



MetroWest+

Portishead Branch Line (MetroWest Phase 1)

TR040011

Applicant: North Somerset District Council
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The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure)
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CHAPTER 6

Planning Framework

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This Chapter 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 provides an appraisal of compliance of the DCO Scheme with the relevant legal and policy framework and forms part of the application for the DCO (see DCO Document Reference 8.11).
- 6.1.2 The application for a DCO in respect of the DCO Scheme (“the DCO Application”) has been prepared by North Somerset District Council (“NSDC”) on behalf of the West of England Local Authorities, comprising: NSDC; Bristol City Council (“BCC”); Bath and North East Somerset Council (“B&NES”); and South Gloucestershire Council (“SGC”). The West of England Combined Authority (“WECA”) is supporting the DCO Scheme, and now co-ordinates the input of its constituent members, having been formed by BCC, B&NES and SGC since the inception of the MetroWest project. The DCO Application has also been prepared with the assistance of Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (“Network Rail”).
- 6.1.3 The DCO Scheme is mostly located within NSDC’s administrative area, but extends into BCC’s administrative area in the vicinity of Bower Ashton with the eastern extent of the DCO Scheme at Ashton Gate (Ashton Junction).
- 6.1.4 Additional works for MetroWest Phase 1, comprising modifications to Parson Street Junction (including Liberty Lane 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 BCC’s administrative area, while Bathampton Turnback is located in B&NES’ administrative area. No works are proposed in SGC’s administrative area, however MetroWest Phase 1 proposes to increase the frequency of the train service for Severn Beach station which extends into South Gloucestershire.
- 6.1.5 This section therefore takes into account the current policies and proposals for both NSDC and BCC, 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.
- 6.1.6 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.

6.2 National Planning Framework

Overview

- 6.2.1 The DCO Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”) and this application will be determined by the Secretary of State for

Transport. The Secretary of State will use the National Policy Statement for National Networks ("NPSNN") as the primary basis for making decisions.

- 6.2.2 Each of the relevant local authorities will submit a Local Impact Report and local planning policy documents will be relevant insofar as reference is made to them by these local authorities.

Planning Act 2008

- 6.2.3 The Planning Act 2008 introduced the DCO regime as the means of seeking planning permission for developments categorised as NSIPs. There are a range of different types of development that can be classed as an NSIP. Of relevance to this application is Section 14(1)(k) "*the construction or alteration of a railway*". The types of railway improvements that fall within the Planning Act 2008 regime are further defined in Section 25(1) and (2), as the DCO Scheme involves construction of a new section of railway line as well as an alteration of existing infrastructure both subsections apply. In order to be an NSIP the project must be:

- wholly in England;
- be part of a network operated by an approved operator;
- for new sections, be a continuous length of more than 2 km; and
- not be located on land that was operational land of a railway undertaker immediately before construction or alteration work began.

- 6.2.4 Once a project has been identified as an NSIP the application can include other associated development, works that in themselves would not require a DCO and instead would be consented under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or under permitted development rights.

- 6.2.5 Under the Planning Act 2008, where additional consents are required under other consenting regimes these can be included in the DCO.

National Policy Statements

- 6.2.6 Government advice on infrastructure proposals of national significance is variously published by the relevant Government department in the form of National Policy Statement ("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 to do so would breach treaty obligations, be unlawful or the harm caused by the project would outweigh its public benefit.

- 6.2.7 The NPSNN was adopted in December 2014.

- 6.2.8 Paragraph 1.1 of the NPSNN confirms that it "*sets 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*". The DCO Scheme will be considered in relation to its compliance with the NPSNN.

- 6.2.9 The Summary of Need in Chapter 2 of the NPSNN describes the Government's vision and strategic objectives for the national networks:

"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."*

6.2.10 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).

6.2.11 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).

6.2.12 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."*

6.2.13 Paragraph 2.33 of the NPSNN identifies that passenger demand on the rail network is predicted to continue its current trend of significant growth. This is supported at paragraph 2.33 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%. 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.

