

# Progress Report

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**Working with communities to improve local  
stations and train services - 10 successful years**



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## Severnside Community Rail Partnership

Works with local communities, schools, the rail industry and local authorities to deliver:-

- **cost-effective community based improvements at local stations**
- **more friendly, welcoming and safer stations**
- **reduced station crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour**
- **better passenger information at local stations and about local train services.**

Has, over the last ten years, helped achieve a 75% increase in passenger numbers at local stations, including a remarkable 350% increase in passenger numbers on the Severn Beach line

**Better stations, locally supported, help encourage more passengers to use local rail services, which means fewer cars on the road and less pollution**

*cover photograph*

*Children from Hannah More Primary School Bristol return from their rail familiarisation and outdoor learning visit to Severn Beach*

## Welcome to the Severnside Community Rail Partnership's Progress Report, covering our work in 2014

**In 2014 the Severnside Community Rail Partnership celebrated our tenth anniversary and the West of England local and regional rail routes carried 12.9 million passengers. In 2004 the same network carried around 7.2 million passengers. On the Severn Beach line the increase is even more marked – 1.15 million passengers in 2014, compared with just 331,000 in 2004.**

The Partnership is proud to have played a significant part in achieving this success. Our main aim is to identify and implement measures to encourage the use of local trains on routes radiating from Bristol; in particular to ensure that access to local stations is easy and that stations provide a safe and welcoming environment. The emphasis is on working with partners and local communities to deliver quick wins and small-scale initiatives that make local rail services more attractive and bring benefits to passengers.

Our work has mainly concentrated on working with communities to improve the local unstaffed stations – the shop window of the West of England rail network. Eleven years ago the local stations were somewhat neglected – the paint was peeling, former gardens were derelict and often became dumping grounds for refuse; graffiti and petty vandalism were rife. Passengers felt unsafe and intimidated particularly in the evenings.

The local stations have been transformed. By and large the station infrastructure is still the same – but it is now cared for; local schools display their artwork on the platforms (and compete for the available space!), community groups tend the gardens, the graffiti has (largely) gone.

The stations are now much more inviting, safer and less intimidating places to use. A key factor in all this has been local community “ownership”. Communities are now encouraged by the Partnership to become actively involved in looking after and improving their local rail station – and the results are compelling.

A long-awaited improvement completed in 2014 is the access ramp to the Bristol bound platform at Keynsham station. This was funded by the Department for Transport's Access for All scheme and Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The running costs of the Partnership, and many of our projects, receive significant funding by way of grants from First Great Western and the local authorities. Without their support and encouragement the Partnership could not operate and deliver the significant benefits which are being achieved. The growing financial pressures on local authorities had an impact on the funding available for the Partnership in 2014 and this is likely to continue in 2015. On page 16 we set out the benefits which local authorities gain from their membership and funding.

As part of the current First Great Western franchise, more funding has been provided for Community Rail projects; we greatly welcome this.

**Keith Walton** *Chairman*

## Partnership Organisation and Structure

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership is a Community Interest Company; it covers the network of routes radiating from Bristol, bounded by Gloucester, Bath/Freshford, Weston-super-Mare, Taunton, and the Severn Estuary; this includes the branch line to Severn Beach.

The Partnership's Principal Sponsors are Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, Somerset County, and South Gloucestershire Councils, Business West, First Great Western, and the West of England Office, who together form the Management Board for the Partnership. We have also welcomed support from CrossCountry Trains, South West Trains, Network Rail, the Department for Transport and the British Transport Police. The Principal Sponsors also have the option of being nominated as Directors of the Partnership, who are legally responsible for the conduct of the Partnership, in accordance with the Companies Acts. The Principal Sponsors fund the running costs, including the post of part-time Partnership Officer. Projects are funded largely through the Partnership's funds, supplemented by specific grants, and considerably assisted by local and community voluntary work.

