

The case for re-opening Saltford Railway Station

The development of a Greater Bristol Metro rail service and the electrification and re-signalling of the GW mainline that passes through Saltford offer an opportunity for Saltford station to be re-opened.

Cost

Latest cost estimates are around £5.5 million for a two platform design. With the line, signalling, pedestrian bridge and “station footprint” in place, a basic station can be re-instated at modest cost.

Business case

A re-opened commuter station would serve **4,200** residents in Saltford, over **1,000** residents in the villages of Corston and Newton St. Loe (Duchy of Cornwall), and **4,600** students and staff on-site daily at Bath Spa University’s Newton Park Campus which is only 1 ½ miles from Saltford station. Residential places at the campus are set to increase from 400 to 900.

29,000 vehicles pass Saltford Station daily each weekday on the A4; some of this traffic would be able to park and use the railway service.

The GW mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (2010) envisages an hourly shuttle train service from Bath Spa to Bristol Temple Meads. This service should serve a re-opened Saltford station. It would be a missed opportunity in the new franchise if this commuter shuttle was able to stop at all the existing stations but pass through Saltford because it did not have a station. Re-opening Saltford station can be viewed as part of the bigger picture of establishing the Greater Bristol Metro.

Evidence

A petition survey of Saltford (Nov 2011) identified by address a minimum of 300 daily users and 500 weekly users of a re-opened Saltford station. These users would be new users of the railway on an already busy rail commuter route from Bath to Bristol – a modal shift from car to rail (the census of 2001 showed only 17 people used the railway to get to work). These usage figures are supported by an independent 2009 Parish survey

The station site as it is today



in which over 400 said that they would be regular users of a Saltford station.

The proximity of the Bath Spa University Campus and the potential for transfer of passengers from the A4 road to rail provides the station with enormous potential. The usage figures would generate a significantly positive cost/ benefit ratio over the life-time of the franchise.



Support

The campaign has the overwhelming support of Saltford residents – a petition in November 2011 raised over 2000 signatures.

The campaign is supported by Saltford Parish Council, B&NES, the constituency MP, Jacob Rees-Mogg, Chris Skidmore MP, Don Foster MP(Bath), Sir Graham Watson MEP, and Bath Spa University.

Visitors to Saltford by rail

Saltford Station, sitting alongside the A4, the river and cycle-path is a perfect hub for activities in the Avon Valley including:

Historic Conservation Area (“old village”) including St Mary’s Church (over 1,000 years old including a Saxon tower) and the restored Ancient Brass Mill (1720)

Access to the Bristol and Bath cycle path (13 miles off-road route between the cities open to walkers and cyclists)

Access to the River Avon (Saltford Marina, Avon County Rowing Club, canal boating)

Avon Valley Country and Wildlife Park (Pixash Lane, Keynsham)

Open countryside and riverside walks, an area of outstanding beauty

Saltford Golf Club (English Ladies Open Tournament held 2011)

Policy

Re-opening Saltford railway station fully supports the aims of the West of England Partnership and the revised draft Core Strategy for Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES). BANES’s transport planning strategy contains this section:

“Rail improvements, such as the electrification of Great Western Railway

mainline by 2016; the new 15 year GWR franchise (including the Greater Bristol Metro Project); increasing the capacity of local rail services travelling through Bath Spa rail station, improving ease of access to and attractiveness of rail travel to and from Bath”.

Economic benefit

Efficient commuter journeys, reduced road congestion, regular use by students, improved access for day-trippers, business opportunities created - all will boost the local economy.

Environmental and social case

The railway station site sits alongside the congested A4 main road* between Bath and Bristol. The station would provide improved, alternative and sustainable transport for our local communities. It would also provide the community with additional resilience against future oil price shocks and the knock-on-effects on motoring costs.

*An air quality management area is being created on the A4 in Saltford because of excess mean emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide from vehicle exhausts.

“A shuttle train service between Bristol TM and Bath Spa stopping at Saltford Station would not only provide an enhanced service to my Bath constituents but would help reduce road congestion in Bath, a World Heritage City.” - Don Foster, MP for Bath

Reinstating the station would provide the local community with a modern, low carbon and convenient alternative to road transport for commuting, shopping and leisure.

Saltford Environment Group
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