- 6.2.14 Paragraph 2.35 of the NPSNN confirms the Government's view that rail transport has a crucial role to play in delivering significant reduction in pollution and congestion. Paragraph 2.36 concludes that "at a strategic level there is a compelling need for development of the national rail network".
- 6.2.15 Paragraph 2.37 of the NPSNN 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..."*. Paragraph 2.40 emphasises the Government's support for modal shift to rail in the light of the need to reduce significantly national carbon dioxide ("CO₂") emissions from the transport sector.
- 6.2.16 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:
- "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."*
- 6.2.17 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 disproportionate.
- 6.2.18 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).
- 6.2.19 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 2008 (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.”

- 6.2.20 An Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") will be required for projects likely to result in significant effects on the environment in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations ("EIA Regulations") 2009 and 2017. 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 are proportionate and focussed on significant effects (paragraph 4.15).
- 6.2.21 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 Habitats Regulations set out a stage by stage process, known as the Habitats 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 overriding public importance and the provision of compensatory measures justify the grant of consent (paragraphs 4.26 and 4.27).
- 6.2.22 The development of a project and the assessment of effects needs to take account of good design principles (paragraphs 4.28 to 4.35) 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).
- 6.2.23 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.”

- 6.2.24 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 were considered and consulted on. They are described in full in the DCO Application documentation, including the relevant chapters and appendices to the Environmental Statement ("ES") (DCO Document References 6.1 to 6.31) in particular the Schedule of Mitigation (DCO Document Reference 6.31), the Code of Construction Practice (DCO Document Reference 8.15), and the Master Construction Environmental Management Plan (DCO Document Reference 8.14).
- 6.2.25 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).
- 6.2.26 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.
- 6.2.27 An assessment has been carried out for this ES and is presented in each of the respective sections.

Air Quality and Carbon Emissions

- 6.2.28 The NPSNN requires the impacts of projects to be assessed as part of an ES 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).
- 6.2.29 Paragraph 5.7 requires an ES 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.”*
- 6.2.30 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.”

- 6.2.31 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.”

- 6.2.32 The assessment of air quality and carbon emissions and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements are provided in Chapter 7 Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.10).

Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation

- 6.2.33 The NPSNN requires an ES 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.

- 6.2.34 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.”

- 6.2.35 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).

- 6.2.36 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.

- 6.2.37 The assessment of biodiversity and ecological conservation and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 9 Ecology and Biodiversity of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.12).

Waste Management

- 6.2.38 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.”

6.2.39 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.”*

6.2.40 The assessment of waste management and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 12 Materials and Waste of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.15).

Flood Risk and Water Quality and Resources

6.2.41 The NPSNN establishes the assessment requirements for projects when considering flood risk. Paragraph 5.92 details when applications for projects should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment ("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.”*

6.2.42 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).

6.2.43 With regard 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.”

- 6.2.44 Further requirements on the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (“SuDS”) for mitigation is provided in paragraphs 5.111 to 5.115.
- 6.2.45 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 (DCO Document Reference 6.20) and Appendix 17.1 Flood Risk Assessment (DCO Document Reference 5.6) of this ES.

Historic Environment

- 6.2.46 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.”*
- 6.2.47 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).
- 6.2.48 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.
- 6.2.49 The assessment of the historic environment and the DCO Scheme’s compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 8 Cultural Heritage of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.11).

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

- 6.2.50 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.
- 6.2.51 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.”*
- 6.2.52 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.
- 6.2.53 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.”*
- 6.2.54 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.”*
- 6.2.55 With regard to land use including open space, green infrastructure and the Green Belt, paragraph 5.165 details the NPSNN requirements. It states the 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.”*
- 6.2.56 Paragraph 5.166 advises against the development of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land. Paragraph 5.167 advises pre-application consultation with the local authority on potential impacts on land use.