## Working with communities in 2014

**As in previous years, much effort has gone into working with communities to improve local unstaffed stations to provide a safer and friendlier waiting environment. Most of the local stations in our area have now benefited from improvement schemes.**

We have been greatly supported in this work by the Probation Service – much of the heavier work has been done by offenders as part of

the Community Payback scheme. In 2014 we implemented a new arrangement with the Probation Service whereby we fund dedicated Supervisors to work with a small team of offenders one day a week. One team was based at Stapleton Road and travelled by train to undertake improvements on local stations in the Bristol/Bath/South Gloucestershire area. However the Stapleton Road base had to be vacated in autumn 2014 because of the start of work on restoration of the four tracks: we are currently looking for an alternative base. Funding became available during the year for a new Community Payback team to work at North Somerset and Somerset stations.

The Community Payback work is then followed up by encouraging local schools to look after station gardens and to brighten up the stations with artwork displays – under the banner of the Severnside Schools Community Stations Programme. Some local stations are now being formally “adopted” by local schools. Experience has shown that involving the local community, and particularly local schools, encourages more pride and less vandalism at stations - better stations attract new passengers to the trains. We are grateful to Bristol Clean and Green, all the local authorities, First Great Western and Network Rail - for their support, funding and encouragement for the station improvement programme. Thanks also go to British Transport Police who have provided additional support through their Neighbourhood Policing Team.

We have established good working relations with a number of schools and colleges, and with neighbourhood and in-bloom groups.

A new - and very successful - initiative has been to take groups of year six school children on rail familiarisation visits to either Severn Beach,

Weston-super-Mare or Taunton. These children will shortly be moving to secondary school and may need to use local rail services as part of their journey. So they are shown how to plan a rail journey, check the timetable, and buy a ticket. For many children this is the first time they have ever travelled by train, so we hope that this experience will encourage them (and their families) to make more rail journeys.

In previous years we have been heavily involved with First Great Western in administering and promoting sales of reduced price season tickets to schoolchildren. First Great Western has now decided to undertake the administration and sales work in-house, leaving a reduced promotion role for the Partnership.

## Contributing our expertise

**The Partnership has been heavily involved with a wide range of other activities including:-**

- developing a proposal to open a new rail platform at the Portway bus Park and Ride – this received wide support and is now being progressed by Network Rail and Bristol City Council with the aim of opening during 2016
- continuing to take a lead role on proposals for new ramps to greatly improve access to the platforms at Nailsea and Backwell, where the extended car park has considerably increased the use of the station. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of funding for the ramps in Spring 2014 we hope that new funding will become available in 2015. We supported a similar improved access scheme at Keynsham, which has now been completed
- working with FGW on a programme of identifying improvements at local stations, including better customer information, more seating, additional shelters, lighting and cycle storage, which is being taken ahead with funding allocated as part of the current Greater Western Franchise
- contributing to various British Transport Police Community Partnership meetings

- considering, and responding to, various consultations from the Department for Transport, First Great Western, Network Rail and other organisations
- continuing to work with employers on the North Bristol Fringe to encourage rail commuting via Bristol Parkway and Filton Abbey Wood, and liaison with Severnside employers and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund on potential greater use of rail at Avonmouth/St Andrews Road
- membership of the MetroWest Programme Board for delivering half hourly services across the local network and reopening the Portishead and Henbury lines
- encouraging scholars to use the train, where there is capacity, by promoting scholar season tickets for the Severn Beach line, and to schools and colleges throughout our area; these tickets offer termly or academic year seasons at considerable discount
- working with the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways on summer weekday and Sunday counts of passengers using the Severn Beach line; and on other promotional activities
- reviewing, along with FGW and the local authorities, the fare structure and fares on the Severn Beach line
- commissioning research on potential improvements to Sunday services on the Severn Beach line
- participation in Network Rail's West Country Community Safety Partnership Group
- attendance at station user group meetings
- facilitating working party meetings for all Somerset and North Somerset station volunteer groups.



