Overview of local & regional transport in the South West

Christopher Irwin, Chair, TravelWatch SouthWest, CIC

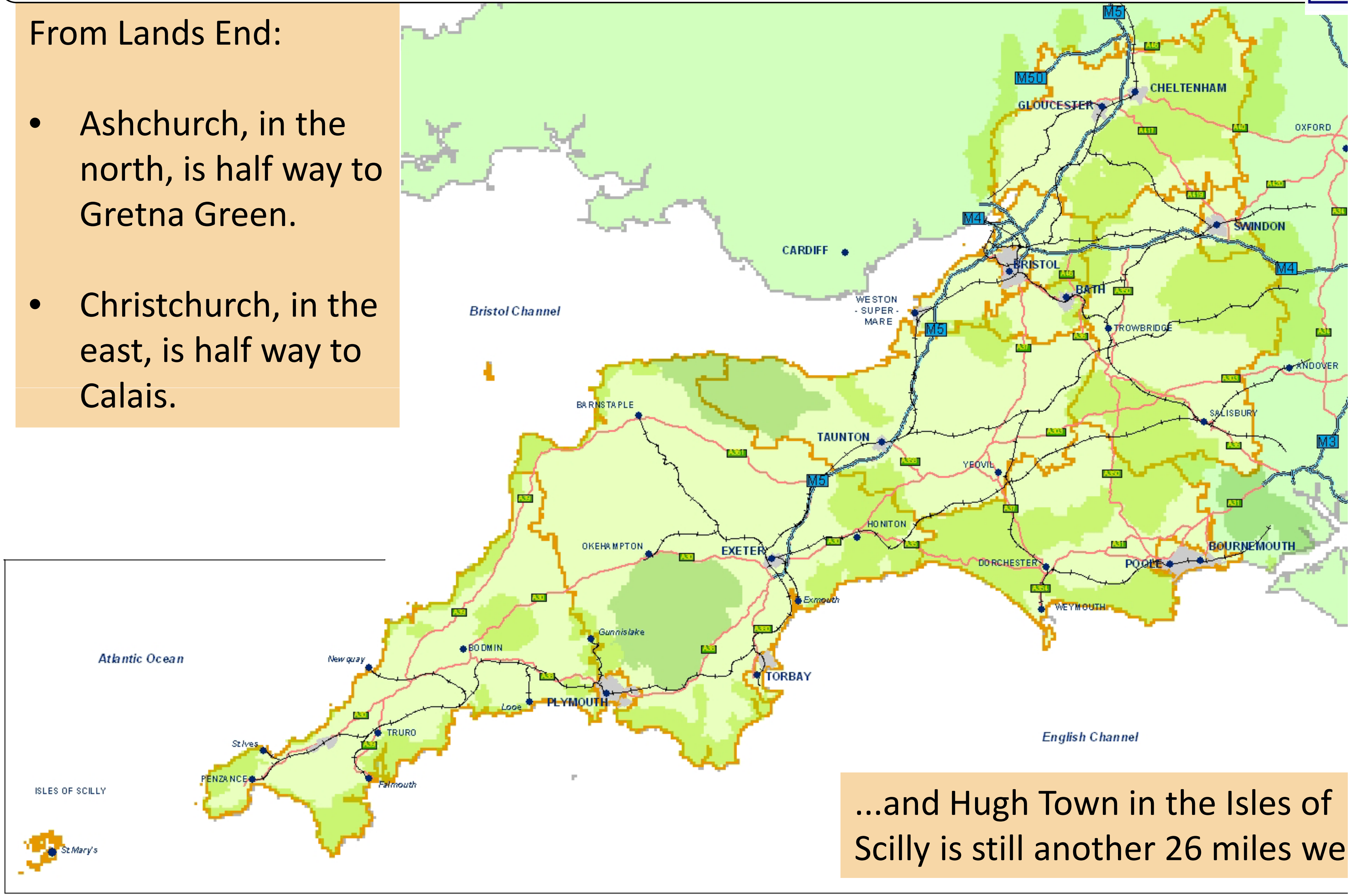
Passenger Focus Board Meeting

Bristol, 11th July, 2013

Dispersed settlements across big, long, territory

From Lands End:

- Ashchurch, in the north, is half way to Gretna Green.
- Christchurch, in the east, is half way to Calais.