- 6.2.57 Paragraph 5.168 advises that applicants should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (ALC grades 1, 2 and 3a), should use poorer quality land, minimise impacts on soil, and use previously developed (brownfield) sites where possible.
- 6.2.58 Paragraph 5.169 advises applicants to safeguard any mineral resources as far as possible.
- 6.2.59 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.
- 6.2.60 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.”*
- 6.2.61 It is therefore recognised that national networks infrastructure projects located in the Green Belt may be inappropriate 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.
- 6.2.62 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.”*
- 6.2.63 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.
- 6.2.64 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 Impacts Assessment of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.14). 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

- 6.2.65 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 Environmental Statement. Paragraph 5.189 lists requirements that should be complied with when preparing the environmental 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.*
 - *the nature and extent of the noise assessment should be proportionate to the likely noise impact.”*
- 6.2.66 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.
- 6.2.67 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).”*

6.2.68 The assessment of noise and vibration, and the DCO Scheme's compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 13 Noise and Vibration of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.16).

Transport Networks

6.2.69 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.”*

6.2.70 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.”*

6.2.71 With regard 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).

6.2.72 The assessment of transport networks and the DCO Scheme's compliance with NPSNN requirements is provided in Chapter 16 Transport, Access and Non-Motorised Users of this ES (DCO Document Reference 6.19).

6.2.73 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 (February 2019)

6.2.74 The revised NPPF, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2019, sets out Government planning policies for England to achieve sustainable development and details how the policies are expected to be applied. Paragraph 1.18 of 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 1.19 of the NPSNN states that the NPPF is not intended to contain specific policies for NSIPs where quite particular considerations can apply.

6.2.75 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 Regional Planning Framework

- 6.3.1 NSDC, BCC, B&NES and SGC are jointly producing the West of England 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. The JSP was submitted for Examination in Public on 13 April 2018 and is still going through the Examination proces. Once adopted the JSP will form a statutory development plan document.
- 6.3.2 The JSP is accompanied by the Joint Transport Study (“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.
- 6.3.3 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, whilst addressing a series of critical issues. One of the critical issues set out in the JSP (page 12) is “*The form and function of development in some parts of the West of England has resulted in significant pressure on infrastructure and settlement patterns which are over-reliant on the private car. This inhibits wealth creation and productivity and contributes to climate change and poor health.*”
- 6.3.4 The objective of the JSP is to address these critical issues and deliver:
- Sustainable growth of homes and jobs, supported by necessary infrastructure.
 - Reduction in car dependency and improved public transport access to opportunity, jobs and services.
 - Contribution to mitigating impacts of climate change.
 - Delivery of Communities in which people want to live and work.
 - Improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

6.4 Local Planning Framework

- 6.4.1 Unlike planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, there is no requirement for the Secretary of State to decide the DCO Application in accordance with the policies of the local development plan. However, these policies will influence the Local Impact Reports which will be submitted by the relevant local authorities.
- 6.4.2 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.

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 set out the development plan documents of each of these authorities.

North Somerset District Council

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

- North Somerset Council Core Strategy (Adopted January 2017)
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 1: Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2016)
- Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations (Adopted 10 April 2018)
- West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (Adopted 2011)

6.4.4 Other material planning policy considerations include the following documents.

6.4.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (“SPD”)

- Creating Sustainable Buildings and Places SPD (Adopted March 2015)
- Parking Standards SPD (November 2013)
- Travel Plans SPD (Final, November 2010)
- Biodiversity and Trees SPD (Adopted December 2005)
- Landscape Character Assessment SPD (Adopted September 2018)
- North Somerset and Mendips Bats Special Area of Conservation (“SAC”) Guidance on Development: SPD (Adopted January 2018)

6.4.6 Other Planning Guidance

- Forest of Avon – A Guide for Developers (October 2005)

6.4.7 There is one Neighbourhood Development Plan (“NDP”) of relevance, the Long Ashton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2013-2033 (May 2015).

6.4.8 Emerging NDPs of relevance are:

- 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.

North Somerset Council Core Strategy (January 2017)

6.4.9 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. NSDC 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. The judgement from the High Court was incorporated into the NSDC Core Strategy which was re-adopted in January 2017.

6.4.10 Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.1.

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.
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.

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

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
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 ("HIA") of developments and health impacts of developments to the wider community. Point 1 of the policy states that all "large scale developments" require an 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.