*New ramp at Keynsham*

## Around the Area - a snapshot of our work

### Safe, Smart and Sustainable Travel - Encouraging a new generation of rail passengers



During 2014 the Partnership teamed up with Bristol organisation Forest Child and with First Great Western Customer Ambassadors to facilitate rail familiarisation visits for pupils in their final year of primary school.

Year six classes at each primary school situated within walking distance of a local station are offered a free of charge journey by rail to either Severn Beach, Weston-super-Mare or Taunton station. The visits are designed to give young people the confidence to travel independently by rail as they progress to secondary school.

During the day pupils are given an overview of how to stay safe at the station and on the train, are presented with options for finding information about journey planning and ticket purchasing, and engage in an often lively question and answer session. Once at the beach, each class receives bespoke outdoor learning sessions on the sand from Forest Child; activities, include using renewable energy sources, give context to the concept of using rail as a sustainable travel option.

Between June 2014 and December 2014, 510 pupils from 10 schools across the region have attended a rail familiarisation visit; 122 of these pupils told us this was their first ever journey by train.

***“Thank you very much for letting us ride on the train. For some of us it was the first time we had been on a train and it was a great experience. We learnt lots about how to keep safe on trains”***

*Phoebe,  
St Andrews Road  
Primary School*



## Volunteers continue to improve local station environments - RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Award Success

Stations throughout the region benefit from the hard work and commitment of voluntary groups who have "adopted" their local station and regularly tend garden areas and planters on platforms.

We encourage groups to enter the Royal Horticultural Society It's Your Neighbourhood Awards - this scheme recognises volunteer led community garden projects which are focused on cleaning up and greening up the neighbourhood. The Partnership supported groups by securing funding for water butts and recycling bins at each station. Judges visit each entry during July and award points for Community Participation, Environmental Responsibility and Gardening Achievement. Our stations received high acclaim



*Members of the Shire Greens volunteer group tour the Severn Beach line with an RHS It's Your Neighbourhood assessor*

with notable successes being Oldfield Park and Weston-super-Mare, both deemed "Outstanding" entries, while Yate and the Severn Beach Line - new entries to the scheme - achieved the "Developing" status.

## Widening Community Participation - Shaping the Future of Your Station



During November the Partnership hosted the first of a series of Shaping the Future of Your Local Station events, showcasing the wide range of opportunities for getting involved with enhancing the station environment and influencing the future of the local rail service.

The well attended evening at Oldfield Park station saw station users and members of the communities surrounding the station speak with representatives from First Great Western, Network Rail, University of Bath, British Transport Police, On Board Community Group and Forest Child. We will continue to support those who expressed an interest in forming a rail user group for the station.

A Bath Spa University student who attended the evening offered to research rail/cycle patterns for his final year dissertation; we look forward to reading his findings.

We will be arranging similar events at Severn Beach and Highbridge during 2015.

## Celebrating our Heritage - Communities in Bath & North East Somerset Map the Line with Unique Heritage Posters



With the support of B&NES one year arts funding, artists Xeena Cooper, Tanja Helmond and storyteller Michael Loader worked with community groups at Bath Spa, Oldfield Park and Keynsham stations to create stories, mosaics and prints under the theme of Journeys.

Assisted by local historical societies who provided history and stories, illustrator Xeena transformed

all these aspects to create a unique history map, which unlocks local history, shares the stories of everyday people and covers three local railway stations. A launch event to celebrate this unique piece took place during October when participants and their guests had the opportunity to travel by train between the three stations to view each section of the map in situ.

Further promotion with local primary schools is planned for February 2015 half term when families will be encouraged to leave the car at home and travel by train to each station, view the map and to visit another free of charge place of interest.

***“Saturday was a great celebration. It was good to meet up with all the other people involved. A very inspiring and successful project. Thank you for involving us.”***

***Judy Grant, Keynsham Civic Society***

## Community Payback

Our successful Partnership working with the Bristol, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Community Payback Company (formerly Avon and Somerset Community Payback Trust) continues.

