

- International shipping routes
- Short sea shipping
- Local waterborne transport options
- Ferry services across Avon

Freight / Haulage Facilities Required

- HGV parking and overnight facilities
- Conveniently located
- Competitively priced
- Encourage use through parking restrictions outside designated parking areas
- Parking places app available to drivers

[e-] Cargo bikes

Cargo bikes are increasingly popular. Grants are available to help businesses purchase them. They can be used to increase sustainability of freight and reduce congestion.

We see PAS as an excellent place to trial cargo bikes as part of a freight consolidation centre where larger vehicles could bring goods into the hub and cargo bikes used to transport appropriate items into the city, avoiding the CAZ charges, traffic and enabling easier access into the city; and also used in/around local area.

Avonmouth could make an excellent site as the Portway path alongside the A4 is a flat, ‘traffic-free’ cycling route into Bristol City Centre. The Portway P&R site could possibly be suitable.

Feedback and dialogue

Thanks for taking the time to read this and we hope you have found it useful.

We welcome your feedback and the opportunity for ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

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SevernNet is a social enterprise funded by its members. We welcome enquiries if you'd like to join us and/or get more involved.

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