



Objection to the proposed Longmoor Village development

- Bristol City Council planning application 21/03166/P
- North Somerset Council planning application 21/P/1679/OUT

The outline planning application (with reserved matters) to Bristol City Council is for a development of some 510 housing units, and the outline planning application (with reserved matters) to North Somerset Council is predominantly for roadway access onto the existing road network that falls within the North Somerset Council jurisdiction.

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways object to these twin planning applications in their current form as future development of the re-opened Bristol-Portishead Railway line will be jeopardised by the proposed Longmoor Village development.

The long-awaited reopening of the Bristol-Portishead railway was originally intended to provide a half-hourly service in both directions. The current scheme for Bristol-Portishead railway re-opening is for an hourly service in each direction, with a 45-minute service at peak times.

The Longmoor Village development will jeopardise the potential to upgrade the hourly service to half-hourly:

- A half-hourly service in each direction would mean that the level crossing from Winterstoke Road to the Ashton Vale trading estate would be closed more than 50% of the time, with nowhere for queueing traffic
- Therefore, a half-hourly service would require the permanent closure of this level crossing.
- A new access road would be required to join the Ashton Vale trading estate to the A370, across the land subject to the Longmoor Village development.
- The Longmoor Village development does not in its current form provide a route for Ashton Vale trading estate access.

A scheme for the access road was devised and costed as part of MetroWest, but has proved beyond the available budget for Portishead re-opening at this point in time. The Bristol-Portishead railway is likely to be extremely well used once it opens, and funding will eventually be found to upgrade to a half-hourly service.

Network Rail comments

We quote here from the Network Rail comments in their response of 9 July 2021 to application 21/03166/P:

“Network Rail does not formally object to the principle of this development albeit on the basis that the residential scheme is in outline only the vehicular access through the site could be adapted to be dual function or the layout of the scheme amended to provide a route to the rear of the estate (once designed and submitted at reserved matters).

We are fully aware that such a scheme would need to be funded, require a separate planning application and landowner agreement and would probably need to be secured through a Transport and Works Act Order, however if the application as currently envisaged is developed the options to provide an alternative access and secure the closure of the level crossing will be more limited and could put a risk the ability for additional train services on the line and the construction of a new railway station to serve this part of Bristol and provide better public transport access to the proposed and existing sporting facilities.”

The Network Rail response attaches draft designs for the access route across the Longmoor Village site carried out at the feasibility stage of MetroWest.

Objection

FoSBR ask Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council to take note of the Network Rail comments and to reject these applications in their current form, ensuring that a corridor across this land is ring-fenced for the future access road from the A370 to Ashton Vale trading estate.

Unless this is done, then the Bristol-Portishead railway will never be able to upgrade to a half-hourly train service. This will also impact the construction of and service to Ashton Gate station, a station which Bristol City Council is keen to re-open.

This restriction on train frequency will reduce the convenience of a low-carbon mass transport solution for the people of south Bristol, Pill and Portishead.

In conclusion, the proposed outline application in its current form and non-upgrading to a half-hourly train service on this line would go against the North Somerset Local Development Plan 2026 Vision 5, and Policies CS10, and CS31, and the proposed North Somerset Local Development Plan 2038 Policies SP5, LP10, LP13, and DP13 (which while not finalised takes some weight in decision making), and the Bristol City Local Development Plan 2011 Policies BCS1, BCS4, BCS8, BCS10, BCS11, BCS12, BCS13, BCS21, BCS23, DM23, and DM24.

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