

PORTISHEAD BRANCH LINE PRELIMINARY
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REPORT
VOLUME 2

CHAPTER 6

Planning Framework



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CHAPTER 6

Planning Framework

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section provides an overview of the national, regional and local planning policy framework for the Portishead Branch Line (MetroWest Phase 1) Development Consent Order (“DCO”) Scheme (“the DCO Scheme”). A separate Planning Statement will form part of the application for the DCO and an appraisal of the DCO Scheme's compliance with the relevant legal and policy framework will be presented in that document.
- 6.1.2 The reconstruction of the disused section of the railway line between Portishead and Pill falls within the definition of a nationally significant infrastructure project (“NSIP”) for the purposes of the Planning Act 2008. The other works required for the DCO Scheme are defined as Associated Development under Section 114 of the Planning Act 2008 and include the new stations, works to the highway at Portishead and Winterstoke Road in Ashton and the alterations to the operational railway between Pill and Ashton Junction. Section 4 provides a full description of the proposed development.
- 6.1.3 Additional works for MetroWest Phase 1, including modifications to Parson Street Junction and Liberty Sidings, Bedminster Down Relief Line, Severn Beach / Avonmouth Signalling and Bathampton Turnback, will be undertaken under Network Rail's permitted development rights. The works in Bedminster and Avonmouth are located in Bristol City Council (“BCC”), while Bathampton Turnback is located in Bath and North East Somerset Council (“B&NES”). No works are proposed in South Gloucestershire Council (“SGC”), however MetroWest Phase 1 proposes to increase the frequency of the train service for Severn Beach station which extends into South Gloucestershire.
- 6.1.4 The DCO Scheme is mostly located within North Somerset District Council (“NSDC”), but extends into BCC’s administrative area in the vicinity of Ashton Gate. This section therefore takes into account the current policies and proposals for both NSDC and BCC for completeness, whilst consideration has been given to B&NES and SGC in the Baseline Report (CH2M, June 2015), as these authorities are only indirectly affected by the DCO Scheme.

6.2 Methodology

Definition of the Study Area

- 6.2.1 The extent of the planning policy framework review is focused on the length of the DCO Scheme. A buffer of 300 m on both sides of the railway was used to capture potentially sensitive land uses and planning policy designations within and adjoining the DCO Scheme. Where the construction and operation of the DCO Scheme may give rise to environmental effects on receptors that lie beyond 300 m of the project then all relevant planning policies are taken into consideration.
- 6.2.2 Figure 4.1 shows the DCO Scheme at a scale of approximately 1:100,000. A more detailed version of the DCO Scheme at 1:2,500 (A3) is provided in Volume 3 Figure 4.2 Sheets 1 to 20.

Evaluation of the DCO Scheme and Planning Policy

- 6.2.3 An appraisal of the DCO Scheme’s compliance with planning policy will be carried out in the Planning Statement accompanying the DCO Application. Primary consideration will be

given to the provisions of the National Policy Statement for National Networks (“NPSNN”), dated December 2014. Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) and the development plans for the two host Local Planning Authorities, NSDC and BCC. The emerging plan policies for NSDC and BCC, along with any other material considerations relevant to the principles, design and location of the DCO Scheme will also be considered.

- 6.2.4 As the engineering design and the environmental assessment is developed, the emerging DCO Scheme will be appraised against planning policies. A final review of the DCO Scheme against national, regional and local policy will be provided with the DCO Application.
- 6.2.5 The following sections provide an overview of the adopted and emerging policy, along with any other relevant plans and any other appropriate planning and development considerations.

6.3 National Planning Framework

Overview

- 6.3.1 The DCO Scheme will be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the Planning Act 2008 and the NPSNN for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (“NSIP”), and with consideration of other nationally important or relevant policies, such as those within the NPPF. The national legislative and policy framework relevant to the DCO Scheme are described below.

Planning Act 2008¹

- 6.3.2 The Planning Act 2008 introduced the DCO regime as the means of seeking planning permission, as well as a number of other consents, for developments categorised as NSIPs. These include railway schemes, where the railway when constructed [or altered] will be wholly within England, is part of a network operated by an approved operator, and where the construction does not benefit from permitted development rights.
- 6.3.3 The Highway and Railway (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) Order 2013 amended Section 25 of the Planning Act 2008 on railways to insert the requirement for a railway NSIP to also comprise *"a stretch of track that is a continuous length of more than 2 kilometres"* which *"is not on land that was operational land of a railway undertaker immediately before the construction work began or is on land that was acquired at an earlier date for the purpose of constructing the railway"*.
- 6.3.4 The proposed works to build the new railway between Portishead and Pill on NSDC and Network Rail land is a NSIP for the following reasons.
1. The scheme when built will be wholly in England.
 2. The scheme will form part of a network operated by an approved operator.
 3. The proposed new section of railway exceeds the threshold length of 2 km.
- 6.3.5 The disused section of the railway between the site of the new Portishead station and Portbury Dock Junction is just under 5 km long. The corridor between Portishead and the Old Portbury Station is in the ownership of NSDC. The corridor between the Old Portbury Station and Portbury Junction is in the ownership of Network Rail. For the purposes of the DCO Application, the land between Old Portbury Station and Portbury Dock Junction is not

¹ Section 14(1)(k) of the Planning Act 2008 defines an NSIP as the construction or alteration of a railway and Section 25(1) and (2) further defines an NSIP including the construction and alteration of projects.

treated as operational railway land. NSDC seeks the powers to rebuild this part of the Branch Line and is not seeking to rely on any permitted development rights Network Rail might have as the status of the land is unclear. The NSIP will continue in parallel to the existing freight line from Portbury Dock Junction to a location to the east of Pill Viaduct, to be known as Pill Junction.

6.3.6 In addition to the railway works, which form the principal development for which development consent is required under the Planning Act 2008, other development is required as part of the DCO Scheme. Permission for this could be sought under other consenting and planning regimes. However, section 115 of the Planning Act 2008 provides that, in addition to the principal development, consent may also be granted in a DCO for 'associated development'. In considering whether other works that form part of MetroWest Phase 1 are 'associated development' and can be included within the DCO application for the principal development, regard has been had to the Department for Communities and Local Government's ("DCLG") advice in *Planning Act 2008: Guidance on Associated Development Applications for Major Infrastructure Projects* (DCLG, 2013). Annex B to the guidance identifies typical associated developments for railway schemes to include new stations and alterations and extensions to existing platforms.

6.3.7 For the purposes of the DCO application, the associated development is taken to include:

- The highway modifications, new car park arrangements, and station at Portishead;
- A new footbridge to the south of Trinity School, Portishead over the railway line and linking to residential areas to the north and south of the railway, and associated accesses;
- A compound and permanent access to the railway at Sheepway;
- Modifications to the arrangements of public rights of way and cycle paths along the disused section of the railway between Portishead and Pill;
- Works to the existing spur railway from Portbury Dock Junction to Royal Portbury Dock;
- Proposed new Pill station car park on the former goods yard site at Monmouth Road, Pill;
- A new rail access and power supply point ("PSP") building at the proposed Pill station car park;
- The reconstruction of the station at Pill, new entrance arrangement, and car park;
- New permanent accesses to the eastern portal of Pill Tunnel for maintenance and emergency access;
- Works along the operational freight line between Pill and Ashton Junction, including removal and replacement of ballast, sleepers and rails; signalling works including trenching and cabling; minor repairs to the existing tunnels and bridges; and earthworks;
- A compound and permanent access to the railway at Clanage Road, Bower Ashton;
- A new pedestrian access connecting Ashton Vale Road to Ashton Road;
- Environmental mitigation works including landscaping and planting; habitat creation; bat and bird boxes; and noise fence at Portishead; and
- Temporary construction sites and accesses along the route.

- 6.3.8 Works that benefit from permitted development rights are specifically excluded from the Planning Act 2008 and the DCO process. The types of works required along the operational railway would usually fall under Network Rail's permitted development rights. However, part of this route crosses the Avon Gorge Woodlands Special Area of Conservation ("SAC") and consequently under the Habitats Regulations an assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there are likely significant effects from the works on the site (see paragraph 6.3.22 below). Under these Regulations the competent authority would be the local authority if it were proposed to proceed by way of permitted development rights, who on this Scheme is also the promoter (namely NSDC). To remove the potential for conflict of interest, the works to the operational railway have been included as associated development for the DCO Scheme, so that the role of competent authority under the Habitats Regulations falls to the Secretary of State.
- 6.3.9 Further details about the project are provided in Chapter 4 Description of the Works, whilst a summary of the NSIP works and associated development is provided in Table 4.3.
- 6.3.10 The application for DCO will be prepared in accordance with section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 and secondary legislation including the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Regulations. The request for the Scoping Opinion forms part of the pre-application stage. In preparing the application for the DCO, NSDC will have regard to the series of advice notes published by the Planning Inspectorate that provide information about the Planning Act 2008 process.

The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009

- 6.3.11 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 SI (as amended) (the "EIA Regulations") apply to this application as the scoping opinion for the DCO Scheme was sought whilst those Regulations were in force. NSDC is proposing to make its application to the Secretary of State in voluntary compliance with the replacement regulations to the EIA Regulations (the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/572/contents/made>)).
- 6.3.12 The Regulations set out the requirements for undertaking an EIA for a NSIP. The EIA Regulations provide that where development of a type listed in Annex 2 of the EIA Regulations is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects, the relevant Secretary of State (in the case of railways, the Secretary of State for Transport) cannot lawfully grant development consent for the development until they have taken into account the environmental information required by the EIA Regulations. Environmental information comprises the information required to be provided by the applicant in the form of an environmental statement ("ES"), including any further or other information, any representations made by specified consultees and any representations duly made by any other person about the environmental effects of the development.
- 6.3.13 An EIA is required for all Schedule 1 developments and for Schedule 2 developments which are *"likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location"*. Schedule 1 developments include *"construction of lines for long distance railway-traffic"*² and Schedule 2 developments include *"Construction of railways (unless included in Schedule 1)"*³. Schedule 3 to the EIA Regulations provides

² Schedule 1 to the EIA Regulations Section 7(a)

³ Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations Section 10(d)

criteria for determining whether a Schedule 2 development requires an EIA. Schedule 4 to the Regulations identifies the information to be included in the ES.

The Project is considered to be a Schedule 2 development which is likely to give rise to significant adverse effects and therefore is EIA Development.

