



Heart of the South West Local Transport Board

‘CONSULTATION ON MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEME PROGRAMME 2015-19’

TravelWatch SouthWest

TravelWatch SouthWest was established in 2001 as The South West Public Transport Users' Forum (SWPTUF) to promote the interests of public transport users in the South West of England (comprising the counties of Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Somerset and the unitary authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay and Wiltshire) - the Forum became a Community Interest Company, limited by guarantee, in August 2005. SWPTUF adopted the trading name of TravelWatch SouthWest in June 2006 and the Community Interest Company changed name to TravelWatch SouthWest CIC in November 2008.

Membership of the TravelWatch SouthWest CIC is open to every 'not-for-profit' organisation in the South West of England whose sole or principal purpose is to represent the users of any public transport service or to promote the development of public transport services - membership is also open to other 'not-for-profit' organisations in the South West England who represent the interests of special and potential classes of public transport users e.g. the disabled or the elderly. TWSW currently has over one hundred affiliated organisations.

TWSW, which is a social enterprise company, acts as an advocate for passengers to lobby for the improvement of public transport in the region and works closely with local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, business organisations and other stakeholder groups - with the dissolution of the former Rail Passengers Committee for Western England in July 2005, TWSW is the representative body for public transport users throughout the South West of England.

Response to consultation

This response is based on feedback from the affiliated organisations in the four strategic transport authorities that comprise the Heart of the South West.

The local members and directors of TravelWatch SouthWest (TWSW) welcome the opportunity chance to respond to the consultation on the seventeen schemes that are candidates for the £40m of capital for schemes over £3m in the Heart of the Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area covering Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Somerset LTAs.

Broad Priority Order for the seventeen schemes

TWSW categorises the seventeen schemes as follows:-

Scheme	Scheme principally includes provision for					Rail	Notes
	Road	Pedestrian	Cycle	Bus Priority			
Tavistock Railway						x	Line reopening
Marsh Barton & Edginswell new stations							x New stations
Derriford Roundabout	x	x	x	x			
Taunton Town Centre	x	x	x	x			
Cattedown Junction	x	x	x	x			
NE Taunton	x			x			
Octagon Roundabout	x			x			
Torbay Town Centre	x	x	x				Public Transport Interchange
Woolwell to George	x	x	x				Improved car access to George P&R
Alphington P&R				+			
Bridge Street	x	x	x				
Bridgwater Centre	x	x	x				
Yeovil Western Corr.	x	x	x				
Torbay Western Corr.	x	x	x				
Jetty Marsh Road	x						
Tiverton Access Road	x						
M5 Junction 25	x						

(+: excludes bus priority on cost grounds)

In broad terms TWSW would wish to see the first nine schemes above (highlighted in bold type), in the order above, proceed before the last seven schemes. The tenth scheme, Alphington P&R, is discussed below. The first six schemes above amount to £39.9m and would fit the £40m assumed funding. All of these six schemes have 'High' or 'Very High' BCR except Taunton Town Centre which is 'Low'. If this scheme is thus disqualified, the seventh scheme is also 'Low' BCR but the eighth (Torbay Town Centre) is 'High' BCR and at £0.2m cheaper than Taunton Town Centre could replace it and still be within the £40m.

Alphington P&R

TWSW would urge that the Alphington P& R scheme be reconsidered and the bus priority be provided from the outset. The attractiveness of P&R has to counter the time penalty of transferring from car to bus and this can be helped if the bus then has a faster journey than the car for the congested part of the route which can be afforded by bus priority. If bus priority were added TWSW would wish to see the scheme promoted in the rankings above.

Plymouth Northern Corridor

The Derriford Roundabout scheme is particularly welcome as it will (belatedly) provide improved bus priority on the route from the George P&R. The lack of bus priority in the Woolwell to George scheme may be inevitable given the low bus frequency at this outer point on the Plymouth Northern Corridor but the easing of the journey for cars to the George P&R is welcomed. Given the scale of development on this corridor TWSW accept the need for these two schemes and Tavistock Railway.

