

South West Rail Prospectus Technical Document

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1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This document sets out regional rail priorities for the South West region. It is intended for a technical audience. The rail priorities will also be summarised in a separate non technical document. The priorities identified are intended to support the delivery of key Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Regional Economic Strategy (RES) objectives. The document aims to respond to the South West Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) and Network Rail Business Plan by identifying the priority outcomes for the region which should be taken forward to deliver the RSS and RES, in the context of current problems and opportunities facing rail in the region.
- 1.2 This work builds on a preliminary technical study, undertaken by Atkins consultants, which identified a “long list” of possible schemes. That work has now been focused in this document to identify rail priorities which have the best chance of delivering five key Strategic Objectives. These are set out in Section 3 below.
- 1.3 Studies commissioned to provide the evidence base for regional policy documents have demonstrated that reliable rail services are vital to the delivery of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.
- Rail transport is at its most efficient and effective as a contributor to regional productivity and competitiveness when carrying large volumes of passengers or freight at high speed over distances of 100 km or more. The routes linking the West of England and the M4/M5 corridor with London and the South East and with Birmingham and the Midlands exemplify this.
 - Rail can also play a valuable role in serving key inter-urban corridors, thereby improving connectivity and easing pressure on the road network, as with the routes via Bristol from Cheltenham to Plymouth and that between the South Coast and South Wales.
 - Similarly, frequent and dependable local rail services with sufficient capacity have an important part to play in providing access to jobs, training and services for people living in the travel to work areas around the region’s growing major Strategically Significant Cities and Towns (SSCTs – listed in Appendix E). Rail’s current and potential role is specifically focused on a limited number of rail corridors serving the major urban areas of the South West. The potential of the cross-Bristol rail network is an example of this where the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study identified the role for rail as part of a wider package of measures to address congestion and growth.
 - Incremental enhancements to existing infrastructure are necessary in order to increase capacity and improve reliability on key corridors in the sub-regions, e.g. reinstatement of capacity between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway, signal spacing on the Bath - Bristol corridor and passing loops between Yeovil and Exeter, and Falmouth and Truro.
 - The rail network also comprises other secondary routes and local branch lines. They are potentially useful transport corridors that require maintenance or development to a standard fit for purpose in those cases where they can contribute to delivery of the region’s strategies.

1.4 Whereas the consultants' preliminary technical study applied a "ranking" system of prioritisation, this document does not attempt to rank the schemes. Instead the prioritisation is objective driven and clearly relies on a degree of judgement. It should be emphasised, however, that the input of the rail industry and users is being actively and continuously sought to ensure that the priorities identified are both deliverable and desirable to the travelling public.

2. Analysis: Problems and Issues

2.1 The Regional Assembly and Regional Development Agency (RDA) have collaborated on a common evidence base, derived through a series of study work. These studies, which can be accessed via the Assembly's website at http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1213&tt=swra, have focussed primarily on the "functionality" of the region. Specific technical studies were also commissioned to understand the importance of "connections" between the region and other regions and within the region to the economic success of the South West.

2.2 The work identified the importance of SSCTs for the region's economy, which are expected to yield around 80% of future jobs and have an important role to play in terms of service provision. The Regional Spatial Strategy identified the need to support the growth and regeneration of SSCTs and help to reduce the need to travel. The studies have also identified the fact that reliable connections to London and the South East and Birmingham are key to the economic success of the SSCTs.

2.3 The studies have identified the following issues as being of major importance:

- Increasing congestion
 - Within SSCTs
 - Along routes connecting the South West with other regions
- Reduction in the reliability of the transport network
- Lack of resilience
- Importance of tourism to the region

- 2.4 SSCTs support sustainable movement within the sub-regions as part of wider integrated area transport strategies, including improved interchange between bus networks and rail stations and increasing use of coordinated through ticketing. Often the main impact of rail will be felt particularly on specific corridors into and within SSCTs.
- 2.5 Facilitating longer distance movements connecting the South West to London and the South East and Birmingham and the West Midlands are also key roles that rail has to play, together with tourism and access to ports and airports.
- 2.6 Each of these main roles for rail in the South West are reflected in the five Strategic Objectives, and ensuing priorities, set out in Section 3 below.