Since February 2013 the Partnership has sponsored a supervisor, based at Stapleton Road station, to oversee four offenders undertaking Community Payback. The group travels by train between stations along the Severn Beach line, in South Gloucestershire and in Bath and North East Somerset, undertaking litter picks, vegetation clearance and supporting station volunteer groups with the upkeep of some of the station gardens and platform planters. During 2014 this system

of deploying small groups of offenders working under the Community Payback Scheme has been extended to the South of our region, operating from a base at Weston-super-Mare station, visiting stations to assist with similar tasks in South Bristol, North Somerset and Somerset.



## Supporting Social Enterprise



The Partnership encourages social enterprise at local stations. The award winning Strawberry Line Café at Yatton station continues to flourish and has seen another successful year providing training and employment for adults with learning difficulties.

In 2014 we welcomed **Kiera Cheung and her "Coffee Trike"** – a custom built, self-contained coffee stall – to Redland station. Kiera serves high quality coffee and organic snacks, attracting customers to the station who were not previously rail users. We support Kiera with her vision for community horticultural activity at the station, and in 2015 plan to install new planters to be used by the local community for growing edibles

## The Severn Beach line

**The Severn Beach Line has been formally designated by the Department for Transport as a Community Rail Route. This gives the Partnership an enhanced role and real involvement in the development of the line, and helps encourage innovation.**

With this continuing growth in passengers – the 2014 rail industry data shows a further 8.6% increase over 2013 – the Partnership wished to gain a better understanding of the views of key groups of passengers. Because of the limited funding available, we decided to commission focus group research initially on two groups of passengers – students, who form a significant proportion of passengers in school and university term time, and passengers who use the outer Bristol stations on the line – Sea Mills, Shirehampton and Avonmouth. While passengers emphasised the need for additional carriages (now provided on morning peak services) other issues raised and being considered include:-

- *the low awareness of the existence of the line and the location of individual stations. A marketing campaign is needed, with stations better signposted and focussing on the destinations of Temple Meads and Clifton Down (to be actioned in 2015)*
- *the “Severn Beach Line” name is not helpful or known – a change of name should be considered (to be reviewed as part of MetroWest)*
- *the line has unique selling points of price, speed, reliability and being stress free – these need to be exploited (publicity will be reviewed in 2015)*
- *the irregularity and frequency of the service; the timetable should have a regular interval pattern with more frequent trains (being delivered as part of MetroWest phase 1), and Sunday evening services extended to 9pm (being evaluated)*
- *stations are acceptable, but more shelter and seating is needed (being implemented in 2015)*
- *concern that non-payment is endemic, mostly unintentional; there is some resentment over non-payment and failure to collect fares (more ticket examiners are now employed on the line)*
- *ticket purchase needs to be straightforward, quick and easily communicated. Buying a ticket is not straightforward for new users, who assume it must be bought before boarding (options for easier purchase of tickets are being considered, including ticket machines, which should be feasible now that the inner zone stations all have CCTV. We are pleased that First Great Western has allocated more ticket examiners to checking and issuing tickets on the Severn Beach line – and also on other local train services).*

We also commissioned additional research in 2014 on Sunday services, which showed that on a summer Sunday about 1000 passengers use the line; the main request was for later services on Sunday evenings; the feasibility of this is now being investigated.



**The Partnership has also sponsored the renovation of the iconic mural at Stapleton Road, which records life in Easton; this is a very popular feature of the station, but the mural had deteriorated over the years because of the ravages of the weather.**

The mural was removed during the summer and, to allay local fears and rumours about its future, the Partnership quickly put up an explanatory panel. This artwork has now been restored by the artist, Bill Guilding, and should be back in place early in 2015.