National Policy Statements

- 6.3.14 Government advice on infrastructure proposals of national significance is variously published by the relevant Government department in the form of National Policy Statements (“NPS”). Where an NPS is in place section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the decision maker to decide on the application in accordance with the relevant NPS unless one or more of a number of listed factors apply. The National Policy Statement for National Networks (“NPSNN”) was adopted in December 2014.
- 6.3.15 Within its introductory paragraph the NPSNN confirms its role is to set out *"the need for, and Government's policies to deliver, development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) on the national road and rail networks in England. It provides planning guidance for promoters of nationally significant infrastructure projects on the road and rail networks, and the basis for the examination by the Examining Authority and decisions by the Secretary of State"* (paragraph 1.1). The DCO Scheme will be considered in relation to its compliance with NPSNN.
- 6.3.16 The Government's vision and strategic objectives for the national networks are described in the Summary of Need in Chapter 2 (page 9) of the NPSNN as follows:
- "The Government will deliver national networks that meet the country's long-term needs; supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of a wider transport system. This means:*
- *Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs.*
 - *Networks which support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety.*
 - *Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy.*
 - *Networks which join up our communities and link effectively to each other."*
- 6.3.17 The NPSNN recognises that the national rail network is integral to supporting economic growth, maintaining existing economic activity and facilitating passenger, business and leisure journeys. It states that:
- "Well-connected and high-performing networks with sufficient capacity are vital to meet the country's long-term needs and support a prosperous economy."* (paragraph 2.1).
- 6.3.18 The NPSNN identifies that travel demand for road and rail is expected to increase in the foreseeable future with economic and population growth (paragraph 2.4). Without action, this growth will in turn lead to a worsening in congestion and crowding, safety issues, constraining economic growth, worsening quality of life and environmental objectives (paragraph 2.9). Transportation networks can unlock regional economic growth and regeneration, by improving connectivity and performance, particularly in disadvantaged areas (paragraph 2.6).
- 6.3.19 Paragraph 2.29 of the NPSNN refers to the Government's vision for the transport system as a driver for economic growth and social development. It states the railway must:
- *"offer a safe and reliable route to work;*

- *facilitate increases in both business and leisure travel;*
 - *support regional and local public transport to connect communities with public services, with workplaces and with each other, and*
 - *provide for the transport of freight across the country, and to and from ports, in order to help meet environmental goals and improve quality of life."*
- 6.3.20 Paragraph 2.33 identifies that passenger demand on the rail network is predicted to continue its current trend of significant growth. This is supported by Table 2: Growth in Passenger km (in %) since 2011 including HS2 Phase 1, which identifies that by 2033 it is estimated that there will be a total average growth of 50.1%. Additionally, paragraph 2.34 details the growth in rail freight transportation, with the total tonne kilometres forecasted to grow by 3% annually to 2043. Rail freight is identified to be of strategic importance, with an increasingly significant role in logistics and an essential driver of economic growth.
- 6.3.21 At paragraph 2.35 the NPSNN goes on to confirm that it is the Government's view that rail transport has a crucial role to play in delivering significant reduction in pollution and congestion and concludes that there is a compelling need to develop the national networks (paragraph 2.36).
- 6.3.22 At paragraph 2.37 it states *"the Government's policy is to improve the capacity, capability, reliability and resilience of the rail network at key locations for both passenger and freight movements to reflect growth in demand, reduce crowding, improve journey times, maintain or improve operational performance and facilitate modal shift from road to rail..."* The other emphasis of the Government is to encourage modal shift to rail in the light of the need to reduce significantly national carbon dioxide ("CO2") emissions from the transport sector (paragraph 2.40).
- 6.3.23 Chapter 3 of the NPSNN provides further guidance on the Government's wider policies for national networks. The need to improve transport networks should be considered within the wider context of the Government's policy on economic performance, the environment, safety, technology, sustainable transport and accessibility, as well as journey reliability and the experience of road/rail users (paragraph 3.1). Paragraph 3.12 of the NPSNN deals with safety and states:
- 6.3.24 *"It is the Government's policy, supported by legislation, to ensure that the risks of passenger and workforce accidents are reduced so far as reasonably practicable. Rail schemes should take account of this and seek to further improve safety where the opportunity exists and where there is value for money in doing so by focussing domestic efforts on the achievement of the European Common Safety Targets."*
- 6.3.25 NSDC has sought to apply this policy in its treatment of level crossings over the railway, whether private or publicly accessible. No new level crossings will be created and all existing level crossings on the branch line are proposed to be closed, with the exception of the Ashton Vale Road Level Crossing. This all-purpose highway crossing is proposed to remain as with the hourly plus service, the duration of closure of the level crossing is considered to be acceptable, the existing level crossing already is equipped with full barriers and CCTV, giving the level crossing a very high safety rating, and the cost of providing a new all-purpose highway to replace the route from Winterstoke Road in to the Ashton Vale Industrial Estate would be significant.
- 6.3.26 Chapter 4 of the NPSNN establishes the assessment principles. The NPSNN requires an application for a transportation project to be accompanied by a transport business case, based on the Transport Business Case guidance and WebTAG guidance published by the Department for Transport ("DfT"). WebTAG combines the economic, environmental, and

- social appraisal of the development which is taken into consideration when deciding whether to finance the project (paragraph 4.5).
- 6.3.27 The NPSNN deals predominantly with linear infrastructure associated with road and rail development, which differ to other types of infrastructure covered by the Planning Act (paragraph 4.11). In considering applications for linear infrastructure, paragraph 4.12 states:
- “decision-makers will need to bear in mind the specific conditions under which such developments must be designed. The generic impacts section of this NPS has been written to take these differences into account.”*
- 6.3.28 An EIA will be required for projects likely to result in significant effects on the environment in accordance with the EIA Regulations. Where some details are still to be decided, the assessment needs to be based on a worse case to ensure that the potential impacts have been addressed properly. The Examining Authority needs to assure themselves that all the likely significant effects have been assessed and that any requests for additional information is proportionate and focussed on significant effects (paragraph 4.15).
- 6.3.29 The NPSNN records the obligation on the Secretary of State to ensure compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (“Habitats Regulations”) (paragraph 4.22). The Habitat Regulations set out a stage by stage process, known as the Habitat Regulations Assessment (“HRA”) to determine whether a project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. The first stage of the process involves screening to determine whether a project is likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of a European site alone or in combination with other plans and projects. If likely significant effects are identified then the decision-maker is required to go onto Stage 2 and to undertake an appropriate assessment to determine whether the project will have implications on the conservation objectives of the European site. If it will, then consent for the development can be granted at this stage only if it can be ascertained that the project will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site. Stages 3 and 4 become relevant if it cannot be ascertained that there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of the European site. This involves the consideration of alternative solutions and, if there are no alternatives, the process of determining whether imperative reasons of over-riding public importance and the provision of compensatory measures justify the grant of consent (paragraphs 4.26 and 4.27).
- 6.3.30 The development of a project and the assessment of effects needs to take account of good design principles (paragraphs 4.28 to 4.25) and adaptation to climate change (paragraphs 4.36 to 4.47). Any activities that are regulated under pollution control legislation will need to obtain the relevant consents before operation commences (paragraphs 4.48 to 4.56).
- 6.3.31 Consideration must also be given to possible sources of nuisance under section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, such as noise, and the means for mitigation (paragraphs 4.57 to 4.59). Paragraph 4.58 of the NPSNN states:
- “It is very important that during the examination of a nationally significant infrastructure project, possible sources of nuisance under section 79(1) of the 1990 Act, and how they may be mitigated or limited are considered by the Examining Authority so they can recommend appropriate requirements that the Secretary of State might include in any subsequent order granting development consent. More information on the consideration of possible sources of nuisance is at paragraphs 5.81-5.89.”*
- 6.3.32 Mitigation for those aspects of the DCO Scheme that may lead to claims under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 or other impacts of the construction and operation of the DCO Scheme are being considered and consulted on. They will be described in full in the DCO Application documentation.

- 6.3.33 The design of the railway and associated facilities should also take account of other safety regulations, industry guidance and regulatory guidance (paragraphs 4.67 to 4.73), security considerations (paragraphs 4.74 to 4.78), and the health and well-being and quality of life of the population (paragraphs 4.79 to 4.82).
- 6.3.34 Chapter 5 of the NPSNN identifies generic impacts associated with transport schemes, which will need to be assessed as part of the EIA (paragraphs 5.3 to 5.231). The impacts listed of relevance include air quality; carbon emissions; biodiversity and ecological conservation; waste management; flood risk; the historic environment; landscape and visual impacts; land use including open space, green infrastructure and Green Belt; noise and vibration; transport networks; and water quality and resources.
- 6.3.35 An initial assessment has been carried out for this PEI Report and is presented in each of the respective sections:

Air Quality and Carbon Emissions

- 6.3.36 The NPSNN requires the impacts of projects to be assessed as part of an environmental statement where a scheme is likely to have significant air quality effects in relation to meeting EIA requirements and / or affect the UK's ability to comply with the Air Quality Directive (paragraph 5.6).
- 6.3.37 Paragraph 5.7 requires an environmental statement to describe:
- *“existing air quality levels;*
 - *forecasts of air quality at the time of opening, assuming that the scheme is not built (the future baseline) and taking account of the impact of the scheme; and*
 - *any significant air quality effects, their mitigation and any residual effects, distinguishing between the construction and operation stages and taking account of the impact of road traffic generated by the project.”*

- 6.3.38 Paragraph 5.10 details the decision-making considerations for the Secretary of State in relation to air quality and states:

“The Secretary of State should consider air quality impacts over the wider area likely to be affected, as well as in the near vicinity of the scheme. In all cases the Secretary of State must take account of relevant statutory air quality thresholds set out in domestic and European legislation. Where a project is likely to lead to a breach of the air quality thresholds, the applicant should work with the relevant authorities to secure appropriate mitigation measures with a view to ensuring so far as possible that those thresholds are not breached.”

- 6.3.39 Further guidance regarding the type and scope of mitigation measures that could be considered are detailed in paragraph 5.15, which states:

“Mitigation measures may affect the project design, layout, construction, operation and/or may comprise measures to improve air quality in pollution hotspots beyond the immediate locality of the scheme. Measures could include, but are not limited to, changes to the route of the new scheme, changes to the proximity of vehicles to local receptors in the existing route, physical means including barriers to trap or better disperse emissions, and speed control. The implementation of mitigation measures may require working with partners to support their delivery.”

- 6.3.40 The assessment of air quality and carbon emissions and the DCO Scheme's compliance with NPSNN requirements are provided in Section 7 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases of this PEI Report.

Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation

- 6.3.41 The NPSNN requires an environmental statement to establish any likely significant effects on internationally, nationally and locally designated sites of ecological or geological conservation importance, including on protected species and habitats and those of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity (paragraph 5.22). In addition, paragraph 5.23 requires applicants to show how the project has taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests.
- 6.3.42 Paragraph 5.25 identifies the general principles that will be considered as part of the decision-making process. It states that:
- “development should avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through mitigation and consideration of reasonable alternatives... Where significant harm cannot be avoided or mitigated, as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.”*
- 6.3.43 The Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites, protected species, habitats and other species of principal importance, and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment (paragraph 5.26).
- 6.3.44 Guidance regarding mitigation is detailed in paragraph 5.36, which requires mitigation measures to form an integral part of the proposed development, including identifying where and how these will be secured. Mitigation measures that may have been agreed with Natural England will need to form part of the Secretary of State’s consideration.
- 6.3.45 The assessment of biodiversity and ecological conservation and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Section 9 Ecology and Biodiversity of this PEI Report.