...and Hugh Town in the Isles of Scilly is still another 26 miles we

Dynamic growth – but big contrasts

- One of four richest UK regions in GVA per head
- 10% more growth than UK average, 1999-2011
- Massive inequalities between sub-regions in SW
- Big inward migration: highest share of elderly
- Biggest increase in bus usage outside London: 23% since 2004/5
- Exceptional growth in rail passenger footfall:
  - 6% compound growth, Greater Bristol stations, 2002/3-2011/2
  - c. 7% compound growth for Far SW Main Line stations
  - (Plus over 100% growth in usage of most branch lines)
- The 6% for every 100 minutes productivity penalty

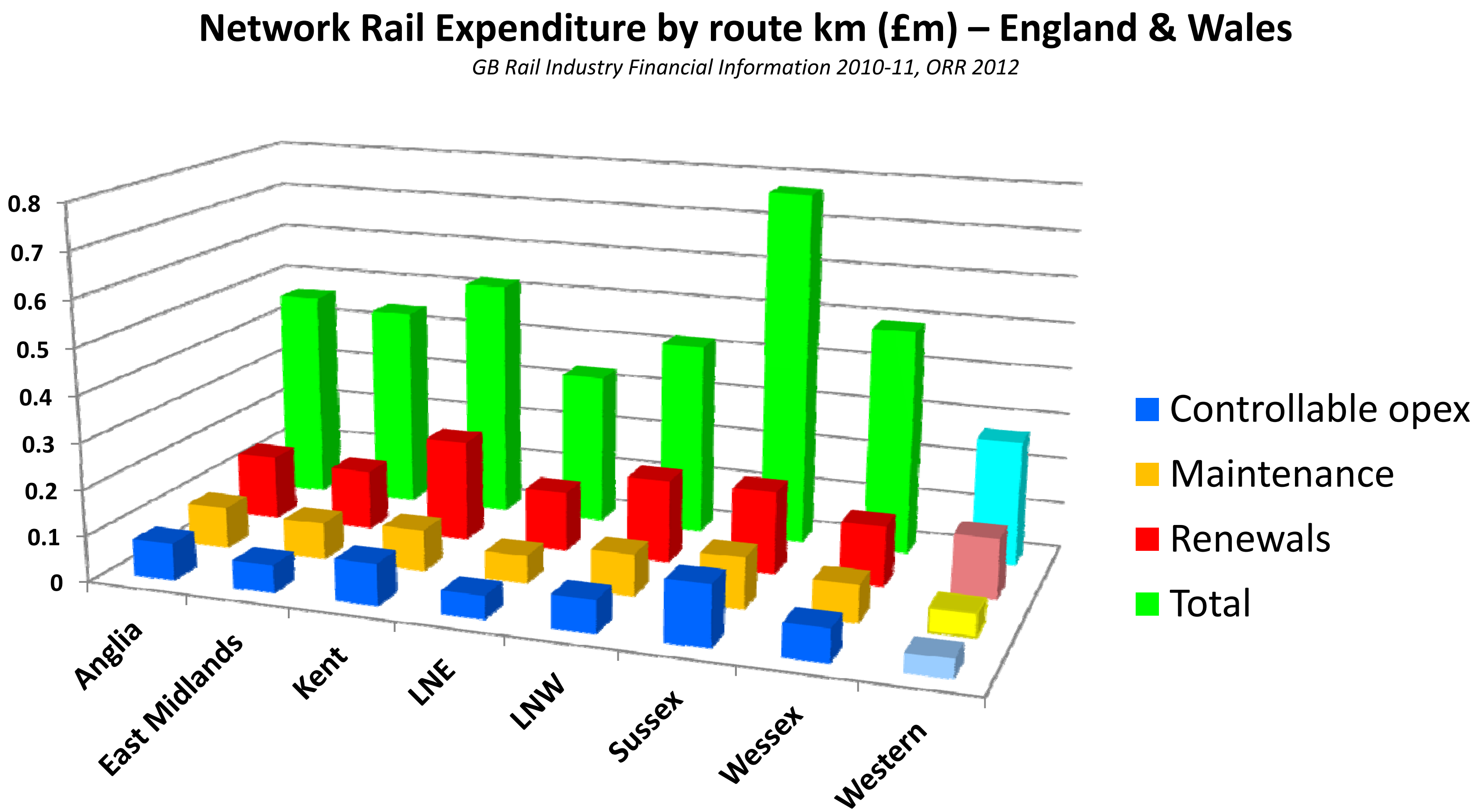