The sequencing of those three schemes needs to consider the disruption inevitably caused during construction. Tavistock Railway should cause minimal disturbance as it is a build on to the end of the line at Bere Alston. The two road schemes will cause far more disruption and it would be prudent, if time permits without causing delay to the road schemes, to undertake the railway scheme first to remove some cars from the corridor before starting the road works.

Tavistock Railway

TWSW understands that there may be a chance to comment to the promoters on the Tavistock Railway scheme later but asks the LTB to note that the considerable benefits of this particular scheme are grossly 'under sold' by the promoters. TWSW would point to five issues in the submission

- a. Car journey times in the peak
- b. Phasing of service level
- c. Passenger demand and revenue forecast
- d. Level of subsidy
- e. Continuing support

This scheme has been consistently supported by TWSW through various planning documents and the abortive Great Western refranchising process. Some detailed figures about this scheme are at Appendix One but are summarised below.

- a. Car journey times in the peak

The ANPR times with virtually no difference between peak and interpeak times defy common sense and experience of bus and car users. They also contradict what the promoters say about this route, "congested particularly within the city". TWSW ask that the scheme be evaluated on the Saturn times quoted by the promoter.

- b. Phasing of service level

TWSW applaud this pragmatic approach of starting with the lowest possible increment of resource and then building the service level on the line whilst demand grows

c. Passenger demand and revenue forecast

TWSW believes that the extra one way daily trips suggested by the promoter in 2020 of 542 will be over 1000. TWSW believe that the revenue for the initial service level will be 320% of the current Tamar Valley Line (TVL) revenue, this is important in estimating the change in subsidy

d. Level of subsidy

Revenue will rise by 320% and costs by 175% so the promoters are correct in saying that the subsidy per passenger will decrease. This is true across all assumptions about the cost to revenue ratio on TVL. In most of these assumptions the absolute subsidy also falls.

e. Continuing Support

TWSW remain fully supportive of this scheme and ask that the LTB evaluate it having considered the issues above. The BCR for the scheme is described as 'High' at 2.72. The next category of 'Very High' is triggered at 3.0. TWSW ask that the points above and in Appendix One are considered to see if this moves the scheme into this next BCR category.

The consultation leaflet says that one of the factors in prioritising the schemes is "private sector investment". Many of the 17 schemes seek nearly all their funding from this LTB source. This fund can deliver far more for the LEP area if significant schemes lever in large external funding. Whilst the overall cost of this scheme is £26m, £17m is funded externally only calling on this fund for £9m. This level of external funding is many times greater than most other schemes and is nearly treble that of the next highest external funding towards a scheme. Other schemes seek more from this fund (£12.4m and £10.2m) whilst only offering very small external contributions ((£1.4m and £2.5m respectively). TWSW ask that this advantage of this scheme be given due weight.

Prioritising Schemes

The consultation leaflet says that the factors taken into account in prioritising the schemes include economic benefit, cost, time to deliver, safety benefits and private sector investment. However, there is no indication of the weight to be given to each factor. TWSW believe that the consultation would be enhanced by seeking views on those weights and other factors that could be included such as environmental benefits.

APPENDIX ONE – Data relating to Tavistock Railway scheme

Car journey times in the peak

The promoters say that the route is “congested particularly within the city”. This is echoed in the other two schemes on this corridor and is the experience of bus and car users of that corridor.

They go on to say “The rail journey time from Tavistock to Plymouth is expected to be 33 minutes for stops at all stations reducing to 28 minutes if there were stops at St Budeaux and Plymouth only. This compares with ANPR journey time data of 31 minutes by road in the AM peak hour (0800hrs to 0900hrs) and 30 minutes in the 1100hrs to 1200hrs inter peak hour. The Plymouth SATURN 2009 model shows 38 minutes in the AM peak hour and 33 minutes in the IP hour. In the PM peak the 2009 modelled northbound journey time is 40 minutes compared with 32 minutes from the ANPR data.”

