

MetroWest*

Portishead branch line (MetroWest Phase 1)
Statement of Community Consultation
June 2015



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

Portishead branch line (MetroWest Phase 1)

North Somerset District Council's Statement of Community Consultation pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008

June 2015

Introduction

North Somerset District Council proposes to re-open the Portishead branch line for passenger services as part of the MetroWest Phase 1 proposals, to enhance local rail services across Bristol. The wider MetroWest Phase 1 proposals comprise the reopening of the railway line from Portishead to Parson Street, Bristol for passenger services and other associated works.

The railway from Portishead to Pill is referred to as the "Portishead branch line" in this document. That part of the railway that currently is in use by freight services to Portbury Dock is referred to as the "Portbury Freight Line".

The re-opening of the railway from Portishead to Pill, together with some associated works at Pill station, Pill Tunnel, the Ashton Gate level crossing and the Barons Close pedestrian crossing, are referred to as "the Project" in this document.

To re-open the railway from Portishead to Pill as is proposed, North Somerset District Council requires a Development Consent Order (**DCO**) under the Planning Act 2008.

This Statement of Community Consultation (**SoCC**) has been published in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, and explains how we will keep you informed throughout the development process as well as how you can comment on the proposals and help shape the Project. It also provides information on the wider MetroWest Phase 1 proposals.

The Project forms part of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership's (**LEP**) wider MetroWest programme, which will invest up to £100 million in a series of complimentary local rail projects. The Project teams are working with Network Rail, First Great Western and the freight train operators to deliver the MetroWest programme, which will be carried out in two phases.

This SoCC relates to the part of MetroWest Phase 1 required for the reopening of the Portishead branch line for passenger services. Any consents required for MetroWest Phase 2, which is the proposed re-opening to passenger services of the current freight only line through Henbury, north of Bristol, will be applied for separately.

The environmental Scoping Report for the Project, submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in June 2015, provides Preliminary Environmental Information (**PEI**) in support of the first stage of community consultation. More detailed PEI will be published in late 2015 and will be made available to the public for a further stage of community consultation prior to submission of the application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2016.

This SoCC explains:

- What we are proposing to develop, including a brief description of:
 - The proposals for works on the Portishead branch line and the other elements of the MetroWest Phase 1 project

- o Details of the Project
- The development consent process including how environmental impacts are assessed
- When we will be consulting
- Who and where we will be consulting
- **How** we will consult with individuals, groups and organisations
- **How** consultees can respond to the consultation
- **How** feedback will be taken into account.

What is a Statement of Community Consultation?

The Planning Act 2008 (the **2008 Act**) provided a new regime for the development of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (**NSIPs**). The Planning Inspectorate is the body responsible for administering the planning process for NSIPs.

For such projects, the Planning Inspectorate examines the application and will make a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State, who will make the decision on whether to grant or to refuse development consent.

This Project comprises an NSIP for the purposes of the 2008 Act. North Somerset District Council therefore intends to make an application to the Secretary of State for Transport for a DCO under the 2008 Act to authorise the Project.

In determining the application, the Secretary of State will have regard to the National Policy Statement for National Networks which sets out the need for development of the national rail network.

Consultation is a key part of the planning and development process. This document sets out how North Somerset District Council intends to discharge its obligation to consult.

The 2008 Act requires developers (in this case, North Somerset District Council) to consult with individuals, groups and organisations affected by the proposed NSIP. This process is referred to as pre-application consultation and must be carried out before the application for a DCO can be accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.

As required under the 2008 Act, when the application is submitted we will report on the views of all respondents and explain how we have taken them into account during the development of the Project proposals.

Please note that all consultation responses received will be considered and potentially published within the Project's Consultation Report. No personal details will be made public.

About MetroWest Phase 1

The West of England has a population of over 1 million and this is expected to exceed 1.1 million by 2016.

The West of England's economic prosperity is beginning to be constrained by its transport network. As demand on the transport network increases as a result of economic and population growth, further investment is needed to ensure the transport network is sufficiently accessible and has sufficient capacity and resilience to continue to meet the subregion's needs.

MetroWest is a series of projects that will improve rail transport in the West of England by investing up to £100 million in a series of complimentary local rail projects. It will be funded by the West of England LEP) a devolved major scheme grant of £45 million from the Department for Transport and by the four West of England Councils.

