

This presentation at



<http://www.passenger.chat/wiltshiretalk>

Railway Development across wider Wiltshire



For RailFuture Severnside AGM
6th April 2019, Dilton Marsh

By Graham Ellis
Vice chair, Melksham Rail User Group
Board member, TravelWatch SouthWest
Webmaster, Great Western Coffee Shop Forum

Railway Development, wider Wiltshire

Wiltshire - In the middle



- Everything passing through

or

- Stuck between?

East / West lines

- All been open for 100 years plus
 - London to Bristol
 - London via Taunton
 - London via Honiton

North / South lines

- Only Cardiff to Portsmouth has been consistent
- Chippenham to Weymouth closed 1966 to 1985
 - Swindon to Southampton closed in 1961

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East / West Axis



- New timetables from Dec 2019
- New or refurbished trains
- Enhanced and faster services

Some concern at Chippenham – Swindon rush hour gaps up from 23 to 41 minutes

North / South Axis



New timetables from December 2019

- Cascades suburban stock replacing trains designed for secondary main line duties
- similar or even reduced services
- schedules to fit operationally around new East/West timetables.
- Connections mentioned just once in the new SLC
(and not at all anywhere in the Unitary area!)

Local services



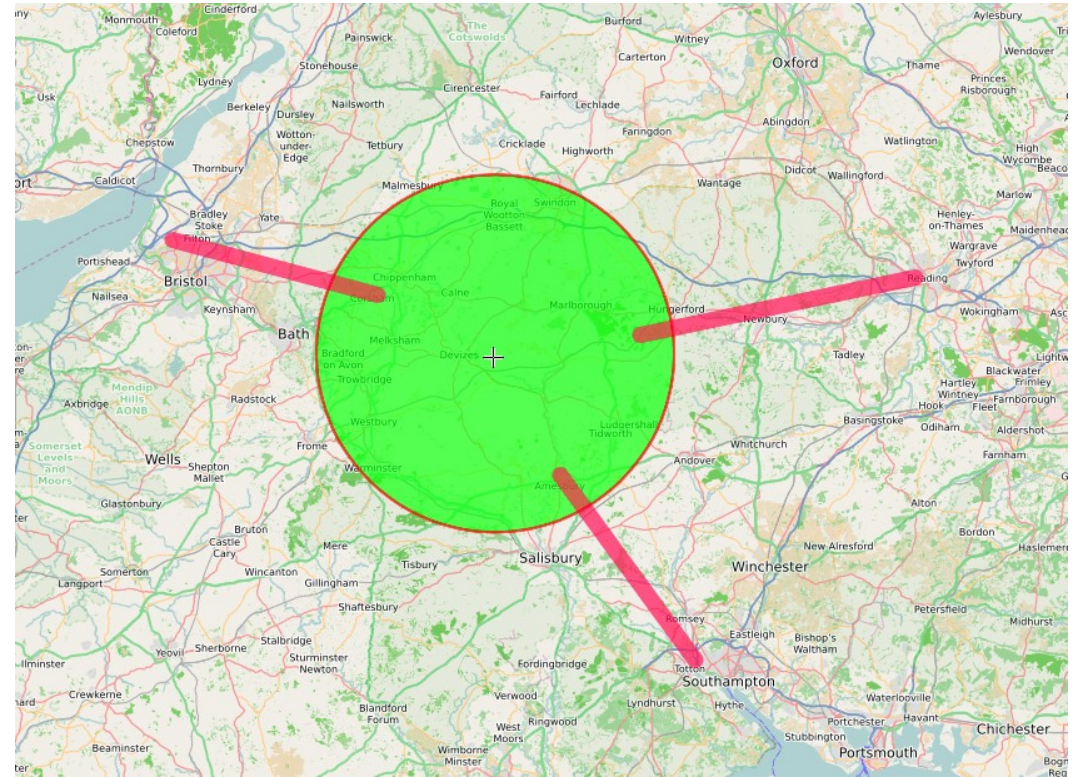
Branches and secondary lines closed

Amesbury, Bulford, Calne, Devizes, Highworth,
Malmesbury, Marlborough, Tidworth

Local stations closed

Royal Wootton Bassett, Corsham, Box,
Badminton, Holt, Chirton, Lavington, Bratton,
Codford, Wilton, Dinton, Porton

- Looking 3 ways
Solent
Home Counties
WECA
- The end of the line
from each



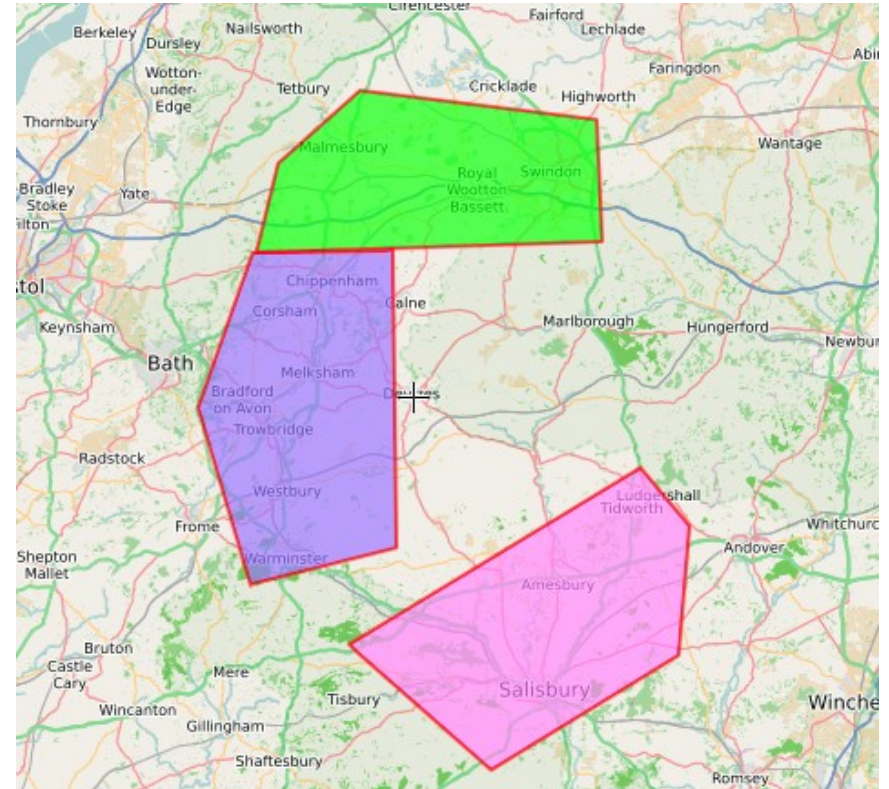
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- 3 development zones