Waste Management

- 6.3.46 The NPSNN details the requirements for assessing waste production, its management and disposal. Paragraph 5.42 states that:
- “The applicant should set out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced. The arrangements described should include information on the proposed waste recovery and disposal system for all waste generated by the development. The applicant should seek to minimise the volume of waste produced and the volume of waste sent for disposal unless it can be demonstrated that the alternative is the best overall environmental outcome.”*
- 6.3.47 Paragraph 5.43 details the process that should be followed and will be considered by the Secretary of State to ensure the proposed development includes for the effective management of hazardous and non-hazardous waste arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development, including:
- *“any such waste will be properly managed, both on-site and off-site;*
 - *the waste from the proposed facility can be dealt with appropriately by the waste infrastructure which is, or is likely to be, available. Such waste arisings should not have an adverse effect on the capacity of existing waste management facilities to deal with other waste arisings in the area; and*
 - *adequate steps have been taken to minimise the volume of waste arisings, and of the volume of waste arisings sent to disposal, except where an alternative is the most sustainable outcome overall.”*

- 6.3.48 The assessment of waste management and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Section 12 Materials and Waste of this PEI Report.

Flood Risk and Water Quality and Resources

- 6.3.49 The NPSNN establishes the assessment requirements for projects when considering flood risk. Paragraph 5.92 details when applications for projects should be accompanied by an FRA, with paragraph 5.94 detailing the requirements when preparing an FRA, which is consistent with NPPF guidance. The provision of an FRA and the application of the Sequential Test, in accordance with NPPF guidance, will be determining factors for the Secretary of State where flood risk may influence a project. Further the Secretary of State should be satisfied that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere and where proposals are located within areas at risk of flooding, it should be demonstrated that:

- *“within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; and*
- *development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed, including by emergency planning; and priority is given to the use of sustainable drainage systems.”*

- 6.3.50 Paragraph 5.102 identifies that the Secretary of State should expect the proposal to incorporate reasonable provisions to avoid, limit and reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed infrastructure and others; and to ensure that the infrastructure remains functional in the event of predicted flooding (paragraph 5.104).

- 6.3.51 With regards to mitigation, paragraph 5.110 states:

“To satisfactorily manage flood risk and the impact of the natural water cycle on people, property and ecosystems, good design and infrastructure may need to be secured using requirements or planning obligations. This may include the use of sustainable drainage systems but could also include vegetation to help to slow runoff, hold back peak flows and make landscapes more able to absorb the impact of severe weather events.”

- 6.3.52 Further requirements on the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (“SUDs”) for mitigation is provided in paragraphs 5.111 to 5.115.

- 6.3.53 The assessment of flood risk and water quality and resources and its compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 17 Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk and Appendix 17.1 Flood Risk Assessment in the PEI Report.

Historic Environment

- 6.3.54 The NPSNN directs applicants to undertake an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts of the proposed project where development is subject to EIA. Paragraph 5.127 details the requirements of the assessment and states:

- *“The applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant Historic Environment Record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.”*

- 6.3.55 In determining applications, the Secretary of State will seek to consider the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposed development, taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise provided (paragraph 5.128). The considerations associated with any harmful impact, including the partial and full loss of a heritage asset is provided in subsequent paragraphs (5.132 to 5.138).
- 6.3.56 Where the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, the Secretary of State will require the applicant to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost (wholly or in part) (paragraph 5.140). Further requirements associated with the documenting and recording evidence is provided in subsequent paragraphs 5.141 and 5.142.
- 6.3.57 The assessment of the historic environment and the DCO Scheme's compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Section 8 Cultural Heritage in this PEI Report.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ("LVIA"), Land Use and Green Belt

- 6.3.58 The NPSNN requires an assessment to be undertaken of any likely significant landscape and visual impacts where development is subject to EIA (paragraph 5.144). This should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies and take account of relevant local development document policy. Paragraph 5.145 details that assessments should include any significant effects on landscape components and landscape character during construction, at completion and throughout the operation of the project.
- 6.3.59 Paragraph 5.146 provides further detail on the scope of assessments, which should include:
- *"the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include any noise and light pollution effects, including on local amenity, tranquillity and nature conservation."*
- 6.3.60 Paragraphs 5.150 to 5.158 provide further detailed direction in relation to development proposed within nationally designated areas, whilst paragraph 5.156 identifies that outside nationally designated areas, there are high valued local landscapes that may be protected by local designation in a local development document. Policies including provisions on landscape character assessment, are to be given particular consideration. However, local landscape designations should not be used in themselves as reasons to refuse consent.
- 6.3.61 The Secretary of State's decision will reflect on all aspects of the design and the visual effects on sensitive receptors. Paragraph 5.157 identifies that the following considerations will be taken into account:
- *"the environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to avoid adverse effects on landscape or to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation."*
- 6.3.62 Paragraph 5.160 provides further detail in relation to appropriate mitigation measures to minimise the visual effects and adverse impacts on the environments. It states that:
- *"Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure, design (including choice of materials), and landscaping schemes, depending on the size and type of proposed project. Materials and designs for infrastructure should always be given careful consideration."*

- 6.3.63 With regards to land use including open space, green infrastructure and the Green Belt, paragraph 5.165 details the NPSNN requirements. It states that applicant should:
- *“identify existing and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing a development or use on a neighbouring site from continuing. Applicants should also assess any effects of precluding a new development or use proposed in the development plan. The assessment should be proportionate.”*
- 6.3.64 Paragraph 5.170 recognises that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt and such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Applicants are therefore required to demonstrate that their proposal does not constitute inappropriate development within the meaning of Green Belt policy.
- 6.3.65 Paragraph 5.171 acknowledges that linear infrastructure will often have to pass through Green Belt land as a means of connecting locations. It states that:
- *“The identification of a policy need for linear infrastructure will take account of the fact that there will be an impact on the Green Belt and as far as possible, of the need to contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts.”*
- 6.3.66 It is therefore recognised that national networks infrastructure projects located in the Green Belt may be appropriate development (paragraph 5.178). Consequently, the Secretary of State as part of the decision-making process will need to consider whether very special circumstances exist that would justify such inappropriate development and would outweigh the harm caused.
- 6.3.67 Paragraph 5.179 identifies that the direct effects of a project on existing uses or proposed uses near the site can be mitigated through the application of good design principles, including the layout of the project and the protection of soils during construction. Further, where green infrastructure is affected, paragraph 5.180 identifies that the project should be designed to:
- *“ensure the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained and any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to mitigate any adverse impact and, where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space, including appropriate access to new coastal access routes, National Trails and other public rights of way.”*
- 6.3.68 Paragraph 5.184 recognises that public rights of way are important recreational facilities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians and as such appropriate measures should be taken to mitigate adverse effects on public rights of way and where possible improve access. Further, it is noted that when considering revisions to an existing right of way the impact on its use, character, attractiveness and convenience should be considered.
- 6.3.69 The assessment of LVIA, land use and Green Belt and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 11 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in this PEI Report. The Planning Statement also provides a detailed assessment to support the determination that the DCO Scheme constitutes appropriate development within the Green Belt.

Noise and Vibration

- 6.3.70 Paragraph 5.189 states that where a development is subject to EIA and significant noise impacts are likely to arise from the proposed development, the applicant should include a noise assessment as part of the environment statement. It details a list of requirements that should be complied with when preparing an assessment, including:

- *“a description of the noise sources including likely usage in terms of number of movements, fleet mix and diurnal pattern. For any associated fixed structures, such as ventilation fans for tunnels, information about the noise sources including the identification of any distinctive tonal, impulsive or low frequency characteristics of the noise.*
 - *identification of noise sensitive premises and noise sensitive areas that may be affected.*
 - *the characteristics of the existing noise environment.*
 - *a prediction on how the noise environment will change with the proposed development:*
 - *in the shorter term, such as during the construction period;*
 - *in the longer term during the operating life of the infrastructure;*
 - *at particular times of the day, evening and night as appropriate.*
 - *an assessment of the effect of predicted changes in the noise environment on any noise sensitive premises and noise sensitive areas.*
 - *measures to be employed in mitigating the effects of noise.*
 - *Applicants should consider using best available techniques to reduce noise impacts.”*
- 6.3.71 Paragraph 5.193 identifies that as part of the Secretary of State’s decision- making process, developments must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise, including the Noise Policy Statement for England, NPPF and the associated planning guidance on noise.
- 6.3.72 Good design should be demonstrated, including through the optimisation of the layout to minimise noise and through the use of landscaping, bunds or noise barriers as a means of reducing or mitigating noise (paragraph 5.194). As part of the Secretary of State’s decision-making process consideration will be given to whether mitigation measures are required during both construction and operation over and above any proposed as part of the scheme (paragraph 5.197). Paragraph 5.198 details such measures as including one or more of the following:
- *“engineering: containment of noise generated;*
 - *materials: use of materials that reduce noise, (for example low noise road surfacing);*
 - *lay-out: adequate distance between source and noise-sensitive receptors; incorporating good design to minimise noise transmission through screening by natural or purpose built barriers;*
 - *administration: specifying acceptable noise limits or times of use (e.g., in the case of railway station PA systems).”*
- 6.3.73 The assessment of noise and vibration, and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 13 Noise and Vibration in this PEI Report.

Transport Networks

- 6.3.74 The NPSNN requires applicants to have regard to the policies set out in local plans (paragraph 5.203) and should consider reasonable opportunities to support other transport modes in developing infrastructure (paragraph 5.205). In relation to rail development paragraph 5.206 states that:

- *“if a development is subject to EIA and is likely to have significant environmental impacts arising from impacts on transport networks, the applicant’s environmental statement should describe those impacts and mitigating commitments.”*
- 6.3.75 Paragraph 5.212 requires schemes to be developed reflecting on the provisions of relevant local policies and local plans, and should utilise local models where appropriate. Notwithstanding this, it states that:
- *“the scheme must be decided in accordance with the NPS except to the extent that one or more of sub-sections 104(4) to 104(8) of the Planning Act 2008 applies.”*
- 6.3.76 With regards to mitigation measures, paragraph 5.215 requires such measures to be proportionate and reasonable, and should be focussed on promoting sustainable development. Mitigation measures in relation to rail development may be associated with the design, layout or operation of the scheme (paragraph 5.217).
- 6.3.77 The assessment of transport networks and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Section 16 Transport, Access and Non-Motorised Users in this PEI Report.
- 6.3.78 Finally, of note, the NPSNN Annex C: Maps of strategic rail freight network identifies the Portbury Freight Line as a strategic freight route with negligible interaction with passenger services and the Bristol to London main line as a strategic freight route with interaction with high speed passenger services.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 6.3.79 The NPPF published by DCLG in March 2012 sets out Government planning policies for England to achieve sustainable development and details how the policies are expected to be applied. The overarching aim of the NPPF is the achievement of sustainable development, with the planning system expected to contribute to this goal. Within this context, the NPPF places emphasis on contributing to a strong economy by ensuring that development supports growth and innovation, creating a high quality built environment that supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and development that protects and enhances the natural, built and historic environment.
- 6.3.80 The NPSNN notes that the NPPF is likely to be an important and relevant consideration in decisions on NSIPs, but only to the extent relevant to that project (paragraph 1.18). The NPPF is not intended to contain specific policies for NSIPs where quite particular considerations can apply (paragraph 1.19). The following summarises the relevant provisions of the NPPF, whilst further detailed consideration is provided within the Planning Statement and the corresponding sections of the PEI Report.
- 6.3.81 Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy, affirms Government’s commitment to the delivery of sustainable economic growth and paragraph 21 requires that the planning system should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth and should seek to address potential barriers to investment, including any lack of infrastructure provision.
- 6.3.82 Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport, and in particular paragraphs 30 and 31 support development that reduces greenhouse gases and reduces congestion, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport and develops strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure. Local planning authorities are required to identify and protect sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. There is also a requirement to ensure that, during the decision-making process, consideration has been given to maximising the use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 6.3.83 Section 7: Requiring good design, establishes that good design should be seen as a key aspect of sustainable development and integral to delivering good planning. Good design applies not only to individual buildings, public and private spaces, but also to wider area development schemes. The provisions in this section and particularly paragraph 58 seek to ensure that development is not only aesthetically attractive in appearance, but also that it functions well, optimises the potential of the site, and supports local facilities and transport networks. Whilst it is recognised that the visual appearance of development is important, during the decision-making process consideration will need to be given to the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment. Further, paragraph 65 states that infrastructure proposals which promote high levels of sustainability should not be refused planning permission by local planning authorities because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design. Paragraph 66 identifies that applicants who work closely with stakeholders and the local community to gain their input and allow them to influence the design process should be looked upon more favourably.
- 6.3.84 Section 8: Promoting healthy communities, identifies that development has a role in contributing to the promotion of healthy communities by providing safe integrated environments free from crime, deliver high levels of accessibility, and seek to protect and enhance public rights of way.
- 6.3.85 Section 9: Protecting green belt land, seeks to define and enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt land. Inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances where any harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations. However, paragraph 90 identifies certain forms of development that are not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt, including local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.
- 6.3.86 Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, provides more detailed guidance with regard to meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 100 details the required consideration to be given in relation to development and flood risk. It states, *“Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere”*.
- 6.3.87 The NPPF advocates local planning authorities to adopt the sequential test to ensure that development is focused away from flood risk areas. Paragraphs 101 and 102 of the NPPF outline this approach along with the exception test, should a location outside of flood risk not be feasible. Subsequently, paragraph 103 of the NPPF goes on to state that, *“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment”*.
- 6.3.88 Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, sets out the principles and requirements to protect and enhance the natural and local environment. In particular, paragraph 109 seeks to conserve and enhance valued landscapes, minimise the impacts on biodiversity, including providing net gains in biodiversity where possible; and remediating and mitigating unstable land.
- 6.3.89 Paragraph 118 identifies that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a number of principles. These principles include:

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted; and
 - opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.
- 6.3.90 Paragraph 121 details how planning policies and decisions should also ensure that a site is suitable for its new use taking account of ground conditions and land instability. Consideration should also be given to, “*natural hazards or former activities such as mining, pollution arising from previous uses and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation or impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation*”. Paragraph 123 goes on to state that “*Planning policies and decisions should aim to:*
- *avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;*
 - *mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions.*”
- 6.3.91 Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, specifically paragraph 128 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014)

- 6.3.92 The National Planning Policy for Waste sets out detailed waste planning policies and is intended to be read in conjunction with the NPPF, the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste. Paragraph 8 includes provisions which require local planning authorities to ensure that applicants that propose non-waste related development have given appropriate consideration to the implications of their proposal on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management. Applicants should ensure that their proposals are acceptable and will not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities. In addition, proposals should ensure that the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse / recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.

National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)

- 6.3.93 On 6 March 2014 DCLG launched the National Planning Practice Guidance (“NPPG”) as a web-based resource to provide planning guidance on a range of categories covering issues such as the Green Belt, flood risk, housing and employment and transport and infrastructure, along with guidance to assist with the preparation of local plans, determining planning applications, and the use of planning conditions. This guidance recognises the importance of local infrastructure planning in the development of healthy communities.

6.4 Regional Planning Framework

- 6.4.1 The Localism Act 2011 made provision for the removal of regional planning policy. The Regional Strategy for the South West (Revocation) Order 2013, which came into force on 20 May 2013, revoked the Regional Strategy for the South West. It also revoked all

directions made under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 preserving policies contained in structure plans within the area to which the Regional Spatial Strategy related, except for the direction made in September 2007 in respect of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration 1991-2011 which preserves Policy 6 (Bristol/Bath green belt). This policy therefore still forms part of the development plan and is a material consideration for determinations under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 until such time that it is replaced by other policies in emerging plans.

- 6.4.2 There is the intention from NSDC, BCC, B&NES and SGC to prepare a Joint Spatial Plan (“JSP”), which will provide a strategic planning framework for the West of England. It will be used to inform local plan reviews and set out objectives for the overall quantum of housing and jobs to be delivered within the West of England, including their distribution across the sub-region, the overall spatial strategy, strategic priorities, and strategic infrastructure necessary to support the deliver the strategy. A Pre-commencement Document was published in December 2014 followed by a further consultation between November 2015 and January 2016 on the Issues and Options for the JSP and key issues for a Joint Transport Study (“JTS”).
- 6.4.3 Subsequently, consultation on the Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study – Draft Strategy for Consultation commenced in November 2016 with adoption anticipated for 2018. Once adopted the JSP will form a statutory development plan document.
- 6.4.4 This latest draft of the JSP sets out a joint framework to deliver development across the West of England up to 2036 and is supported by the JTS which establishes a set of integrated proposals for future transport investment to address existing deficiencies as well as the future impact of development supported by the JSP.
- 6.4.5 The JSP establishes a vision and four strategic priorities which seek to deliver a more integrated and reliable transport network, to support sustainable economic growth and healthy and sustainable lifestyles for all communities. Five spatial implications are identified as arising from the strategic priorities, comprising:
- “1. Economic rebalancing to help address inequality, improve accessibility to jobs, support economic growth, and address unsustainable commuting patterns by aligning jobs and homes*
 - 2. Sufficient land should be identified to meet the needs of development including:*
 - *Deliver the housing needed at a range of sustainable locations*
 - *Facilitate economic growth of both existing employment centres such as the Enterprise Zones and Enterprise Areas and in new locations which will most successfully deliver the appropriate scale and type of jobs and contribution to the West of England economy.*
 - *Recognise the need for affordable housing delivery in accessible locations close to employment centres and other services and close to where the need arises.*
 - 3. Retention of the overall function of the Bristol & Bath Green Belt as set out in the NPPF.*
 - 4. The environmental quality of the West of England is maintained and enhanced by*
 - *Planning positively to ensure that development encourages and does not restrict the benefits the natural environment can provide.*
 - *Ensuring no net loss to biodiversity and enhancing ecosystem service provision.*
 - *To develop a more resilient environment to help tackle the challenges of future climate change.*

5. Strategic development should be in locations which maximise the potential to reduce the need to travel or where travel is necessary, maximise opportunities to travel by sustainable, non-car modes, especially walking and cycling. The focus of new transport infrastructure should address both existing challenges and create capacity for sustainable growth. Or be in places accessible to existing or new high quality public transport links.”

- 6.4.6 Table 1 goes on to detail the intentions for future development, including the strategic locations and rationale for their inclusion in the JSP.
- 6.4.7 Subsequently, consideration is then given to likely mitigation and infrastructure that would be required to support the strategy. It recognises the issues faced in terms of an increasing volume of travel, which contributes to increased journey times and congestion and has resulting implications for sustainable economic growth. It identifies the importance that transport investment can have in terms of addressing this trend, mitigating existing deficiencies and supporting future development aspirations. Key to this is prioritising and maximising the effectiveness of sustainable travel choices and encouraging a modal shift to more sustainable means, with improved reliability of service and access to rail, MetroBus (bus rapid transit), park and ride, bus, cycling and walking provisions. Paragraph 57 identifies that rail will have a key role to access facilities in urban centres, but will need investment to increase capacity, improve access to stations with sufficient parking and support the creation of interchanges.
- 6.4.8 The JTS builds on the provisions within the JSP and sets out a transport vision for the West of England, which reflects the existing and future challenges on the transport network. It reflects on recent and planned improvements to both the strategic road network and the rail network, including proposals for the redevelopment of Bristol Temple Meads station. In particular, it identifies that there is a clear programme of investment for further schemes including MetroWest and MetroBus, which aim to provide stronger links to the West of England’s priority development sites within the Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas.

6.5 Local Planning Framework

- 6.5.1 The local planning framework comprises a number of key adopted documents which form the statutory development plan for each authority, against which proposals seeking planning permission are assessed. These policy documents comprise saved policies from extant Local Plans as well as new emerging policy documents.
- 6.5.2 Whilst emerging plans and the policies and proposals contained within them do not form part of the development plan until adopted, depending on the stage at which such documents have reached in the plan preparation process they may be held as material considerations in the determination of applications for development. The further advanced such documents are, the more weight they carry. It is also recognised that during the formulation of a preferred option for the DCO Scheme, the planning context may evolve and as a consequence, emerging documents of potentially significant influence are described in the following sections.

MetroWest Phase 1 affects all four West of England Authorities whilst the DCO Scheme lies within the jurisdiction of two of the local planning authorities, NSDC and BCC. The following subsections summarise the local planning framework for NSDC and BCC. The main planning policies relevant to the DCO Scheme are presented in Figure 6-1 Sheets 1 to 5.

North Somerset District Council

- 6.5.3 The statutory development plan for North Somerset comprises the following documents:

- North Somerset Council Core Strategy (April 2012)
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (July 2016)
- Saved policies from the Replacement Local Plan (March 2007)
- Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013 – 2033 (May 2015)
- West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (2011)

6.5.4 Other material planning policy considerations include the following documents.

6.5.5 Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan (Publication Version)

- The Publication Version identifies detailed allocations required to meet the development aspirations of the Core Strategy including the review of existing sites and identification of new sites and designations, along with safeguards for local green space, strategic gaps, or other protective designations, although it does not include any allocations relating to transport infrastructure. Its key focus is on the delivery of future housing with the distribution reflecting the North Somerset Core Strategy spatial strategy, which focuses the majority of growth to the Weston urban area and with decreasing proportions at towns and service villages. However, paragraph 4.25 identifies the factors that have been considered to determine the suitability of employment allocations, which includes: strategic access; and proximity to train station and or bus connections. Consequently, the DCO Scheme provides an influential factor in the consideration of the location and scale of future economic development and growth.
- Consultation was undertaken on the Publication Version of the Part 2 Plan between 7 November and 19 December 2016. It was subsequently submitted to the planning inspectorate for examination on 24 February 2017 with the hearing sessions taking place between 16 and 18 May. Following the close of the hearing the Inspector issued further written guidance relating to the delivery of housing on 26 June 2017. The Inspector requested further work to be undertaken in relation to housing supply in order to make the plan sound. The Council provided an initial response to this letter on 20 July 2017, setting out a timetable for the further work, including the identification and assessment of additional housing sites. The Council's formal response to the Inspector's letter of 26 June was considered by Executive Committee on 5 September 2017.

6.5.6 Supplementary Planning Documents ("SPD")

- Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places SPD (March 2015): Outlines measures for achieving sustainable buildings and places, including detailed guidance on the implementation of policies for energy efficiency in both new and existing buildings, renewable and low carbon energy generation, SUDS and on the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method ("BREEAM").
- Parking Standards SPD (November 2013): This SPD provides further clarification and interpretation of Core Strategy Policy CS11 (Parking) regarding the appropriate parking standards for new development.
- Travel Plans SPD (November 2010): This SPD sets out the requirements for the provision of Travel Plans and is intended to support policies GDP5 and T/11 of the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and Core Strategy Policy CS10.
- Biodiversity and Trees SPD (December 2005): This is intended to provide additional guidance to applicants by supplementing the policies and proposals relating to

biodiversity in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan and seeks to further the actions of Biodiversity Action Plans.

