



MetroWest+

Portishead Branch Line (MetroWest Phase 1)

Planning Inspectorate Reference: TR040011

Applicant: North Somerset District Council

DCO Document Reference: 9.7 ExA.SoC.D6.V4

Statement of Commonality of Statements of Common Ground

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2. ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

2008 Act	Planning Act 2008
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
ExA	Examining Authority
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground

In the text, "DCO Document Reference" refers to the DCO document reference number as shown on the documents on the Portishead Branch Line (MetroWest Phase 1) [project page on the PINS website](#).

In cases where a document appears twice and there are two Document reference numbers, (for example, the AGVMP which appears twice as standalone document reference number 8.12 and as ES Appendix 9.11, document 6.25), we have used the DCO Document Reference for the standalone document.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Scheme Overview

- 3.1.1 The Applicant has applied to the Planning Inspectorate ("PINS") for a DCO to construct the Portishead Branch Line under the Planning Act 2008 ("Application"). The Application was made on 15 November 2019 under reference TR040011 and was accepted for examination on 12 December 2019.
- 3.1.2 The DCO Scheme will provide an hourly (or hourly plus) railway service between Portishead and Bristol Temple Meads Railway Station, with stops at Portishead, Pill, Parson Street and Bedminster.
- 3.1.3 The DCO Scheme comprises the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project ("NSIP") as defined by the Planning Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act") to construct a new railway 5.4 kilometres long between Portishead and the village of Pill, and associated works including a new station and car park at Portishead, a refurbished station and new car park at Pill and various works along the existing operational railway line between Pill and Ashton Junction where the DCO Scheme will join the existing railway. Ashton Junction is located close to the railway junction with the Bristol to Exeter Mainline at Parson Street.¹

3.2 Purpose of the Statement of Commonality

- 3.2.1 This document provides the Examining Authority ("ExA") with an overview of the position of each Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") between the Applicant and the various parties in relation to the MetroWest Portishead Branch Line DCO at Deadline 6.

¹ Please refer to Schedule 1 of the DCO (DCO Document Reference 3.1) for more detail.

3.2.2 The Statement of Commonality is provided at the request of the ExA and sets out the Applicant's understanding of the current progress of negotiations and the areas of commonality across the SoCGs.

3.2.3 The Applicant will continue to work with interested parties to review any matters that remain unresolved as the Examination progresses.

3.3 Structure

3.3.1 This report is structured as follows:

- (i) Section 3 outlines the background to the SoCGs;
- (ii) Section 4 sets out the status of each SoCG; and
- (iii) Section 5 sets out the matters agreed, the matters not agreed and the matters subject to further discussions.

3.4 Deadline 6 status of Statements of Common Ground

3.4.1 Table 1 provides a summary of the current position of negotiations of SoCGs at Deadline 6. As at Deadlines 1, 3 and 5, the status of negotiations is categorised as follows:

- (i) **Agreed and signed** – all matters are agreed between the parties and the interested party has signed the SoCG;
- (ii) **Agreed but not yet signed** – all matters are agreed between the parties but the interested party has not yet signed the SoCG;
- (iii) **Largely agreed but not yet signed** – the SoCG has been significantly progressed but matters remain outstanding. The Applicant will also undertake a review of the issues covered in the SoCG following the ExA's first written questions and seek to address those issues with the relevant party;
- (iv) **Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed** – a draft SoCG is in circulation between the parties but matters remain outstanding and the latest draft by the Applicant is yet to receive comments/ approval from the interested party. The

draft submitted to the ExA is, the Applicant believes, an accurate reflection of the current position between the parties;

- (v) **SoCG not yet in circulation** – notification of the ExA's request for a SoCG with this party was received in the Rule 6 letter and the Applicant is taking steps to engage with the party and agree the basis for drafting of a SoCG. The SoCG will be progressed through the course of the Examination.

3.4.2 Where a new version of a SoCG has been submitted at Deadline 6, the status of that SoCG in Table 1 is shown in a highlighted box.