North Wiltshire

A350 corridor

Salisbury area



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So you want a station / [better] service / line?

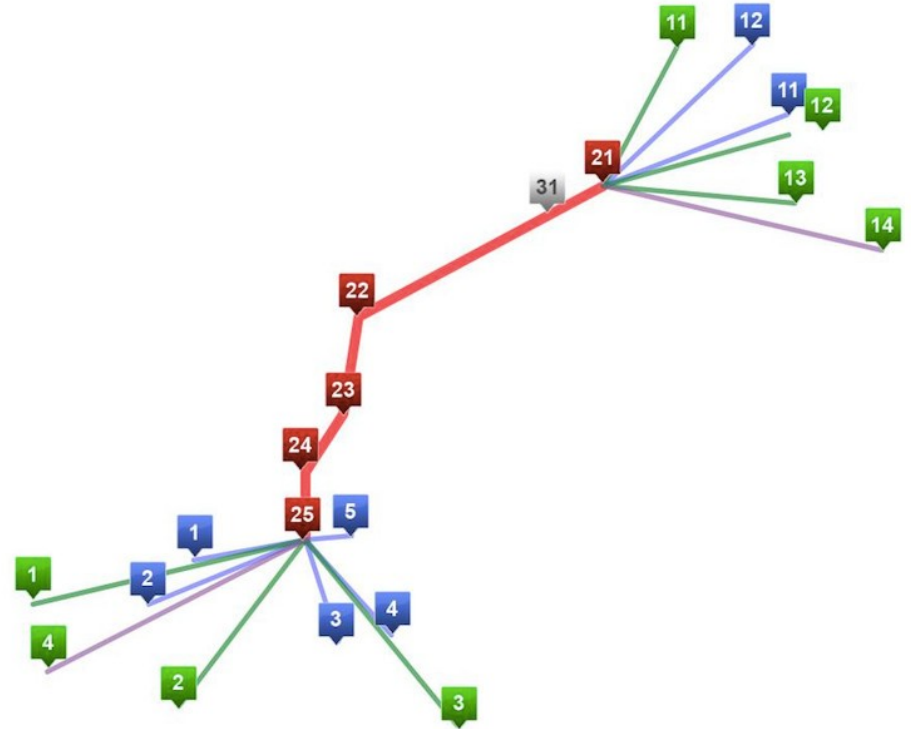


1. What trains would call there?
2. Who would use it?
3. How would they get to / from the station?
4. Is it a safe place for a station?
5. Will trains be frequent enough?
6. Will they go to the right places?
7. Is there space on the line and in their schedules for the extra stop?
8. What do the local people think?
9. Who will pay for it?
10. Will it just abstract passengers from other stations?
11. Is there a wider economic, congestion, clean air benefit?
12. Who will take the lead in promoting it and take the risk?

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Look at your flows

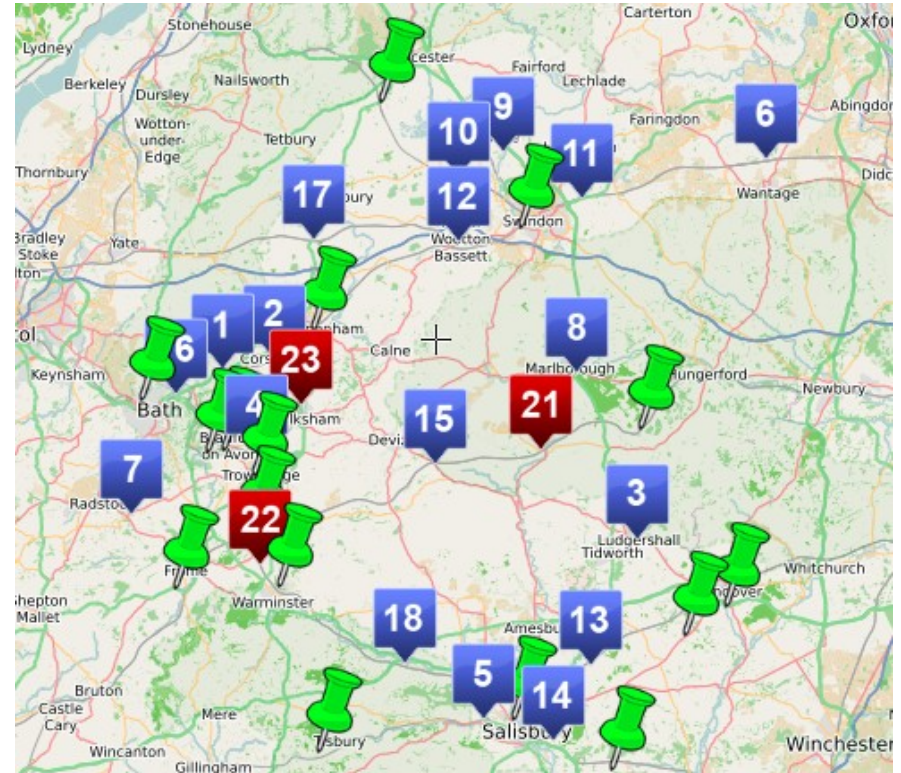
Line improvements.
Who will use the line?