*Severn Beach Line Passenger growth*

## Capacity problems on the local trains



*School children crowd the narrow platform at Nailsea and Backwell station to board the homebound train*

**Overcrowding continues to be a problem on many local services at peak periods. In the medium term it is likely that diesel trains cascaded by the electrification of Thames Valley services will be made available for use in the West of England, but this is not going to solve the serious short-term overcrowding.**

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership in conjunction with the West of England Partnership is therefore pressing First Great Western and the Department for Transport for more trains in the interim for West of England services.

Travelling by train to and from school is increasingly popular, but this can put an additional strain on particular trains which fit with school start and finish times. This is a particular problem between Yatton and Nailsea, Stapleton Road and Redland, and on some services into Bath.

However overcrowded trains are not just a feature of weekday commuter periods. A sudden increase in passenger numbers, for instance families travelling to Weston-super-Mare on a sunny day, to Bath on a Saturday for sport or shopping, or even extra mid-week shoppers because of school closures on in-service teacher training days, can put a real strain on the local services.

With instances of passengers being left behind, those occasional users who experience overcrowded trains may be put off travelling by train in future. So we think it is also important that extra carriages are also provided on appropriate weekday off-peak and weekend services.

## Passengers using local and regional trains in the West of England 2014

Cardiff - Bristol - Westbury - Portsmouth/Weymouth	8,440,000
Bristol - Severn Beach	1,155,000
Bristol - Weston-super-Mare - Taunton	1,877,000
Bristol - Gloucester - Great Malvern	1,411,000
<b>Total West of England local/regional journeys</b>	<b>12,883,000</b>

Notes: These figures are from First Great Western ticket sales allocated Lennon data and include only FGW journeys. Some journeys made for example on rover tickets or employee passes, or on substitute buses, may not have been recorded. So the figures may underscore the total journeys, but this is unlikely to be significant.

# Passenger Statistics

Passengers using West of England area local stations on weekdays			
Station	2007	2013	2014
Yate	694	1193	1,337
Patchway	139	408	381
Filton Abbey Wood	1,958	4,412	4,160
Bedminster	156	415	376
Parson Street	108	453	418
Nailsea and Backwell	1,315	1,588	1,765
Yatton	1,192	1,562	1,497
Worle	841	1,455	1,426
Weston Milton	261	395	389
Weston-s-Mare	2,279	2,583	2,379
Keynsham	839	1,459	1,504
Oldfield Park	841	1,480	1,459
Freshford	89	134	129
Severn Beach	135	252	269
St Andrews Road	30	79	94
Avonmouth	218	521	592
Shirehampton	86	375	359
Sea Mills	121	452	399
Clifton Down	500	1,924	1,908
Redland	264	814	742
Montpelier	253	1,083	1,082
Stapleton Road sb	326	970	1,082
Lawrence Hill sb	263	732	693
Temple Meads sb	649	2,373	2,321
<b>Severn Beach line trains total</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>9,575</b>	<b>9,541</b>
Stapleton Road nsb	91	475	449
Lawrence Hill nsb	49	457	436
<b>Stations - Temple Meads - Severn Beach - all trains</b>	<b>2,985</b>	<b>10,507</b>	<b>10,426</b>
<b>Grand total West of England Partnership local stations (does not include Somerset)</b>	<b>13,697</b>	<b>28,044</b>	<b>27,638</b>