MetroWest Phase 1 is a scheme promoted by North Somerset District Council on behalf of itself, South Gloucestershire District Council, Bristol City Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council. The scheme is a priority for the West of England's local authorities and the West of England LEP, as it would connect at least an additional 35,000 people to the railway network.

The proposal to re-open the Portishead branch line, with stations at Portishead and Pill, is a key part of MetroWest Phase 1.

The wider elements of MetroWest Phase 1 are intended to allow the local train operating company to:

- Run half hourly passenger train services to Avonmouth on the Severn Beach line with one train an hour continuing to St. Andrews Road and Severn Beach stations; and
- Provide a half hourly train service for local stations between Bristol Temple Meads and Bath Spa.

Elements of MetroWest Phase 1 which part of the proposed application for a DCO are set out in the following Project Description section. The section also highlights a number of elements of MetroWest Phase 1 which do not form part of the proposed application.

MetroWest Phase 2

MetroWest Phase 2 will introduce half hourly train services to Yate and hourly services on the Henbury line, which is currently freight only. This does not form part of the application for the Project and will be subject to separate consents at a later date.

Project description

The Project entails the re-opening 5km of disused railway between Portishead and Pill.

The infrastructure proposed to deliver the Project that will be included in the application for the DCO are as follows:

- Rebuilding the disused Portishead to Pill line (5km)
- New station at Portishead including car park, pedestrian and cycle link to the town centre and highway alterations to Quays Avenue/Harbour Road/Phoenix Way
- Provision of a fully accessible pedestrian bridge near Trinity Primary School
- Retain existing National Cycle Network routes between Pill and Portishead through minor realignment or diversion as necessary
- An additional track through Pill (including widening of the Avon Road bridge underpass)
- Reopening of the former station at Pill, including a new fully accessible pedestrian bridge to the refurbished platform on the south side of the station and car park
- Improvements to access to Pill tunnel;
- Improvements to access to the highway for construction and maintenance;
- Closure of historic and permissive crossings between Portishead and Pill and, where appropriate, provision of alternative access arrangements,
- · Environmental mitigation measures; and
- Works to two level crossings in Ashton Gate and Barons Close, on the Portbury Freight Line.

The geographic extent of the works in the DCO is shown in **Figure 1**.

On the Portbury Freight Line some additional works are required which currently do not form part of the proposed application for a DCO, as follows:

- New signalling for the branch line from Parson Street junction to Portishead, including a new intermediate signal in Avon Gorge woodland;
- Extension of the existing double track section north from Parson Street, to Bower Ashton; and
- Upgrading of Parson Street junction.

These works are within Network Rail's existing operational railway and it is anticipated that these will be carried out by Network Rail, using its general permitted development rights, save where authority is needed to reconstruct the two existing level crossings at Ashton (the level crossing works are intended to be included in the application for a DCO).

Most of the land required for the Project is owned by North Somerset District Council or Network Rail. Small areas of land will be required for construction compounds, maintenance access routes, and permanent works. Where additional land is required temporarily and permanently for works, powers of compulsory acquisition will be sought under the Order.

The following further elements are required for MetroWest Phase 1, away from the works to the Portishead branch line. These will be carried out by Network Rail, using its general permitted development rights:

- Partial reinstatement of the down relief line at Bedminster;
- Additional signal near Avonmouth station; and
- A track crossover and signalling at Bathampton to allow trains to turn around at Bath off the main line.

The Portbury Freight Line

The Portbury Freight Line plays an important role for the economy through providing efficient access to markets including car import/exports, containers and coal.

The volume of freight traffic is increasing and the Councils recognise the importance of the Portbury Freight Line to Bristol Port and its contribution to the economy. The infrastructure identified for the Project, as set out above, will provide sufficient capacity for the current and future operation of both freight trains and passenger trains.

Assessing environmental impacts

Under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (**EIA Regulations**), we are required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (**EIA**) to identify likely significant environmental effects of the Project. The results of the EIA will be published in an Environmental Statement (**ES**) that will accompany the DCO application for the Project. A Non-Technical Summary (**NTS**) of the ES will also be provided.

The EIA Regulations also require us to set out in the SoCC how we intend to publicise and consult on the Preliminary Environmental Information (**PEI**).

Stage 1 community consultation

In order to agree the environmental studies required for the EIA with statutory consultees, we submitted a Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate in June 2015. This document included information on the approach to EIA for the Project, an indicative Project description for the works and a summary of potential impacts which will be assessed. The Scoping Report comprises the PEI for the first stage of community consultation.