One extra minute between AM Peak inbound and interpeak on ANPR times does not match experience or common sense. The Saturn times seem to calibrate well with ANPR times in the interpeak and are more realistic for the peaks. The promoters go on to say, “The Plymouth 2026 SATURN models (with low and high growth), including transport Improvements that reduce highway journey time, forecast considerably higher journey times for the year 2026. So the small time advantage in travelling by rail now would increase considerably with increasing traffic and congestion”.

TWSW ask the LTB to evaluate this scheme on the basis of significant rail over road journey time advantage now and even more by 2026.

Phasing of service level

The promoters say, “The intention is ultimately to deliver an hourly service to Tavistock. One option for achieving this is by running a shuttle between Gunnislake and Bere Alston for most of the day connecting into Tavistock - Plymouth services in the direction of the tidal flow. However, an hourly Tavistock frequency requires two units operating between Tavistock and Plymouth. Reducing slightly to a 75 minute frequency will reduce this requirement to one unit. The intention is therefore that the 75 min frequency would provide an initial level of service stepping up to hourly with an additional unit as demand warrants it. Even with a 75 minute frequency this would provide a higher frequency service for Gunnislake (13 trains per day compared to 9 at present). Although there would be an interchange time penalty, this could be minimised with a cross platform interchange, and because trains currently take 5 mins to reverse at Bere Alston, there would be no overall increase in journey time. This option has been developed with First Great Western, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and Network Rail but remains only one option and others may be pursued in due course”

TWSW applaud this pragmatic approach to building the service level on the line whilst demand grows. The extra unit could be a single coach 153 and deployed on the Bere Alston to Gunnislake shuttle, whilst the current 2 coach 150 operates between Plymouth and Tavistock. This is the smallest possible resource increment and will help to reduce subsidy and minimise subsidy per passenger.

Rail demand and revenue forecast

The promoters say “The patronage forecast suggest 542 one way trips per day in 2020 and 647 one way trips per day in 2026.” TWSW assumes that these are the extra trips due to the new station at Tavistock and extra patronage on TVL due to improved frequency.

The dominating factor in passenger and revenue increase will be the relative populations in the catchments of Tavistock station compared to Gunnislake, Calstock, Bere Alston & Bere Ferrers stations. The PDFH recommends a 2 Km radius catchment for such comparisons. Using 2001 census data the appropriate multiplier is 1.22 (i.e. passengers from Tavistock will be 122% of passengers from the 4 rural stations on TVL, at current TVL service level). The new 750 houses adjacent to the station increases this to 1.47, so about 150 passengers from Tavistock for each 100 on current TVL. The combined lines would be about 250% of current TVL, at current TVL 1 train every 2 hour frequency

The trains per day (tpd) increase of 9 to 13 (just over 40% extra) will induce extra travel from current TVL stations but the traffic from Tavistock estimated via the multiplier above is at current TVL frequency and will also be greater for the 13 tpd service. The LTB will have more sophisticated quantification of the relationship between increased frequency and increased passenger loads but here, in round terms, we take a 40% frequency increase to deliver a 20% passenger increase.

So each 100 existing TVL passengers could increase to 120, whilst each 150 new passengers from Tavistock would become 180 at the higher frequency (300 in total – treble current TVL levels)

NEW PASSENGER LEVEL – Base 100 for current TVL

Bere Ferrers/Bere Alston	60 (east/west of Tamar split broadly 50/50)
Calstock/Gunnislake	60
Tavistock	180
TOTAL	300 (Treble current TVL Passengers)

Current TVL passengers are about 175,000 one way trips pa. Only a small part of this patronage would be on Sundays and allowing for public holidays the extra daily one way trip rate would be about $(175,000 \times 2)/300 = 1167$ which is significantly greater than the 542 daily one way trips suggested by the promoters. To understand what may happen to subsidy levels there is a need to estimate future revenue.

