

To : Kevin O'Hanlon. Department of Transport.

What follows are some important shortcomings in the process leading to, and contained in, the current version of the draft DCO. A colossal document that has cost over £20million to this stage and still does not represent in all aspects, a viable commercial system.

1. There has been severe lack of draft DCO inspection availability to the public. Probably caused by long-lasting Covid19 closure of offices and libraries. In my area of Portbury little detail of the scheme is known by the general public, apart from those who will live close to the proposed railway as to benefits or not, that the DCO will bring. Updates to the submitted version of the DCO has not reached Bristol Central Library or Portishead Library as of 22nd November 2021.
2. The planning application TRO40011 was compiled by North Somerset Council, the Local Planning Authority and MetroWest, the Operator, that in my view, has resulted in insufficient awareness of the transport system the public will get from immense construction costs, outdated locomotion, insufficient stops, and one of completely over optimistic passenger transport forecast.
3. An excessive area of land is being put forward for compulsory acquisition, particularly at the Portishead area of the route. I am not aware of changes, in which case identified excessive land should be handed back to avoid unnecessary land gain by the developer.
4. The complete replacement of the disused track bed between Pill and Portishead should be reviewed. I claim that the bed is already settled but could be enhanced if new preassembled track sections are laid with a ballast binder included. However the Proposal is that the magnitude of dust emissions will be large during construction (and may include asbestos dust from the former nearby asbestos works.). Tamping of replaced ballast is planned to provide good settlement for the track but will also damage, and possibly eliminate, due to soil compression, the permeating transverse drainage towards the A369 from the whole length of the line south of Sheepway unless a new drainage ditch system is constructed to avoid flooding in Sheepway properties above.

5. The choice of locomotion is more difficult so as not to counter the Governments firm plan to eliminate diesel power. A light railway, with fuel cell electric power or at least non fossil produced fuel must be selected.
6. The predicted passenger numbers are far too optimistic using something like 36 trains per day and five coaches per train after the first year. The actual traffic that is much more likely would not fill one carriage and more likely be near empty in off peak times.
7. The existing rail platform at Portbury village station is not included in the proposal. Too few stops all along the route, not to passengers benefit.
8. The destination railway station of Temple Meads is too far from Bristol city centre hence requiring taxi, bus, or walking to complete the journey. Very few passengers will want to go to Temple Meads.
9. The new railway station on the outskirts of Portishead will require a huge amount of road removal and redesign replacement work. Very expensive in a very unsuitable position despite being the best site now available. All others have been redeveloped.
10. The new railway station at Portishead is not at the convenient original and central Brunel site but now proposed at the outskirts of Portishead, meaning much further for visitors to walk to the Town Centre or Lake Grounds.
11. The train fare will have to be near free to get passengers at all, because the bus services from First Group and Stagecoach are very good and of course much more flexible. I expect I shall go on one return journey to Temple Meads to see what it is like but it will soon become evident during the first year of service that running costs will far exceed revenue.
12. Competing proposals seem to have been discredited by NSC in their partnership with MetroWest. But using the entire branch line route resurfaced as a Metro bus route would bring connection to the Metro bus route at Ashton Gate and hence all over Bristol. A rail connection is severely limited because Bristol is a hilly district which rail transport cannot cope with. Metrobus is by far the better choice, much more flexible, far less costly and quicker centre to centre than the DCO train

will be.

The industrial rail traffic from Bristol Port need not be affected because road and rail traffic run together in many cities in the UK now.

The submitted DCO that is due for a verdict in April 2022 should be refused or sent back to the applicant for redesign.

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