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Realities, aspirations, dreams

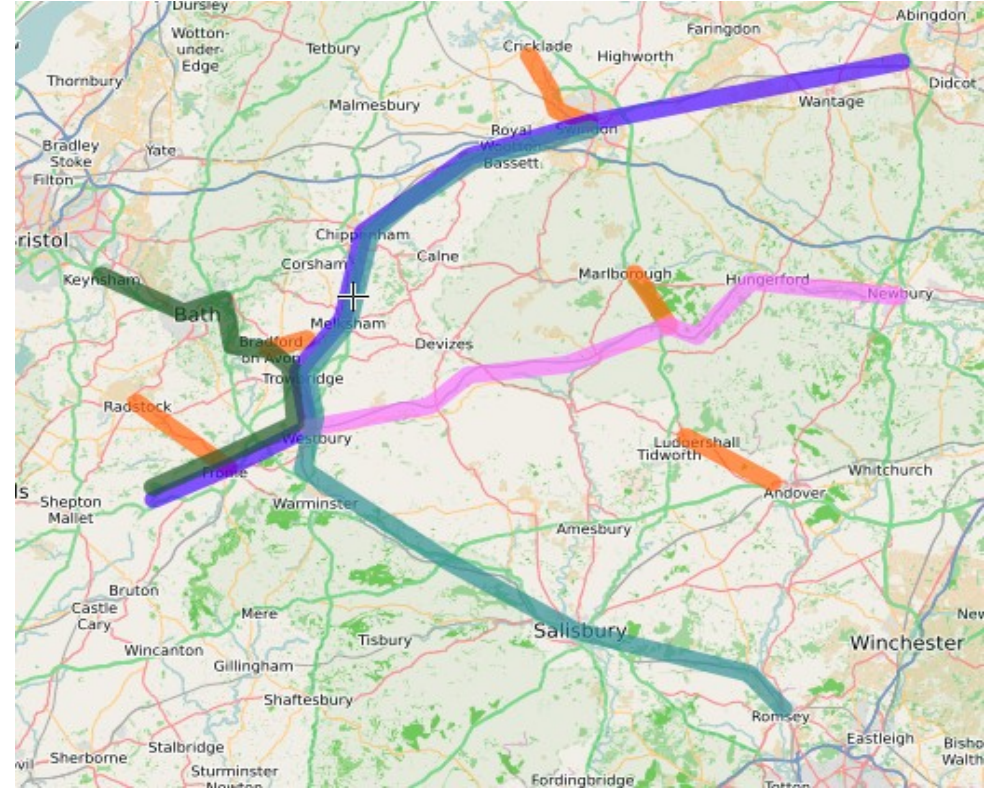
- Green – current stations
- Red – current stations
Better service needed
- Blue – aspired station



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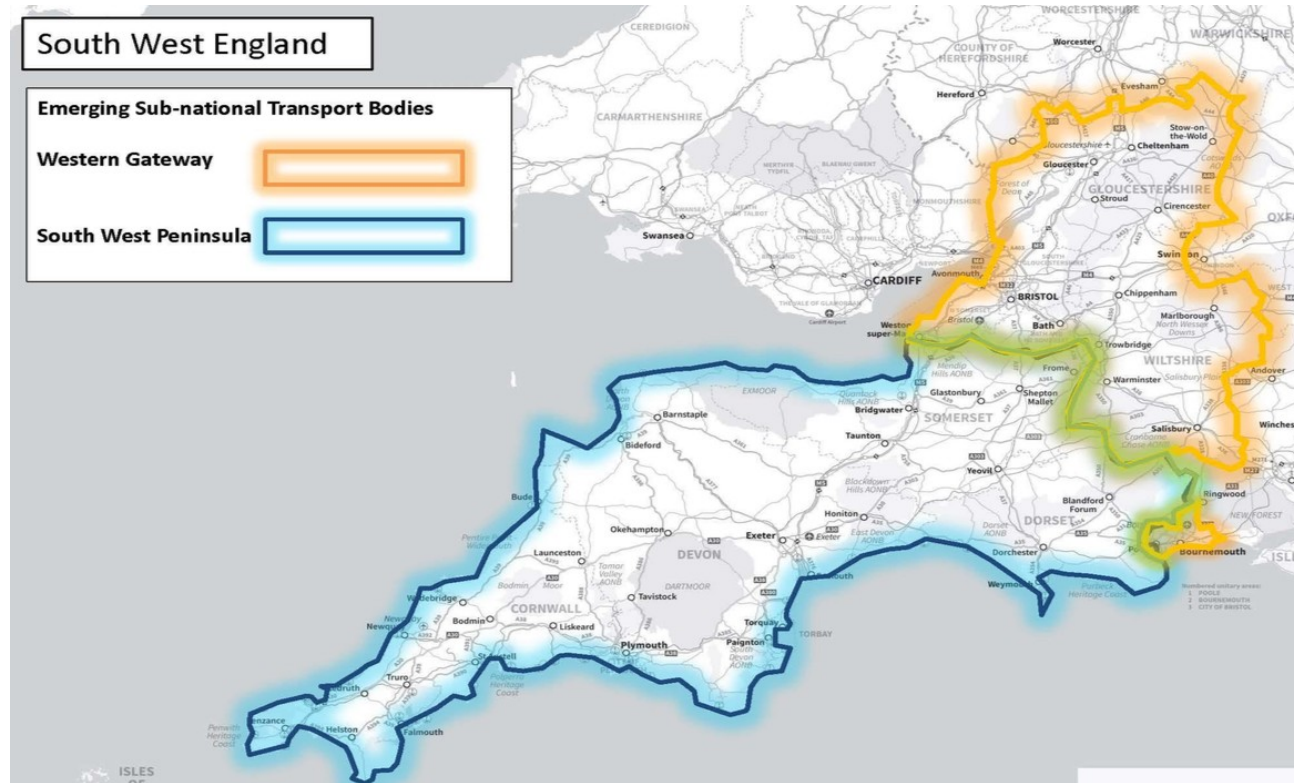
Some service suggestions