3. Strategic Objectives supporting the delivery of the RSS and RES

3.1 The tables in the remainder of the document identify the key rail priorities which can contribute to five specific Strategic Objectives, drawn from the consultants' analysis of relevant documentation, as supporting the delivery of the RSS and RES. Building on the levels of growth arising from the RSS, rail can contribute to a number of over-arching strategic objectives, including the promotion of productivity and competitiveness, supporting sustainable growth, improving accessibility (particularly in addressing social exclusion and in accommodating the needs of the region's increasingly elderly population) and in tackling climate change by providing a less environmentally threatening alternative to the transport of people and goods by road. While progressing the document there has been a focus on the need to do more work to clarify Outcomes relating to environmental and social policies set out in the draft RSS which will need to be taken forward in part, through the Climate Change Action Plan. The five specific Strategic Objectives are as follows:

- **Strategic Objective 1:** Improve connectivity to and between SSCTs in the South West (particularly West of England, Swindon, Bournemouth / Poole, Exeter, Plymouth, Cheltenham / Gloucester, Taunton, Torbay and the five Cornish towns comprising Truro, Camborne, Pool, Redruth and Falmouth/Penryn), especially from those places to London / South East and Birmingham / Midlands.
- **Strategic Objective 2:** Strengthen the position of SSCTs identified in the RSS (particularly West of England, Swindon, Bournemouth / Poole, Exeter, Plymouth Gloucester / Cheltenham) as focal points for growth and regeneration through provision of efficient and reliable transport systems, tackling congestion and supporting delivery of economic growth.
- **Strategic Objective 3:** Improve public transport access to airports (including Bristol, Bournemouth, Exeter, Southampton, Birmingham and London airports), through better public transport interchange, to Bristol, Bournemouth and Exeter airports.

- **Strategic Objective 4:** Facilitate the growth and success of Bristol Port, encourage sustainable distribution and safeguard the potential for improved rail traffic to/from Poole, Plymouth and other South West ports.
- **Strategic Objective 5:** Support growth in key regional business sectors, particularly tourism, providing increased opportunities for people to travel and within the South West and to the regions by non-car modes.

3.2 Cross referenced against each Strategic Objective are links to the South West RPA objectives, which are appended.

3.3 Under each Strategic Objective are three sections. The first identifies the key **Outcomes** that the region is calling for the rail industry to achieve, in order to help meet the Strategic Objective. The second identifies the **Rail Outputs** that will be needed to deliver the **Outcomes**.

3.4 The final section will identify measures, or **Rail Inputs**, such as those identified in the Atkins study Tables 4.1 and 4.2, Network Rail Business Plan and South West RPA, which will achieve the **Outcomes** and deliver the Strategic Objectives. Current schemes are those appearing in published technical documents. They are not necessarily commitments to build and/or do not represent policy proposals or committed schemes. The lists will be the subject of discussion with the rail industry to verify that they are the most appropriate measures to deliver the Strategic Objectives identified, having regard to value for money and deliverability. It is anticipated that the number of schemes will be reduced and subject to revision. Information about cost and period of delivery will be added. This work will be completed before they are added to the Rail Inputs table.

3.5 The tables will not (deliberately) distinguish between schemes inside or outside of the South West as certain major schemes outside the region have the potential to impact greatly on services in the region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

Improve connectivity to and between SSCTs in the South West (particularly West of England, Swindon, Bournemouth / Poole, Exeter, Plymouth, Cheltenham / Gloucester, Taunton, Torbay and the five Cornish towns comprising Truro, Camborne, Pool, Redruth and Falmouth/Penryn), especially from those places to London / South East and Birmingham / Midlands.