The Scoping Report is available on the Project website:

www.travelwest.info/metrowest

The Scoping Report will be available at exhibitions and can be downloaded from the Project website. At this stage, we have identified the following potential benefits which may result from the proposed Project:

- Economic growth, through enhancing transport links to major employment centres across the West of England
- A more resilient transport offer, with more attractive and reliable journey times
- Improved accessibility to the rail network with new and re-opened rail stations
- A positive contribution to social well-being, life opportunities and improving quality of life
- An overall reduction traffic congestion due the shift from road to rail
- Enhanced capacity of the local rail network
- Reduction in the overall environmental impact of the transport network due to encouraging the shift from road to rail.

Assessment work is being undertaken to understand the following potential impacts:

- Temporary disruption of the road network at Quays Avenue/Harbour Road in Portishead and in the vicinity of Pill station during construction and local traffic issues associated with increased demand to the Portishead and Pill station locations during operation
- Noise impacts associated with the new passenger trains
- Temporary construction impacts on local households, including increased traffic and noise, during construction
- Increased visual intrusion due to the loss of vegetation and new stations and bridges

Increased disturbance and local air emissions through the Avon Gorge Woodlands
 Special Area of Conservation, Avon Gorge Site of Special Scientific Interest and Leigh
 Woods National Nature Reserve.

Stage 2 community consultation

Towards the end of 2015, we will provide the preliminary findings of the EIA and make this information available to the local community for consultation. The updated PEI (which will be in the form of a draft ES) will include a description of the proposals and baseline information to date and identify the potential impacts of the development, as well as possible measures to reduce, prevent or offset these. This will include information on the scope for any associated land restoration, landscaping, other mitigation or compensatory measures for impacts on natural habitats if required.

Stage 2 of the community consultation will enable local communities to have the most information possible to comment on the proposals prior to the publication of the ES, and therefore help to shape the proposals in advance of submission of the application to the Planning Inspectorate.

Consultation timetable

<u>Table 1</u> below sets out the preliminary timetable for consultation on the Project up to submission of the application for development consent.

| Month | Consultation Activity | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| June and July 2014 | Consultation on the location of the new Portishead | |
| | station (now completed) | |
| May and June 2015 | Statutory consultation with the local authorities on the | |
| | content of the SoCC (now completed) | |
| June 2015 | Publication of notice of the SoCC and deposit of the | |
| | SoCC in Council buildings, including local libraries and | |
| | on the Project website | |
| June – August 2015 | Stage 1 community consultation in accordance with | |
| | the SoCC | |
| November 2015 – January 2016 | Stage 2 community consultation in accordance with | |
| | the SoCC (dates and details to be advertised closer to | |
| | the time) | |
| November 2015 – January 2016 | Formal consultation with statutory consultees such as | |
| | local authorities and other stakeholders (this is outside | |
| | the scope of the SoCC) | |
| June 2016 | Submission of application to the Planning Inspectorate | |

Scope of the consultation

In accordance with Section 47 of the 2008 Act, we are required to consult with people in the vicinity of the proposed development.

Consultation with the relevant local authorities on the preparation of the SoCC has helped to identify the local communities and determine the consultation methods that were deemed to be the most appropriate to ensure an inclusive process. This included the identification of hard-to-reach groups and ways of enabling these groups to access relevant information. This will include engaging with disability and equality groups and forums, the use of social media to raise awareness among young people, and ensuring documents are available in libraries for people without internet access.

We will be focussing our consultation with the communities identified in **Figure 2** (the **Tier 1 Communities**). These communities have been identified due to their proximity to the Project and therefore have the potential to be affected by the Project (i.e. within 200 metres of the Project and 400 metres around Portishead and Pill stations). In addition we intend to consult with communities within 200m of the Portbury Freight Line through Avon Gorge.

In order to identify the Tier 1 consultation area we considered the scope of potential impacts of both the construction and operation of the MetroWest Phase 1 project. These include noise, air quality, and landscape and visual impacts resulting from the scheme.

We have also considered the **Tier 2 Communities**, i.e. people who will be indirectly affected by the Project (and the Portbury Freight Line) but which are not close enough to be physically affected by it. These include residents in Portishead and Pill who live further than 400m from the Project.

However, anyone can comment on the proposals and, as set out in the next section, written information will be made widely available to ensure that the consultation is accessible and effective.

Consultation events will be held in the areas that are potentially most affected by the proposals. However, those who are not directly affected may also wish to take part in the events.

Staffed public exhibitions will be held in the following locations:

- The Engine Shed, Bristol on Thursday 2 July at 14-00 to 19-30
- Somerset Hall, Portishead on Monday 6 July 2015 from 14-00 to 19-30 and Wednesday 8 July from 14-00 to 19-30
- Pill Community Centre on Friday 10 July from 14-00 to 19-30

Also there will be:

An unmanned exhibition at 100 Temple Street, Bristol on Monday 13 July to Friday
 17 July 2015 from 09-00 to 17-00

• Poster display at Bristol Temple Meads, and staff to hand out invitation postcards at Bristol Temple Meads Station on Wednesday 1 July.

Figure 3 illustrates the locations of consultation events.

How will we consult with local communities?

Previous non-statutory consultation on the Project

We have already commenced consultation on aspects of the Project. Informal consultation on the location of Portishead railway station took place in June and July 2014. Two consultation events were held at Portishead Methodist Church, where stakeholders were able to meet the Project Team.

Three possible locations for the station were presented in the consultation and a total of 421 consultation responses were received. Following the consultation, the preferred location was selected and then approved by North Somerset District Council in March 2015.

In December 2013/January 2014 the West of England LEP consulted on their Strategic Plan, which identified MetroWest Phases 1 and 2 as a funding priority.

Structure of statutory consultation

Each stage of formal consultation will be structured around a series of exhibition events and an online consultation website, along with a number of supporting documents.

We recognise that individuals, groups and organisations will have different requirements for information and our consultation process will reflect this. Therefore we will inform the community of the start of the consultation and the dates and locations of the exhibition events using the following methods:

- Mail drop: We will write directly to the Tier 1 Communities, providing details of the consultation, where information can be viewed and how to submit comments.
- **Newsletter**: We will promote the consultation in an email newsletter, which will distributed to around 840 subscribers who are interested in transport issues.
- **Press adverts**: We will place adverts promoting the consultation in appropriate publications at the relevant time.
- **Press releases**: We will issue information to local media outlets (newspapers, radio and TV) to encourage media coverage of the consultation.
- Posters: We will place posters in Portishead Town Council, Portishead library and other strategic locations to promote the consultations and explain where to view information and how to submit comments.
- Stakeholders, groups and organisations: We will engage with a broad range of stakeholder groups and organisations in an appropriate manner including briefings and meetings as required. They will be kept informed by regular electronic newletters.
- **Website**: We will promote the consultation on the TravelWest website, which will include a direct link to the consultation webpage.
- **Social media**: We will promote the consultation through the Project's Twitter account, providing a direct link to the online consultation webpage.

To engage with hard to reach sectors of the communities, the following groups will be included in the stakeholder consultation:

- Bristol Women's Voice
- Bristol Disability Equality Forum
- Bristol BME Voice
- Bristol the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual and TransgenderForum
- Bristol Older People's Forum.
- North Somerset Black, and Minority Ethnic Network
- North Somerset Disability Access Group
- North Somerset Partnership

The Tier 2 Communities will be made aware of the consultation by the newsletters, press adverts, press releases, posters, website and social media.

As well as being available on the consultation website, we intend to make paper copies of key documents available in Council and other publicly accessible buildings including local libraries during the consultation period (details of locations are set out at the end of this document). This will include the SoCC as well as Planning Inspectorate Advice Notes on how the public can get involved in the development consent process. Details of these locations are set out below.

North Somerset

- Castlewood North Somerset Office, Tickenham Road, Clevedon BS21 6FW Monday to Friday 08-30 to 17-00.
- Long Ashton Library, Lovelinch Gardens, Long Ashton BS41 9AH
 Tuesday 10-00 to 12-30; 13-30 to 17-00 Thursday 10-00 to 12-30; 13-30 to 19-00 Friday 10-00 to 12-30 Saturday 10-00 to 12-30; 13-30 to 15-30
- Pill Library, Crockerne House, Underbanks, Pill BS20 0AT Tuesday 10-00 to 12-30
 Wednesday 13-30 to 17-00
 Friday 10-00 to 12-30; 13-30 to 17-00
 Saturday 10-00 to 12-30
- Portishead Library, Horatio House, 24 Harbour Road, Portishead BS20 7AL Tuesday 09-30 to 17-00
 Wednesday 09-30 to 17-00
 Thursday 09-30 to 19-00
 Friday 09-30 to 17-00
 Saturday 09-30 to 16-00
 Sunday 10-30 to 14-30

