

Bristol Community Rail Festival Saturday 29 September 2012

Special trains to Portbury and Henbury

First Great Western, Severnside Community Rail Partnership and the West of England Partnership office welcome you to this special train, which has been arranged to mark the annual Community Rail Festival. The train will travel over lines that could be re-opened to passenger services as part of the West of England Partnership proposals for the Greater Bristol Metro.

The Greater Bristol Metro

The Greater Bristol Metro is a scheme to considerably improve the rail services in the Greater Bristol area, sponsored by the local authorities with the full backing of the rail industry, business and communities. The basic local train service could be increased to half hourly at local stations (with extra trains at peak periods), and new services could operate to Portishead and Henbury.

Technical work undertaken by consultants Halcrow has demonstrated that the Greater Bristol Metro is technically feasible with a strong business case. The key to implementation of the Metro is the reinstatement of the four tracks to Filton Abbey Wood. The go-ahead for this has now been given by the Department for Transport with completion in 2017. This would enable the provision of more local train services along the Severn Beach line and to Yate, and a new service to Henbury. A priority in the Metro is the re-opening of the service to Portishead.

Phase 1 of the Metro could see half hourly train services on the Severn Beach line with some through trains to Bath, an improved local service between Bristol and Bath and trains to Portishead. It would also be possible to stop Cardiff – Taunton trains at Bedminster and Parson Street to provide an all day half hourly service. Phase 1 could be completed by 2018.

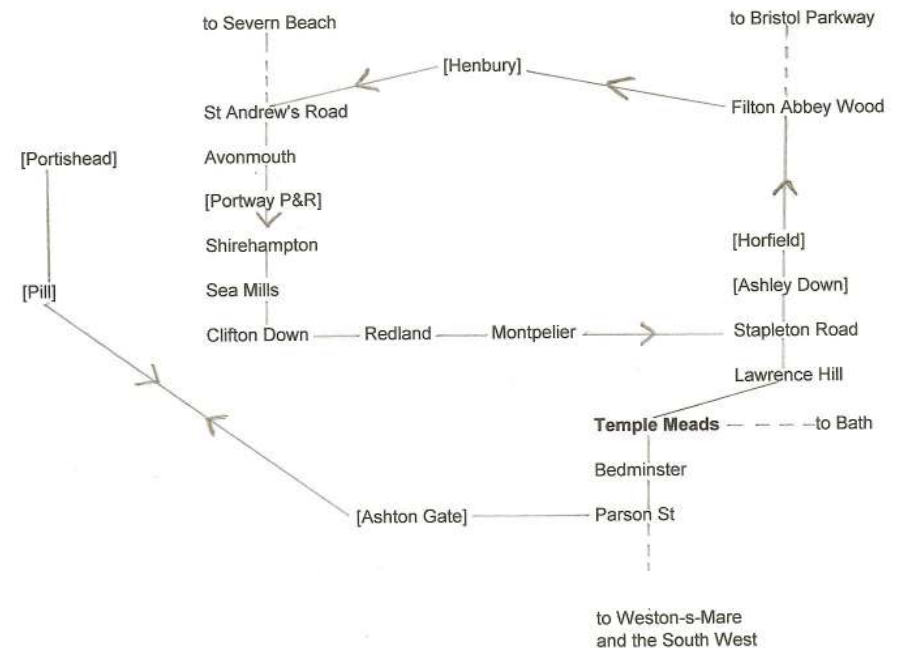
Phase 2 could see a half hourly service to Yate and a new service to Henbury.

Completion by 2023 is possible depending on the development of Filton Airfield.

In both phases a number of new stations are suggested including Ashley Hill, Saltford, North Filton and Ashton Gate and business cases for these will need to be developed.

The special trains today will travel over the Portishead line as far as Portbury and round the Henbury loop.