- Metro West / Heart of Wessex
- Nuneaton to Taunton (Go-op Cooperative)
- Swindon to Solent
- Hourly B&H Semi-fast



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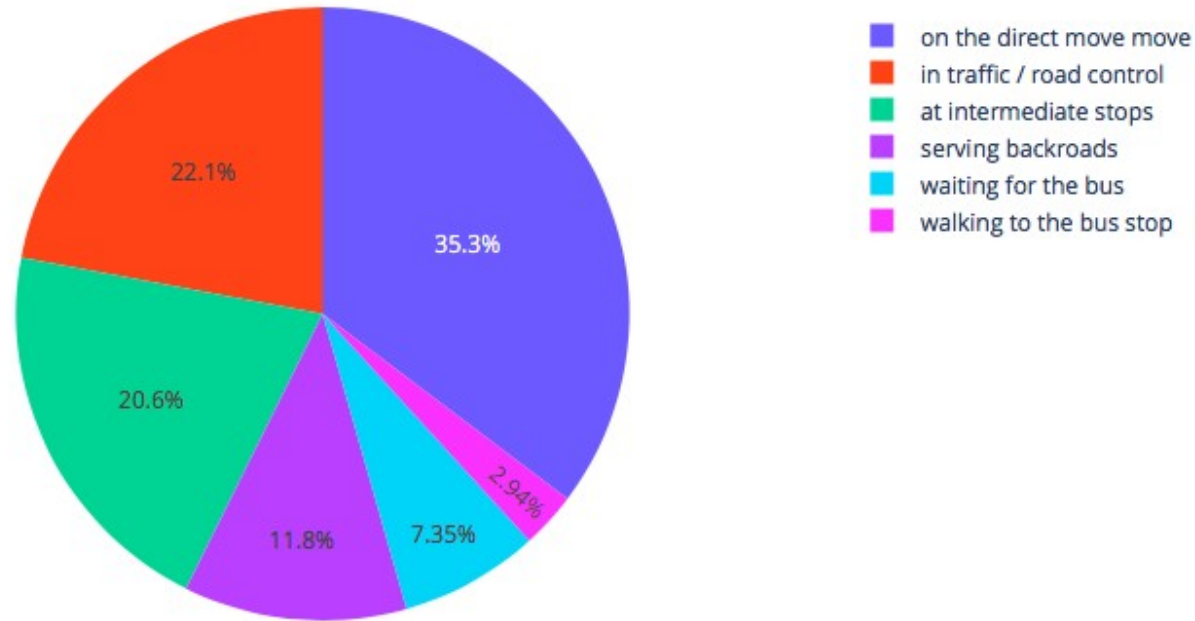
Regional Transport Boards



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Making sure it works

From my front door to Bath Bus Station - how is my time spent?



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Look at the various ideas

www.melkshamnews.com

RAIL TRAVEL BOOST FOR MELKSHAM

RAIL travel in Melksham could get a boost from a new train operator proposing a significant addition to the rail timetable from summer 2020.

The proposal from GO-OP - an independent co-operative society - will bring an additional six services a day to the town, which GO-OP say will 'make a total of 25 departures a day from Melksham, close to an hourly service'.

The service will connect Melksham to the West Midlands, with the service going as far as Nuneaton, via Oxford, Leamington Spa and Coventry. The service will also connect the town with Somerset, stopping in places like Frome, Castle Cary, Taunton and Yeovil.

Graham Ellis from Melksham Rail User Group commented, "There's little doubt that GO-OP have done excellent work in identifying holes in current train service provision, where additional train services would be really useful."

"An hourly service is ex-

actly what Melksham needs. Alternate Southampton to Swindon and Taunton to Oxford trains making up that service would be excellent. It would, I believe, more than double the number of passengers using Melksham Station.

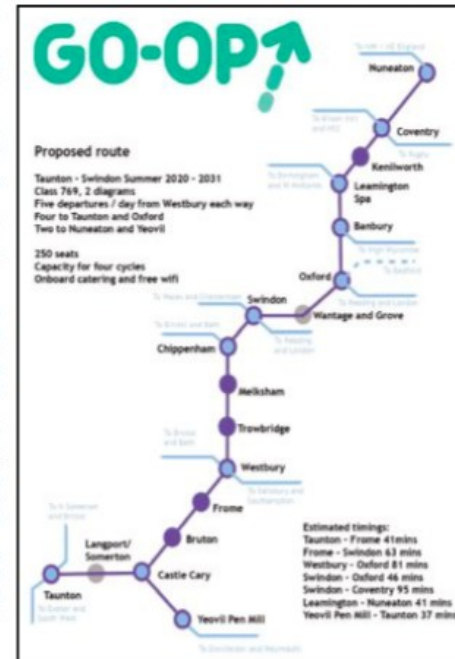
"The capacity of the railway through Melksham is limited, as it is on other parts of GO-OP's planned route. With additional GWR mainline trains from December, our existing local services are already being compromised from this December. It's not clear yet how the extra train paths for GO-OP could be found through better use of existing tracks, or whether enhancement such as re-doubling part of the line would be needed."