 Weston-super-Mare Library, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

Monday to Friday 08-30 to 20-00 Saturday 08-30 to 19-00 Sunday 10-00 to 19-00

*This library is partially staffed during these times. Times reflect the opening times of the town hall

Bristol City

Bedminster Library, 4 St Peter's Court, Bedminster Parade, Bristol BS3 4AQ

Monday 0930 to 17-00

Tuesday 09-30 to 19-30

Wednesday 09-30 to 17-00

Thursday 09-30 to 19-30

Friday 09-30 to 17-00

Saturday 09-30 to 17-00

Sunday 13-00 to 16-00

Bristol Central Library, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TL

Monday 09-30 to 19-30

Tuesday 09-30 to 19-30

Wednesday 10-00 to 17-00

Thursday 09-30 to 19-30

Friday 09-30 to 17-00

Saturday 09-30 to 17-00

Sunday 13-00 to 17-00

Marksbury Road Library, Marksbury Road, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5LG

Monday 10-00 to 13-00; 14-00 to 19-00

Wednesday 10-00 to 13-00; 14-00 to 17-00

Friday 10-00 to 13-00; 14-00 to 17-00

Saturday 10-00 to 13-00

100 Temple Street

Monday to Friday 9-00 to 17-00

What are we consulting on?

Consultation will be carried out on issues relating to the whole of the proposed Project and will include potential impacts which may result from the proposed development. The consultation seeks views on topics including:

- The Project
- Concerns about the Project
- The design proposals for Portishead station
- The highways changes in Portishead
- The proposals for the footbridge near Trinity school
- The proposals for Pill station.

Other consultations in the area

The following consultations are not related to the MetroWest project, but may be taking place during the consultation period for the MetroWest Phase 1 DCO.

| Consultation | Consulting body | Date |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| MetroBus Traffic Regulation | Bristol City Council | Throughout the entire |
| Order Consultation | - | MetroWest consultation |
| | | period |
| Local Planning Application | North Somerset Council | April-June 2015 |
| Requirements 2015 | | |
| Charlton Lane/Brentry | Bristol City Council | |
| Lane/Swanmoor | | May -June 2015 |
| Crescent/Okebourne Road - | | Way Julie 2013 |
| Highway Improvements | | |
| A403 Avonmouth to Aust | Bristol City Council | June 2015 |
| Bristol Libraries for the Future | Bristol City Council | March - June 2015 |
| - phase 2 consultation | | March - Julie 2013 |
| Consultation on proposed | Bristol City Council | |
| amendment to Bristol City | | |
| Council Community | | May - July 2015 |
| Infrastructure Levy (CIL) | | |
| Regulation 123 List | | |
| School Expansion Proposals | Bristol City Council | June - July 2015 |
| Charlton Lane/Brentry | Bristol City Council | |
| Lane/Swanmoor | | May -June 2015 |
| Crescent/Okebourne Road - | | Way Julie 2013 |
| Highway Improvements | | |
| A403 Avonmouth to Aust | Bristol City Council | June 2015 |

Keeping people informed of the DCO process

The Project team will keep people informed of the DCO process by:

- Inviting people to sign up the MetroWest email newsletter if they want to receive Project updates.
- Providing updates through the media (press releases)
- Providing updates on our website and Tweet links to these updates

How to submit your views

Whilst your views are welcomed throughout the development of the Project, we request that comments on the first stage of Section 47 (statutory) consultation are received from the start of the consultation period to **Monday 22 June 2015** to **Monday 3 August 2015**.

You can submit your views in a number of ways:

Complete the online feedback form on our website: www.travelwest.info/metrowest

View the proposals and complete a feedback form at one of our public exhibitions or from one of the locations listed on pages 11/12 and return it to:

MetroWest Engine Shed Station Approach Temple Meads Bristol, BS1 6QH

How feedback will be taken into account

All responses will be recorded, reviewed and considered as part of the consultation process.

We will publish a Consultation Report outlining the relevant responses received and explaining how we have taken them into account in developing the Project. The Report will be submitted as part of the application for development consent. If an issue has not resulted in a change to the proposed development, the Consultation Report will explain this.

As there may be a large number of responses, the Consultation Report may group comments into broad issues of concern. No personal details will be made public.











