



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Portishead Branch Line – MetroWest Phase 1
<b>File reference</b>	TR040011
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	23 February 2018
<b>Meeting with</b>	Project representatives
<b>Venue</b>	Womble Bond Dickinson’s office - Bristol
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>The Planning Inspectorate</b> Kathryn Dunne – Infrastructure Planning Lead Emre’ Williams – Case Manager [REDACTED] – Case Officer Richard Hunt – Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor Emma Cottam – EIA and Land Rights Advisor <b>The Applicant</b> Richard Guyatt – Womble Bond Dickinson Samantha Bryant – Womble Bond Dickson James Willcock – North Somerset District Council Colin Field – Network Rail
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update
<b>Circulation</b>	All attendees

### Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

### Overview

North Somerset District Council (NSDC) provided an overview of the history of the project. A copy of the presentation is provided at Annex A. The most recent change to the proposal is that the half hourly timetable for train journeys between Portishead and Temple Meads station will no longer form the basis of the design on which the application will be made and will instead be promoted to facilitate an approximately hourly passenger service.

### Update on funding

NSDC advised that final funding arrangements for the scheme will not be known until May.

## **Update following s42 Consultation**

NSDC advised that particular changes arising from the s42 consultation are still being reviewed. NSDC intend to extend the s42 consultation for the area around Ashton Vale Road as people at the far end of that area have complained that they were not included in the original consultation.

The Inspectorate requested a copy of the s42 letter to be issued as part of this consultation and advised that the Applicant ensure that their consultation is accurately demonstrated within their Consultation Report (CR) and that everyone who has/ had been consulted is reflected within the CR.

## **Update on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)**

Surveys have indicated the presence of a small number of bats within the study corridor as well as populations of great crested newts. Radio tracking of bats has indicated one individual commuting between the study area and the Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The implications of the possible link to the SAC are being considered. Advance pond creation works are currently being considered by NSDC as mitigation for newts and may require separate consents e.g. under Town and Country Planning legislation.

A decision is still to be made about what level of fencing is required in the Avon Gorge. Concerns were raised, during s42 consultation, about vegetation removal. Due to the reduced speed of trains, post and rail fencing (similar to present) is being considered in some locations. NSDC stated that double tracking is no longer required up to the southern boundary of the Avon Gorge SAC, and due to the reduced works in the Gorge itself there will be a significant reduction in the number of trees required to be felled. Bristol Whitebeam has been propagated for replacement planting. NSDC are in the process of agreeing a Management Plan with Natural England and Avon Wildlife Trust.

The Applicant has identified a need to undertake soil nailing at Pill for slope stability – the Applicant discussed the implication of the works in terms of construction effects.

The Inspectorate requested clarification regarding the Applicant's proposed construction compound arrangements in the Avon Gorge. The Applicant stated that a small area of Network Rail's operational land would be used to store materials as well as a main site on Clanage Road that would become a permanent rail access compound.

## **Access**

The need for potential temporary closures/ diversions of the existing towpath during construction was discussed.

Crossing arrangements for Winterstoke Road were also discussed, including provision of a ramp arrangement.

## **Submission date**

The Applicant confirmed that the anticipated submission date is likely to be late July 2018.

## **Draft documents**

The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant of their service to review draft applications documents for comments in advance of their formal submission. The Applicant acknowledged this and confirmed that they would aim to issue any draft application documents for review by late March/ early April. The Inspectorate provided an indicative list of draft application documents for the Applicant to consider submitting (draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Explanatory Memorandum, Land and Works Plan etc.) and noted that any draft Development Consent Order submitted for review should be supported by a detailed Explanatory Memorandum.

It was agreed that a further conversation would be beneficial prior to the submission of draft documents to the Inspectorate.



A photograph of the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England, spanning a deep gorge. The bridge is a suspension bridge with two large stone towers. In the foreground, a railway line with tracks and a wooden walkway runs through the gorge. The surrounding area is filled with dense green trees and bushes. The sky is clear and blue.