Office of the Rail Regulator station usage statistics		
West of England	2012/13	2013/14
Avonmouth	97,880	111,440
Bath Spa	5,757,880	5,990,274
Bedminster	80,262	83,242
Bristol Parkway	2,255,298	2,215,810
Bristol Temple Meads	9,099,368	9,522,840
Clifton Down	522,010	573,770
Filton Abbey Wood	852,250	988,734
Freshford	39,160	40,148
Keynsham	329,274	358,186
Lawrence Hill	124,878	136,316
Montpelier	126,316	121,294
Nailsea & Backwell	421,892	423,174
Oldfield Park	281,622	305,984
Parson Street	87,932	102,654
Patchway	82,198	90,404
Pilning	130	88
Redland	94,984	93,176
Sea Mills	58,310	58,106
Severn Beach	167,078	195,824
Shirehampton	50,654	51,542
St.Andrew's Road	9,910	13,376
Stapleton Road	140,390	157,294
Weston Milton	48,008	56,068
Weston-Super-Mare	1,037,172	1,062,670
Worle	253,590	276,016
Yate	307,148	328,832
Yatton	398,530	416,794
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,724,124</b>	<b>23,774,056</b>
<b>Wiltshire (selected)</b>		
Avoncliff	16,404	19,394
Bradford-On-Avon	482,196	499,466
Chippenham	1,746,840	1,826,343
Trowbridge	790,030	849,928
Westbury	467,122	486,546
<b>Somerset (selected)</b>		
Bridgwater	286,352	293,924
Highbridge & Burnham	160,268	168,898
Taunton	1,289,276	1,261,950
<b>Gloucestershire (selected)</b>		
Cam & Dursley	166,870	177,094
Cheltenham Spa	1,891,974	1,924,750
Gloucester	1,303,750	1,314,800

Notes: The figures in the left hand columns are from the November weekday count which is undertaken annually by the West of England local authorities and is a one-day snapshot of the total number of passengers both boarding and alighting at the station on the day of the count. The 2014 figures are provisional.

Figures in the right hand columns are from Office of the Rail Regulator's published station usage data, based on ticket sales allocated Lennon data.

nsb = not Severn Beach line passengers

sb = Severn Beach line passengers

## Accounts and financial statement Sevenside Community Rail Partnership

Year ended 31 March 2014 - Balance Sheet		
	£ 2013-14	£ 2012-13
Fixed Assets	-	-
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	40,182	47,573
	<b><u>40,182</u></b>	<b><u>47,553</u></b>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	(839)	(839)
Net Assets	39,343	46,734
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b><u>39,343</u></b>	<b><u>46,734</u></b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Restricted funds	4,289	12,875
Unrestricted funds	35,054	33,859
	<b><u>39,343</u></b>	<b><u>46,734</u></b>

Year ended 31 March 2014 - Profit and Loss Account		
	£ 2013-14	£ 2012-13
<b>Income</b>	65,741	111,134
Administrative Expenses	(73,132)	(96,555)
<b>Operating Profit/Loss</b>	(7,391)	14,759
Interest Receivable	-	-
<b>Profit/(Loss) on Ordinary Activities before taxation</b>	(7,391)	14,759
Corporation Tax	-	-
<b>Retained profit brought forward</b>	<b><u>46,734</u></b>	<b><u>31,975</u></b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b><u>39,343</u></b>	<b><u>46,734</u></b>

The Directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act. The Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

(i) ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and

(ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The Company has no recognised gains or losses other than the profit/loss for the above financial period. None of the Company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above financial period.

# Sevenside Community Rail Partnership

<b>Year ended 31 March 2014 Income and Expenditure information</b>				
	£ 2013 -14 Restricted	£ 2013 -14 Unrestricted	£ 2013 -14 Total	£ 2012 -13 Total
<b>Income</b>				
Contributions from partners		42,000	42,000	45,000
Stapleton Road project				747
Arts Council – Lawrence Hill	5,760		5,760	
Severn Beach line research	5,000			
First Great Western	8,222	1,000	9,222	495
Scholar tickets project	2,684		2,684	65,072
	<b>22,691</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>65,741</b>	<b>111,314</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Travel & Subsistence		1,618	1,618	1,299
Salary and payroll costs		30,861	30,861	27,831
Miscellaneous	1,860	801	2,661	2,377
Telephone/IT		4,536	4,536	1,681
Postage/stationery/printing		228	228	245
Research	10,040		10,040	
Meetings/Events		163	163	348
Accommodation		2,310	2,310	
Accountancy/Audit/Insurance		1,338	1,338	1,338
Station improvement projects	9,553		9,553	2,989
Scholar tickets project	9,824		9,824	58,447
	<b>31,277</b>	<b>41,855</b>	<b>73,132</b>	<b>96,555</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit for the year</b>	(8,586)	1,195	(7,391)	14,759
Transfer between funds				
Balance brought forward	12,875	33,859	46,734	31,975
<b>Balance at 31 March 2013</b>	<b><u>4,289</u></b>	<b><u>35,054</u></b>	<b><u>39,343</u></b>	<b><u>46,734</u></b>

