

Outline Business Case

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Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
councils working together to improve your local transport

Executive Summary

The West of England (WoE) Councils comprising of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, together with the West of England Combined Authority are progressing plans to deliver a series of strategic enhancements to the local rail network over the next five years and beyond, through the MetroWest Programme. The aim of the MetroWest Programme is to establish a 'Metro' local rail network, similar to comparable sized city regions, through targeted investment in strategic rail corridors, including existing lines, freight only lines and dis-used lines.

The MetroWest Programme currently comprises:

- the MetroWest Phase 1 scheme,
- the MetroWest Phase 2 scheme,
- the Portway Park & Ride station scheme,
- a range of new station/re-opening schemes, subject to separate business cases and smaller scale localised enhancement schemes

MetroWest Phase 1 and Phase 2 proposals span **five local rail corridors**:

- Phase 1 - Severn Beach Line – upgrade to half hourly passenger service
- Phase 1 - Bath Spa to Bristol Line – upgrade to half hourly passenger service
- Phase 1 - Portishead Line – re-open with an hourly passenger service
- Phase 2 - Yate to Bristol Line – upgrade to half hourly passenger service
- Phase 2 - Henbury to Bristol Line – re-introduce hourly passenger service

The MetroWest Programme which is planned to be delivered by late 2021, is being taken forward as a third party promoted programme with an estimated total capital cost of over £150M, for delivery during the early stages of Control Period 6 (2019-2024). Further projects are expected to be added to the MetroWest programme in due course, potentially establishing a medium term investment programme. The MetroWest Programme is has been developed in collaboration with the rail industry.

This Outline Business Case is for MetroWest Phase 1, which proposes to enhance the Severn Beach Line and the Bath Spa to Bristol Line to operate a half hourly train service and re-open the Portishead Line with an hourly train service. Two new stations are proposed, at Portishead and Pill. The new train services will also service 16 existing stations.

The West of England is a dynamic city region, with a population of more than 1.1 million people, over 43,000 businesses and an economy worth over £31 billion a year. It is a highly productive economy, with GVA per capita higher than the national average. The city region is one of the few areas of the UK that is a net contributor to the Treasury.

Recent economic growth has been driven by a diverse sectoral base with strengths in aerospace, creative and environmental industries, IT and microelectronics, finance and tourism. A high proportion of local employment is, therefore, in high-value knowledge intensive industries. The area is also home to four universities producing cutting-edge research. Economic growth over the last

decade has been driven by these sector strengths and the availability of high quality business space with good access to the transport networks, particularly in the North Fringe area close to the M4 and M5. There has also been rapid growth recently seen in Bristol city centre as businesses are attracted by the large skilled workforce, dynamic local business community and availability of appropriate workspaces.

The West of England faces serious transport challenges and these will become more acute with the anticipated scale of growth in the area. The forecast numbers of people living and working in the area will increase demands on the transport system, which will have significant economic, social and environmental impacts. Whilst the West of England has benefited from a strong economy over the last decade, the sub-region's economic prosperity is beginning to be constrained by its transport network.

While the West of England has frequent rail links to London, the Midlands, South Wales and the South West, the local rail network is under-developed for the size of the city region. The geographic reach of the local rail network is limited and the train service frequency is irregular in places and some corridors have a poor frequency or not clock-face. There are connectivity issues for cross-Bristol Temple Meads trips and most of the local rail network does not have a basic half hourly service, falling well short of most other comparative Core Cities in England.

This Outline Business Case sets out a compelling case for intervention to deliver MetroWest Phase 1, through five chapters including the Strategic Case, Economic Case, Management Case, Commercial Case and Financial Case.

The benefits of the scheme are:

- **an increased local economy** by generating £264M of Gross Value Added (GVA) in first ten years from opening) and creating 514 net new permanent jobs
- **enhanced rail capacity** by delivering over 800 additional seats per hour for the local rail network, which in turn will extend the benefits of Network Rail's Western Route Modernisation Programme
- **a reliable and more frequent public transport service**, directly benefitting 180,000 people within 1km of 16 existing stations, with enhanced train service frequency
- **an increased number of people living within 30 minutes travel time of key employment areas**, such as TQEZ,
- **reduce highway congestion** on arterial corridors, including A369 between Portishead and Bristol, significantly improving network resilience
- **competitive journey times** from Portishead and Pill to Bristol Temple Meads (around 23 minutes)
- **improved accessibility** to sites for new homes and employment development in proximity to the rail corridors and bring an additional 50,000+ people within the immediate catchment of the rail network with new stations at Portishead and Pill
- **reduced overall environmental impact**, resulting in improved air quality, on key arterial highway routes

- **an attractive mode choice** and capacity for journeys to work (alternatives to single occupancy car-based travel) addressing long-term car dependency
- wide ranging **social/health benefits**

The wider scheme outputs include:

- high value for money with a **Benefit to Cost Ratio of 3.48** with wider economic impacts, giving £3.48 of quantified benefits for every £1 invested to implement the scheme
- **forecast revenue** surplus every year from year 6 onwards
- supporting the **delivery of the 105,000 new homes and 82,500 new jobs** identified in the WoE Joint Transport Study and WoE Joint Spatial Plan