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

- 6.4.11 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. The plan was adopted by full Council on 19 July 2016. Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Summary of adopted policies in the NSDC 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.
DM9	Trees and Woodlands	This policy seeks to incorporate existing trees and wooded areas into design proposals where practical and ensure that the planting of new trees is properly designed and adequately maintained in the longer term and recognise the place-making quality of trees.

Table 6.2: Summary of adopted policies in the NSDC Sites and Policies Plan Part 1:
Development Management Policies

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
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.
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.
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.

Table 6.2: Summary of adopted policies in the NSDC Sites and Policies Plan Part 1:
Development Management Policies

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
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 cultural 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.

Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations (April 2018)

- 6.4.12 The Sites and Policies Plan presents the allocations that will deliver the requirements of the Core Strategy up to 2026. It includes provision for new residential, employment and community facility sites, sets the settlement boundaries of towns and villages, and designates local green spaces and strategic gaps.
- 6.4.13 The plan was subject to examination by an independent Inspector on 24 February 2017 and a number of modifications were subsequently made to the October 2016 Publication Version of the Plan. The Plan was adopted on 10 April 2018. Those policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Summary of the NSDC Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
SA1	Housing	This policy identifies land that has been safeguarded for future housing development for ten or more units.
SA2	Settlement Boundaries	This policy defines settlement boundaries around towns and villages, within which development may be acceptable subject to the detailed policies of the Core Strategy, Sites and Policies Plan, Part 1, Development Management Policies and Neighbourhood Plans.
SA4	Employment	This policy identifies land that has been safeguarded for future employment development.

SA5	Local Green Space	This policy aims to protect amenity areas of public value from unacceptable harm or loss.
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Bristol City Council

- 6.4.14 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)
 - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Adopted July 2014)
 - Bristol Central Area Plan (Adopted March 2015)
 - West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (Adopted March 2011)
- 6.4.15 Supplementary Planning Guidance (“SPG”) and Documents (“SPD”)
- Planning Obligations SPD (Adopted September 2012)
 - Policy Advice Note 2 - Conservation Area Enhancement Statements (November 1993)
 - Bristol Development Framework Supplementary Planning document (SPD) 7 Archaeology and Development (Adopted March 2006).
- 6.4.16 Other material planning policy considerations include an emerging new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will detail how Bristol will develop over the next 20 years and establish a strategy, policies, designations and allocations to deliver new homes and jobs and safeguard environmental assets. It will ultimately replace the current suite of adopted plans. It is currently at an early stage of the adoption process and as such it carries little weight. Consultation has been undertaken on an initial Local Plan Review consultation document in February 2018 and March 2019 prior to the preparation of the Publication draft.

Bristol Core Strategy (June 2011)

- 6.4.17 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.
- 6.4.18 Those policies within the Bristol City Council Core Strategy of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Summary of adopted policies 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.
BCS2	Bristol City Centre	Establishes the quantum and type of development that will be supported within the city centre, including improvements to transport systems and connectivity, such as new public transport, pedestrian and cycling routes and transport hubs.
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.
BCS11	Infrastructure and Developer Contributions	Requires development to contribute towards the provision of measures to directly mitigate its impact and infrastructure, facilities and services required to support the growth of the City.

Table 6.4: Summary of adopted policies from the Bristol Core Strategy

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
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.
BCS21	Quality Urban Design	Requires new development to deliver high quality urban design and contribute positively to an area’s character and identity.
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 regard 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)

- 6.4.19 To support the delivery of the Core Strategy, the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, incorporate development management policies, designations and site allocations that will deliver the strategic policies and principles of the Core Strategy.
- 6.4.20 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.

- 6.4.21 Those policies within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies of particular relevance to the DCO Scheme are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Summary of adopted policies in the Bristol 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.
DM14	The Health Impacts of Development	Requires development to contribute towards reducing the causes of ill health, improving health and reducing health inequalities. Developments that will have an unacceptable impact on health and wellbeing will not be permitted.
DM15	Green Infrastructure Provision	States that the provision of additional and/or improved management of existing trees will be expected as part of the landscape treatment of new development.
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.

