TransWilts to Southampton Airport Campaign

There is a strong economic case for extending the existing Swindon to Westbury service to Southampton Airport. Table 1 below compares the rail "door to door" travel times to our nearest international airports.

Times are the shortest journey time with number of changes shown in brackets including a bus transfer at Bristol. Except for the TransWilts comparison, many of the services have longer journey times. The extended TransWilts line Swindon - Southampton Airport would provide a regular direct service, which for Wiltshire, even beats the London Heathrow times via Paddington. The times are comparable or better than using Bristol whilst avoiding a rail-bus change at Bristol Temple Meads.

There are 201,000 residents in the TransWilts corridor, representing 43% of Wiltshire's population (Table 2). In addition the majority of Wiltshire's businesses are located in the corridor.

Table 1 : Door to Door Rail times to Airports	London Heathrow	Bristol	Southampton	Southampton using TransWilts
Swindon SWI	1.29 (1)	1.18 (1)	1.27 (1)	1.55
Chippenham CPM	1.45 (1)	1.04 (1)	1.37 (1)	1.37
Melksham MKM	2.06 (2)	1.46 (2)	2.08 (2)	1.28
Trowbridge TRO	2.02 (1)	1.08 (1)	1.30 (1)	1.19
Westbury WSB	1.50 (1)	1.14 (1)	1.13 (1)	1.13
Warminster WMN	2.30 (2)	1.24 (2)	1.04 (1)	1.04
Salisbury SAL	2.23 (3)	1.42 (3)	0.37	0.37

'Which' report gives Southampton Airport an average check in time of 10 minutes. The Airport's recommended check in time is half an hour less than Bristol's or Heathrow ie one and half hours for international flights. The rail station is one of the closest to the check in the UK – advertised as just 99 steps.

A reliable direct rail route to a regional international airport has a significant impact on both business and tourism

- Reduced car use and lower pollution
- eliminates airport parking costs
- a low congestion airport with low average check in times
- easier access for international business travellers
- a direct international visitor route to Wiltshire's towns and attractions
- on board free Wi-Fi for productive journeys

The proposed service will use existing diesel rolling stock and infrastructure. In their new franchise FGW are upgrading the existing TransWilts rolling stock from single car to two car Class 158 units from May 2017. The trains are air conditioned and fitted with free Wi-Fi. From December 2018 the service will be upgraded to more modern Class 165 trains with air conditioning and free Wi-Fi.

We are proposing that the introduction of the new Class 165 trains should coincide with extending the TransWilts service from Westbury to Southampton Airport.

Table 2

Wiltshire Population on TransWilts line	**Population 2011 census**	% Wiltshire Population	Miles to drive to London Heathrow	Miles to drive to Bristol Airport	Miles to drive to Southampton Airport
Chippenham	**45,337**	9.6%	86	36	80
Melksham	**28,343**	6.0%	94	44	54
Trowbridge	**41,649**	8.8%	99	29	58
Westbury	**19,581**	4.1%	96	39	52
Warminster	**24,454**	5.2%	90	39	46
Salisbury	**41,682**	8.8%	75	60	25
Total Corridor	**201,046**	42.7%			
Wiltshire Population	**470,981**				

Miles from AA web site, populations from Wiltshire Council web site