Community Rail Special Trains



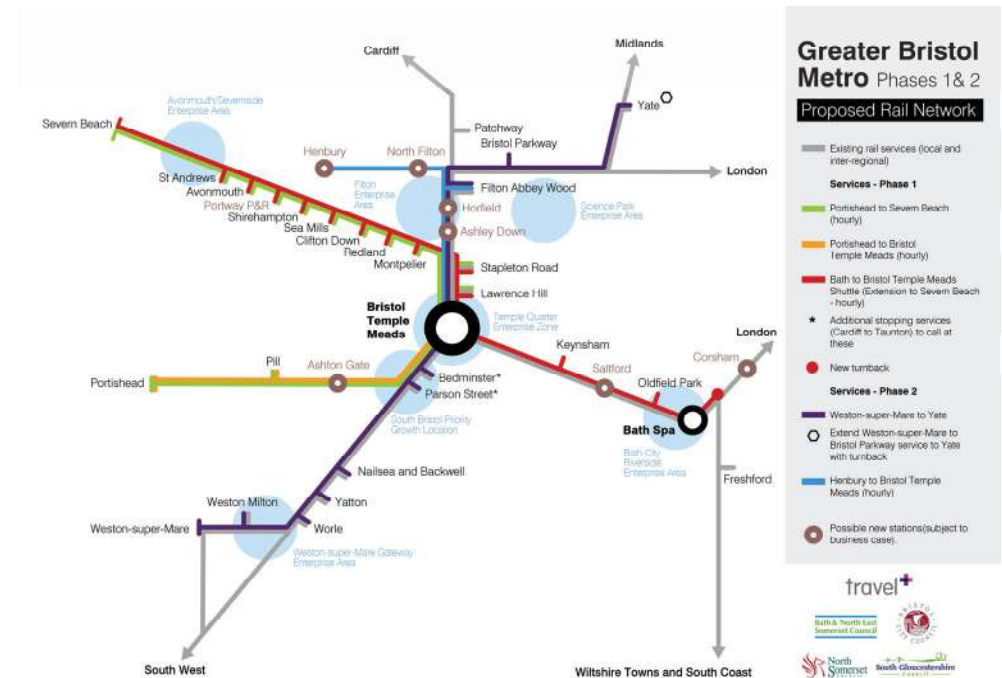
The Portishead Line

The Portishead line was closed to passenger trains in 1964. Occasional passenger special trains continued for a few years. In 2002 the section of line between Parson Street (on the Bristol - Weston-super-Mare route) and Portbury was rebuilt to carry freight trains to the Portbury freight terminal (about 3 miles short of Portishead). The special trains today will operate as far as the freight terminal gates. The remainder of the line to Portishead is currently derelict, but owned by North Somerset Council. Both the existing track to Portbury and the disused section to Portishead will need to be rebuilt, the signalling modernised and new stations built at Portishead and Pill before daily passenger services can use the line again.

The Henbury Line

The line from Bristol Parkway (with a link from Filton Abbey Wood) via Henbury to Avonmouth is heavily used by freight trains. Coal is unloaded at the Portbury docks and then moved by a conveyor belt to Avonmouth, where it is loaded onto trains for the power stations. At Avonmouth the freight line is connected to the Severn Beach route. The line via Henbury and onward to Temple Meads via Clifton Down is also occasionally used as a passenger diversion route, when the main line via Filton Bank is closed, but in recent years very little use has been made of this facility.

The special trains today will travel outwards via Filton Bank, turning left on the single track at Filton Abbey Wood, and continuing via Henbury. The old Henbury station has been disused for many years, and a new location nearby, and closer to the proposed Filton Airport development, may be preferable for a new station. The train then continues via Hallen Marsh Junction to join the Severn Beach line, returning to Temple Meads via Clifton Down. Look out for the Park and Ride site at Shirehampton, where a new rail platform is due to open in Spring 2013



This leaflet has kindly been produced by Severnside Community Rail Partnership.

More information on train services - firstgreatwestern.co.uk
the Greater Bristol Metro www.travelwest.info/GWfranchise
the Severnside Community Rail Partnership www.severnside-rail.org.uk, the
Severn Beach line www.severnbeachline.org