

**REPORT TO: WECA OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 23 JANUARY 2019**

**REPORT TITLE: INFORMATION ITEM - METROWEST UPDATE**

**AUTHORS:**

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### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To provide an update on the progress of MetroWest.

### **General background**

- 2.1 MetroWest Phase 1 and Phase 2 are priorities for the Combined Authority and other West of England Authorities because of their importance in delivering key targets against both national and regional policies and priorities, including:
  - \* A Strategic Vision for Rail: Moving Britain Ahead – ‘...identifying the places where rail is the right answer for local transport needs...’
  - \* Industrial Strategy – ‘...drive productivity by improving connections within City Regions’
  - \* Housing White Paper – ‘...employees should be able to move easily to where jobs are without being forced into long commutes.’
- 2.2 MetroWest is a key project within the Joint Local Transport Plan and is identified as a committed scheme to support the projected housing growth of 105,500 new homes within the Joint Spatial Plan.
- 2.3 In summary, in overall terms the MetroWest Phase 1 project aims to re-open the Portishead rail line to passenger train services and to enhance local passenger train services on the Severn Beach and Bath to Bristol lines. Phase 2 will see the reopening of the Henbury Line to passenger trains with new stations at Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down and half hourly services to Yate with possible extension to Gloucester.
- 2.4 At their most recent meeting on 30 November, the West of England Joint Committee received a report on the MetroWest Phase 1A and 1B gateway decision.

The full report can be viewed at this link:

<https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s700/12%20-%20JC%2030th%20Nov%2020%20MetroWest%20Final%20-1.pdf>

In summary, the 30 November report:

- \* provided an update on project funding and sought approval for a further drawdown of funds from the Local Growth Fund to enable Phase 1A work to continue.
- \* proposed a scheme governance structure for Phase 1A and 1B for approval.
- \* provided an update on technical progress and its implications for scheme partners.
- \* provided a timetable for the submission of the Development Consent Order for the Portishead to Bristol line and for Phase 1A and 1B works.
- \* responded to issues raised in early October 2018 in a letter from Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, particularly around exploration of light rail and tram/train options

2.5 On 30 November, the Joint Committee approved the following recommendations:

- a. To approve the proposed governance structure that encompasses both Phase 1A and 1B.
- b. To approve Section 151 officers undertaking further exploratory work to determine how the funding gap may be addressed.
- c. The approval of a further allocation of £500k from the Local Growth Fund for 2018/19 to enable continued development of Phase 1A.

#### **Latest update information – Phase 1a**

- 3.1 Pre-GRIP feasibility work has been completed by Network Rail for the option to extend the Phase 1A train service to Westbury. While no line capacity enhancements are needed, the increase in the number of trains on this section of line (the intensification of train services) increases the risk profile for five level crossings such that it will be necessary to install additional protective measures/works at these crossings
- 3.2 To progress this option it is necessary to undertake a GRIP1-4 design. Network Rail are currently putting together a cost estimate and programme for this work and it is anticipated this work will be formally commissioned in January 2019. It is assumed that the works can be implemented using Network Rail's permitted development rights (no planning consent is needed). This assumption will be subject to more detailed assessment during the development of the GRIP1-4 design.
- 3.3 A further £0.5M of Local Growth Funding for 2018-19 was agreed by the Joint Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> November to progress Phase 1A, including commencing the GRIP 1-4 design and undertaking economic appraisal.

#### **Latest update information – Phase 1b**

- 4.1 Good progress is being made on completing all the technical work for the Development Consent Order (DCO) application with the focus being on finalising the Environmental Statement (ES), which in turn feeds into a large suite of DCO application documents and plans.

- 4.2 The proposed date for submission of the DCO is April 2019, but it is important to note that this is dependent on completing the technical engagement satisfactorily with statutory / regulatory bodies. The Initial Promotion Agreement between the Authorities will need to be updated and extended to cover work from Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) 4 to the completion of the Full Business Case to reflect the changes to project governance agreed by the Joint Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.
- 4.3 Other work strands are also underway to address wider points made by Chris Grayling in his October letter, this includes an assessment of the feasibility of tram-train for the Portishead Line. It is anticipated this work will be complete by late February and will entail a letter and report back to Chris Grayling.

### **Latest update information – Phase 2**

- 5.1 The GRIP 4 cost estimate for Phase 2 is now due at the end of February 2019. Work on the Outline Business Case for Phase 2 is underway for completion and submission in March 2019. Planning applications for the three new stations – Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down are being prepared for submission at the end of April 2019. The project is still on programme for commencement of services at the end of 2021. There are, however, a number of factors which could impact on this:
- Enhancement to Bristol East Junction, a requirement for the Henbury line, but dependent on full Department for Transport funding which has not yet been announced. The scheme is currently funded up to GRIP 4.
  - Access and drainage issues at the preferred location for Henbury station.
  - National timetabling issues which could impact on service commencement.
  - Access and planning issues at Ashley Down Station - designs to be finalised and consulted on.
- 5.2 Work continues with Gloucestershire County Council on the possible extension of services to Gloucester. This work has identified that one level crossing in Gloucester may need to be closed due to additional freight and MetroWest movements, which would have highway / pedestrian implications. Modelling is being undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council. A decision on the Yate turnback, which will still be required if services are not extended to Gloucester, is needed by summer 2019.

### **Consultation**

Non-applicable (in the context of this being an update report for information).

### **Other Options Considered**

Non-applicable (in the context of this being an update report for information).

### **Risk Management/Assessment**

Non-applicable (in the context of this being an update report for information).

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## **Public Sector Equality Duties**

- 6      *The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:*
- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.*
  - *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
  - *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*
- 6.1    *The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:*
- *Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.*
  - *Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.*
  - *Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.*
- 6.2    *The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.*
- 6.3    Equalities Impact Assessments will be provided through the planning and delivery of the MetroWest programme. As this is an update report for information, there are no specific equalities issues arising as a result of this report.

## **Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:**

- 7      None directly arising from this information report.

## **Legal Implications:**

- 8      None directly arising from this information report.

## **Land/property implications**

- 9      None directly arising from this information report.

## **Human Resources Implications:**

- 10     None directly arising from this information report.

## **Recommendation:**

- \*      **That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes this update on the MetroWest programme.**

**Background papers:**

None

**West of England Combined Authority Contact:**

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Way, Bristol BS1 6ER; email: [democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)