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Attention of the Examining Authority

Dear Sir or Madam

Portishead Branch Line - MetroWest Phase 1
South Gloucestershire Council Local Impact Report

Please find below the Local Impact Report for the above project submitted by this Council. We would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt.

This is a delegated officer response following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Strategic Infrastructure.

If you have any questions regarding this submission please contact me

Yours Faithfully



Gillian Ellis King
Strategic Projects Manager
Strategic Infrastructure Service

Portishead Branch Line – MetroWest Phase 1 South Gloucestershire Council Local Impact Report Submission to the Examining Authority

02 November 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is an adjacent authority in relation to the Portishead Branch Line – MetroWest Phase 1.
- 1.2 This brief Local Impact Report is submitted in our capacity as a planning authority and is entirely separate to SGC's West of England role and the promotion of the project.
- 1.3 This is a delegated officer response following consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, Environment and Strategic Infrastructure.

2. Policy context

2.1 Severn Estuary international designations

The South Gloucestershire Council area includes part of the internationally designated Severn Estuary upstream of the proposed project.

2.2 West of England transport policy

2.2.1 Since submitting SGC's Relevant Representations (RRs) to the Examining Authority in February 2020, there has been a material change to the transport planning policy context relevant to the MetroWest Phase 1 project: The West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 2020-2036¹ has been adopted and now replaces JLTP3, which was current at the time of submitting our RRs. The development of JLTP4 was led by the West of England working with the constituent local authorities including South Gloucestershire Council.

2.2.2 The objectives of JLTP4 (page 4 & 25) are:

- Take action against climate change and address poor air quality
- Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Enable equality and improve accessibility
- Contribute to better health, wellbeing, safety and security
- Create better places

2.2.3 JLTP4 sets out the transport challenges in the West of England, including high levels of commuting by car, congestion, population growth, and transport being the largest CO₂ and greenhouse gas contributor.

2.2.4 As key part of addressing these objectives and challenges JLTP4 identifies the MetroWest project is a key element of a wider programme of transport improvements proposed across the West of England.

2.2.5 JLTP4 Policy W1 (page 5) seeks to 'Provide more public transport options and improve service quality'. The MetroWest Phase 1 project is a significant scheme in the delivery of this, forming:

¹ Link to JLTP4: <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/travelwest/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Adopted-Joint-Local-Transport-Plan-4.pdf>

- A key element of an integrated package of sustainable transport measures for the West of England that will (page 46) increase capacity and enable mode shift, thereby reducing the impacts of congestion on the road network.
- A key rail priority (page 58) that will improve connectivity within the West of England, and provide a foundation for further rail improvements across the wider network, and
- is identified as a 'committed project' and 'early investment scheme' (pages 131 & 159) along with other transport improvements.

2.2.6 JLTP4 (page 5) also aims to ensure that transport is carbon neutral by 2030 and acknowledges that there has to be substantial shift towards cleaner and greener and more sustainable forms of transport. MetroWest Phase 1 is listed in the projects that together encourage the switch to more sustainable transport modes including public transport.

3. Assessment

3.1 Potential for effects on the internationally designated Severn Estuary

It is noted that the Examining Authority's 1st Written questions BIO 1.43 and GC1.17 relate to potential for contamination connectivity / pathways in relation to the internationally designated estuary. The estuary is a large and complex ecosystem and upstream, these designations encompass part of the South Gloucestershire Council area. It is also noted that Natural England are engaged with the Examination, and that Written Questions are addressed to them in relation to these matters.

3.2 Project relationship to South Gloucestershire

The Portishead line project is located some distance from the South Gloucestershire Council area, however it is proposed as an integral part of a wider package of transport improvements proposed across the West of England, including in South Gloucestershire, that is designed to achieve a range of objectives as set out in the adopted JLTP4 (see section 2.2 above).

4. Conclusions

4.1 The Severn Estuary

Given Natural England's role as Government advisor on the natural environment, and their engagement with the Examination, this Council defers to them in relation to agreeing/ resolving any relationship with/ effects arising from this project in relation to the Severn Estuary and its' international designations.

4.2 The Portishead Line and West of England Transport Policy

This Council wishes to confirm that having reviewed the updated JLTP4 policy context to the MetroWest Phase 1 project, the following conclusions of this Council in respect of the wider implications of the project, as were set out in South Gloucestershire Council's Relevant Representations (25 February 2020) still stand::

- *The MetroWest Phase 1 proposals should make a positive contribution to the delivery of a range of transport, planning and climate change policies in the wider WoE area (of which SGC is part), and*

- *It is agreed that positive socio-economic and environmental effects are expected to arise from the delivery of this first phase of the wider MetroWest project, for the wider West of England area including South Gloucestershire.*