- Landscape Character Assessment SPD (December 2005): The main purpose of this assessment is to document the current status of the North Somerset landscape, furthering the understanding of the landscape resource available in the area and giving an indication of areas in need of enhancement and of conservation.

6.5.7 Other Planning Guidance

- Forest of Avon – A Guide for Developers (October 2005): This SPD has its basis in replacement local plan policy relating to new developments in the Forest of Avon and the requirement for new tree planting.

6.5.8 Guidance notes for Ecological Surveys

- Bat survey requirements – The leaflet provides information on bat survey requirements to enable the Council to consider planning applications. It identifies that a bat survey is required when there is ‘reasonable likelihood’ of bat roosts being present and impacted by a proposal and identifies the level of information required to support a planning application.

6.5.9 Emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans (“NDP”)

- Portbury NDP: NSDC approved an application from Portbury Parish Council to designate Portbury as a neighbourhood area. A future NDP is intended to be prepared for this area.
- Pill/Easton-in-Gordano and Abbots Leigh NDP: NSDC approved a joint application from Pill/Easton-in-Gordano and Abbots Leigh Parish Councils to designate the two parishes as a combined neighbourhood area. A future NDP is intended to be prepared for this area.

6.5.10 Of these plans, the policies within the Core Strategy, the saved policies of the Replacement Local Plan, the policies within the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies and the policies within the Long Ashton NDP are considered to be of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme.

North Somerset Council Core Strategy (April 2012)

6.5.11 The Core Strategy sets out the broad long-term vision, objectives and strategic planning policies for North Somerset up to 2026. It was the subject of a legal challenge in 2012 in respect of housing supply figures and was remitted to the Planning Inspectorate for re-examination. The hearings took place in March 2014 and as a result of the inspector's findings Main Modifications to Policy CS13 were consulted on between September and November 2014. The inspector called additional hearings in January 2015 and provided his final report in March 2015. North Somerset Council subsequently asked the Secretary of State to intervene in this decision and received a response on 18 September 2015 which confirmed that he agreed with the inspector's conclusion that the housing requirement figure for the plan period was appropriate. This decision therefore had the effect of making Policy CS13 part of the development plan.

6.5.12 Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.1. An assessment of the DCO Scheme's compliance with these policies is provided in Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement.

Table 6.1: Summary of adopted policies from the NSDC Core Strategy

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
CS1	Addressing climate change and carbon reduction	An overarching policy to encourage implementation of measures to reduce CO ₂ , through design, use of walking, public transport and reuse of land.
CS2	Delivering sustainable design and construction	Requires new development to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable design and construction
CS3	Environmental impacts and flood risk management	An overarching policy aimed at directing developments away from flood plains.
CS4	Nature conservation	Promotes the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through various measures.
CS5	Landscape and the historic environment	Emphasis on protecting the character, distinctiveness, diversity and quality of North Somerset's landscape and townscape while also conserving the historic environment.
CS9	Green infrastructure	Has the objective of protecting and expanding the provision of green infrastructure throughout North Somerset.
CS10	Transportation and movement	This policy references the reopening of the Portishead to Bristol line for passenger services, which is a priority objective, and outlines the criteria which transport schemes have to fulfil.
CS11	Parking	Requires parking to be provided to meet the needs of the expected users, delivering a balance between good urban design, highway safety, residential amenity and promoting town centre attractiveness and vitality.
CS12	Achieving high quality design and place-making	Seeks to provide high quality buildings and places that should function well, support sustainable land uses and seek to improve the image of the area.
CS20	Supporting a Successful Economy	This policy sets out the aspirations and requirements for future economic development, identifying the quantum of developable employment land available over the plan period along with the general distribution across North Somerset.
CS24	Royal Portbury Dock	Maintain and enhance the role of Royal Portbury Dock. Includes ongoing safeguarding of land at Court House Farm for port uses.
CS26	Supporting healthy living and the provision of health care facilities	Sets out the requirements for Health Impact Assessments of developments and health impacts of developments to the wider community. Point 1 of the policy states that all "large scale developments" require a Health Impact Assessment ("HIA").
CS31	Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead	Identifies the quantum of development to be delivered in these towns, with particular regard to the delivery of housing and employment land. The policy seeks to prioritise previously developed land and provides support to sustainable transport proposals, emphasising that the re-opening of a rail/rapid transit link from Portishead to Bristol is a particular priority.
CS32	Service Villages	Identifies the service villages and establishes what development will be supported in these locations. In particular, transport proposals are supported where they would increase accessibility by public transport, community transport, cycling and walking.

North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (Saved policies) (March 2007)

- 6.5.13 The North Somerset Replacement Local Plan was adopted in 2007 primarily to "*develop the policies and general proposals of the Structure Plan for the period to 2011 and relate them to precise areas of land where appropriate*".
- 6.5.14 Whilst many of the policies in the Replacement Local Plan have been superseded by the Core Strategy and Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies, the remaining saved policies still remain a material consideration in the determination of new development proposals until these policies are replaced by the emerging Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations Plan. The remaining Replacement Local Plan policies of relevance to the DCO Scheme aim to safeguard land for future employment development and protect amenity areas of public value.
- 6.5.15 Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Summary of extant planning policy in the Replacement Local Plan

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
ECH/1	Amenity areas and gateways to settlements	Aims to protect amenity areas of public value from unacceptable harm or loss.
E/5	Safeguarded Employment Areas	This policy identifies land that has been safeguarded for future employment development.

Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (July 2016)

- 6.5.16 The development management policies are generic policies that are used when assessing a range of planning applications and development proposals. The document does not contain site allocations, which are detailed in Part 2, but instead focuses on a broad range of development issues such as the Green Belt, major transport schemes, development in the countryside and retailing.
- 6.5.17 The Publication Version of the Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State and has undergone Examination which concluded in November 2015. The Plan has recently undergone consultation on Main Modifications to the Plan, which incorporated changes to policy as a consequence of comments received on the Publication Version and amendments proposed by the Council and the Inspector following the examination. The plan was adopted by full Council on 19 July 2016. Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Summary of adopted policy in the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
DM1	Flooding and drainage	Aims to discourage inappropriate development in flood risk areas and to ensure that the impact of new development on flooding is fully taken into account. SUDs are expected for all major developments; alternatives will only be permitted where SUDs are impractical or would compromise the scheme viability and the alternative does not conflict with national planning policy.
DM3	Conservation Areas	Seeks to protect conservations areas and their setting from inappropriate development.
DM4	Listed Buildings	Seeks to protect listed buildings and their setting from inappropriate development.
DM5	Historic Parks and Gardens	Includes provisions to ensure that development proposals will not adversely affect designated landscape character within the district including both nationally registered and unregistered Historic Parks and Gardens.
DM6	Archaeology	Seeks to ensure that new development will not significantly impact on archaeological remains or their setting.
DM7	Non-designated heritage assets	Seeks to protect non-designated heritage assets and their setting from inappropriate development.
DM8	Nature Conservation	Seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity, particularly on sites of recognised nature conservation interest. To protect trees, hedges and other landscape features of amenity value and to secure suitable replacements in instances where their loss is justified.
DM10	Landscape	Includes provisions to ensure that development proposals will not adversely affect designated landscape character within the district including both nationally registered and unregistered Historic Parks and Gardens. Development will also be required to be carefully integrated into the environment, conserve and enhance vegetation characteristic, respect the historic landscape and include appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments.
DM12	Development within the Green Belt	Provides detailed guidance in relation to the types of new development which are considered to be not inappropriate development and therefore acceptable in the Green Belt, along with provisions relating to redevelopment of sites on previously developed land.
DM19	Green Infrastructure	Requires development proposals to contribute to the quality of the environment, through the creation of high quality well designed and accessible green infrastructure, which should be provided in line with the phasing of development and include provisions for maintenance.
DM21	Motorway Junctions	Provides protection to land at existing motorway junctions for potential future capacity improvements.
DM22	Existing and proposed railway lines	Existing and proposed railway lines will safeguard land for the proposed route.
DM24	Safety, traffic and provision of infrastructure associated with development	Seeks to ensure that new development will not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or inhibit necessary access for emergency, public transport, service or waste collection vehicles. Development proposals will need to incorporate measures to mitigate the impact of development which would give rise to a significant detrimental impact on travel patterns or exacerbates existing transport problems.

Table 6.3: Summary of adopted policy in the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
DM25	Public rights of way, pedestrian and cycle access	Seeks to protect and enhance the existing public rights of way network and strategic cycle routes and ensure the provision of new and improved multi-user routes connecting with new developments.
DM28	Parking Standards	Identifies that development proposals should meet the Council's standards for the parking of motor vehicles and bicycles. Where development is not covered by these standards, assessment will be carried out according to individual circumstances with regard being given to the provisions of any submitted Travel Plan.
DM29	Car Parks	Aims to ensure that new development is provided with adequate parking, which meets the needs of intended users and that parking problems are not created or exacerbated in the surrounding area.
DM49	Royal Portbury Dock	Safeguards land for port related uses associated with the Royal Portbury Dock at Court House Farm subject to proposals meeting the criteria set out in the policy. These include the requirement to demonstrate that development would not prejudice proposals for a possible future station and associated parking facilities off Royal Portbury Dock Road associated with the operation of the Portishead to Bristol line.
DM68	Protection of sporting, recreation and community facilities	Protection of existing land and sites and development only allowed where certain conditions apply. Designated community assets shall be retained in community use.

Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013 – 2033 (May 2015)

- 6.5.18 The Long Ashton NDP covers the parish of Long Ashton. The eastern boundary extends to the river Avon and includes a short section of the DCO Scheme through Leigh Woods.
- 6.5.19 The Long Ashton NDP seeks to ensure that Long Ashton remains separate from Bristol both physically and administratively. The policies within the plan reflect this as well as the intentions to maintain the status of the surrounding Green Belt, along with a sense of community and identity not withstanding its proximity to the city.
- 6.5.20 Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Summary of adopted policy in the Long Ashton NDP

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
LC3	Local green space	Identifies areas designated as Local Green Space, which includes the Ashton Court Estate (covering the area which lies within Long Ashton Parish). The policy states that development on these areas will not be permitted unless it enhances the existing use and community value or in very special circumstances.
ENV1	Area of Separation	Designates an Area of Separation that is required to remain open in aspect in order to maintain an actual and visual separation between the City of Bristol and the parish of Long Ashton. This area lies within the Green Belt and development contrary to Green Belt policies that threatens the open and rural aspect will not be permitted.
ENV5	Conserve and enhance areas of value to nature or landscape	States that any development proposal must conserve and enhance the wildlife, biodiversity and historic assets of the village. Nightingale Valley and Stokeleigh Camp is identified as an area of local ecological and landscape value.