The figures above relate to passengers not revenue. Most of the new revenue will come from Tavistock passengers. The TVL carnet has a zone fare structure with the lower fare being for Bere Ferrers and Bere Alston and the higher fare on the west side of the Tamar. Tavistock is a mile further from Bere Alston than is Gunnislake, but assume that Tavistock is in the same fare zone as Calstock/Gunnislake. Peak traffic will be significant (about 50% of total travel) and the fare ratio of the Peak Returns to Plymouth from Gunnislake and Bere Alston is 1.3 to 1

The revenue version of the table above then becomes

NEW REVENUE LEVEL – Base revenue would be $(50 \times 1) + (50 \times 1.3) = 115$ for current TVL

Bere Ferrers/Bere Alston	60
Calstock/Gunnislake	78
Tavistock	234
TOTAL	372 $(372/115=3.2)$

So the new combined Gunnislake/Tavistock 75 minute timetable would yield in round terms 320% of the current TVL revenue.

Level of Subsidy

The promoters are right to say that the subsidy per passenger will drop considerably but there is also a possibility that the overall subsidy may reduce. TWSW doesn't have access to the actual revenues and unit costs to estimate the actual £ change in subsidy. However, the percentage changes to costs (below) and revenue (above) may be of interest to the LTB when evaluating this scheme.

There is a need to make some estimates of operational cost changes.

COSTS

The day length in the current TVL and the 75 minute combined timetables is the same – so crew costs will not inflate because of day length. However, two crews will be needed – so overall crew costs increase by 100%.

Rolling stock leasing costs will increase with the need to lease a 153 as well as a 150. Assuming that a 150 has a lease cost twice that of a 153 – lease costs could rise by 50%

Vehicle mileage related costs will also increase.

Current Vehicle Mileage 2 cars x 9 trips x 29 miles = 522 vehicles miles

DCRP Timetable

Ply/Tavistock	2 cars x 13 trips x 31 miles = 806 vehicle miles
BA/Gunn	1 car x 13 trips x 9 miles = 117 vehicle miles
TOTAL	923 vehicle miles
INCREASE	923 – 522 = 401 extra vehicle miles (77%)

There will be some extra track maintenance cost but the Bere Alston/Gunnislake section will have 13 journeys from a one carriage train whilst today most of its 9 journeys are provided by a two carriage train. The Bere Alston/Tavistock track will be new and the extra journeys from St Budeaux to Bere Alston are not excessive.

SUMMARY OF % COST INCREASES

Crew Cost	+100%	200% of current)	weightings unknown
ROSCO Lease	+50%	150% of current)	but in round terms
Vehicle Mileage	+75%	175% of current)	say, 175%, of current TVL costs

ILLUSTRATION OF SUBSIDY CHANGE AT DIFFERENT COST TO REVENUE RATIOS

The Table below applies the cost (175%) and revenue (320%) increases estimated above to different speculated current subsidy levels

	COST TO REVENUE RATIO						
	60/40	65/35	70/30	74/26	75/25	80/20	90/10
Old Cost	60	65	70	74	75	80	90
Old Rev	40	35	30	26	25	20	10
Old Sub	20	30	40	48	50	60	80
New Cost	105	114	119	126	131	140	158
New Rev	128	112	96	83	80	64	32
New Sub	-23	2	23	43	51	76	126
Chg Sub	-43	-28	-17	-5	1	16	46
Old Sub/Pax	11.4	17.1	22.9	27.4	28.6	34.3	45.7
New Sub/Pax	7.7(p)	0.62	7.7	14.3	17.0	25.3	42.0

The (p) denotes a premium per passenger. There is no unit for the old and new subsidy per passenger but the notional figures allow some comparison

The Table above leads to some interesting points.

1. If the ratio is 60:40 the service could move into surplus.
2. For cost to revenue ratios of 65:35 & 70:30 the 75 minute timetable proposal reduces subsidy from the current TVL level.
3. At about a ratio of 75:25 the subsidy ceases to decrease but is buying far more rail service, passenger increase and road decongestion for the same subsidy
4. Even at the extreme ratio of 90:10 the subsidy only increases by 57.5% (46/80) but trebles passengers with the associated reduction in road congestion and pollution.
5. The subsidy per passenger is consistently lower across all the cost to revenue ratios

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23 June 2013

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