Average rail journey time isochrones

Devon County Council, The South West Spine, February 2013

Some telling transport superlatives

- – Poorest access to buses in England
- – The highest comparable regulated rail fares
- – Most over-crowded trains into London
- – Aged regional passenger fleet – rail and bus
- – Slowest long sections of main line
- – More car use than in any other region
- – Slowest-moving urban traffic in UK (Bristol)

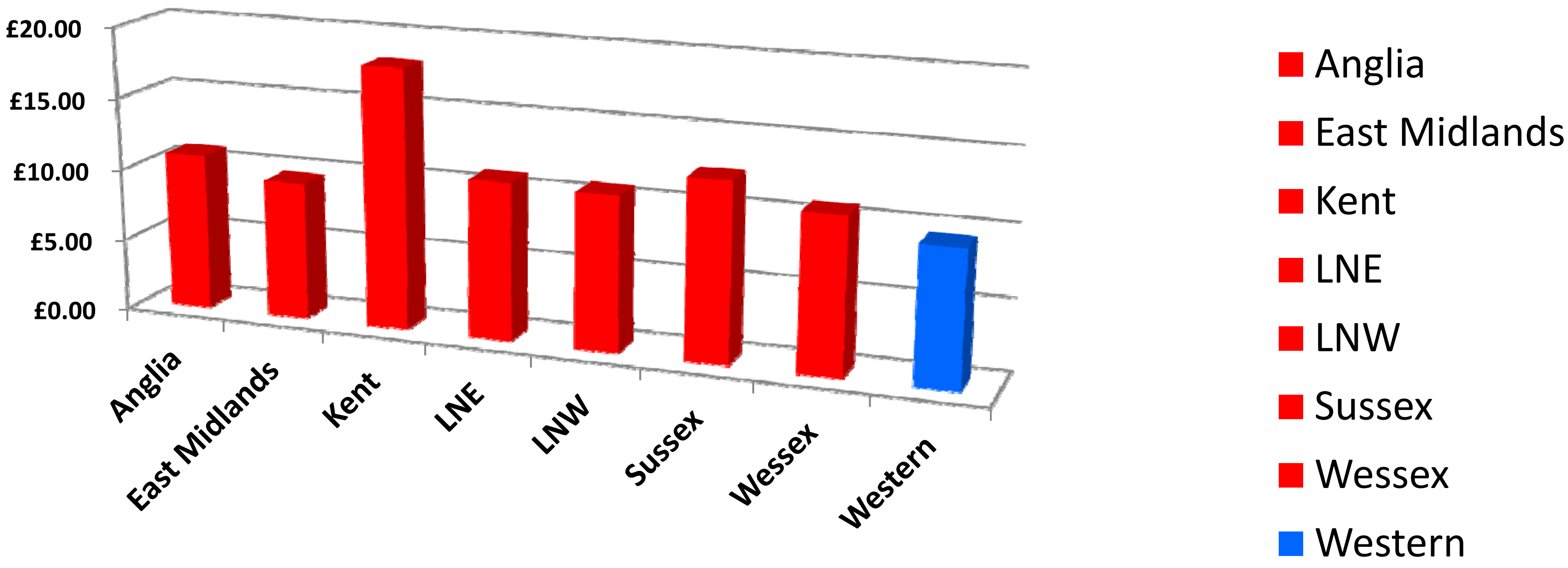
Lowest rail infrastructure spend



Lowest rail operating spend

Train operator expenditure per train km travelled (£) - England

GB Rail Industry Financial Information 2010-11, ORR 2012



Can the rail sector coordinate for growth?