Bristol City Council

- 6.5.21 The statutory development plan for BCC is the Bristol Local Plan comprising the following suite of documents, which are used alongside the NPPF to guide development in the city:
- Bristol Core Strategy (Adopted June 2011): The Bristol Core Strategy is part of the Local Plan (formerly the Local Development Framework), which sets out the overall approach and spatial strategy for future development in Bristol and provides the overarching strategic policy and guidance to deliver sustainable communities and economic growth across the City. The Core Strategy replaces a number of strategic policies saved from the 1997 Plan.
 - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014): This document incorporates site allocations for development, policy designations and development management policies. It forms part of the Bristol Local Plan and will seek to deliver the policies of the Core Strategy. It also replaces a number of saved policies from the 1997 Plan.
 - Bristol Central Area Plan (Adopted March 2015): This document sets out development management policies and designations covering issues relevant to the City Centre, central Bristol and its neighbourhoods, including the identification of sites for development and land that intended to be safeguarded.
 - West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (Adopted March 2011): The Joint Waste Core Strategy guides decisions about where waste management facilities should be located within the West of England.
- 6.5.22 Supplementary Planning Guidance
- PAN 2 - Conservation Area Enhancement Statements (November 1993) – seeks to protect and enhance whole areas with architectural or historic character and details the Clifton Conservation Area and is accompanied by the Conservation Area 5 - Clifton & Hotwells Character Appraisal & Management Proposals.
- 6.5.23 Of these plans, the policies within the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies and those saved in the Local Plan are considered to be of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme and are considered in further detail below.

Bristol Core Strategy (June 2011)

- 6.5.24 The Core Strategy sets the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives for Bristol up to 2026, identifying the future development intentions and strategy for the city and its neighbourhoods. It provides a Delivery Strategy which identifies the means of delivering the vision and objectives and includes a spatial strategy which contains the Council's strategic policies for different parts of the city. It sets out the type, scale and broad location of where new homes, transport improvements, jobs, shops, open spaces and services will be located during the plan period, and incorporates a number of development principles that will ensure new development addresses key issues faced by the city. Whilst the Core Strategy does not set out site-specific proposals or allocations it does cover the broad locations for delivering new development.
- 6.5.25 Those policies within the Bristol City Council Core Strategy of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.4. An assessment of the DCO Scheme's compliance with these policies are provided in Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement.

Table 6.5: Summary of adopted policy from the Bristol Core Strategy

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
BCS1	South Bristol	Strategic policy which has the overall objective to regenerate south Bristol and focus development within the existing built up area connected by high quality transport networks.
BCS6	Green Belt	This policy indicates the broad extent of the Green Belt within Bristol and the approach to development within it, following the principles set out in national planning policy.
BCS8	Delivering a thriving economy	Sets out the quantum and distribution of employment land that will be supported across the City, with a particular focus for future economic development in the city centre and to the south of Bristol, including within major regeneration areas in South Bristol.
BCS9	Green Infrastructure	The City Council aims to increase the connectivity of the strategic green infrastructure network, retain and prevent its loss.
BCS10	Transport and Access Improvements	This policy confirms the support for the reopening of the Portishead to Bristol Rail Line.
BCS13	Climate Change	Requires the impact from development on climate change to be taken into account and requires development to mitigate its impact on climate change and adapt to the effects of climate change, such as through measures that include the efficient use of natural resources in construction.
BCS15	Sustainable Design and Construction	This policy aims to ensure that new developments minimise their environmental impact and emissions of CO ₂ . <i>“Sustainable design and construction will be integral to new development in Bristol. In delivering sustainable design and construction, development should address the following key issues: waste and recycling during construction and in operation; conserving water resources; the type, life cycle and source of materials to be used; and flexibility and adaptability, allowing future modification of use or layout, facilitating future refurbishment and retrofitting.”</i>
BCS16	Flood Risk and Water Management	This policy sets out the Council’s approach to minimising the risk and impact of flooding in the context of new development. All development will be expected to incorporate measures to reduce surface water runoff, including the use of SUDs, to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
BCS22	Conservation and the Historic Environment	This policy seeks to protect heritage assets and their character and setting from inappropriate development, giving specific regard to: scheduled ancient monuments; historic buildings; historic parks and gardens; conservation areas; and archaeological remains.
BCS23	Pollution	Requires development to be sited and designed so as to maintain environmental amenity with regards to noise, dust, vibration, and odour, and to prevent pollution and contamination of air, land and water.

Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (July 2014)

- 6.5.26 To support the delivery of the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, incorporates development management policies, designations and site allocations that will deliver the strategic policies and principles of the Core Strategy.

- 6.5.27 The detailed development management policies will be applied by the Council when assessing planning applications. The designations identify land that is intended to be safeguarded from development such as for open space or transport infrastructure, or where specific policies apply, whilst the site allocations identify sites that are intended to be allocated for development for particular land uses such as homes, business and mixed-use developments. The intention is to provide clarity to applicants and the local community regarding the land uses on specific sites that are acceptable in principle to the Council. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies replace a number of saved Local Plan policies.
- 6.5.28 Those policies within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.6: Summary of adopted policy in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
DM1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development	Policy reflects the core planning principles set out in the NPPF that a positive approach will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
DM13	Development proposals on Principal Industrial and Warehousing Areas	The policy identifies that sites are to be retained for industrial and warehousing uses and seeks to protect these sites from inappropriate alternative uses.
DM17	Development Involving Existing Green Infrastructure	The Core Strategy seeks to conserve existing green infrastructure assets. This policy sets out the detailed approach to this where further detail to support the Core Strategy is required.
DM19	Development and Nature Conservation	Seeks to ensure that consideration is given to the likely impact that development could have upon habitat, species or features, which contribute to nature conservation in Bristol, and that appropriate mitigation is provided where such impacts would occur.
DM23	Transport Development Management	This policy sets out the transport and traffic considerations that development proposals should address, including parking standards for non-residential development. It also seeks to ensure that new development is accessible by sustainable transport methods such as walking, cycling and public transport.
DM24	Transport Schemes	The policy details a number of infrastructure projects, including rapid transit schemes and rail, Park and Ride and highway improvements. These proposals reflect the schemes set out in the West of England Partnership's Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026) and the purpose of the policy is to safeguard land required for the implementation of these schemes, which includes safeguarding railway sites and associated land for passenger and rail freight purposes.
DM25	Greenways	The policy sets out how development proposals should facilitate and, where possible, improve access to the network of 'Greenways' in and around Bristol.
DM31	Heritage Assets	The policy identifies that development that has an impact upon a heritage asset will be expected to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the asset or its setting.

Table 6.6: Summary of adopted policy in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
DM33	Pollution Control, Air Quality and Water Quality	Seeks to ensure that development will not unacceptably impact on environmental amenity, air quality or water quality as a consequence of pollution emanating from new developments.
DM34	Contaminated Land	Requires development to demonstrate that it will not contaminate land and that where existing contamination exists appropriate mitigation will be implemented to ensure that there will be no unacceptable risk to the site or its surroundings.
DM35	Noise Mitigation	This policy identifies that development that would have an unacceptable impact on environmental amenity or biodiversity by reason of noise will be expected to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation.
SA1	Site Allocations	This policy allocates specific sites for development and identifies the type of development considered appropriate for the site.

Bristol Central Area Plan

- 6.5.29 The Central Area Plan sets out Development Management policies that detail policies to be used by the Council when assessing planning applications. These cover issues relevant to the City Centre and central Bristol, key areas of change including sites for development within the City Centre and development approaches to Neighbourhoods. The Plan also identifies designations for land intended to be safeguarded and where specific policies are to be applied.
- 6.5.30 The scope of the DCO works do not extend into the boundary of the Central Area Plan and therefore the policies of the Plan have not been considered further.

6.6 Other Relevant Strategies and Plans

Network Rail Plans and Strategies

Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy March 2010 – Network Rail

- 6.6.1 Sets out the strategic vision for the future of the Great Western section of the rail network. Route Utilisation Strategies (“RUS”) seek to establish the strategic direction of the railway and balance capacity, passenger and freight demand, operational performance and cost whilst addressing the requirements of funders and stakeholders. Network Rail is developing a programme of RUSs, in conjunction with rail industry partners and wider stakeholders, which when complete, will cover the entire rail network in Great Britain. This programme of RUSs includes a Network RUS which reviews national issues such as stations, depots, rolling stock and electrification as well as presenting scenarios and forecasts for long distance passenger and freight markets with the established Freight RUS providing a strategy to meet anticipated freight demand to 2014.
- 6.6.2 The Great Western RUS sets out the strategic vision for this section of the network with the focal element being the Great Western Main Line (“GWML”). This covers over 320 miles and provides main line links from London to the West of England and South Wales. The scope area adjoins the routes of the South West Main Line; Wessex; South and Central Wales and Borders; Chilterns and the West Midlands. The RUS area plays a crucial role in the core cross-country network, linking the South Coast, Thames Valley, West Country,

South Wales and South Midlands with the Midlands, Greater Manchester, Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland.

- 6.6.3 The RUS identifies a number of more specific studies and proposals which have been undertaken by various stakeholders that have also contributed supportive information to the RUS. This includes reference to North Somerset Council's Portishead Rail Line Study and identifies that the reopening of the Portishead line A scheme is undergoing evaluation into the, reopening of, *'six kilometres of disused railway between the current limit of the line adjacent to the Portbury Dock boundary (Portbury Jn) and Portishead town centre with the conversion of the current freight only line to passenger status.'*
- 6.6.4 The RUS confirms that the reopened line is being promoted by North Somerset Council and would support both a passenger service to operate between Portishead and Bristol Temple Meads and freight services for Portbury Docks, which forms part of a wider West of England Partnership promoted Bristol area bid under the Transport Innovation Fund ("TIF") and is currently being developed to GRIP stage 3 (Option Selection). The South West Regional Development Agency ("SWRDA") has also submitted a bid for £25 million as a contribution to the scheme as part of their medium term commitments (2014 – 2019) in the South West Regional Funding advice for 2009 to 2019.
- 6.6.5 The RUS also details the West of England Transport Carbon Emissions Study, which is the second of the studies for the West of England that will assess the impact of transport investment on climate change. It states that, *'the study will consider the impacts of the sub-regions major scheme programme and particularly investment in public transport, on greenhouse gas emissions and the possible contribution of modal shift towards related national targets'*. The major scheme programme for the West of England includes the Portishead rail corridor.
- 6.6.6 The RUS identifies that in June 2009, the Association of Train Operating Companies ("ATOC") published their 'Connecting Communities: Expanding access to the rail network' report which reviews options for capacity enhancements through other means such as links to (or new stations on) existing lines, by utilising freight lines (current or closed) as well as through railway land left by line closures and capacity reductions of the 1960s and 70s. Within the RUS area, the ATOC report supports the reopening of the Portishead line for passenger services.