GO-OP has been working on its plans for several years and had announced in 2016 that it hoped to gradually introduce the new services from 2017. Alex Lawrie, the operations director and a founder member of GO-OP said, "We've had a couple of

false starts and have realised that perhaps we weren't as well prepared as we thought. The technical difficulties are hard to overstate. The UK railways are - for good reason - carefully regulated and we must prove in great detail that our ideas stack up. But we learn and we move on. This is a new submission and we think that this is the one!

"We are holding a public meeting in Frome on Thursday 4th April. We'd encourage anyone who'd like to find out more to come to these events, or visit www.go-op.coop for more information. This is just the start - we need to start planning bus services to bring people to the stations, and consider how we can further develop and enhance the service. Anyone in the area we serve can be part of the conversation."

The meeting will take place at 5pm - 6.30pm. The venue is to be confirmed, please check the GO-OP website for updates: www.go-op.coop



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Knowing which doors open

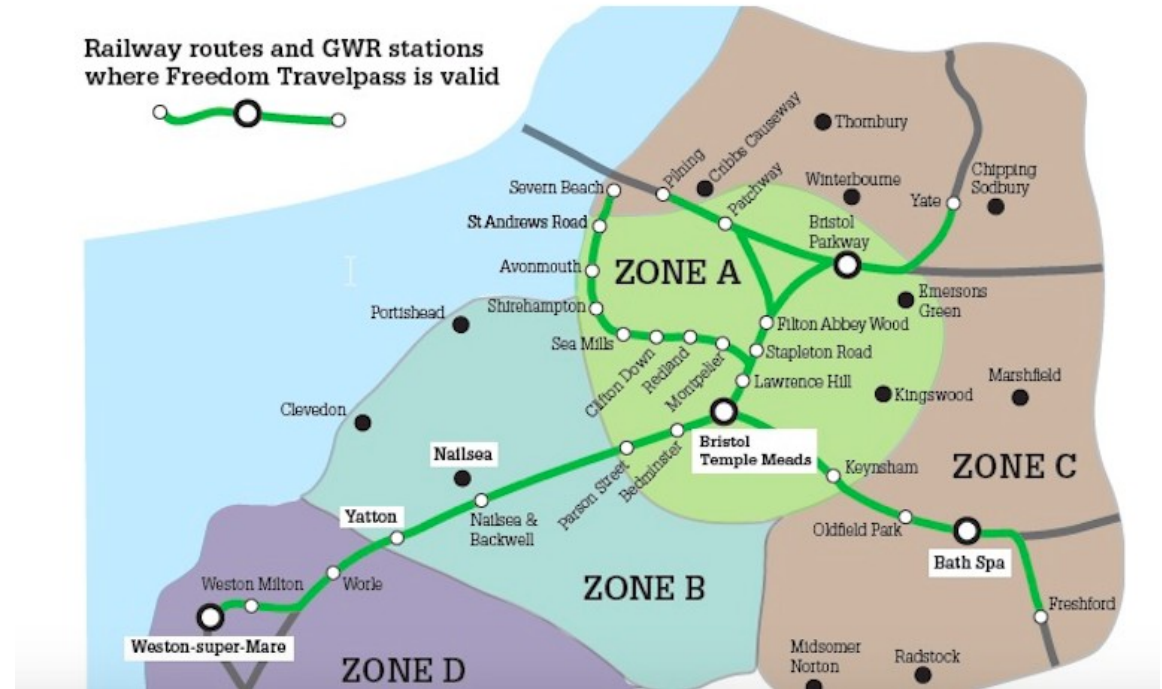


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Total Product

Available within four zones, the Freedom Travelpass enables you to buy one ticket for your whole journey.

- Tickets
- Times
- Information
- Connections
- Flexibility



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As dream moves to reality



Gain -> Promote -> Develop

Crayonist -> Community -> Council

Campaign -> Support -> Ongoing Development

Community Support



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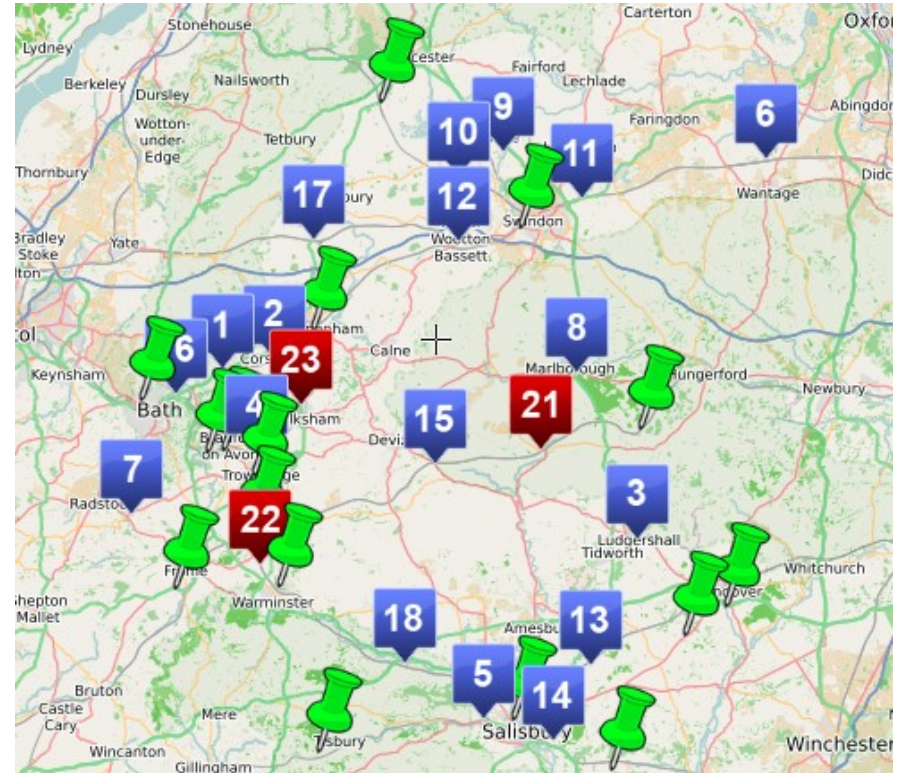
Integrating transport