- Welcome investment in GWML but a Decade of Disruption
- The rolling stock famine:
  - Meeting the local and regional capacity gap
  - Diversionary capacity and M4 bustitution – a part-time Main Line?
  - Meeting the capacity potential of the new Reading-London throat
- The present franchise mismatch:
  - The post-WCML fudge and aborted preparations
  - Passing the parcel during the Decade of Disruption
  - The case for dove-tailing franchise replacement (currently GW: 2016; CC 2019)
- Managing essential engineering:
  - Uneven coordination of possessions: From Reading to Whiteball Tunnel & Cowley Bridge

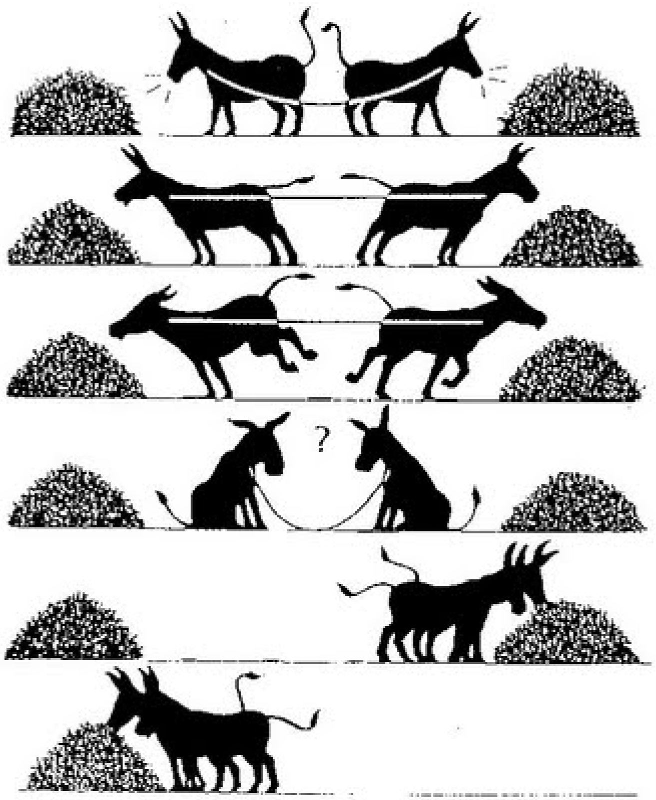
Can stakeholders make themselves heard?

- The collective psychopathology of the South West:
  - Being ‘too nice’
  - Parochial visions: the ‘outside our boundary’ syndrome
  - Labour’s interests seen as focussed elsewhere
  - Coalition’s heartland – traditional supporters sense they’re ‘taken for granted’
- The challenge of thinking strategically:
  - No spatial planning oriented ‘Driving Mind’
  - Infrastructure manager’s lack of contact with end-users
  - LTAs: ever scarcer resources and the pressures of ‘localism’
  - LEPs: short on money, skills and cross-boundary working
  - The erosion of publicly-funded passenger representation
- New stakeholder opportunities: Promise of EU’s 4th Railway Package, e.g users to participate in franchise specification and corridor management priorities:
  - Resourcing effective representation

But can buses hold their market?

- Largest proportion of LTA-supported bus services (<40%)
- Continuing reductions in government financial support:
  - 20% cut in Bus Services Operator Grant (fuel duty rebate) in 2012-13
  - Cuts in concessionary travel reimbursement rate
  - Big reductions in local authority funding for tendered services (e.g. Somerset from £5.2m to £1.9m; Swindon cut 50%; Dorset -£800k in 13/14)
- Many operators rely on ramshackle fleets – continuing step access, no CCTV, old furnishings….
- Stagecoach performance (and until depot fire, Western Greyhound) in SW illustrates importance of funding service quality and empowering local managements

TravelWatch SW's *Winning together* strategy



- Build consensus on key stakeholder priorities, e.g. *Greater Western, Lesser Western*
- Collaborate to deliver expertise for (some) LEPs and (all) LTAs, e.g. *Spine of the SW*
- Work in partnership with key operators, e.g. regular dialogue with 3 TOCs and 9 main bus operations

www.travelwatchsouthwest.org

Thank you!