Outcomes

Meeting the needs of business for reliable connections to markets as a prime business concern, measured as the proportion of businesses satisfied with the reliability of rail connections to and from and between the places named above and between those places and London / The South East and Birmingham / West Midlands by 2016 (from 2007 base year). *Business Survey likely to be commissioned by SWRDA in 2007/8.*

Improved connectivity to key markets, for example *to the places named above and between them and London / The South East and Birmingham / West Midlands by 2016 (from 2007 base year) contributing to improved economic performance in all SSCTs, as measured by productivity (GVA), employment and levels of inward investment. Rail connectivity defined as the number of direct connections, increased capacity, speed and ability to do a days work at either end (see rail outcomes below).*

Reduced pressure on the strategic road network (particularly J1-J13 of M4 which is already 4th most delayed section of motorway in UK) by 2016 as measured by the contribution of rail services to movements on corridors to and between the places named above and between those places and London / South East and Birmingham / Midlands. *Expressed by number and proportion of journeys by rail.*

Rail mode-share in the South West (Source: SW RPA / South West Area Multi-Modal Study):

- Overall, only 1.2% of commuting trips in the South West are made by rail, compared with an average of 5% nationwide, reflecting the relatively sparse population distribution in the region, the rural geography and lack of stations.
- M5 corridor – 7% between Exeter and Taunton, 3% between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol.
- M4 corridor – 10 to 12% between Bristol and London.
- A303/A30 – 12 to 16% Exeter to Reading corridor (includes the line between Taunton and Reading into Paddington and the Exeter-Waterloo line).

Improved interchange links both inside and outside the South West, particularly in relation to the following places / destinations:

- Reading
- Birmingham
- Cross London (Crossrail and to Europe via Kings Cross / St Pancras)
- Direct connections to Heathrow airport
- Encouraging interchange between the core High Speed rail network and bus/rail feeder services, particularly in rural areas in the region where rail is less prevalent.

Rail Outputs

Improved reliability between London, the South West and South Wales to meet the High Level Output Statement target for long distance and regional services of 92.6% PPM by 2014 (as set out in the July 2007 White Paper).

Improving capacity for high speed services along core routes (Core High Speed Line Strategy to (1) 2014/15 (2) 2026 as follows:

- Great Western Main Line
- Reading to Plymouth Line

Increasing capacity and connections between the places named above and between those places and London / South East and Birmingham / West Midlands including capacity at Paddington, Waterloo, Reading and Birmingham New Street to tackle bottlenecks and ease flows to / from South West.

Development of Parkway stations at key node points (eg Worle Parkway and Gloucestershire Parkway) and improved access to the railway at key centres, eg Taunton and Swindon Visions.

Improved connections to/from gateway airports (particularly Stansted, Heathrow and Gatwick) and channel tunnel services from the South West.

Securing long term resilience of routes to flooding / climate change.

Rail Inputs

Rail Inputs will be determined following an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, Rail providers and DfT Rail in relation to what is required to deliver the Outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

Strengthen the position of SSCTs identified in the RSS (particularly West of England, Swindon, Bournemouth / Poole, Exeter, Plymouth Gloucester / Cheltenham) as focal points for growth and regeneration through provision of efficient and reliable transport systems, tackling congestion and supporting delivery of economic growth.

Links with RPA Objectives: 1, 2, 8, 9, 10

Outcomes

Support the growth of the region's main cities and towns envisaged through the RSS and RES, particularly in West of England, South East Dorset, Exeter, Plymouth and Swindon, and on the following rail corridors listed below, by 2016 and 2026:

Improve accessibility and encourage modal shift away from the car for commuting trips to and within SSCTs (particularly in Bristol where average road speed during peak hours is the slowest in England outside London), making use of the rail asset, particularly where significant local employment and housing growth will take place.

Key rail corridors supporting access to jobs and services in relation to SSCTs identified in the RSS:

- **Weston Super Mare – Bristol – South Wales**
- **West Wilts – Bath – Bristol**
- **Cheltenham / Gloucester – Bristol**
- **Cheltenham / Gloucester – Swindon**
- **Local train routes to Exeter from Torbay, Exmouth and Barnstaple**
- **Axminster – Cranbrook – Exeter**
- **Poole – Bournemouth**
- **Weymouth – Bournemouth / Poole**
- **Southampton – Bournemouth / Poole**
- **Five Cornish Towns Group**

Passenger flows and growth data for these corridors are provided at Appendix D.

Rail Outputs

Increased capacity, capability and frequency of cross **Bristol** services.