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Realities, aspirations, dreams

- Green – current stations
- Red – current stations
Better service needed
- Blue – aspired station



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Dilton Marsh



A Station formerly serving a village that survived the "Beeching Axe" against odds. It dropped to peak-only services at the low point, but now has a requirement for at least one train every 3 hours that makes the service a "curious and perverse" one as GWR struggle to meet the spec without stopping the only regular train on the line - the hourly regional express from Cardiff to Portsmouth. Odd trains call, daily commutes to any one destination are interesting, and there's a much better service to all destinations from nearby Westbury. However, nearby fields to the station are now covered in houses and Dilton Marsh has a significant catchment to service daily direct journeys to any reasonable pair of major work centres.

GWR changes in December 2019 - relatively small adjustments based on major timetable upgrade.

SWR - possibility / probability of extra services though the station from May, and some calling from (?) December. Would add some useful journeys to already-served destinations (timetable completion for some) as well as new journeys to places such as Basingstoke, London and Yeovil.

TransWilts / Severn and Solent proposals replace most of the current infrequent "curious and perverse" service with an hourly train on the Swindon to Southampton route; they leave a peak return services to Bath / Bristol.

Melksham



Six years ago, just a peak train each way - or rather morning pre-peak to Swindon and evening post-peak from Swindon, with even more extreme balancing workings - 06:12 and the 18:44 off Swindon ... result, hardly any passengers. From December 2013, extra fill-in trips about every 2 hours working well, and also completing round trip opportunities with established trains. Passenger numbers up from 3,000 to 75,000 per year, but should be 250,000 plus based on character and catchment. Lacks frequency, certain connections and "get home after evening out" services.

Trains and platform now longer so capacity not an issue, but safety of increasing passengers on the approach area will be.

GWR changes in December 2019 reduce southbound services by one per day and displace established services by up to 20 minutes, breaking many established and used connections. Done to fit around the more important London expresses at both ends of the line.

Proposals looked at in SWR consultation for hourly Southampton to Swindon and perhaps Oxford. Could step up from 8 each way to 12 easily without extra stock under this scheme, but hourly would need infrastructure changes. Two step process? Even first stage looks like parked as "too many changes at once" for December 2019. See also Go-op plans which would use those extra paths currently available for their Taunton to Nuneaton services.

Additional drop off / pick up capacity and connecting bus services for station most important. Extra car parking and better customer facilities in plan.

Direct service to Bath and Bristol would be nice but should not dilute services via Trowbridge; AOK for when there's a train every 30 minutes.

Pewsey



Currently 8 trains each way per day, biased towards peak services to / from London with 4 hour gaps. Very varied stopping pattern - only fixed element is that all trains go to or come from Reading and Paddington, making other trips hit and miss.

From December 2019, becomes 2 hour frequency with much more regular stopping pattern - Newbury, Westbury, Taunton, Exeter now regular. Peak hour extras retained. Commute options to Trowbridge / Bath / Bristol remain poor.

Consideration / discussion for longer term of extending Paddington - Bedwyn hourly services westward, perhaps replacing the December 2019 service. Slowing for (?) 4 extra calls but now practical with automatic doors and faster acceleration of the new trains. Note - peak trains already make these calls.

Devizes Parkway



Devizes, population 32,000 is less than 3 miles from the railway - but in the middle of a 22 mile gap between stations.

A Park and Ride station on the A342 to the south east of the town has been mooted and appears practical - and is on the London side of Devizes so would psychologically fit with where the "movers and shakers" want to go.

2 hourly services with extra London peaks would be the natural and available service. Note the possibility of increasing that to hourly but 15 minutes slower in the future.

A Devizes Parkway station would lead to some abstraction of passengers who currently use Pewsey.

Wilton Parkway



Wilton - from which WILTshire got its name. Population around 5,000. Large park and ride car park, underutilised, beside railway which heading out from Salisbury branches there towards Exeter (south west) and north north west across Wiltshire to Bath and Bristol. Wilton House and outlet village. Easiest rail access for buses to Stonehenge. Existing stations closed in 1955 (on Bristol line) and 1966 (on Exeter line). Note P&R prospects not just for Salisbury but for Southampton, Andover and London.

Initial proposal for simple 2 platform station in cutting beside car park, funded by development of housing on the rise behind the car park. To be served by hourly TransWilts (Swindon - Southampton) service and SWR London - Bristol trains.

Proposal extended to add footbridge over Exeter tracks to provide access to Wilton Town and attractions.

Proposal extended to add platforms on the Exeter tracks.

The new station at Wilton Parkway is not a mandatory element of the Swindon - Southampton hourly train case; these trains have an excellent case even if they run through without stopping.

