

CS10: Transportation and Movement

Scheme : Greater Bristol Metro (This scheme includes a scheme listed in the Core Strategy as 'Double track on the loop line between Weston-super-Mare and Worle')

Scheme Prioritisation within Infrastructure Delivery Plan: Necessary

Cost Estimate: £22m in 2008/09 prices

Funding Source: Detailed funding package to be determined, but is likely to comprise funding from Department for Transport and the four West of England councils.

Expected Completion Date: 2016 - 2021

Scheme Description:

Greater Bristol Metro is a joint heavy rail scheme promoted by all four unitary councils that comprise the West of England. The scheme concept is to provide an enhanced cross Bristol passenger train service operating a half hourly clock face pattern on the Yate to Weston-super-Mare and Cardiff to Westbury via Bath and Bristol corridors.

Future increments would introduce half hourly services on the Severn Beach line, linked with the reopening of Portishead and Henbury lines and possible extensions of the Metro boundaries to the north, south and east namely to Taunton, Gloucester and Chippenham.

The Greater Bristol Metro Rail Project would provide:

- Enhanced half hourly clock face cross Bristol train services on Yate to Weston-super-Mare and Cardiff to Westbury (supported by Wiltshire Council) via Bath and Bristol corridors;
- New high capacity rolling stock – faster acceleration, more economical, multiple doors. This is additional rolling stock and it is not to replace existing units;
- Enhanced infrastructure including redoubling of Worle Jn, redoubling of the single line track from Worle Jn to Weston Milton and the reinstatement of the bay platform at Weston-super-Mare station.
- Enhanced station access and security through improvements to platform access and greater coverage of CCTV.

While there are opportunities for some aspects of the Metro proposals to be delivered as part of other rail schemes such as the electrification of the Great Western main line, the four councils are committed to realising the full Metro concept in the medium term.

Scheme Deliverability:

The scheme was included in the South West Regional Funding Advice to central government for capital funding to be made available for the period 2014-19. The process for funding major transport scheme has since been changed and the Regional Funding Advice has been replaced with a competitive process.

Initial high level work undertaken by Network Rail through the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS, March 2010) has produced mixed results in terms of the business case. Proposals for Bristol to Bath services performed well as did Bristol to Yate subject to third party funding. The case for Bristol to Weston-super-Mare services did not show a strong business case. However the scope of technical investigation was limited and the methodology used focused mainly on the quantifying just the user-benefits of the scheme. Further work is needed to fully quantify the non-user benefits of the scheme, before any firm conclusions and decisions can be made. The policy to deliver Greater Bristol Metro is set out in the 3rd Joint Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).

Consultation:

A corridor extending 10 metres either side of the existing tracks of the Taunton-Bristol railway line is safeguarded in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan for the provision of additional tracks. Development within this corridor will only be permitted if it would not prejudice proposals for the line promoted by national rail policies or by the relevant network operator.

Key stakeholder consultation was conducted on the initial conclusions of the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy 2010 – 2019, by Network Rail in 2010 and further stakeholder consultation has taken place as part of the emerging Core Strategy.

Support for the project was re-affirmed at a West of England Rail conference held on 4 November 2011, attended by 70 stakeholders, including business and community organisations. Delegates were asked to prioritise a range of rail enhancement schemes and select their top three schemes for the sub-region. The overall top three schemes, in priority order were:

1. Greater Bristol Metro
2. Portishead Passenger Rail
3. Additional rolling stock

Scheme Justification:

The West of England area has witnessed substantial growth in rail travel with passengers increasing by 56% over the last five years. Existing services have suffered from short formed trains leading to overcrowding and passengers left behind on stations.

While incremental improvement have been made to the West of England local rail network over the last 5 years, the pattern of train services provided in comparison with cities / sub-regions with a similar demographic, is poor. Clearly, the extent of growth in rail travel in the sub-region shows that people are choosing rail over other modes, however for the sub-regional to continue to cater for the on-going growth passenger demand and fully realise the contribution of rail, the Greater Bristol Metro needs to be delivered. In doing so the scheme provide high quality transport corridor with frequent and reliable journeys into Bristol, thereby reducing road congestion and provide support economic growth.

Greater Bristol Metro – Scheme Plan

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