

# Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Portishead Branch Line – MetroWest Phase 1
<b>Applicant</b>	North Somerset District Council ( <b>NSDC</b> )
<b>File reference</b>	TR040011
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	27 November 2018
<b>Meeting with</b>	Womble Bond Dickinson LLP ( <b>WBD</b> )
<b>Venue</b>	WBD Offices, Bristol
<b>Circulation</b>	All attendees

## Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate advised on its openness policy, explaining that any advice given would be recorded and published on the Planning Inspectorate's (the Inspectorate's) 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 it can be relied.

### ***Background and project description***

This is a proposal to re-open a passenger railway branch line from a new station at Portishead to Bedminster, Bristol. The Applicant considers this to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project as defined under section 25 of the 2008 Act, including proposals for construction of a railway line of continuous length of more than 2km to be part of a network operated by an approved operator (Network Rail).

WBD intends to split the description of works in Schedule 1 of the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) based on land ownership, as follows:

- Portishead to Portbury Station;
- Portbury Station to Portbury Dock Junction;
- Portbury Dock Junction to Pill Station;
- Pill Station to Bedminster.

### ***Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and increase to Order limit***

WBD explained that, within the Avon Gorge, the Order limits may need to be widened along parts of the railway alignment due to essential rock fall mitigation work required to meet operational safety requirements, e.g. catch fences, rock picking and dowels. Surveys are underway to identify the potential extent of these works and the necessary land, access and land ownership. NSDC will notify any impacted landowners of the changes. NSDC proposes to submit a draft HRA to the Inspectorate for comment early in 2019, setting out the implications for the Avon Gorge Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

### ***Flood risk***

The works proposed in Bedminster include a permanent compound to the east of Clanage Road located in flood zone 3; WBD explained that it is marginal but flood

compensation land may be needed at an alternative location (TBC) due to the placement of a new road-rail access ramp for rail safety purposes at this location. Discussions continue with the Environment Agency.

### ***Plans***

WBD is considering how to present the plans/ drawings for the development consent application. If the entire proposed branch line is presented within the Order limits, the plans will cover 9 miles, and parts of the track have either no works or access required; or minor works such as wall pointing.

The Inspectorate explained that the presentation of the plans will be influenced by the description of the works and what exactly is being applied for. For example, the plans required for certain locations along the route will depend on what works or powers NSDC is seeking in those areas, if any.

In order to enable the Inspectorate to provide s51 advice on the matter, WBD will provide written clarification and explanation of the following:

- The description and location of the principal works, associated development and any other powers to be applied for.
- The proposal regarding the plans required, including the types of plans, locations and scales, describing how they consider these plans would satisfy regulation 5 and 6 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 including levels and cross sections.
- How the DCO would secure the works against the proposed plans.
- A plan or description of locations where there are no works/ powers sought along the route.

### ***Draft documents***

WBD advised that the Applicant hopes if possible to submit in mid-December 2018 to the Inspectorate for advice a dDCO and draft Explanatory Memorandum, Statement of Reasons and works plans. The Inspectorate requested the introductory chapters of the Environmental Statement (ES) to be submitted as part of the draft documents, in particular the draft description of development and the overarching ES methodology chapters, with a draft HRA to be sent at a later date.

The Inspectorate advised WBD to refer to the updated Advice Note 15 prior to submitting their dDCO for comment, with particular attention to the required content of the draft Explanatory Memorandum.

The Inspectorate requested WBD to provide any specific queries they have in regard to the dDCO and to highlight any novel approaches they are taking which they would request the Inspectorate's advice on, as this will help to focus the Inspectorate's review of documents (a line-by-line review of the dDCO will not be undertaken).

### ***Follow-up required***

WBD will update the Inspectorate explaining what they are applying for within their application and how they propose to meet the legislative requirements in relation to the plans, requesting advice from the Inspectorate on these matters as necessary.