Honourable Mentions



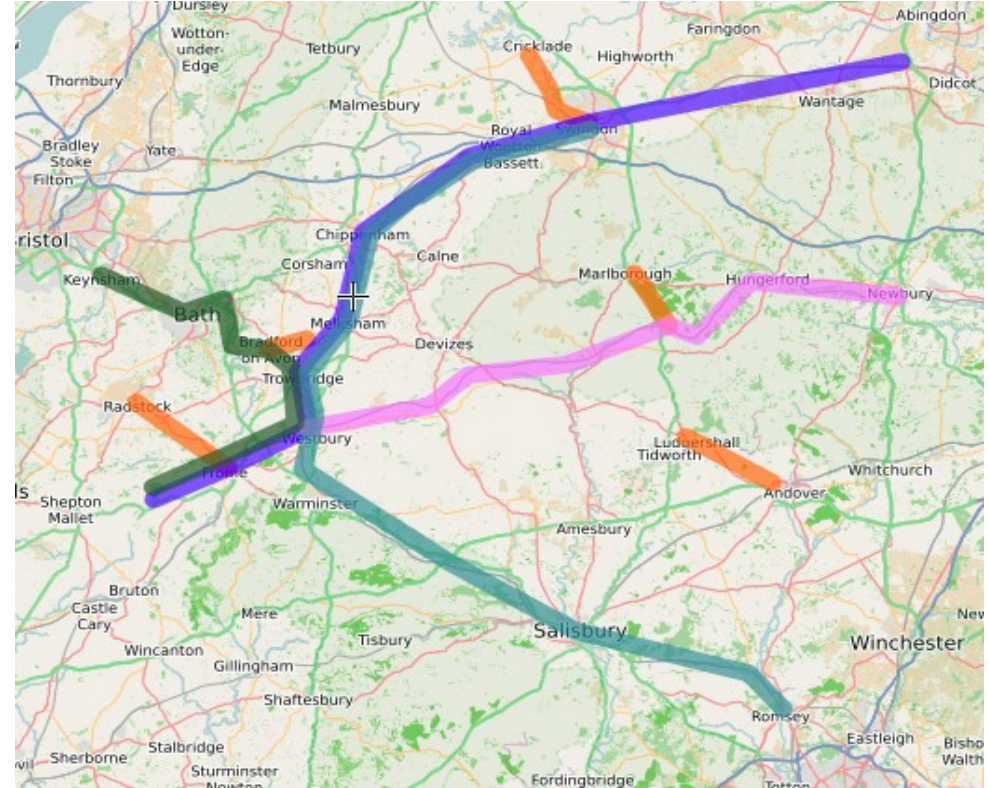
Corsham - lack of suitable trains though site; main business would be local traffic. Lack of road / parking access. But long-time aspiration

Royal Wootton Bassett - lack of a practical agreed site for station; trains would need to be frequent for it to serve as park and ride for Swindon.

Grove (Wantage Road) - lack of suitable trains though site (but two other proposal in this document fix that); concern at consumption of valuable paths as trains slow for the call and start up again, and on freight loop interaction.

Some service suggestions

- Metro West / Heart of Wessex
- Nuneaton to Taunton (Go-op Cooperative)
- Swindon to Solent
- Hourly B&H Semi-fast



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Swindon – Solent service

Proposal to link .. Swindon to Westbury, Westbury to Warminster / Salisbury / Southampton, and Salisbury to Romsey via the Southampton loop. Efficient trains, new regional journeys in addition to serving all existing traffic.

Would work - from December 2019 every 2 hours Swindon to Westbury and every hour south from there. No extra trains needed, but it would need cross-franchise agreements and co-operation which have, I'm pretty sure, been put on the "too difficult" pile as limited staff struggle to thread north-south services between the important east-west trains on their new schedules, at the same time sticking to what have - in some cases - become anachronisms in the service level commitments.

Best look to see what can be done May or December 2020.

Provision of hourly north of Westbury in peaks could be done; off peak, all day, clock face hits a capacity / robustness issue until works undertaken on the single line bottleneck.

Go-op and Swindon to Oxford



Proposal for a Taunton - Frome - Westbury - Swindon - Oxford - Coventry - Nuneaton Open Access service. Identified potential flows look good / fill some much needed gaps. But Go-op have been working on this / similar schemes for a number of years and deadlines have slipped even more than is usual in the rail industry. They have something of a credibility problem; as a service subcontracted to an existing operator (could be a Midland one headed south, or one of the two already in Wiltshire) the trains would be very welcome and supported.

It's unlikely that both this proposal and the Swindon - Solent one (perhaps extended to Oxford - Solent) could both run as proposed - capacity issues. It should be the fervent hope of the passenger who want to see the present poor service between Westbury and Swindon, and Swindon and Oxford, stepped up to a decent level the the two schemes don't slog it out to the extent that both are left mortally wounded and we get nothing.

Metro West – to Wiltshire



Local trains from Bristol to Bath are to be stepped from hourly to twice an hour ... perhaps May or December 2020? It's not operationally practical for them to reverse at Bath Spa, and an extra turnback facility at Batheaston would cost a fortune. Suggestions have been to run them on to Swindon (via Corsham, Chippenham and Royal Wootton Bassett) or to Westbury (via Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge), with that latter appearing to be the option currently planned for implementation.

With employment growing faster than housing in Bath, and housing growing faster than employment in West Wilts, and with trains already very full on that route, an extra train each hour (up from 2 to 3 if you include the Cardiff - Portsmouth) makes sense.