Improved capacity, capability and reliability of services in rail corridors serving **Swindon, Gloucester/Cheltenham** and **Exeter** sub-regions.

Increased capacity for east/west movements to and within the **South East Dorset** conurbation.

Rail Inputs

Rail Inputs will be determined following an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, Rail providers and DfT Rail in relation to what is required to deliver the Outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

Improve public transport access to airports (including Bristol, Bournemouth, Exeter, Southampton, Birmingham and London airports), through better public transport interchange, to Bristol, Bournemouth and Exeter airports.

Links with RPA Objectives: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6

Outcomes

More people using non-car modes to access key regional airports at Bristol, Bournemouth and Exeter to achieve modal share as agreed between the Airports and local authorities through statutory master plans. The relevant Master Plans state the following:

- Bristol International Airport Master Plan: target is 13% access by non-car modes by 2015.
- Bournemouth Airport Master Plan: support for improvements to Bournemouth Travel Interchange (public transport information and booking service based at coach and bus station adjoining Bournemouth Railway Station).
- Exeter International Airport: Master Plan yet to be published.

Improved accessibility to support the growth and development of economic activity around the region's airports (e.g. the new community and development area East of Exeter)

Improved public transport connectivity from the region to London Heathrow.

Rail Outputs

Improved interchange between bus networks and rail stations and coordinated through ticketing.

Good public transport interchange and links to **Exeter Airport**.

Greater capacity at key rail interchanges (in terms of car park facilities, train capacity and platform length) to accommodate increasing passenger demand

Deliver improved rail / air interchanges to London Heathrow for passengers from the South West.

Rail Inputs

Rail Inputs will be determined following an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, Rail providers and DfT Rail in relation to what is required to deliver the Outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

Facilitate the growth and success of Bristol Port, encourage sustainable distribution and safeguard the potential for improved rail traffic to/from Poole, Plymouth and other South West ports.

Links with RPA Objectives: 3, 6, 7

Outcomes

Greater volume and proportion of freight movement through Bristol port (currently 3,800 tonnes per annum equating to 36% of all tonnage), making use of the Port's rail access for enhanced connectivity to markets.

Continued growth and sustainable development to support Bristol Port's role as significant contributor to the local, regional and national economy expressed as jobs and income generated.

Improved reliability and punctuality of passenger and freight services in the Bristol area and along the Great Western Main Line due to reduced conflicts.

Safeguard potential to improve rail freight facilities and services at all South West ports.

Rail Outputs

Ensuring a higher proportion of train paths from the Port are used.

Providing sufficient capacity to enable forecast growth of east-west and north-south passenger and freight traffic through Bristol and Reading and Didcot, and access to West Coast Main Line.

Ensuring sufficient rail capacity to accommodate growth in freight movements from **Avonmouth** and **Portbury docks** through **Bristol** and Reading.

Ensuring sufficient rail capacity and rail access from major employment centres to docks including Ports outside the region, eg Southampton.

Rail Inputs

Rail Inputs will be determined following an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, Rail providers and DfT Rail in relation to what is required to deliver the Outcomes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

Support growth in key regional business sectors, particularly tourism, and providing increased opportunities for people to travel more sustainably within the South West and to other regions by non-car modes.

Links with RPA Objectives: 4, 5, 6, 10

Outcomes

To support the aims of 'Towards 2015', the South West's Tourism Strategy which include:

- An increase in the value of tourism in the off peak and off season by 40% by 2015
- Sustainable tourism by increasing the proportion of staying visitor trips made by rail from 7% to 10% by 2015

Rail Outputs

Improved passenger information and comfort levels at stations and on trains, including increased luggage space, to encourage journeys by rail.

Improved connectivity to key tourism destinations (e.g. **Weston-super-Mare, Paignton, Weymouth, Newquay, Falmouth, Salisbury, Bournemouth, Bath and the Cotswolds**).

Rail Inputs

Rail Inputs will be determined following an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, Rail providers and DfT Rail in relation to what is required to deliver the Outcomes.