Long Term Planning Process (Regional Urban Markets) Study October 2013 – Network Rail

- 6.6.7 This study has been developed jointly with the wider rail industry including passenger and freight operators, Passenger Transport Executives, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Department for Transport and Welsh Government and sets out how demand for passenger and freight movement by rail is expected to change in Great Britain over the next 30 years.
- 6.6.8 The study identifies the role of this passenger market in achieving the key priorities of current and potential future national and regional funders over the long term. These priorities are the strategic goals that the Regional Urban market should aim to meet over this period and include:
- Enabling economic growth
 - Reducing carbon and the transport sector's impact on the Environment
 - Improving the quality of life for communities and individuals
 - Improving affordability and value for money for Government and other funders

- 6.6.9 With regards to the Exeter to Bristol route, it is identified as a key business to business flow in the South West. Its conditional output is considered in the Long Distance Market Study, which proposes improved journey time to improve business to business connectivity and enable economic growth in these areas.
- 6.6.10 It states that, *'rail services between Taunton and Bristol Temple Meads help to accommodate demand for leisure and commuting journeys by rail. 17,000 jobs are planned at the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone close to Bristol Temple Meads. There are aspirations to reopen the Portishead line to passenger operators'*.
- 6.6.11 The study identifies that the next stage will involve the development of Route Studies, which will develop options in each of Network Rail's devolved routes to test them against funders' appraisal criteria. The output will be a series of choices for funders to consider.

Other National Strategies and Plans

The 10 Year Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy for North Somerset 2007

- 6.6.12 The Strategy aims to achieve economic development and regeneration in the local area based on *"economic, social and environmental sustainability (to support the development of sustainable communities)"*.
- 6.6.13 The strategy outlines a number of objectives that aim to utilise transport improvements as a means to achieve this overarching aim, including:
- Objective A sets out to deliver a more sustainable approach to economic development and regeneration through improving transport infrastructure to minimise cost of congestion benefits to business. Integrated and improved public transport is considered central to achieving this.
 - Objective E outlines how the local authority will address economic exclusion in North Somerset via transport initiatives.
- 6.6.14 With specific reference to Portishead, the Strategy identifies a requirement for land for office development and aims to promote employment and commercial projects in Portishead. Such development could take advantage of any transport infrastructure improvements in the area, including the reopening of the Portishead line. Indeed, during the consultation process for the Strategy stakeholders expressed a desire for a rail link between Bristol and Portishead.

Transforming Places; Changing Lives: Taking Forward the Regeneration Framework (May 2009)

- 6.6.15 This report, prepared by DCLG, sets out a package of proposals that aim to shape the way that regeneration is carried out in the future in England. It contains a renewed focus on ensuring that regeneration tackles the underlying economic challenges to increase social mobility, with a specific focus on the following priority outcomes:
- improving economic performance and tackling worklessness, particularly in the most deprived areas;
 - creating the right conditions for business growth which could include investment in infrastructure, land use, and a better public realm;
 - creating sustainable places where people want to live and work, and where businesses want to invest.

- 6.6.16 The report indicates that regeneration investment should be targeted at creating new jobs or helping people to access jobs over the long term, in order to tackle the underlying economic causes of deprivation.

Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential (2010)

- 6.6.17 The Local Growth White Paper outlines the Government's proposals to decentralise many services, empowering local communities to create their own entrepreneurial local economies, with active support from the private sector. It aims to encourage economic recovery by:
- Shifting power to local communities and businesses;
 - Promoting efficient and dynamic markets by increasing confidence to invest, and;
 - Focusing on supporting investment that will have a long term impact on growth.
- 6.6.18 As outlined in the Local Growth White Paper, the Government recognises the importance of economic growth for supporting economic recovery, for giving people throughout the country new opportunities, and for making sure that the UK is well placed for competing in an expanding global economy. The focus of the White Paper is on private sector led economic recovery at a localised level.
- 6.6.19 The White Paper highlights transport schemes as a key area for investment. The rationale for delivering such schemes is that they act as enablers for innovation, help to create jobs and are essential to successful economic growth and recovery. The White Paper also recognises the importance of improving accessibility to jobs in growing the economy. Within this context, the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review ("CSR") prioritised economically significant local transport projects as key enablers of growth.

The Path to Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth (November 2010)

- 6.6.20 This report presents the Government's approach to achieving strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country. The Government recognises the importance of the private sector to deliver this objective. In particular, the document states that the corporate sector is in a strong position to drive an investment-led recovery. To make this happen, the report articulates the Government's four-part commitment to the private sector which reflects the prevailing attitude:
- providing the stability business needs to plan and invest;
 - making markets more dynamic by removing barriers to growth wherever possible;
 - focusing the Government's own activities on providing the conditions for private sector growth and investment;
 - ensuring that strong growth is fairly shared and sustainable in the long-term.
- 6.6.21 The report notes that the construction sector is one of six key sectors highlighted by the Government. It is argued that the improved output and performance of this sector is vital to the country's prospects for growth. As a result, the Government is committed to investment in housing and infrastructure including transport infrastructure.

Other Regional Strategies and Plans

West of England Multi-Area Agreement (2009)

- 6.6.22 The West of England Partnership Board ("WEP") have prepared the West of England Multi-Area Agreement ("MAA"). The Partnership comprises the Leaders of Council and eight other Councillors, cross-party, drawn from the four Unitary Councils in the sub-region, seven partners drawn from the business, higher education, health, voluntary and

- community, environmental and social sectors, along with senior representatives from HCA, SWRDA, South West Councils and the Government Office for the South West (“GOSW”). Neighbouring upper tier authorities are also observers at the Board.
- 6.6.23 The Partnership was established to facilitate joint-working across administrative boundaries on key strategic issues that reflect the economic geography of the area. The West of England MAA seeks to co-ordinate and combine the priorities and programmes of the authorities and their strategic partners, including national agencies and government, with the aim of increasing the speed of delivery of these priorities that are considered to be critical to economic growth and the quality of life for local communities.
- 6.6.24 The MMA identifies a set of five priority ‘outcomes’ that are considered to be mutually supportive, one of which is to improve access and reduce traffic congestion to increase competitiveness and quality of life. The aim of this priority is to enable WEP to commit to improving congested areas, allowing more public transport flexibility and increase capacity across the transport network.
- 6.6.25 Key transport objectives are identified which, support the intentions of the MetroWest Phase 1 Scheme, and include:
- “• *Deliver transport investment to:*
 - *match projected high levels of growth in homes and jobs;*
 - *contribute to delivering more mixed and sustainable communities;*
 - *support economic growth and competitiveness.*
 - *Tackle congestion:*
 - *promote alternatives to the car, especially public transport, walking and cycling to improve air quality and support the economy.*
 - *Improve access to:*
 - *employment, to support economic competitiveness and the regeneration of disadvantaged communities;*
 - *contribute to delivering more mixed and sustainable communities.*
 - *Improve safety for all road users*
 - *Improve air quality and tackle climate change.”*

West of England Local Economic Assessment 2011

- 6.6.26 The assessment further emphasises the links between transport and the economy in Bristol. In the ten years up to 2009; the volume of traffic on West of England’s roads increased by 11%, leading to congestion being perceived as a key issue by residents and businesses alike. Perceptions of congestion are thought to act as a deterrent to new businesses locating in the area and a motivation for existing businesses to relocate elsewhere. Based on these effects, the assessment states that the economic impact of congestion is expected to reach £600m by 2016.
- 6.6.27 The assessment also highlights the rapid growth of rail transport in the West of England, with the number of rail passengers increasing by 56% between 2004 and 2009. To accommodate this level of growth and to facilitate economic growth and enhanced accessibility in the region, the assessment supports the reopening of the Portishead line and the wider MetroWest Phase 1.
- 6.6.28 Investment in public transport infrastructure is highlighted as a key mechanism for tackling congestion. Upgrading and adding to existing networks will help to make the West of

England more attractive to businesses, employees and residents. Focussing on schemes such as the Portishead line will also help to rebalance the West of England economy by promoting growth in peripheral areas away from Bristol and the North Fringe. For example, the assessment highlights market demand for office development at locations close to the M5 in the Portishead area; such developments would become increasingly viable with improved transport infrastructure.

West of England LEP Business Plan 2011-13

- 6.6.29 The plan identifies inadequate transport systems as a barrier to business growth. Enhanced transport infrastructure is considered a necessity to delivering the LEP's key economic objectives, by:
- Improving access to jobs;
 - Reducing congestion and carbon emissions;
 - Attracting new businesses; and
 - Maintaining the strong performance of existing businesses.
- 6.6.30 The business plan presents the reopening of the Portishead line as an important rail scheme that could unlock growth in North Somerset and across the West of England more generally. The plan also suggests that the MetroWest (Portishead to Parsons Street) Scheme, along with other major transport schemes, is instrumental to business performance and access to jobs in the West of England. Specifically, these schemes are expected to underpin the viability and long-term success of Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, other enterprise areas and priority growth locations in the sub-region.

Unlocking our Potential: The Economic Benefits of Transport Investment in the West of England 2012

- 6.6.31 This summary report, produced by Atkins and West of England Authorities in 2012, outlines the importance of transport investment in unlocking economic growth. Transport investment is presented as a critical factor in delivering large numbers of new jobs and economic output in areas where the underlying growth potential exists. The West of England is identified as an area with underlying growth potential, which is currently constrained by the existing transport network. Problems with the existing transport network include:
- Congestion on local roads;
 - Public perception of buses as expensive and slow;
 - Infrequent and poor coverage of rail services;
 - Poor access to the motorway network.
- 6.6.32 Under these circumstances, the economic potential of the West of England can only be fully realised through investment in transport infrastructure and major schemes. One such scheme highlighted in the report is the MetroWest Phase 1 (encompassing the reopening of the Portishead line), which is expected to reduce dependence on private vehicles and increase access to key growth areas such as Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone. The technical paper supporting this summary report (*GVA Impacts of Major Transport Schemes 2012*) provides evidence of consultation responses regarding MetroWest Phase 1. The report suggests that consultees believed the rail scheme would make a significant difference to the West of England economy. In particular, commuters had a highly favourable view of MetroWest Phase 1 – especially commuters who would benefit from the reopening of the Portishead line. Two key reasons are provided for this support:
- The scheme will provide a viable alternative to the car for commuter journeys;

- The scheme will increase access to employment markets for the labour force;
- The scheme will increase access to labour markets for businesses.

6.6.33 The technical report also specifically highlights the correlation between connectivity and employment densities. In particular, public transport provision is presented as closely related to commuting and business travel for the producer and consumer services sectors. This reflects the concentration of these sectors in the centre of urban areas in the sub-region, such as Bristol. Therefore, the report illustrates the importance of improving the public transport network, especially in light of increased constraints on highway capacity.

Growth and Opportunity: Bristol's Economic Development 2012-25

6.6.34 Bristol is the economic hub of the West of England and the centre point for the various MetroWest Phase 1 routes that the Portishead line will be linked too. The prospectus states that Bristol has a strong but rapidly growing economy, characterised by high productivity, a skilled work-force, diverse industrial base, a strong sense of enterprise and academic excellence. Nevertheless, the Local Economic Assessment undertaken in 2011 did highlight a number of weaknesses, which the prospectus aims to alleviate.

6.6.35 One such weakness relates to infrastructure and connectivity, which the prospectus considers to be a key constraint to economic growth. As a result, the prospectus indicates that Bristol would benefit from improved local public transport provision via the implementation of a rapid transit network linking the city centre to peripheral employment and residential areas.

West of England LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2015-2030

6.6.36 The Strategic Economic Plan ("SEP") prepared by West of England Local Enterprise Partnership ("LEP") outlines how the region will achieve sustainable economic growth over the plan period. Specifically, the SEP was prepared to support the West of England's attempts to secure government funding to assist economic development in the region between 2015 and 2021, via the Local Growth Deals initiative. Within this context, the SEP aims to facilitate the creation of more than 25,000 jobs and develop an economy worth around £25bn per year (which also contributes some £10bn to the Treasury annually).

