MidWilts

A regional rail service on the Berks & Hants Line and a transport plan for WHS Stonehenge

TransWilts cic (TW) 'Regional Network 2020' proposals launched today, include a proposal for a "MidWilts" regional rail service from Frome via Westbury, Pewsey and Bedwyn to Newbury, calling at Hungerford and Kintbury. The service would connect all these intervening stations with an hourly service in each direction. The new train service would be comprise two trains two car units with free Wi-Fi and air conditioning provided in the new FGW franchise.

There are 103,000 residents in the MidWilts corridor (2011 census) Westbury to Bedwyn representing 23% of Wiltshire's population. Frome has a population of 26,000. Thus together the corridor potentially serves 138,000 residents, equivalent to 66% of Swindon's population. Yet the area is under served by the patchwork of through services and the latest franchise proposals together with the hiatus from electrification delays giving an even more confused picture.

The largest Wiltshire town on the route is Devizes with 32,000 population. This proposal enables the ambition of providing a suitable service to open a station at Devizes-Lydeway. Marlborough's 18,000 population is served by Pewsey and Bedwyn. Although the closest station the poor service to Pewsey has meant a disproportionate use of Bedwyn and Hungerford with the consequential parking pressure.

The MidWilts interchange with Westbury also provides north-south connectivity including the regional airport at Southampton. Whilst the hourly Newbury connection to Reading/London services (eventually electrified?) gives regular access to Heathrow and Crossrail services

This proposal does not of course meet the ambition of direct services to London from all stations. However the knowledge of regular hourly interchange services at Westbury and at Newbury to high speed services to London and the South West would simplify travel planning for passengers with the need for just one change.

The economic benefit to business and residents in the corridor will be substantial and immediate. This can service be delivered in the current FGW franchise.

The World Heritage Sites of Avebury and Stonehenge can be accessed via Pewsey Station. We are working on an "Explorer" circular bus service that would link Devizes-Avebury-Marlborough-Pewsey-Larkhill-Stonehenge-Wilton(P&R to Salisbury). The service would include cycle trailers and provide the commuter service connections to Pewsey station and eventually Devizes Parkway station and Wilton P&R station. This network would give the WHS Avebury and Stonehenge the sustainable access from London it needs and deserves.

FROME
12
WESTBURY
17
DEVIZES PARKWAY
PEWSEY
12
BEDWYN
9
HUNGERFORD
4
KINTBURY
6
NEWBURY
60