Table 6.5: Summary of adopted policies in the Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
DM20	Regionally Important Geological Sites	Seeks to protect and conserve Regionally Important Geological Sites.
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.
DM26	Local Character and Distinctiveness	This policy requires development to contribute towards local character and distinctiveness by responding to existing land forms, green infrastructure and historic assets, and retaining and enhancing important existing views.
DM27	Layout and Form	This policy requires the layout and form of new development and landscapes to contribute towards the creation of quality urban design.
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.
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.

Table 6.5: Summary of adopted policies in the Bristol Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document

Policy No.	Title	Policy Summary
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.
DM37	Unstable Land	This policy sets out detailed requirements where unstable land is suspected and / or there is the risk of instability. It identifies that where remediation measures are necessary, conditions or obligations may be applied to ensure that the development does not take place until appropriate works are completed.
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

- 6.4.22 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.
- 6.4.23 The scope of the DCO Scheme works do not extend into the boundary of the Central Area Plan and therefore the policies of the Plan have not been considered further.

6.5 Other Relevant Strategies and Plans

- 6.5.1 Whilst not determinative with respect to the DCO Application decision, the following strategies and plans are of relevance to the DCO Scheme and the Secretary of State may consider them to be material considerations.

Network Rail Plans and Strategies

Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy March 2010 – Network Rail

- 6.5.2 The Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy ("RUS") sets out the strategic vision for the future of the Great Western section of the rail network. RUSs 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.
- 6.5.3 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 Great Western 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.
- 6.5.4 The Great Western 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 NSDC’s Portishead Rail Line Study and identifies that 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.”*
- 6.5.5 The Great Western RUS confirms that the reopened line is being promoted by NSDC 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 Network Rail’s Governance for Railway Investment Projects (“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.
- 6.5.6 The Great Western 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.
- 6.5.7 The Great Western 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](#)
- 6.5.8 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 DfT 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.

- 6.5.9 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
- 6.5.10 With regard 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.
- 6.5.11 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.”*
- 6.5.12 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

- 6.5.13 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)”*.
- 6.5.14 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.
- 6.5.15 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. During the consultation process for the

Strategy stakeholders expressed a desire for a rail link between Bristol and Portishead.

Investing in the South West (February 2019)

6.5.16 This document, published by the DfT in February 2019 details the investment that the government is making in the south-west and how it will help the region grow and prosper.

6.5.17 The document reaffirms the government's commitment to investing in the MetroWest proposals:

“Metrowest is an exciting proposal which will open up rail connections to Portishead and North Bristol. It is estimated it could generate 1.7 million new passenger trips and give 80,000 more people access to train services. The government is already providing a £57 million contribution to Metrowest and is considering the case for further funding.”

Other Regional Strategies and Plans

West of England Local Economic Assessment 2015

6.5.18 The assessment further emphasises the links between transport and the economy in Bristol and North Somerset. In 2014, average vehicle speeds in West of England districts ranged from 14.6 miles per hour in Bristol to 30.8 miles per hour in North Somerset, and were below the England average (24.4 miles per hour) in all districts apart from North Somerset, which is identified as an indicator of congestion. 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. The assessment identifies that with the costs of housing having increased significantly over recent years with increasing levels of traffic congestion, that, *“if left unaddressed, these will affect the ability to compete as an economy and as a place to attract and retain talent”*.

6.5.19 The assessment also highlights that in 2011, the most popular method of travelling to work in the West of England was by car (56 per cent – slightly higher than the England average of 54 per cent), whilst a below-average percentage travelled by train/underground/metro/light rail/tram (2 per cent, compared with 9 per cent nationally), highlighting the travel challenges and opportunities within the West of England that the reopening of the Portishead Branch Line and wider MetroWest Phase 1 Project could help to address.

6.5.20 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 (a largely industrial area focussing on aviation technology and research located between the Bristol and South Gloucestershire border and the M4/M5).

West of England Combined Authority Business Plan 2019-2020

6.5.21 The plan identifies inadequate transport systems as a barrier to business growth. The plan sets out five objectives for infrastructure:

- better links to reduce congestion and connect people

- improve national and international connections
- enabling the required housing growth in the region promoting affordability and an appropriate housing mix
- employment spaces to meet the needs of all businesses and communities, and
- world leading digital connections across the region

6.5.22 The business plan identifies MetroWest Phase 1 as a scheme to improve links to reduce congestion and connect people. The plan says the combined authority will develop the plan, with the DfT, Network Rail and Great Western Railway, to significantly increase rail usage, as part of a comprehensive approach to public transport investment, including the delivery / joint delivery of key schemes such as MetroWest Phase 1.

[Unlocking our Potential: The Economic Benefits of Transport Investment in the West of England 2012](#)

6.5.23 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.

6.5.24 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 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 ("TQEZ"). 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.

6.5.25 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

6.5.26 Bristol is the economic hub of the West of England and the centre point for the various MetroWest Phase 1 routes to which the Portishead line will be linked. The prospectus states that Bristol has a strong and 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.

6.5.27 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

6.5.28 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).

6.5.29 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 in and promotion of places and infrastructure. In particular, infrastructure is presented as a key enabler of growth in the region, with MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 rail improvements emphasised as key cross-boundary infrastructure interventions in the SEP.

6.5.30 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 TQEZ 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)

- 6.5.31 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.
- 6.5.32 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 TQEZ.
- 6.5.33 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.
- 6.5.34 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 DCO 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.

West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (2019-2036)

- 6.5.35 The Draft Joint Local Transport Plan 4 was published in January 2019 for consultation between 6 February 2019 and 20 March 2019. MetroWest is confirmed as a committed project (Phase 1 and Phase 2), which will deliver:

- *“Half hourly services on the Severn Beach to Bath Spa and Westbury Lines. This is forecast to generate 0.6 million passengers a year*
- *Reopening of the Portishead Line, with initially an hourly service (half hourly aspiration) to Bristol Temple Meads and new stations at Portishead and Pill. This is forecast to generate 0.4 million passengers a year*
- *Re-opening of the Henbury Line with new stations at Henbury and North Filton to serve Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood (5,700 new homes) and the new Bristol Arena. This is forecast to generate 0.4 million new passengers a year*
- *New station at Ashley Down on the Filton Bank | Half hourly services between Bristol Temple Meads and Yate (3,000 new homes) by 2021, with possible extension to Gloucester. This is forecast to generate 0.25 million new passengers a year*
- *Stations to be brought up to a new MetroWest high standard of passenger facilities, with step free access | New station at Portway, part funded by the New Station Fund, to serve the adjacent Park & Ride site”.*

Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone Prospectus

- 6.5.36 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 100 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.
- 6.5.37 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)

- 6.5.38 The Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area seeks to complement the other enterprise zones and areas across the West of England, offering defined incentives for business.
- 6.5.39 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.
- 6.5.40 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.

- 6.5.41 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

- 6.5.42 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.
- 6.5.43 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)

- 6.5.44 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.
- 6.5.45 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*”.
- 6.5.46 The Portishead line will be serving the station directly as the final stop on the branch.

6.6 Plans and Policy Summary

- 6.6.1 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-relations

between economic growth and accessibility, most noticeably by expanding labour markets and improving employment opportunities for the labour force.

- 6.6.2 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.

6.7 Other Planning and Development Considerations

Planning History

- 6.7.1 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 Chapter 18 In-combination and Cumulative Effects Assessment (DCO Document Reference 6.21) and shown in Figure 18.1 in the Book of Figures (DCO Document Reference 6.24) of this ES.

Devolution

- 6.7.2 B&NES, BCC and SGC formed the 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 NSDC who opted out of the deal, however there is a continued commitment to work with WECA and the other authorities on strategic issues including transport.
- 6.7.3 The combined authority is supported by the West of England LEP, NSDC and other local service providers, to deliver economic growth across the region.
- 6.7.4 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.

6.8 References

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6.9 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
CO2	Carbon dioxide
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
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
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
NPS	National Policy Statements
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
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
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

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