4. STATUS OF THE STATEMENTS OF COMMON GROUND

Table 1 – Position of Statements of Common Ground at Deadline 6

Document Reference	Party	Position at Deadline 1	Position at Deadline 3	Position at Deadline 5	Position at Deadline 6	Position at Deadline 7
Local authorities						
9.3.2 ExA.SoCG-BCC.D1.V1	Bristol City Council Local Planning Authority	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	
9.3.1 ExA.SoCG-NSC.D1.V1	North Somerset District Council Local Planning Authority	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	
9.3.9 ExA.SoCG-SCC.D1.V1	Somerset County Council	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	
Statutory consultees						
9.3.3 ExA.SoCG-EA.D3.V2	Environment Agency	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	

Document Reference	Party	Position at Deadline 1	Position at Deadline 3	Position at Deadline 5	Position at Deadline 6	Position at Deadline 7
9.3.4 ExA.SoCG- HECL.D1.V1	Highways England	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	
9.3.5 ExA.SoCG- HE.D1.V1	Historic England	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	
9.3.6 ExA.SoCG- NE.D3.V2	Natural England	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Agreed and signed	
9.3.7 ExA.SoCG- NSLIDB.D3.V2	North Somerset Levels Internal Drainage Board	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Agreed and signed	
9.3.11 ExA.SoCG- ASP.D1.V1	Avon & Somerset Constabulary	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed but not yet signed	
-	National Trust	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	
-	Forestry England (formerly Forestry Commission)	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	

Document Reference	Party	Position at Deadline 1	Position at Deadline 3	Position at Deadline 5	Position at Deadline 6	Position at Deadline 7
Statutory undertakers						
9.3.8 ExA.SoCG- NGET.D3.V2	National Grid (NGET)	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	Largely agreed but not yet signed	
9.3.12 ExA.SoCG- BPC.D1.V1	Bristol Port Company	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	
9.3.10 ExA.SoCG- OL.D1.V1	Openreach Limited	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed and signed	Agreed and signed	
9.3.12 ExA.SoCG- WW.D1.V1	Wessex Water Limited	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Agreed but not yet signed	Agreed but not yet signed	
-	Bristol Water PLC	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	
-	Network Rail Infrastructure Limited	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	

Document Reference	Party	Position at Deadline 1	Position at Deadline 3	Position at Deadline 5	Position at Deadline 6	Position at Deadline 7
9.3.14 ExA.SoCG- WPD.D5.V1	Western Power Distribution	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	Applicant's latest draft not yet agreed	
Interested parties						
-	Woodland Trust	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	SoCG not yet in circulation	

5. COMMONALITY

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 This section of the report provides a summary of the principal topics covered in the SoCGs and evidences the areas of commonality with various parties at Deadline 6.
- 5.1.2 Where the Applicant considers issues to have developed since the previous Statement of Commonality and a revised SoCG has been submitted to the ExA reflecting those developments, the relevant sub-topics are outlined in bold.
- 5.1.3 Please note, in many cases the Applicant has continued its discussions since Deadlines 1, 3 and 5, and matters at issue have narrowed. Nevertheless, until a revised SoCG is submitted to the ExA the status in this Statement of Commonality will remain as per the most recently submitted SoCG.
- 5.1.4 The summary in Table 2 outlines the topics covered in the SoCGs and how these are relevant to each party, with the position for each topic presented as follows:

	Matter agreed
	Matter subject to further discussions
	Matter not relevant/not covered by the SoCG
	Matter not agreed

Table 2 – Summary of Commonality with each SoCG stakeholder at Deadline 6

Document Reference Number	Party	Topics																Impacts on statutory undertakers/bodies	
		Air quality	Biodiversity, Ecology and the Natural Environment	Climate change	Construction impacts (inc. CEMP and CTMP)	Cultural heritage	Design and engineering	Draft DCO	EIA and ES	Water environmental effects	Noise, vibration and light	Planning policy	Public rights of way and cycle routes	Socio-economic effects	Traffic and transport	Contamination (land/water)	Other consents and licences		Landscape
9.3.2 ExA.SoCG-BCC.D1.V1	Bristol City Council Local Planning Authority																		
9.3.1 ExA.SoCG-NSC.D1.V1	North Somerset District Council Local Planning Authority																		
9.3.9 ExA.SoCG-SCC.D1.V1	Somerset County Council																		
9.3.3 ExA.SoCG-EA.D3.V2	Environment Agency																		
9.3.4 ExA.SoCG-HECL.D1.V1	Highways England																		
9.3.5 ExA.SoCG-HE.D1.V1	Historic England																		
9.3.6 ExA.SoCG-NE.D3.V2	Natural England																		
9.3.7 ExA.SoCG-NSLIDB.D3.V2	North Somerset Levels Internal Drainage Board																		