Contributions in kind: we are grateful for travel passes provided by First Great Western and Cross Country Trains, which are not included above. The restricted deficit is due to income being received for the scholar tickets project in 2012-13, and related invoices not being paid until 2013-14.

# Local authorities gain considerable benefits from their funding towards the running costs of the Partnership.

## Active help in delivering Local Transport Plans and other Targets, including the Localism Agenda

Local authority targets to attract increased use of local rail services will not be achieved without considerable work. The Partnership's active role in this is:

- working with train operators to achieve more frequent off-peak local train services – already largely delivered
- working with train operators to resolve problems of lack of peak capacity – some additional carriages now in service
- delivering small scale improvements to make local stations more welcoming, safer and environmentally friendly – on-going programme
- making rail travel easier for local passengers:
  - simplified timetable posters - displayed at all unstaffed stations
  - better, and better targeted, local publicity through leaflets and special promotions
  - reducing barriers to travel through:
    - improving station safety and security – CCTV already installed at most stations, with a programme to extend this more stations
    - better station access – the Partnership is able to sponsor and attract match funding for small schemes
    - promoting integration – eg combined bus-rail tickets.

The Partnership's work also helps local authorities deliver a sustainable transport system, as well as achieving the wider objectives set out in Local Area Agreements, assisting with local regeneration schemes and promoting economic growth. Much of our work is in socially deprived areas which helps meet local authority social inclusivity targets. We have developed a range of measures to encourage localism, including local volunteering.

The Partnership's work fully supports the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) with its proposals for generating jobs and housing and transport including MetroWest. With new rail services linking up major growth areas at the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone (17,000 jobs) at Bristol Temple Meads and the five Enterprise Areas including Weston-super-Mare J21 (11,000) and Bath City Riverside (9,000), MetroWest will play an important role in bringing these employment centres closer to the skilled workforce catchment.

Increasingly, the Partnership is providing a facilitation role with the industry and stakeholders in the delivery of small rail improvement schemes

## Augmenting Councils' influence on the rail industry

The Partnership provides an opportunity for local authorities to have regular and easy access to senior rail management; and for local authorities to come together with other Partnership members and the train operators to make representations, for instance to the Department for Transport. The Partnership "club membership" provides a mechanism for consultation, input and influence on rail issues varying from significant policy development to more practical issues such as local timetables, which would not otherwise be so readily available. There are many different bodies in the privatised rail industry – commercial, regulatory and statutory – each with their own interests and with inter-dependent relationship. The Partnership is a unique forum to bring these together

## Information for local authority members and transport officers

The Partnership provides a source of independent expertise and briefing for local authorities on rail issues, such as timetable changes, rolling stock, performance and infrastructure development issues. The briefings help local authority members and officers, and reduce the need for each local authority separately to devote time and effort to researching rail issues

## Support for the local economy by encouraging rail tourism

The Partnership works closely with tourism agencies, and produces leaflets promoting days out by train in the West of England

## Access to funding, which is not available to local authorities

As a Community Interest Company, the Partnership is able to attract grants and match funding not available to public sector bodies. This has already been used to help deliver local station improvements

## A mechanism for involving local communities constructively in supporting public transport

The Partnership provides a mechanism for involving local communities constructively in supporting public transport – for example not only do art displays and gardens help to make the stations more friendly places, but local "ownership" helps reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour