



TRAVELWATCH SOUTHWEST NEWSLOG 140 – MONDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

Seven bids for local enterprise partnerships in the South West

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has announced that it has received seven bids to form new local enterprise partnerships in the South West of England – the seven bids have been received from:-

- i) Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
- ii) Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
- iii) Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- iv) Devon, Plymouth and Torbay
- v) East Devon and South Somerset
- vi) Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire
- vii) Somerset

The new local enterprise partnerships will be responsible for promoting economic growth in their respective areas, following the impending abolition of the South West Regional Development Agency. The government is expected to announce the actual powers that could be given to local enterprise partnerships in October – it has previously been stated that one of the key responsibilities of the new partnerships will be to ensure that transport policy supports the economic growth agenda.

First hybrid bus enters service in South West

The first hybrid (diesel/electric) bus to be used in the South West has commenced operation on the Bath park-and-ride services – the bus is being operated by First Somerset and Avon as part of the European Union CIVITAS Renaissance Project which is designed to promote innovative and clean forms of public transport in urban areas. The hybrid bus is powered by a small 1.9 litre turbo diesel engine and a 37 KWh battery pack. The vehicle has a regenerative braking system, which is expected to be particularly beneficial in Bath, enabling the bus to operate almost entirely on battery power in the city centre, making it nearly emission-free.

Go-Ahead profits fall by twenty per cent

The Go-Ahead Group, which owns Plymouth Citybus and the Wilts and Dorset Bus Company, has announced that the company's profits for the year ended 3 July 2010 fell by over twenty per cent compared with the previous year – operating profits in the UK rail division fell by thirty-nine per cent, while the

operating profits of the group's UK bus division fell by over four per cent. The revenue generated by the group's UK bus division increased by over seven per cent, while the turnover of the UK rail division fell by one per cent.

More CrossCountry trains to Glasgow?

The Department for Transport (DfT) has confirmed that it is in negotiations with Arriva CrossCountry to extend the existing hourly train service between Plymouth and Edinburgh to and from Glasgow Central via Motherwell every two hours from May 2011 – at present just two of the hourly trains between Plymouth and Edinburgh in each direction are extended to and from Glasgow Central.

DfT releases BSOG data

The Department for Transport (DfT) has released details of the total amount of BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant) paid to every operator in South West England – the information is available on the DfT web site: 'www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/busgrants/bsog/661224'.

People

Mark Dean, a driver employed by Transdev Yellow Buses (TYB), has beaten over one hundred entrants to win the coveted UK bus driver of the year award for 2010 – Mark qualified for the final in Blackpool as the runner-up in the regional qualifier to another TYB driver, Andy Turner!

And finally,

Her Majesty's Coastguard has produced three hundred and fifty vinyl posters, which have been fixed to the rear windows of First buses in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset – First has donated the advertising space free of charge. The posters feature messages about Her Majesty's Coastguard and encourage people to call 999 if they spot someone in trouble at sea or on the coast.