Document Reference Number	Party	Topics															Impacts on statutory undertakers/bodies		
		Air quality	Biodiversity, Ecology and the Natural Environment	Climate change	Construction impacts (inc. CEMP and CTMP)	Cultural heritage	Design and engineering	Draft DCO	EIA and ES	Water environmental effects	Noise, vibration and light	Planning policy	Public rights of way and cycle routes	Socio-economic effects	Traffic and transport	Contamination (land/water)		Other consents and licences	Landscape
9.3.11 ExA.SoCG-ASP.D1.V1	Avon & Somerset Constabulary																		
9.3.8 ExA.SoCG-NGET.D3.V2	National Grid (NGET)																		
9.3.12 ExA.SoCG-BPC.D1.V1	Bristol Port Company																		
9.3.10 ExA.SoCG-OL.D1.V1	Openreach Limited																		
9.3.12 ExA.SoCG-WW.D1.V1	Wessex Water Limited																		
-	National Trust																		
-	Forestry England																		
-	Bristol Water PLC																		
-	Network Rail Infrastructure Limited																		
9.3.14 ExA.SoCG-WPD.D5.V1	Western Power Distribution																		
-	Woodland Trust																		

5.2 Summary of updates to SoCGs at Deadline 6

5.2.1 Environment Agency

- A FRA Addendum has been prepared and submitted at Deadline 6 which is now referred to in the SoCG.
- Further discussions between the EA and the Applicant have taken place and the EA has agreed the Applicant's proposals for the construction and use of the Clanlage Road compound and the DCO requirement for Cattle Creep bridge.
- The EA land and assets access arrangements have largely been agreed and there are ongoing discussions to finalise.
- The EA and the Applicant have agreed short form protective provisions which have been incorporated in the dDCO.
- The parties have largely agreed the contaminated land requirement and provisions for waste.
- The parties have agreed all the associated development provisions save for Portishead Station and surrounding area. The EA is to consider the Applicant's Flood Risk Assessment.

5.2.2 Natural England

- The SoCG with Natural England has been agreed, signed and submitted at Deadline 6.
- The only European sites that may be affected by the DCO Scheme are the Avon Gorge Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC.
- The mitigation measures proposed in respect of North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC will avoid an adverse impact on the integrity of this SAC.
- While the mitigation measures proposed in respect of the Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC will reduce the effects of the DCO Scheme on the SAC, it

cannot be ascertained that the DCO Scheme will not adversely affect the integrity of the Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC owing to losses of qualifying grassland and woodland.

- Following the conclusion of an agreement between the Applicant and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs c/o Forestry Commission (FC) in respect of two parcels of land in the Avon Gorge that are managed by FC the measures to be delivered to satisfactorily compensate for adverse effects on the integrity of the Avon Gorge Woodlands SAC (unless the Secretary of State determines otherwise in the grant of a DCO) are described in the Avon Gorge Vegetation Management Plan (Ver 03), secured by Requirement 14 and comprise:
 - the planting of 54 whitebeam trees on land within the SAC on two sites owned by Network Rail and one site managed by the Forestry Commission to compensate for the loss by removal or coppicing of up to 27 rare whitebeam trees ("Whitebeam Planting Package 2");
 - the undertaking of 1.45ha of positive woodland management measures on land managed by the Forestry Commission outside but adjacent to the SAC to compensate for the loss of 0.73ha of Tilio-Acerion woodland; and
 - the undertaking of 0.15ha of positive management of Festuco-Brometalia grassland on land owned by NR within the SAC to compensate for the loss of 0.06ha of Festuco-Brometalia grassland.
- Letters of no objection have been issued by Natural England in respect of licences for bats and badgers on the DCO site, the parties are not aware of any reason why a LONI would not be issued for Schedule 8 wild plants and mitigation for effects on great crested newt will be provided through the District Level Licensing scheme.

- The general impact of the DCO Scheme on wider biodiversity, air quality and landscape are agreed and the mitigation measures proposed to address these impacts are agreed to be suitable.

5.3 The Applicant's intention is to update this Statement of Commonality as SoCGs are commenced with interested parties not yet engaged in respect of a SoCG. This may present additional high level issues/topics to report.

5.4 The Applicant will continue to work with parties already engaged to narrow down the outstanding issues, with further significant updates and 'final form' SoCGs expected to be submitted at Deadline 7.