With just 3 platform faces at Westbury, current operational constraints which restrict connectional timetabling could become worse. However, reducing terminating trains by linking Swindon - Westbury to Westbury - Salisbury at the time of change would help. Additionally, a local train arriving every 60 minutes and returning 10 (or 70) minutes later (as we have at present) would be replaced by a 30 minute cycle - allowing a 40 minute or 100 minute turn around - equal to a service extension to Frome or to Yeovil.

Services via Frome



On the boundary of Wiltshire, Frome is a town of considerable size that suffers from big service gaps due to railway geography.

It is proposed to extend some SWR trains to / from Waterloo to or via Frome and / or Yeovil - first changes, May 2019

Changes in December 2020 at Frome and Yeovil Pen Mill will be purely to "shoehorn" the services between the mail line expresses as I understand it. Apart from the morning peak train to London and evening return, none of the new trains London trains will call at Frome - so no Taunton service (for example).

See also MetroWest which could well provide a half hourly service to Frome (hourly extension to Yeovil) and Go-op (Taunton to Nuneaton) which would provide on current plans services to Swindon and Oxford (around 6 per day) and Yeovil and Taunton (total of around 6 per day).

Berks and Hants semi-fast



See Pewsey and Devizes Parkway discussions. Extend the hourly Paddington to Bedwyn service to Exeter, in place of the two hourly Paddington to Exeter semi-fast. That would mean 4 or 5 more stops on daytime trains from London to Westbury (adding around 15 minutes) but would double their frequency. Early morning trains to London and afternoon peak trains from London already make these extra stops.

From December 2019, the 4 hour gap in the semi-fasts is already filled. The suggestion would give an hourly service all day and make the trains much more practical for journeys such as Bedwyn and Pewsey to Trowbridge and Bath. The trade off between speed and frequency becomes a sensible one with the new trains, which need shorter stops at stations (due to automatic doors) and accelerate faster from stops.

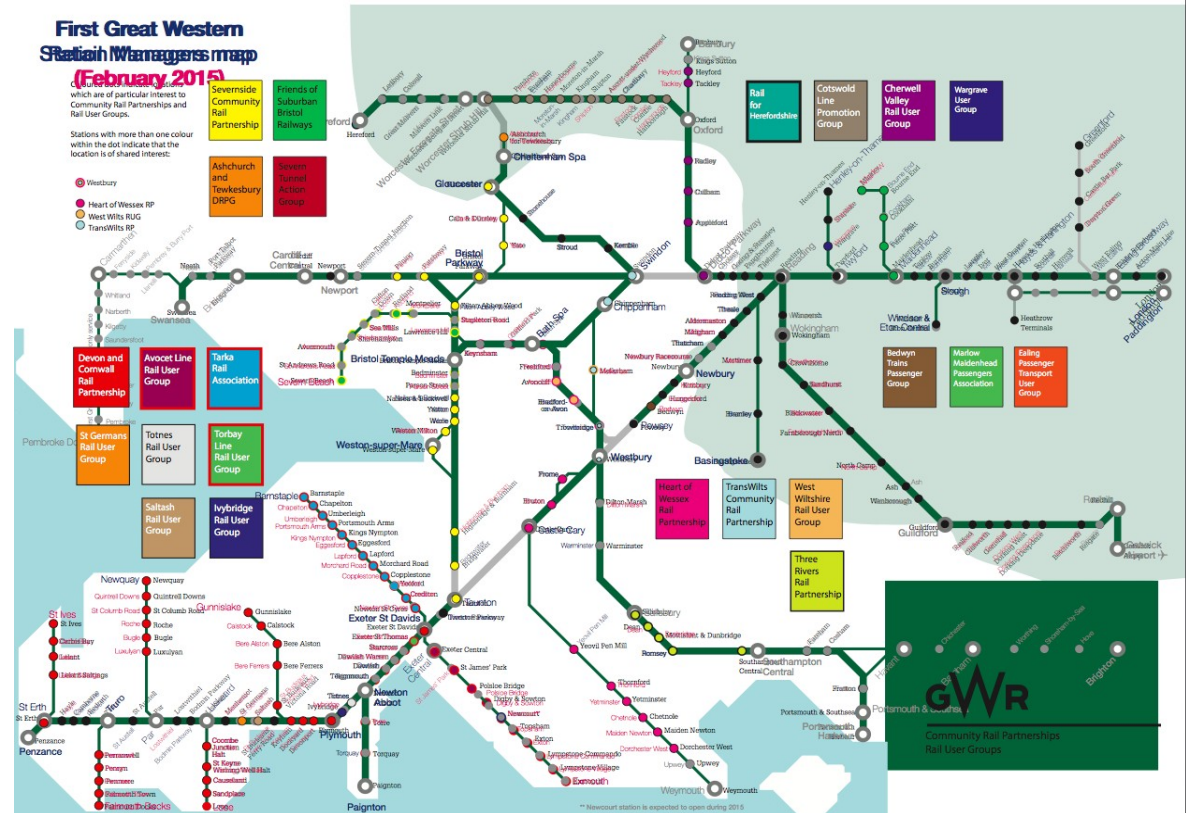
Goal – well used services



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Who sorts this out?

- Department for Transport
- Train Operator
- Network Rail
- Local Authorities
- Businesses
- Community Rail Partnerships
- User Groups
- Transport Focus
- Office of Road & Rail
- TravelWatch



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How can YOU be involved?



Happy to provide contact details for organisations on previous page where known

* Great Western Coffee Shop Forum – <http://gwr.passenger.chat>

* RailFuture



Or get in touch ...

Graham Ellis - graham@railcustomer.info,

48 Spa Road, Melksham, SN12 7NY 01225 708225

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