4. What this document will be used for

- 4.1 This technical working document is intended to be dynamic and will develop and change over time as a result of discussion with the rail industry, input from Assembly Members and RDA Board Members and changing priorities / policy context.
- 4.2 The information will be used and presented in different ways depending on the particular audience or purpose in question. For example, a concise and professionally presented version is likely to be produced, based on the information contained in this technical working document, for use in lobbying activities.
- 4.3 The various versions produced will be used as an input into deliberations with the rail industry and Government on spending on rail infrastructure and services in the South West. Potentially, it will also be used to feed into the debate on wider transport funding (such as the Transport Regional Funding Allocations). This does not mean that the region will necessarily seek to incorporate rail schemes into the established RFA programme, however.

5. Appendix A - South West RPA Objectives

1. Promote measures to tackle climate change including supporting development of sustainable communities.
2. Strengthen position of SSCTs identified in the RSS as focal point for growth through provision of efficient and reliable inter-regional transport systems.
3. Improve access to the main airports and to ports.
4. Improve connectivity within the South West and between the South West and the rest of the UK.
5. Deliver improvements to the accessibility, punctuality and reliability of local and regional transport systems (including the increased use of public transport).
6. Improve cost effectiveness, provide good value for money (sound financial management, cost control and clear appraisal of transport investment) and make resources work harder and smarter across transport modes.
7. Make better use of capacity for freight services by focusing freight on key routes and improving performance for freight users.
8. Balance the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life.
9. Support the roles of market towns.
10. Develop sustainable tourism.

6. Appendix B - Table of planned infrastructure investment

[To be added - referring to Network Rail Route Plans “planning infrastructure investment” tables]

7. Appendix C - Table of other planned investment

[To be added - following meetings with TOCs, etc.]

8. Appendix D - Passenger flows and growth data (Source: First Group)

Total Yearly Journeys on South West main corridors

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
W-s-M - Bristol - South Wales	2,164,511	1,885,489	1,734,666	1,711,517	1,597,104
West Wilts - Bath - Bristol	2,298,547	2,084,308	1,961,128	1,856,864	1,710,169
Chelt/Glouc - Bristol	997,465	846,681	694,225	607,832	551,195
Chelt/Glouc - Swindon	354,155	313,097	283,272	248,422	243,420
Commuter routes into Exeter	1,069,860	925,327	894,797	955,996	986,048
Poole - Bournemouth	248,906	245,738	280,738	252,486	191,220
Weymouth - Bournem - Poole	1,208,534	1,162,781	1,188,036	1,151,069	988,374
Southamp - Bournem - Poole	3,582,675	3,371,018	3,267,656	3,253,465	2,845,783
Truro - Falmouth	178,262	167,793	154,727	156,506	148,346
Truro - CPR*	139,589	128,939	115,721	101,065	80,822

* Corridor does not include Pool

Total Year on Year Growth

	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
W-s-M - Bristol - South Wales	14.80%	8.69%	1.35%	7.16%	
West Wilts - Bath - Bristol	10.28%	6.28%	5.62%	8.58%	
Chelt/Glouc - Bristol	17.81%	21.96%	14.21%	10.28%	
Chelt/Glouc - Swindon	13.11%	10.53%	14.03%	2.06%	
commuter routes into Exeter	15.62%	3.41%	-6.40%	-3.05%	
Poole - Bournemouth	1.29%	-12.47%	11.19%	32.04%	
Weymouth - Bournem - Poole	3.93%	-2.13%	3.21%	16.46%	
Southamp - Bournem - Poole	6.28%	3.16%	0.44%	14.33%	
Truro - Falmouth	6.24%	8.44%	-1.14%	5.50%	
Truro - CPR*	8.26%	11.42%	14.50%	25.05%	

* Corridor does not include Pool

9. Appendix E – Strategically Significant Cities and Towns identified in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West

STRATEGICALLY SIGNIFICANT CITIES AND TOWNS		
Barnstaple	Chippenham	Taunton
Bath	Dorchester	Torbay
Bournemouth	Exeter	Trowbridge
Bridgwater	Gloucester	Weston-super-Mare
Bristol	Plymouth	Weymouth
Camborne/Pool/Redruth, Falmouth-Penryn, Truro	Poole	Yeovil
	Salisbury	
Cheltenham	Swindon	