**Scheme Briefing  
October 2017  
Portishead Branch Line  
DCO Scheme  
(MetroWest Phase 1)**

**MetroWest** 

# MetroWest Programme

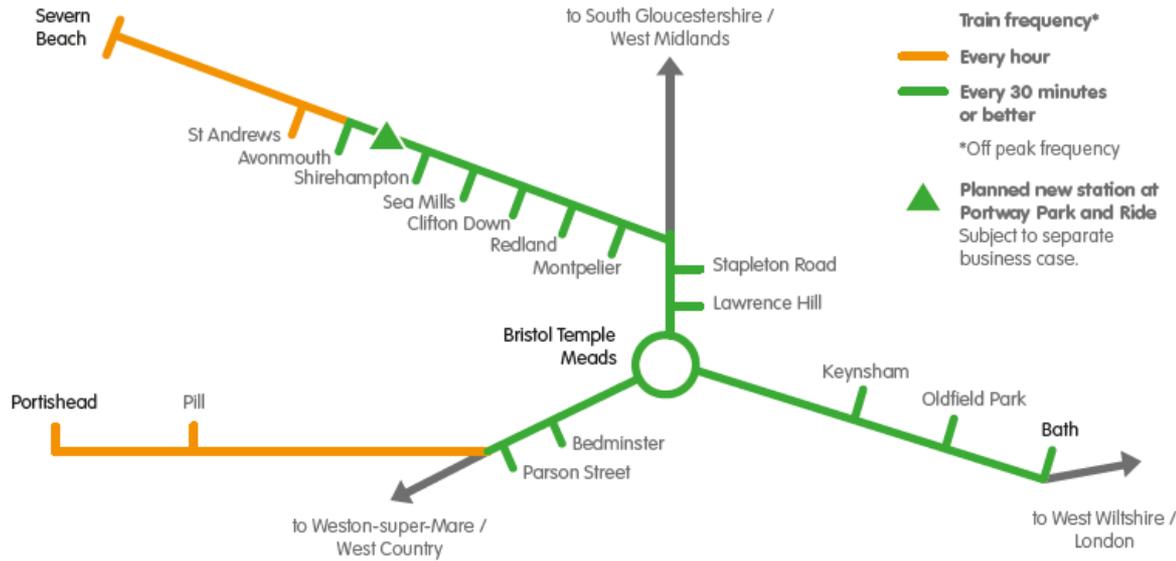
The MetroWest programme over the next 10 years is aiming to:

- Deliver a 'Metro' style local rail network, across the West of England
- Assist the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone reach its full potential and deliver sustained economic growth for the WoE economy
- Provide additional capacity for the local rail network to accommodate forecast demand

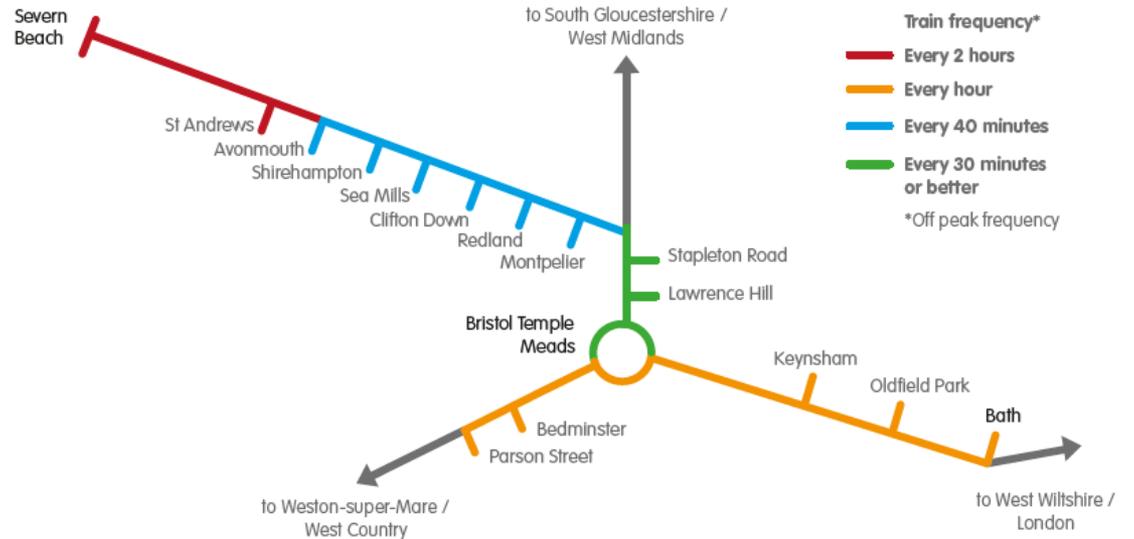
The programme comprises:

- MetroWest Phase 1 – led by North Somerset Council on behalf of the four councils in the WoE
- MetroWest Phase 2 – led by South Gloucestershire Council on behalf of the four councils in the WoE
- Other smaller projects such as new proposals for various new / re-opened stations

## Proposed MetroWest Phase 1 Network



## Existing MetroWest Phase 1 Network (Not currently MetroWest branded)



# MetroWest objectives

**The scheme is a West of England priority, supported by the four Councils, the LEP, Network Rail, Department for Transport and other partners, and is included in multiple policy documents**

## **Its principal business objectives are:**

- To support economic growth
- To deliver a more resilient transport offer
- To improve accessibility to the rail network
- To make a positive contribution to social well-being

## **Its supporting objectives are:**

- To contribute to reducing traffic congestion
- To contribute to enhancing the capacity of the local rail network
- To contribute to reducing the overall environmental impact of the transport network

# Scheme changes since Jan 2017

The overall scheme cost that came from GRIP3 for 2TPH was higher than GRIP2 estimates at £145-175 million

As a result of this, the Joint Transport Board in March agreed to a staged approach to Phase 1, and to progress the technical work for Stages A and B.

Since then we have been undertaking technical work for Stages A and B including the infrastructure requirements.

Stage	Description
Stage A	Deliver the service improvements on the Severn Beach & Bath corridors.
Stage B	Deliver an initial rail passenger service to Portishead
Stage C	Deliver the full two trains per hour passenger service to Portishead at a later date.

# MetroWest Phase 1 (Stage A and B)

Comprises delivery of infrastructure and passenger train operations to provide:

- a half hourly service for the Severn Beach line (hourly for St. Andrews Road station and Severn Beach station);
- a half hourly service for Keynsham and Oldfield Park stations on the Bath Spa to Bristol line; and
- an hourly or an hourly plus service for a reopened Portishead Branch Line with stations at Portishead and Pill.



# Scheme benefits

- will provide £3 of quantified benefits for every £1 invested to deliver the scheme
- will enhance the regional economy by £264m in the first ten years and will create 514 permanent new jobs
- will provide a journey time from Portishead to Bristol Temple Meads of around 23 minutes
- will bring an additional 50,000+ people within the immediate catchment of the national rail network with 2 new stations at Portishead and Pill
- will upgrade the existing train service at 16 stations across three rail corridors, directly benefiting 180,000 people within a 1km catchment

# Development Consent Order (DCO) formal consultation

- The Portishead Line requires a DCO for powers to build and operate, including Compulsory Land Acquisition
- The 2008 planning act sets out detailed requirement for pre-application consultation (Section 42/ 47)
- The consultation period is for 6 weeks from the **23<sup>rd</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> December**
- Consulting the local community, land/property owners, statutory bodies, government agencies, local interest groups and wider stakeholders
- Public exhibitions will be held within the time period
- Meetings are being arranged with key stakeholders

# What are we consulting on?

Formal consultation will be carried out on issues relating to the whole of the proposed DCO Scheme. It will include potential impacts of the proposed development. Consultation will seek views on the DCO Scheme on topics including:

- the design proposals for Portishead station;
- the proposed highways changes in Portishead;
- the proposed footbridge near Trinity Primary School;
- the proposals for Pill station and works for double tracking;
- works affecting the Avon Gorge and its natural habitats;
- the proposals in the Ashton Vale area
- the DCO Scheme's likely environmental impacts

# Public Exhibitions

**Friday 10 November, 12.30pm - 7.30pm**

Somerset Hall, The Precinct, Portishead, BS20 6AH

**Wednesday 15 November, 12.30pm - 7.30pm**

Engine Shed, Station Approach, Bristol BS1 6QH

**Tuesday 21 November, 1.30pm - 7.30pm**

Trinity Anglican Primary School (Community Hall), Marjoram Way, Portishead, BS20 7JF

**Wednesday 22 November, 12.30pm - 7.30pm**

Ashton Gate Stadium, Ashton Rd, Bristol BS3 2EJ

**Thursday 23 November, 3.30pm – 7.30pm**

Long Ashton Community Centre, Keedwell Hill, Long Ashton, BS41 9DP

**Friday 24 November, 12.30pm - 7.30pm**

Community Centre, Church Place, Pill, BS20 0AE



# Formal consultation documents

Stakeholders including the public will be contacted via:

- Letters to stakeholders (including landowners and statutory bodies)
- Newspaper adverts
- Mail drop - postcards delivered to over 5,000 individual addresses
- Press release
- Leaflets (online and distributed)
- MetroWest newsletter
- Website [www.travelwest.info/metrowest](http://www.travelwest.info/metrowest)
- Posters and Social media
- North Somerset Life article



**MetroWest+**

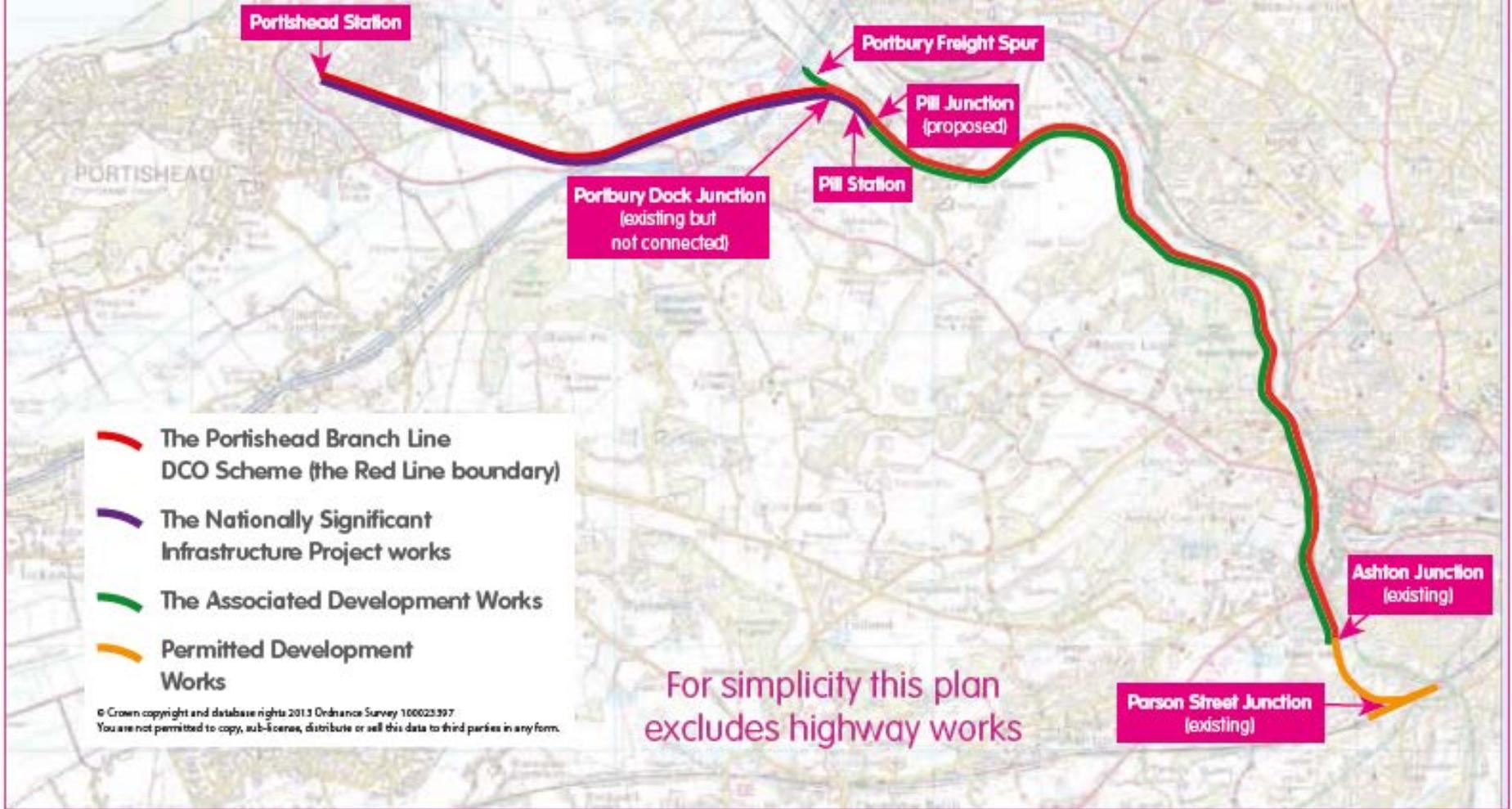
Stage 2 Consultation on  
re-opening the Portishead  
branch line as part of  
MetroWest Phase 1

October to December 2017

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

**MetroWest+**

# Portishead Branch Line DCO Scheme (MetroWest Phase 1) Reference Plan



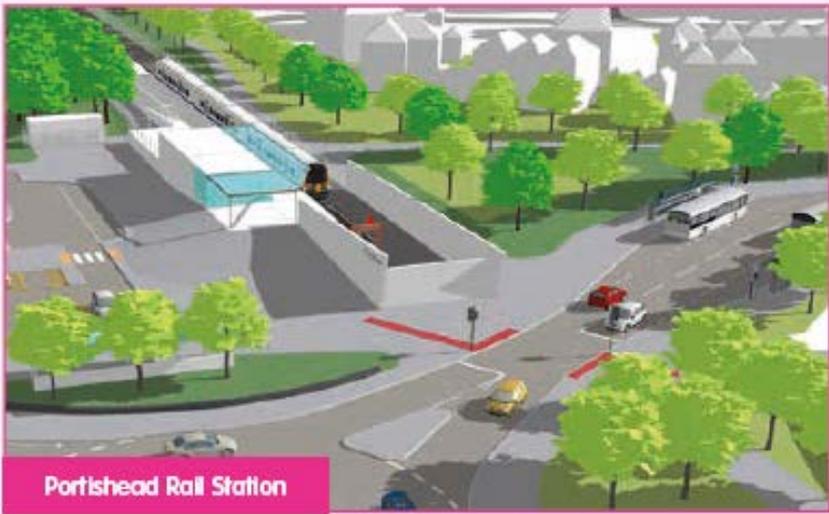
# Proposed DCO scheme

The scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and requires a Development Consent Order (DCO) to re-open the Portishead branch line for passenger trains with an initial frequency service. Includes the following infrastructure:

1. Two new stations at Portishead and Pill, with associated highway works
2. Re-build the dis-used railway (approximately 5.4km) from Portishead to a new junction east of Pill viaduct, joining the existing freight line to Portbury Docks
3. Uses the freight line through the Avon Gorge from Pill junction to Parson Street junction with minimal improvement works to upgrade it to passenger standard as the line speed will remain at the current 30mph
4. Minor works in the Ashton Vale area including a new pedestrian ramp and alterations to the Ashton Vale Road / Winterstoke Road junction to increase capacity (technical work is showing the Ashton Vale Road level crossing can remain open and no alternative highway access is required)
5. Diversion of the National Cycle Network and Public Rights of Way, both temporarily and permanently
6. Other related works including track renewals and work to structures including bridges and culverts
7. Works associated with the construction and operation

# 1. Portishead Station and associated works

- Re-alignment of Quays Avenue
- A single platform and station building with a ticket/waiting area and toilets
- GSM-R communications mast at Portishead Station
- A multi-modal station forecourt with seating, cycle parking, taxi rank, disabled parking, bus stop, lighting and a car park (car park A) and a larger car park opposite the station accessed from Harbour Road (car park B)
- A 300 metre pedestrian & cycle boulevard linking towards the town centre
- On-street bus stops, immediately in front of the station on Quays Avenue
- A footbridge linking to Trinity Primary School and footpath links
- There are both temporary and permanent TROs proposed, mainly affecting routes around Portishead and Pill.



## 2. Pill Station and associated works

- Pill station including new platform, access ramp (and earthworks), forecourt and car park
- Demolition of existing Pill station house to create space for station forecourt
- Introduction of some on-street parking restrictions on Station Road
- Replacement of Avon Road/Lodway railway bridge and embankment works
- Installation of a Principal Supply Point (PSP) building in Pill station car park
- Laying a new single line railway which will run parallel to the existing railway line from Portbury Dock to a new railway Junction (Pill Junction) east of Pill Viaduct
- Civil engineering works including works to culverts, bridges and earthworks (cuttings and embankments)



Pill Station

MetroWest+

# 3. Avon Gorge

**No major construction works are required, only minor works due to retention of the existing line speed**

Avon Gorge specifics:

- The scheme passes through the Avon Gorge (a SAC and SSSI) and a number of local wildlife sites. Due to this a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken for the gorge.
- Four species of rare whitebeam are potentially affected by the scheme.
- An Avon Gorge Management Plan is being produced for the scheme to mitigate for scheme effects in the SAC/SSSI
- The scheme previously required double tracking between the proposed Clifton junction and Ashton junction this is no longer required for an initial passenger service

Construction through the Avon Gorge is extremely difficult due in part to the environmental and accessibility constraints



# 4. Ashton Vale Road Level Crossing

The Ashton Vale Road (Ashton Junction) level crossing will remain operational, and no alterations will be undertaken to the level crossing itself.

The following works are proposed to reduce the highway traffic impact from the increased use of the level crossing:

- Extension of the left turn flare lane on Winterstoke Road,
- Optimisation of the Ashton Vale Road signals, and upgrade of signals to 'MOVA', and
- Provision of a ramp to the north of the level crossing to connect pedestrians and cyclists from Ashton Vale Road to Ashton Road



# 5. National Cycle Network (NCN) and Public Right of Way (PROW) diversions and alterations

- Minor alterations to the Bridleway (LA8/66/10) and National Cycle Route 26 south of Royal Portbury Dock,
- Extension of bridleway LA8/67/10 north of the M5 underbridge to connect with the National Cycle Route 41 to the east of the M5 that connects with Pill
- Permanent Closure of Baron's Close pedestrian level crossing/ PROW. Alternative pedestrian access will be provided, utilising a pedestrian and cycle path (currently under construction by the MetroBus scheme) linking to the Ashton Vale Road level crossing and the proposed MetroWest Phase 1 pedestrian / cycle ramp.
- Temporary closure and diversions of various sections of paths. Including- NCN 26 for up to 18 months between Marsh Lane and Pill and NCN 41 for short periods

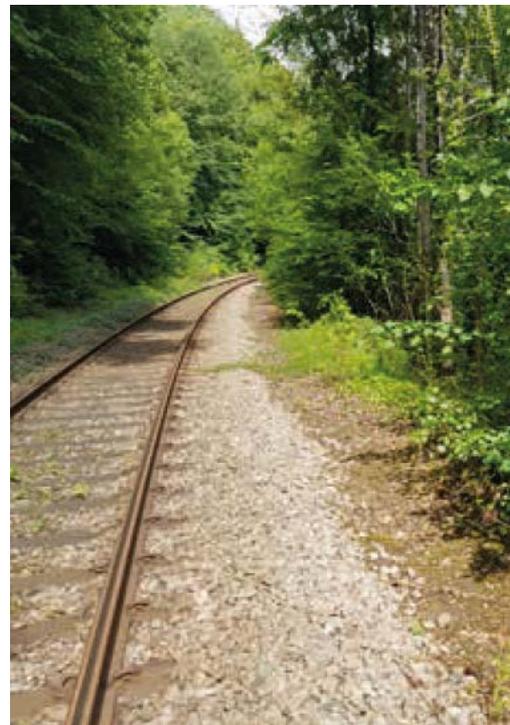
# 6. Other minor works

Disused line works including

- Minor works to bridges and structures along the disused railway.
- New signalling and line side equipment
- Landscaping, fencing and environmental mitigation works.

Freight Line Works including

- minor adjustments to track geometry
- minor works to tunnels
- repairs to bridges and retaining walls
- repair/replace culverts
- minor geo-technical works
- install sand blanket (below ballast) at a few specific locations
- replace some sleepers, ballast and track
- replace the signalling and electrical systems
- install a communication system (including a new mast)
- enhance pedestrian access for maintenance
- replace fencing along the alignment
- environmental mitigation
- potential works to Quarry Underbridge no 2
- materials storage on land outside of SSSI/SAC near Quarry Underbridge no 6



# 7. Construction Methodology

## Disused section

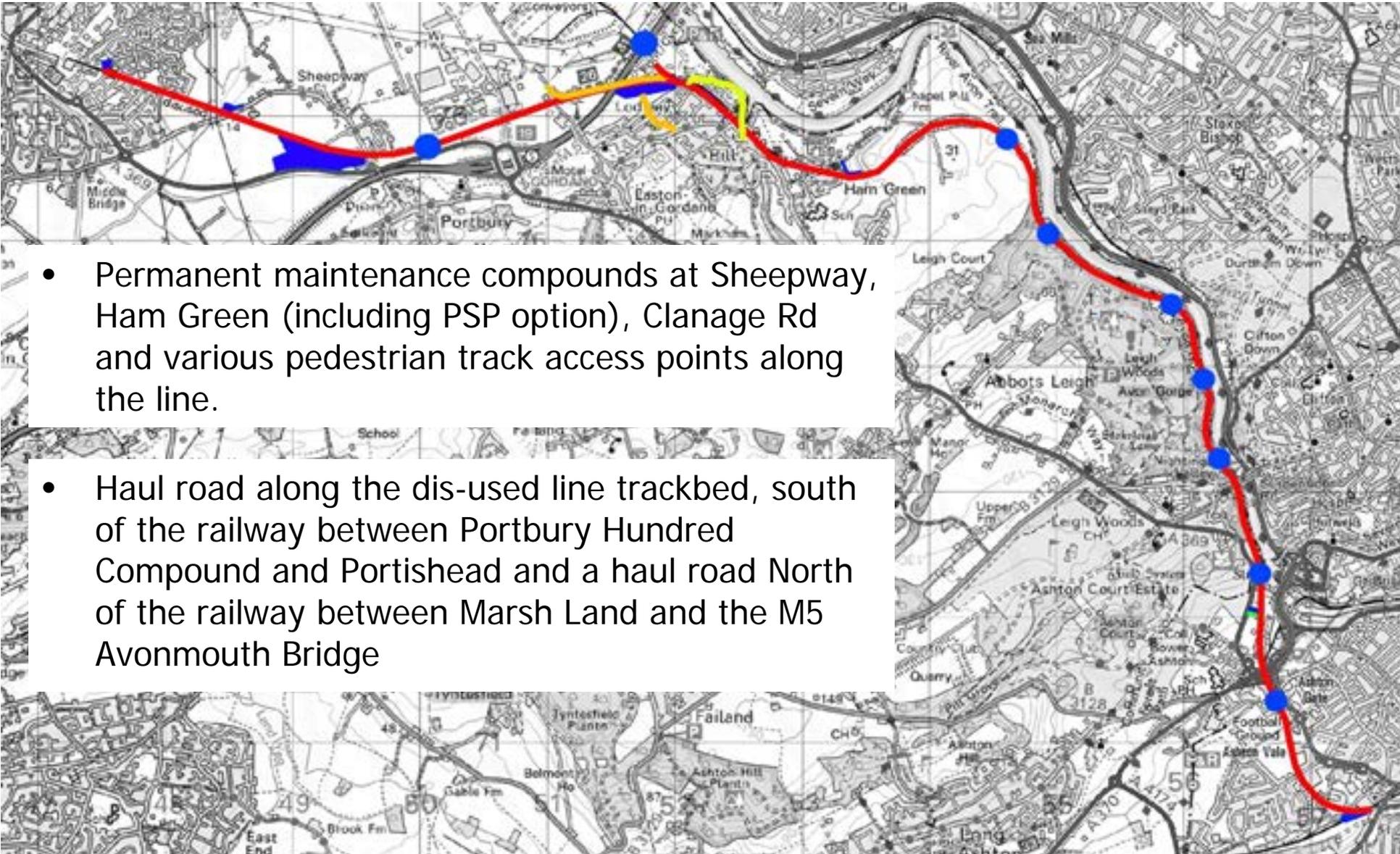
- Cannot be accessed by rail, so a haul road and construction compounds will be used
- The existing track bed will be removed and replaced with a capping layer and ballast below the sleeper bottom

## Freight Line

- Access through the gorge is difficult, with only a few access points
- Due to the environmental constraints in the Avon Gorge the construction works will be limited to a narrow corridor
- For the sections of track formation along the freight line that require renewal, conventional methods will be followed.



# 7. Construction Compounds and Permanent access points



- Permanent maintenance compounds at Sheepway, Ham Green (including PSP option), Clamage Rd and various pedestrian track access points along the line.
- Haul road along the dis-used line trackbed, south of the railway between Portbury Hundred Compound and Portishead and a haul road North of the railway between Marsh Land and the M5 Avonmouth Bridge

# Facts and figures

- will increase the UK national passenger network by 14 km and add two new stations
- will upgrade the existing train service frequency at 16 stations across 3 rail corridors: from the South East at Bath Spa to Bristol; from the North West and from the South at Parson Street to Bristol, directly benefiting 180,000 people
- will bring an additional 50,000+ people within the immediate catchment of the national rail network with new stations at Portishead and Pill
- includes works to 4 tunnels, 3 viaducts, 12 under bridges, 14 over bridges and 3 km of retaining walls
- includes some environmentally important areas along the railway alignment, including Avon Gorge which is a Special Area of Conservation
- includes 16 km of railway works and 1 km of highway works
- will have a line speed of 75 mph between Portishead and Pill and 30 mph from Pill to Ashton Vale
- will be operated with modern diesel trains, with three carriages initially, with up to 270 seats.

# Programme Summary

Milestone	Dates
DCO Formal Consultation (s42/s47)	October / December 2017
Completion of Outline Business Case	Late 2017
Submission of Development Consent Order Application	Spring 2018
Examination	Autumn 2018
Receipt of DCO from Secretary of State – <b>not in our control</b>	Autumn 2019
Discharge planning conditions; legal and contractual processes and mobilisation of construction contractor	Winter 2019/20
Full Business Case Approval	Winter 2019/20
Start of Main Railway & Highway construction works	Spring 2020
Completion of all Railway & Highway works	Autumn 2021
Start of train services	Late 2021

# Important documents

- Consultation leaflet
- Section 42 plans
- Various Site notices
- Preliminary Environmental Information report (PEIR) includes both the impacts of the works and the cumulative effects - it will form the basis for our environmental statement and mitigation proposals.
- All stored on the document store, link available from [www.travelwest.info/metrowest](http://www.travelwest.info/metrowest)

# FAQs

- Q1. How much will the project cost?**
- Q2. Where is the funding coming from?**
- Q3. When is the project going to open?**
- Q4. Why do rail projects take so long?**
- Q5. What are the benefits of the project?**
- Q6. Why is it only an hourly service for the Portishead Line and will the trains have enough seats?**
- Q7. Will the Portishead Line be upgraded to half hourly service in the future?**

# Contact details

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Any Questions?