



**SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT
CHELTENHAM SPA RAILWAY STATION**

26 OCTOBER 2015



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** A review of the Cheltenham Spa Railway Station was initiated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 8 September 2014 following a suggestion by the Leader of the Council that this would be an important issue for the town in view of the franchise renewal in 2016, and the parallel activity by the Task Force in trying to secure funding to make improvements.
- 1.2** Members felt that there were issues relating to the station itself, the transport links to the station and within the borough, as well as the rail service offered.
- 1.3** This report sets out the findings and recommendations arising from the scrutiny review by the scrutiny task group.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Membership of the task group:-

- Councillor Roger Whyborn (Chair)
- Councillor Flo Clucas
- Councillor Chris Mason
- Councillor Dan Murch
- Councillor John Payne
- Councillor Max Wilkinson

2.2 Councillor Whyborn would like to put on record his thanks to his colleagues on the task group.

2.3 The one page strategy for this task group was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 18 September 2014 and this is attached as Appendix 1. The ambitions for the review were as follows:

- Understand the franchise renewal process
- Understand the implications of any improvements for Cheltenham railway station and the town as a whole
- Understand how these issues are currently being progressed
- Influence the decision makers regarding improvements that would benefit the station and town
- Consider if there are any wider 'integrated transport' issues

2.4 In the event, the London train service franchise was extended by the DfT to the existing franchise holder, First Great Western, in April 2015 by a period of three and a half years who at the same time announced the introduction of improved train services to take place in 2017/18. As a result, the first objective of the task group was superseded.

2.5 The main outcome required was therefore for the task group to develop a list of issues (improvements to the station, transport links and rail service itself) that

should be considered as part of a campaign agenda for the Council working with its partners, for the benefit of Cheltenham and residents.

3. HOW DID THE TASK GROUP GO ABOUT THIS REVIEW?

3.1 The task group met on five occasions between November 2014 and June 2015 and spoke to a range of experts who all contributed to the discussions and were able to respond to members questions or provide additional information outside of meetings. These officers and experts included:

- Jeremy Williamson – Cheltenham Development Task Force Managing Director
- Saira Malin – Democracy Officer (facilitator for this scrutiny review)
- Frank Chambers – TravelWatch South West
- Michael Ratcliffe – Chamber of Commerce
- Richard Clarke – National Rail
- Matthew Barnes – First Great Western
- Rupert Cox – Stagecoach West
- Shirin Wotherspoon – OneLegal

Members would like to thank all of the experts and officers who attended meetings and contributed to the review.

The Leader was also involved in our review and we thank him for his input.

4. WHAT WE DID

4.1 The following paragraphs describe the areas covered in and outside of meetings:

4.2 24 November 2014

The task group met with Jeremy Williamson, Managing Director of the Cheltenham Development Task Force.

He explained that there had been no major upgrades to the station for some 60 years. The station has restricted up and down, uni-directional two track layout; one track north, one track south and no way of crossing between. This restrictive layout caused major delays in the event of a train failure and meant that the entire network had to close for 7 minutes to allow terminating services to cross the line. As an indication of scale, there were 94 Cross Country train services daily and in addition to this, terminating services and freight trains and 1,812,624 passenger journeys were recorded in 2011/12.

The formation of the Gloucestershire Local Transport Board created an opportunity for third parties to identify and submit bids towards localised priorities and this resulted in the development of a bid, by the Task Force in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, with the following components:- two new platforms that would accommodate the future anticipated passenger growth and critically improve performance by separating terminating from through trains (They would also be designed to cater for the Intercity express trains to be

introduced in 2017); a completely new hub layout with a proper bus interchange, cycle facilities and a 2 storey car park (to help alleviate parking issues); new passenger facilities within a new concourse. Members were shown a virtual tour of what the changes would achieve, which he felt reflected upgrades which had been undertaken to a number of stations.

An initial bid for £3.3m of the anticipated £20m spend, was secured from the Gloucestershire Local Transport Board. However, Network Rail and First Great Western (FGW) subsequently felt that the additional bay platforms could not be delivered within control period 5 (which is 2014-2019, a railway operating financial structure) so this element was deleted and a new bid submitted. The revised bid for £1.95m of an estimated £10m spend was submitted and whilst it scored highly, only £1.1m was awarded initially and after further negotiation with GLTB this was raised to c£1.5m. The rail industry had secured funding from Access for All and the National Stations Improvement Programme and whilst it is hoped to be worth £2-3m, these sums had not yet been confirmed. A further bid had been made, with the support of Sustrans from the Department for Transport Cycle-Rail initiative, which would assist delivery of the connection of the Honeybourne Line southwards to Lansdown. This would immediately open up cycle connectivity to the south and an interface with the 10 minute X94 Stagecoach service. This would also align with another ambition/bidding process to create a 4 mile Cheltenham-Bishops Cleeve cycle route. The LEP Growth Fund round 2 (or top-up) had called for projects so a bid was submitted for £10m to fund the bay platforms. This was never expected to be successful as it did not meet the delivery criteria in terms of timescale and it was inevitably unsuccessful, but it was felt important to note future potential, as an important County wide project; Cheltenham is by far the busiest station in the County. To avoid any confusion he explained that he was simply securing funding and that governance and delivery of any improvements would fall to Network Rail and FGW.

The station improvements had thus evolved into what came to be known as Phases 1 and 2, c£10M each. Phase 1 is for a wide range of improvements to the station and station site including car parking, commensurate with a passenger usage looking to exceed c. 2m movements per annum. Phase 2, for which Phase 1 allows passive provision, is the addition of two bay platforms and the associated signalling and enhanced station building.

The task group were reassured to learn that; the Local Transport Plan 3, mentioned rail in far greater detail compared to earlier versions; the publication of the Western Route Survey also supported many of the ambitions for Cheltenham and actually acknowledged the capacity issue posed by Cheltenham; and the LEP Strategic Economic Plan noted that there is: - Limited direct train services to London; High car dependence; High levels of commuting within the County and beyond.

4.3 15 December 2014

The Scrutiny task group had, by email, agreed the wording for a motion.

The motion proposed that the draft response to the Western Route Study, be formally submitted by the Leader, on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. The response to the consultation document, which included a statement of

support from colleagues at Gloucestershire County Council, set out areas which the Council were pleased to see had been included and highlight concerns in relation to the proposed timescales and what were considered to be omissions.

The motion was considered and passed by Council at the meeting held on the 15 December 2014 and was duly submitted prior to the consultation deadline.

"Cheltenham Borough Council is pleased to note the proposals for an enhanced train service from Cheltenham to (especially) London within the Western Route Study Consultation, being conducted by Network Rail. However, this Council is very concerned that these much needed improvements are not projected to take place until 2019 at the earliest, rather than taking advantage of the recent doubling of tracks on the line between Kemble and Swindon, and also supporting the LEP growth strategy.

This Council also notes with approval that Cheltenham Spa Station features in the report as a candidate for improvement under NSIP (National Station Improvement Plan) and AfA (Access for All); this is in addition to funding offered by Gloucestershire Local Transport Board and other bids funded by this Council and partners at GCC for an improved Cycle-Rail link. However, the Council is concerned that station facilities are already under enormous strain from greatly increased levels of use in recent years, now expected to increase to 2 million journeys per annum; this Council is concerned that the limitations of access and parking, including disabled access, together with the London train service, are already restricting its use and hampering modal shift by passengers to rail.

Cheltenham Borough Council therefore urges Network Rail and First Great Western to do all in their power to expedite improvements to both the rail station and the train service and the authority is willing and keen to engage with all stakeholders in order to facilitate further improvements (e.g. car parking capacity and terminating train constraints), and to help secure the associated funding."

4.4 8 January 2015

Frank Chambers (TravelWatch South West) and Michael Ratcliffe (Chamber of Commerce) met with the task group and showed them illustrations, commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce, which showed what the improved station could look like.

The Chamber of Commerce were firmly of the opinion that the bay platforms would improve the passenger experience by allowing them more time to get on and off trains, as well as satisfying the operational need.

Travelwatch South West, who had been advising the Chamber of Commerce in support of the improvements to the station since 2007/08, felt that the station was lacking in functionality and needed dramatic improvements.

The task group were advised that there had been no major investment at Cheltenham since 1953, in contrast with other stations such as Oxford, Bristol Temple Meads, Newport and Swindon, which had recently benefited from a huge amount of work. The suggestion was that improvements would be further warranted once passenger usage increased to 2m per annum (it was currently

1.924m per annum) as the station would then be categorised as B by Passenger Watch on their scale of A-C. The group were also advised that the five year control periods to which the rail industry were wedded, often conflicted with funding programmes such as GLTB.

4.5 10 March 2015

The task group met with representatives from Network Rail (NR) and First Great Western (FGW) to discuss their thoughts on the council's submission to the Western Route Study and to establish their position on the proposed improvements to the station and rail service.

FGW accepted that the existing station facilities and layout were a possible reason for why people living in the North and South of the town travelled to Evesham and Swindon or Kemble respectively, to board a train. Both NR and FGW were generally supportive of a scheme to make improvements to the station building, car parking facilities and taxi/bus interchange arrangements at Cheltenham Spa Railway Station; whilst making passive allowance for new bay platforms at some point in the future, should NR deem them necessary.

At the time, FGW were still in negotiations with the Department for Transport over the new direct award franchise and were therefore unable to divulge details of the future service pattern. NR, however, anticipated that, enabled by the route modernisation and deployment of new express trains, an hourly direct service to London was deliverable and that there was potential for reduced journey times. Subsequent to this meeting, it was announced that FGW had been given a new direct award franchise which covered 3.5 years with an option for a 1 year extension.

Following the announcement of the direct award franchise, FGW circulated a briefing to members of the task group which set out some short and long term timetable changes and improvements, which included journey times to Paddington of below two hours.

4.6 12 May 2015

In order to fulfil all of the objectives for the review, as set by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the task group met with Rupert Cox, the Managing Director of Stagecoach West, to discuss existing bus links to and from the station.

Members were comfortable that the D service provided good linkage and frequency from some areas and that the grant from the Cycle Rail Fund would allow for a meaningful link to the 94 service, but felt that, particularly from the West of the town, links to the station were not as good. They accepted that Stagecoach considered demographics of areas and the suburbs of Cheltenham from which people were most likely to want to access the station but felt that a number of brand new route options, in some cases replacing existing routes, could address connectivity issues in some of the worst affected areas and should form part of a wider network review.

The task group were encouraged by the news that Stagecoach were open to allowing the southbound 'D' service to enter the forecourt at the station and accepted that this would only be possible if there was sufficient clearance on the

forecourt for one bus to pass another; either through increased segregation of the forecourt, or, in the short term, better enforcement. Segregation of the forecourt was a key element of the wider improvements being sought.

Members of the task group were aware that PlusBus tickets were available, but were surprised to learn that these tickets were available for journeys over a weekly, 4 weekly and annual periods and felt that this needed to be more widely publicised.

4.7 9 June 2015

At the final meeting held on the 9 June 2015, the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member Development and Safety and a representative of OneLegal were given the opportunity to consider and comment upon the draft report and recommendations and their feedback was taken into account by the task group.

Of all the issues the group had considered, the poor disabled access and ramp access, which also pose issues to those with prams and small children and the shortage of parking bays, (including disabled) were considered the most serious. Integrated transport and economic development of the town was something else which needed to be taken very seriously. The station must be integral to the economic development of the town rather than a barrier to both. The group therefore wanted to focus its attention on completion of phases 1 and 2.

In particular it was expedient to re-define Phase 1 of the proposed improvements as Phases 1A and 1B, the detail of this is described within our conclusions at paragraph 5.1.3.

An approach to integrated transport, similar to that adopted in London, i.e. with more localised funding, was being discussed as part of the devolution debate, though it was too early to be clear how that might work in Gloucestershire.

The group had had some very useful discussions with FGW, NR, Stagecoach and user groups but had concerns there was still no formal mechanism for CBC, as a second tier council, to get involved in formal discussions. The Leader anticipated such discussions are likely to involve the LEP Joint Board, County Council and others. It was important for CBC to be involved in this dialogue.

5. OUR CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 *Understand the franchise renewal process*** It would be fair to say, that whilst the group learned a good deal about the franchise renewal process, and received some valuable insights from industry representatives, as an overall subject it is quite complex. The task group recommends that the Council administration flag to central government and to elected representatives of other bodies, and to the LGA, that the present franchising structure is ill-suited to effective local input. There is no mechanism for ensuring effective local input, and importantly the rail industry's control periods do not really mesh effectively with local government's finance or electoral cycles. Something the group is very much exercised over is that the franchising process does not enable meaningful input from local communities, and especially second tier local authorities, who with populations of

typically the size of Cheltenham are, in our view, key players in the use and development of a mainline railway station.

- 5.1.2** As to, say, the fitness of First Great Western to be the preferred franchisee, the task group does not have specific comment to make.

The group has concerns that the franchising process as a whole is flawed, awarding one contract to one supplier for a number of years without (generally) the options of either open access competition on the one hand or a publicly owned franchisee on the other. This is a wider discussion which needs to take place elsewhere, and is arguably beyond the group's remit. Events have overtaken the original group remit, to the extent that FGW has had its current franchise extended by direct award for some three+ years as of April 2015.

- 5.1.3** *Understand the implications of any improvements for Cheltenham railway station and the town as a whole. Understand how these issues are currently being progressed.*

Before considering these questions we received in-depth assessments of the current weaknesses that beset rail provision at Cheltenham, particularly given its status as the busiest railway station in the County. We were particularly heartened by the public recognition of these issues in the Western Route Study of October 2014 where the constraint of "Capacity through Cheltenham due to terminating trains" was formally noted. This was most helpful as it gave credence to the concerns that we had heard from passenger user groups. Equally we were encouraged and welcomed the service improvements announced as part of the FGW franchise renewal process, in April 2015 although a little cautious over how more & improved services may impact upon the declared challenge posed by terminating trains.

Taking these two aims together we conclude that:

The Council – working closely with the Cheltenham Development Task Force, the County Council, local MP, local transport consumer groups, and local business groups including both the LEP and the Chamber of Commerce should continue to lobby the rail authorities and central government for improvements to Cheltenham Spa station, and for funding. Similarly, the Council should continue to hold the rail authorities and the DfT to account to enact the improvements to the train service already announced for 2017/18, to be achieved on time, and preferably earlier.

Whilst recognising the paramount importance of maintaining consensus across the county, and wishing to see a fully rebuilt rail station within the next 5 to 10 years, the problems at Cheltenham Spa station are acute and cannot wait. We fully support the proposals in phase 1 which effectively provide a major station customer experience upgrade with the exception of any future bay platforms which may become a necessity within a phase 2 long-term plan. The priorities are noted as follows, with the appropriate funding stream status at the time of writing identified, and with the strong recommendation to complete Phase 1 within the Rail industry's control period 5, that is 2014-2019:

Proposed improvement	Funding Source	Status	Phase
<p>Full equality access: The group particularly identified problems with the present access via ramps and the need for lifts. Also lack of disabled toilet facilities at platform level - – currently only on Platform 1 & forecourt level. Better safer routes for disabled (and all) passengers accessing/egressing across the forecourt to/from Queens Road on foot. NR have engaged in detailed discussions with Cheltenham based disability groups, which will in turn, inform the scale of the works to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Access for All –Network Rail to implement.</p> <p>Agreed in principle.</p>	<p>The liaison with representatives from disability groups is welcomed. Design and costing work to be completed. Budget will then be agreed.</p>	Phase 1A
<p>Car parking (short term): Plan for 70 surface car spaces as part of the works associated with the cycle-rail link, although will require additional funding.</p>	First Great Western	Bid made by FGW on 05/06/15.to NR/DfT	Phase 1A
<p>Forecourt improvements: Re-planning of the whole layout to make it user friendly for buses, taxis, car-parking, pedestrians and cyclists. Providing an integrated transport hub.</p>	Gloucestershire Local Transport Board.	£1.497m funding approved subject to securing other funding components.	Phase 1A
<p>Improved cycle and passenger linkage particularly to Lansdown Road: (also giving a link to the 94 bus route)</p>	Successful Cycle-Rail bid – FGW to implement.	£733k funding approved. -Design and costing work to be completed.	Phase 1A
<p>Ticketing office and other facilities: Improved toilets, waiting rooms and ticket hall, buffet/coffee shop and other passenger facilities. If it is possible, enable access to/from Gloucester Road across footbridge to ticket hall without going through barrier.</p>	National Station Improvement Programme – FGW to implement	FGW registered as deliverer but funding not finalised	Phase 1A
<p>Car parking (longer term): two storey car park.</p>	Commercial Facilities Fund	FGW to pursue once phase 1A implemented	Phase 1B
<p>Bay platforms: to alleviate the constraint of capacity at Cheltenham due to terminating trains.</p>	To be determined – potentially rail industry or LEP or a combination	Improvements at Cheltenham Spa to be part of emerging rail strategy for LTP3	Phase 2

Phase 1A

The group added that it considered the pedestrian route markings for all passengers across the forecourt to/from Queens Road to represent a possible safety hazard. Subsequently FGW has re-marked this within existing budgets.

Phase 1B

The group recognised that whilst the FGW funding bid to increase car parking capacity by approximately 70 spaces was both welcome and useful, it was only a short term expedient to deal with an acute shortage of car parking. Phase 1B is thus the provision of a decked car park facility across much of the present car park site, but designed such as to enable subsequent installation of Phase 2 (bay platforms). The addition of decked car parking would provide c. 400 spaces. Members are concerned that additional decked car parking should be built in a way which is sympathetic to adjacent housing in Kensington Avenue; this should form part of future discussions between CBC and the rail industry.

It would appear that the ambition to complete Phase 1A and 1B is not only supported by the rail industry, local Council, MP, etc, but this has now been validated by the Under Secretary of State, Claire Perry MP, in a letter to the MP in which she confirms that a significant programme of investment and improvement worth approximately £10m is planned (Appendix 2).

Phase 2

The increased services announced by FGW would, by their very definition, increase pressure on both the car park, which was already full on occasions despite the addition of 50+ spaces in 2014, and on the single siding with London trains running hourly. Increased services would also add pressure to the rail network's limited capacity for terminating trains at Cheltenham Spa, and the group saw it as essential to address this.

Until delivered, CBC should collectively campaign for these improvements in order to cope with the c2m passengers p.a. and rising. By 'Control period 6', that is 2019 – 2024, a fully rebuilt station is a realistic aim for CBC to work for with others, and it would reflect the expectation of Cheltenham Spa moving into station category B, with over 2m passenger movement p.a. Within control period 6 we should aim to establish whether the additional bay platforms for which passive provision will have been allowed are a necessary requirement and if so progress through the rail industry to full implementation and take advantage of expected rail passenger growth, new Inter City Express trains and potential future electrification, signal upgrades etc.

5.1.4 *Influence the decision makers regarding improvements that would benefit the station and town.*

We note agreeably that during the currency of the group's investigations, significant progress has been made in securing funding from various silos for proposed improvements at the railway station, although the group would not wish to claim too much credit for this, as our work follows the earlier work of others, notably the joint efforts of the Task Force and Chamber of Commerce.

However, what has been extremely useful has been the opportunity to meet with the rail authorities, passenger user groups and other key parties e.g. Stagecoach to explain the full picture of needs and concerns at first hand, and to put the case to managers who have to make business cases for each of the allocations of monies for various stations and services from a defined pot of money available to First Great Western and Network Rail..

What has been demonstrated is the power of collective working to both promote the needs of Cheltenham and its economy and also proactively bid for funds, although we recognise that delivery will be entirely in the hands of the rail industry given that the station lies entirely within rail ownership. The latter point being a major advantage to deliver upgrades at Cheltenham Spa station as there are no land assembly barriers. It will be helpful for elected members to repeat this dialogue in the future, especially as there appears to be no formalised mechanism for consultation between the rail industry and local authorities.

5.1.5 Consider if there are any wider 'integrated transport' issues

Buses: Having met with the principal operator Stagecoach, the group had formed a number of conclusions:

- Stagecoach was committed to provide good/improving links particularly to the town centre and principle stops on routes D and 94, and to engage fully in future plans for the station, meaning that there would be better linkages to the 94 (Cheltenham-Churchdown Gloucester); there would also be better linkages to the Southbound 'D' (Bishops Cleeve Town –Hatherley/Warden Hill). Both of these should encourage modal shift.
- The group was keen for Stagecoach to re-appraise its overall offer in the light of a rebuilt station with a bus interchange – using this as an opportunity to remodel the whole route network to the advantage of all; Stagecoach included, with holistic network links across the rest of the town, particularly the west of Cheltenham. It was noted that the company has run a network which has been quite successful, and in practice is prepared to cross-subsidise services for the wider benefit of the network. However it was also noted that introduction of new routes are expensive, and recent experiments with new route 'B' to serve Cheltenham Spa Rail station had not been a success. The group would therefore encourage Stagecoach to revisit this opportunity, and encourage the Council and all stakeholders to explore how best to achieve an affordable integrated transport approach encompassing the station.
- The group noted agreeably that plus-bus schemes which utilise combined bus and train tickets already exist, not only as singles and returns but also as weekly and monthly tickets. This was not well known to the public, and the group urges the CBC, GCC and all stakeholders to give much more publicity to this facility, again with the aim to increase modal shift.
- Stagecoach and GCC had been testing a smartcard ticket, a multi-operator ticket which would allow travel in any zone(s). Again the group saw this as an excellent way to promote modal shift from private cars, but adequate promotion is essential for it to become widespread.

Cycle and pedestrian links: The group did not commit a great deal of time to this, as clearly much work of an overview and scrutiny nature had been committed by others, resulting in the successful Cycle-Rail bid and the promise of £733,000 to open up links at Lansdown Road. Nevertheless the group did review both cycle route maps, and the proposed new linkages. It was felt that the main issue at the station was the forecourt, upon which there was no segregation for cyclists, pedestrians, or indeed, buses and taxis. A reorganisation of the forecourt should address most the issues currently faced.

5.1.6 Other relevant matters

The group stressed that the main focus should be on Cheltenham Spa station and its ability to cope with the increased 2017/18 London train service, which was in itself a very

welcome development. This was not to say that other matters were unimportant but rather the focus should be on completion of Phase 1 and 2 improvements. Other matters which the group believes should remain on the agenda are as follows:

- On the north/south route, though train services are fairly frequent, there is concern that lack of route capacity may stifle traffic, and hence modal shift to rail in the future, with too high a proportion of traffic going by road.
- The rolling stock on some local services, particularly operated by Arriva trains, is life-expired, and should be a factor when this franchise is renewed.
- The train service to Worcester remains poor and is not addressed by recent proposals.
- The potential for future improvements through both electrification and re-signalling on the Bristol-Birmingham line is to be welcomed.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1** During the course of this review we have consulted with various experts involved in this issue. The Leader and OneLegal were given the opportunity to review our draft report.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1** Taking all our findings into consideration, the task group agreed a number of recommendations, namely that:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet:

1) To Authorise the Managing Director of the Cheltenham Task Force in conjunction with the leader of the Council to undertake the following tasks and to report progress to O&S in 12 months' time:

- **To proactively lobby the relevant parties for all the improvements in phase 1A and 1B as listed in the table set out in section [5.1.3] of the report.**
- **Being mindful of devolution, particularly the integration of transport, to continue dialogue with Gloucestershire County Council, Local Economic Partnership and others; in particular to pursue all possible opportunities to improve public transport links to/from Cheltenham Spa station.**
- **Publicise Smartcard and PlusBus opportunities in the area.**
- **In view of the fact that some funding levels and finalised proposals for all of the improvements to the station have not yet been announced, to keep O&S informed of any developments.**
- **To pursue opportunities for CBC to be represented in formal consultation processes to ensure that local interests are taken into account when relevant authorities make decisions relevant to CBC residents.**

2) To NOTE that whilst the service improvements announced by FGW are to be welcomed, it should be acknowledged, with concern, that a consequence of the increased services to London will be increased pressure on the rail network in the need to terminate additional trains. Thus Phase 2 will be even more necessary than it is at present.

3) To NOTE the other relevant matters raised:

- On the north/south route, though train services are fairly frequent, there is concern that lack of route capacity may stifle traffic, and hence modal shift to rail in the future, with too high a proportion of traffic going by road.
- The rolling stock on some local services, particularly operated by Arriva trains, is life-expired, and should be a factor when this franchise is renewed.
- The train service to Worcester remains poor and is not addressed by recent proposals.
- The potential for future improvements through both electrification and re-signalling on the Bristol-Birmingham line is to be welcomed.

7.2 PROGRESSING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of the reference set for us by the O&S committee, we feel confident that these have been met.

Report author	Councillor Roger Whyborn, Chair of the scrutiny task group Contact officer: Saira Malin, Democracy Officer Saira.Malin@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 77 5153
Appendices	1. The One page strategy for this review 2. Letter from Claire Perry MP to Alex Chalk MP of 17 June 2015
Background information	1. Council minutes (15 December 2014)