

**Application by North Somerset Council for an order granting development consent for the Portishead branch line - MetroWest phase 1**

**Planning Inspectorate reference TR040011**

**Interested party reference PORT-S57657**

**Note on behalf of First Corporate Shipping Limited trading as The Bristol Port Company (BPC) on the construction of the bridge to replace the at-grade crossing at Court House Farm dated 15 March 2021**

1. This note is provided in response to action point 28 arising from Issue Specific Hearing 5 on 4 March 2021. BPC was asked to provide an estimated timescale for the replacement bridge for the at-grade crossing to Court House Farm.
2. BPC has engaged a suitably experienced contractor to carry out initial design and programming work in relation to the bridge which BPC would need to build if the current at-grade crossing between the two parts of the dock estate near Court House Farm were no longer to be usable by BPC.
3. The programme, and the information below, focusses on the time which would be needed from the start of the programme until BPC would be able to finish work to allow access for Network Rail's works at the at-grade crossing to start, wholly free from BPC's need for continued use of or access to the crossing.
4. The stages of the design and works process that have been identified as necessary include the following:
  - site investigation;
  - detailed design;
  - design approval from Network Rail;
  - site set up and mobilisation;
  - earthworks, including ground improvements and construction of reinforced earth embankments;
  - drainage works;
  - construction of abutments and wingwalls;
  - construction of deck and edge beams;
  - construction of a culvert/tunnel through the bridge abutment to accommodate the bridleway which runs alongside the route of the new railway in this location;
  - road surfacing and finishings; and
  - removal of the crossing-at-grade, once the new bridge is operational.
5. The contractor's current estimate is that a period of 15 months would be required to complete the elements described in 4 above. This assumes BPC's works could be undertaken on a standalone basis, without interruption from any works in connection with the DCO scheme.

6. BPC understands that the contractor considers that the principal risks to delivering this programme are:
- weather;
  - unexpected ground conditions;
  - delays in obtaining the various approvals from Network Rail, in relation to the stages and elements of the design and in relation to works affecting the railway; and
  - delays in obtaining the approval of North Somerset Council as local highway authority (NSC) in relation to the diversion of the bridleway through a new culvert/tunnel and in relation to temporary impacts on the bridleway during construction.
7. BPC understands that within its 15 months estimate, the contractor has made such time allowance as it considers is realistic and reasonable in relation to each of the risks above based on the best information currently available, but if, for example, it were to take longer than currently expected to obtain any approvals from Network Rail or NSC, then the overall construction period could be extended beyond 15 months.