6.6.37 The SEP positions the West of England as 'the city region of choice for a sustainable future', based on the region's legacy of innovation, world class university and research facilities, strong visitor economy and high quality of life. This positioning is supported by a focus on five priority sectors: creative and digital media, low carbon, high tech industries, advanced engineering and aerospace and professional services. The SEP highlights that expansion of these sectors will be driven by a number of 'levers of growth', including investment and promotion and places and infrastructure. In particular, infrastructure is presented as a key enabler of growth in the region, with MetroWest rail improvements phase 1 and phase 2 emphasised as key cross-boundary infrastructure interventions in the SEP.

6.6.38 The SEP also predicts that MetroWest Phase 1 could generate around 1150 direct jobs leading to a contribution to the region's economy of around £110m per year (measured in terms of gross value added ("GVA")). These economic outputs will be achieved by increasing the connectivity between Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and the West of England's various Enterprise Areas, including Bath City Riverside, Avonmouth Severnside, J21, Filton and Emerson Green, improving connectivity to these major employment sites for the skilled workforce residing in the region.

Other Local Strategies and Plans

West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026) (March 2011)

- 6.6.39 The West of England Joint Local Transport Plan, published by the West of England Partnership, outlines the transport strategy for the sub-region going forward. The transport strategy for the West of England revolves around five aspirational goals: reducing carbon emissions, supporting economic growth, improving accessibility, providing for a safe, healthy and secure population, and enhancing quality of life.
- 6.6.40 The plan portrays the West of England as one of the fastest growing economies in the UK and a critical hub for the South-West's economy. The West of England is home to many major employment sites, the majority of which are located in proximity to Bristol City Centre or the North Fringe. Forecast growth in economic output for Bristol is estimated at 3.4% between 2010 and 2020, compared to 3.2% across the UK. Similarly, Bristol is regarded as the most competitive large city outside London. Within this context, the wider sub-region is expected to deliver 95,000 new jobs over the next 20 years which will assist local economic growth and national economic recovery. To support these ambitions, the plan highlights major transport improvements as a key priority for businesses. The plan aims to synchronise transport investment with major development and regeneration areas, such as Bristol's Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone ("TQEZ").
- 6.6.41 The plan suggests that residents in North Somerset would be primary beneficiaries of any investment in transport infrastructure. Currently, residents in the district have the worst accessibility to major employment sites of any residents across the West of England. Only 21% of residents can access major employment sites by public transport within 20 minutes, compared to a regional average of 31%. At the same time, only 55% of residents have access within 40 minutes, compared to 73% for the West of England.
- 6.6.42 The key strategy of the plan is to support economic growth by providing an affordable, low carbon, accessible, integrated, healthy, safe and reliable transport network. Provision of reliable public transport infrastructure is considered to be a vital mechanism for achieving this strategy. In particular, the plan acknowledges a range of major transport schemes that were prioritised through the DfT's Regional Funding Allocation in 2010. These major schemes include significant investment in rail infrastructure such as MetroWest Phase 1. The MetroWest (Portishead to Parson Street Junction) Scheme aims to reinstate rail connections between Portishead and Bristol, to provide enhanced accessibility to the city centre for Portishead's 23,699 residents (2011 census). Currently, the plan suggests there is significant out-commuting from Portishead to Bristol via car, meaning the Portishead Rail Corridor will provide a more sustainable, alternative mode of transport for many workers and will also improve network resilience.

Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone Prospectus

- 6.6.43 The Bristol TQEZ is earmarked as a key driver of economic growth in Bristol and across the West of England as a whole. The Prospectus outlines the development opportunities available at a 70 hectare site in the centre of Bristol. The MetroWest Phase 1 is identified as a key infrastructure project that will help to ensure the success of the ambitious plans at TQEZ.
- 6.6.44 A key requirement for delivering a successful Enterprise Zone is providing high quality, integrated transport links both to TQEZ and across the wider West of England area. This will allow the economic benefits arising from TQEZ to be spread over as wide an area as possible. The MetroWest Phase 1 will provide an affordable, low carbon, accessible,

integrated, healthy, safe and reliable transport network for commuters, connecting residential areas to the Enterprise Zone.

Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area Outline Development Strategy (April 2012)

- 6.6.45 The Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area seeks to complement the other enterprise zones and areas across the West of England, offering defined incentives for business.
- 6.6.46 The Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area is an industrial location of internationally significant scale, covering approximately 1,800 ha and employing 14,200 people and supporting the three largest sectors in terms of employment including transport and storage, wholesale and manufacturing. The aspirations for the area are therefore to build on its attractiveness as an area for large-scale industrial, warehouse and distribution, energy and waste processing uses, and its major port activities that includes associated storage and distribution facilities and associated industries.
- 6.6.47 The strategy therefore seeks to support an integrated strategic approach to address the areas challenges, which include accessibility constraints and congestion, and facilitate the delivery of the opportunities through a long-term planned approach to future development and infrastructure provision to 2050.
- 6.6.48 MetroWest Phase 1 project will support the enterprise area by improving local train services with an approximately half hourly service between Bristol Temple Meads and Avonmouth station and hourly service to St Andrews Road and Severn Beach.

Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area - Masterplan 2014-2029 - Masterplan Vision Report

- 6.6.49 Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area vision report identifies the aspirations for the enterprise area to drive employment growth, which includes accommodating up to 9,000 new jobs and 3,400 homes. The report was endorsed by B&NES on 12 November 2014.
- 6.6.50 The enterprise area includes 98 hectares of land along the river corridor in central and western Bath, which is intended to attract creative industries, professional financial and business services, information technology and software development. The report states that overall, the Enterprise Area has the potential to increase the value of the Bath economy by £620 million (an increase of 16%) per annum and will be supported by public sector investment in enabling infrastructure to unlock the delivery of over £1 billion of development over the next 15 years. MetroWest will improve connectivity to the Enterprise Area providing improved services to Oldfield Park and Bath Spa.

Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone – The Spatial Framework – Publication Version (October 2016)

- 6.6.51 The Temple Quarter Spatial Framework is a non-statutory planning document which identifies the aspirations for the TQEZ to create a place over the next 25 years that is ‘welcoming to all – to live, work, enjoy leisure time and build on Bristol's strengths as a world class city’. The Spatial Framework is intended to provide an important planning tool to enable future development in the area to be guided and shaped to meet these aspirations. One of the key priorities is to support improvements to sustainable transport accessibility and in particular public transport and station improvements amongst other improvements to walking and cycling routes.
- 6.6.52 The Framework identifies Temple Meads railway station as key interchange within the City, serving existing and future aspirations for MetroWest and MetroBus, helping to

deliver an estimate £110-£300m worth of productivity improvements to the UK economy per annum. It states that Network Rail estimate that, 'with the InterCity Express and electrification projects, MetroWest and planned station enhancements, Temple Meads will be handling 40% more passengers in 10 years.'

6.7 Plans and Policy Summary

- 6.7.1 National and local policy identifies road congestion and other transport issues as key constraints on economic growth. In line with the NPSNN and national planning policy, local policy and other relevant plans advocate investment in transport infrastructure as a key enabler of economic growth. Similarly, the considered policy and plans highlight the inter-relationships between economic growth and accessibility, most noticeably by expanding labour markets and improving employment opportunities for the labour force.
- 6.7.2 Consequently, there is a general consensus across the NPSNN and other national and local policy and plans that the DCO Scheme and the wider MetroWest Phase 1 Project represent a strategic transport infrastructure project which would facilitate the delivery of economic growth and sustainable access improvements throughout the West of England.

6.8 Other Planning and Development Considerations

Planning History

- 6.8.1 There is no relevant recent planning history associated with the DCO Scheme. No previous planning applications have been submitted for any of the works subject to this application or that would affect the proposed route of the DCO Scheme. Other committed development that has the potential to influence the DCO Scheme is discussed in Section 18 Cumulative Effects and shown in Figure 6-2 Volume 3 of this PEI Report.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

- 6.8.2 Section 18 assesses the in-combination and the cumulative effects associated with the construction and operation of the DCO Scheme. A list of proposals has been identified from the list of committed development and considered in the cumulative impacts assessment ("CIA"). The methodology for undertaking the CIA is based on the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note (Advice Note Seventeen: *Cumulative effects assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects*, December 2015). The full CIA can be found in Chapter 18. Where available, detailed information was compiled for each shortlisted 'other development' and the cumulative effects were assessed. This information is presented in Matrix 1 and Matrix 2 in Appendices 18.1 and 18.2.

Devolution

- 6.8.3 Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire authorities formed the new West of England Combined Authority ("WECA") in February 2017. This has seen a transfer of new strategic powers and responsibilities from Central Government to local decision-makers and secured control over investment in key transport infrastructure projects in the three West of England authorities. The agreement excludes North Somerset Council who opted out of the deal, however there is a continued commitment to work with WECA and the other authorities on strategic transport issues.
- 6.8.4 The combined authority is supported by the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, North Somerset Council and other local service providers, to deliver economic growth across the region.
- 6.8.5 In summary, the agreement will see:

- The creation of a West of England Investment Fund to deliver infrastructure to boost economic growth. Government will provide £30 million a year for funding towards this fund for 30 years, or £900 million. Additional sums from other sources take the total over and above £1 billion.
- Devolution of multi-year transport budgets, enabling the area to deliver more ambitious transport projects with greater certainty. This will be coupled with further powers over transport including the ability to franchise bus services and responsibility for a Key Routes Network of roads.
- Responsibility for the new Adult Education Budget from 2018/19, helping the West of England ensure that adult skills provision meets the needs of local businesses and learners.
- Enhanced powers to speed up the delivery of new housing where most needed and resist unsustainable developments that are not in line with jointly agreed planning policies.
- Closer cooperation between government and the West of England on promoting trade and investment with the region.
- Co-design with the Department of Work and Pensions (“DWP”) of the new National Work and Health Programme focusing on supporting those with a health condition or disability and the very long-term unemployed. The West of England will also bring forward a pilot scheme to offer intensive support for those furthest from the labour market.
- Support for realising the potential of the Bristol and Bath Science Park and the development of the West of England Growth Hub.

6.9 References

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6.10 Abbreviations

ATOC	Association of Train Operating Companies
B&NES	Bath and North East Somerset Council
BCC	Bristol City Council

BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
CIA	Cumulative impact assessment
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide
CSR	Comprehensive spending review
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCO	Development Consent Order
DfT	Department for Transport
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
GOSW	Government Office for the South West
GVA	Gross value added
GWML	Great Western Main Line
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
JSP	Joint Spatial Plan
JTS	Joint Transport Study
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
MAA	Multi-Area Agreement
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
NPSNN	National Policy Statement for National Networks
NSDC	North Somerset District Council
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
RUS	Route utilisation strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
SGC	South Gloucestershire Council
SPD	Supplementary Planning Documents
SUD	Sustainable Drainage System
SWRDA	South West Regional Development Agency
TIF	Transport innovation Fund
TQEZ	Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone
WECA	West of England Combined Authority
WEP	West of England Partnership