

REPORT TO: WECA OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 27 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT TITLE: INFORMATION ITEM – METROWEST UPDATE

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Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide an update on the progress of MetroWest. The last update was provided for the 23 January Overview and Scrutiny Committee. As work has been ongoing in relation to key deliverables, there is limited change to report at this stage. This report therefore confirms key dates and provides a summary of responses to issues raised at the last meeting. A more detailed update will be provided for the May meeting.

Background

- 2 MetroWest Phase 1 and 2 are priorities for the Combined Authority and other West of England Authorities. They are important in delivering against national and regional policies and priorities, including the following nationally:

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.’

Regionally MetroWest is a key project within the Joint Local Transport Plan and is identified as a committed scheme to support the protected housing growth of 105,500 new homes within the Joint Spatial Plan.

- 3 The MetroWest programme currently comprises:
 - Phase 1a - Severn Beach to Bath Spa (with an extension to Westbury) upgraded to half hourly passenger service
 - Phase 1b - Portishead line reopened with hourly passenger service
 - Phase 2 - Yate to Bristol upgraded to a half hourly service, and the potential to extend to Gloucester. Henbury to Bristol reintroduced as an hourly service
 - Portway Park & Ride Station

Questions raised at last meeting

- a) A question was raised as to whether a Park & Ride scheme around the preferred location for Henbury Station would resolve the drainage issues

Planning applications for all three new stations for Phase 2 will be submitted in June 2019. The drainage, access and layout issues for Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down will be resolved in advance of submission.

- b) It was also queried whether a decision on the Yate turnback would have a bearing on the viability of Phase 2. It was noted that a decision on this would be needed by summer 2019

The Preliminary Business Case for Phase 2 was based on the option with a Yate turnback. If extension to Gloucester is approved in the future, then the business case will be updated as necessary.

- c) An important element was the decision on Filton Arena and whether the Park & Ride would cope with the trains bringing people back from events. If they could leave in both directions it would reduce congestion. A request to challenge the docks on the need for coal conveyors was raised although it was noted that a small amount was still brought into the docks.

The MetroWest Phase 2 planning application in relation to the station at Henbury is based on predicted need and the existing business case. Any future development in the area will be reflected in future phases of work for the MetroWest programme.

Update Phase 1a – Severn Beach to Bathampton / Westbury

- 4 As noted in the last update, Pre-GRIP (Governance for Railway Investment Projects) feasibility work has been completed by Network Rail. We are awaiting confirmed cost and programme for GRIP 1-4 in relation to the extension to Westbury. As soon as this is confirmed, work will be commissioned.

Update Phase 1b – Portishead Line

- 5 North Somerset Council (NSC) paper February 2019, seeking authority to enter into legal agreements and, subject to approval and closing the funding gap, agreement to draw on up to £15m of the LGF funding allocation.
- 6 Technical work is ongoing to complete the Development Consent Order (DCO). NSC have confirmed the aim to submit once the funding gap has been met. The current timeline can therefore be summarised as:
- Update of Initial Promotion Agreement to reflect governance agreed by Joint Committee on 30 November 2019 - To be completed by April 2019.
 - Response to, and meeting with Chris Grayling to incorporate feedback on the feasibility of Tram Train option for the Portishead Line - To be completed late February / Early March 2019.
 - Confirmation of way forward and approval of submission of DCO - To be completed by the end of May 2019
 - Submission of DCO - To be completed June 2019.
- 7 Dependencies: Phase 1 remains subject to a funding gap, which is subject to ongoing review and mitigation. Phase 1b is dependent on the Bristol East Junction enhancement, awaiting Network Rail funding decision.

Update Phase 2 – Henbury Line and services to Yate / Gloucester

- 8 Key activities noted in the last report remain on track:
- GRIP 4 cost estimates are due at the end of February.
 - Work on the Outline Business Case for Phase 2 is continuing for submission to WECA March 2019, for decision at WECA Committee 31 May 2019. Planning applications for the three new stations at Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down are in development with the aim to submit June 2019. As noted above, issues in relation to drainage, access and layout will be resolved prior to submission.
 - Ongoing engagement with Gloucestershire County Council on extension of services to Gloucester. Decision expected Summer 2019. If approved, the Outline Business Case will be updated to reflect that change.
- 9 Dependencies remain as noted in the previous report: Bristol East Junction enhancement awaiting DfT funding decision. Access and drainage at the preferred location for Henbury Station – to be addressed prior to planning application. Access and planning issues at Ashley Down Station – to be addressed prior to planning application and national timetabling issues.

Portway Station

- 10 Planning application has been submitted. Additional ecological surveys have been completed, and a final decision is anticipated in the near future.

Consultation

Not applicable in the context of this update report.

Other Options Considered

Not applicable in the context of this update report.

Risk Management/Assessment

Not applicable in the context of this update report.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 11 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.
- 11.1 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.

11.2 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.

11.3 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:

12 None arising directly from this information report.

Legal Implications:

13 None arising directly from this information report. Issues relating to forthcoming planning applications (Phase 2) and Development Consent Order (Phase 1) applications will be updated to the committee as appropriate.

(Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal)

Land/property implications

14 None arising directly from this information report.

Human Resources Implications:

15 None arising directly 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