

Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

Board Meeting

Paper B

Date **21st July 2021**

Title of report: **Rail Update**

Purpose of report: **To update the Board on the implications of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, work on the Rail Strategy and revised programme and the proposal to work with the East-West-Rail Consortium.**

Recommendations:

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. Delegate to the Rail Officer Group to explore options for the STB to take a greater role in the area's rail network.
- II. Agree to reallocate the £65,000 rail strategy funding for 2021/22 to taking forward the outputs from Network Rail's strategic corridor studies with delegation to the Senior Officers Group to confirm the programme.
- III. Agree to delete the car parking at stations target and revise the supporting text in the Rail Strategy as set out in Appendix Two.
- IV. Agree to delegate to officers to:
 - a) work closely with EWRC on developing the business case for Bristol to Oxford and Oxford to Southampton services.
 - b) confirm membership of the EWRC.
 - c) agree to the Western Gateway STB logo being added to the EWRC Prospectus.

Introduction

- 1.1 The Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (STB) Board meeting of 19 June 2019 agreed to produce an area wide rail strategy. WSP consultants were commissioned to undertake the work. The final Rail Strategy was adopted by the Board on 16 September 2020.
- 1.2 The Rail Strategy recommended establishing five cross rail industry task forces to deliver the Strategy's conditional outputs for: Strategic planning, Digital Solutions, Station & Access to Rail, Freight and Future Ready &

Resilience. At the 16 December 2020 Partnership Board meeting it was agreed that in taking the Rail Strategy forward the priority should be to focus on the Stations & Access to Rail, Digital Solutions and Strategic planning task forces.

- 1.3 A report to the 17 March 2021 Board set out progress to date on setting up the task forces with a draft programme for delivery. This report provides an update to the Board on the implications of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, work on the Rail Strategy and revised programme and the proposal to work with the East-West-Rail Consortium.

Williams – Shapps Plan for Rail

- 2.1 The long awaited Williams Review in to the structure of Britain’s rail industry was finally published as ‘The Williams – Shapps Plan for Rail’ White Paper on 20 May 2021. It contains ten outcomes and 62 commitments to deliver a customer focused railway.
- 2.2 The key *implications* for the Western Gateway STB are shown in the table below:

No.	Commitment description	Implications for the Western Gateway
1., 2. and 3.	Creation of a new national body Great British Railways (GBR) with five regional divisions.	<i>What roles will STB’s have in setting up GBR and how will it interact with it? GBR will require legislative change and will take at least three years to set up.</i>
9.	30 Year Strategy with five year business plans replacing the existing Control Periods from 2024.	<i>Need for the Rail Strategy and the long term Strategic Transport Plan to dovetail with the 30 Year Strategy and five year business plans.</i>
11.	New partnerships between GBR and local and regional governments with joint governance.	<i>DfT has indicated STB’s will have a key role. To note the White Paper caveats this section with ‘where such arrangements are appropriate.’</i>
11.	Greater control for local people and places with the ability for local leaders/ partnerships to integrate ticketing and fares with other local transport services, greater control over stations and services and ‘buy’ additional services or infrastructure.	<i>Again the DfT has indicated there is likely to be a STB role here. Again, the DfT has indicated there is likely to be a Mayoral Combined Authorities and Sub-National Transport Bodies role here. Potential for greater integration with cycling, walking and buses.</i>
15.	Unlock housing and economic growth, placemaking and catalyst for regeneration and development.	<i>Links to Rail Strategy commitment for transit orientated growth and the action to provide guidance for Local Plans.</i>
21.	Passenger Service Contracts to replace franchising with revenue risk taken by GBR with incentives to the operator. GBR will be specify timetables, fares and service levels and will be accountable to the passenger.	<i>No one size will fit all so question as to what shape and form these Contracts will take for the Western Gateway area and the level of direct input the STB have.</i>
30.	Integrated and easier ticketing with pay as you go and digital ticketing roll out and across all public transport sectors .	<i>How will the Western Gateway Rail Strategy commitment to integrated ticketing and fares reform fit in with this?</i>
44.	National Accessibility Strategy and investment programme.	<i>This has implications for the proposed Western Gateway station audit work (see below).</i>

45.	GBR statutory duty to promote freight, growth target and fair access for freight to the network	<i>Need to reflect this in the freight study, long term Strategic Transport Plan and Rail Strategy.</i>
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- 2.3 There is the opportunity to build the case for the Western Gateway STB's role in the new partnerships between Great British Railways and local and regional government. Preliminary technical evidence and policy options work would need to be undertaken to gain a fuller understanding of the benefits, risks, commitments, governance and accountabilities. Options would need to be explored with neighbouring STBs given that many train services are cross boundary so a wider geographical approach may be required.
- 2.4 It is recommended that the Rail Officer Group be delegated to explore options for the STB to take a greater role in the area's rail network.
- 2.5 An additional note on the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail can be found in Appendix One (courtesy of Andrew Wiles at Somerset County Council/Peninsula STB).

Station Audit and revised rail programme

- 3.1 As agreed at the Board on 17 March 2021 £65,000 was allocated in 2021/22 for a Station Audit study as part of implementing the Western Gateway Rail Strategy. The Western Gateway Rail Officer Group drew up a brief for the audit. At the request of the Department for Transport (DfT) issuing the brief was put on hold pending the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. As noted above this includes a new National Accessibility Strategy and investment programme. This effectively duplicates the work of the Western Gateway Station Audit so it is proposed that the funding for 2021/22 is reallocated to supporting taking forward the outputs of Network Rail's strategic corridor studies. As the funding for 2021/22 is limited it is intended that a rolling programme of work is set up with funding sought for later years.
- 3.2 Network Rail is expecting the strategic corridor studies to be taken forward in partnership (Network Rail, STBs, local authorities, train operating companies and others). The corridors for the Western Gateway are:
- Bristol to Birmingham (Bristol to Gloucester 4tph). MetroWest provides 2 tph so this would be about enhancing the service to 4tph which requires significant infrastructure interventions. Station proposals along the line including Charfield and Stonehouse Bristol Road would benefit.
 - Bristol to Exeter (4.5 tph to Worle + 6 tph to WSM). With services extending to Taunton to Exeter there is the opportunity to work jointly with the Peninsula STB on this.
 - West of England Main Line (Salisbury to Exeter). This was completed in 2020 with various proposals to provide additional capacity.
 - Dorset – emerging outputs include enhancing services on the Heart of Wessex Line (Weymouth to Bristol) and a Dorset Metro.

- Greater Bristol (post April 2022). This will be linked to the West of England Combined Authority's 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan and 25 Year SOBC. Given post April 2022 timescales this would be one for further down the programme.
 - South West Main Line – includes routes from Woking to Salisbury and Bournemouth. This is at an early stage, final report expected July 2022, so again one for further down the programme.
 - Bristol to Oxford and Oxford to Southampton via Swindon (with East-West-Rail consortium – see below). The West of England Combined Authority has funding to explore Bristol to Oxford so there is the opportunity to link with this and ask East-West-Rail and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) to contribute.
- 3.3 All the above align with the Western Gateway Rail Strategy and can be rolled together into an area wide case. Given the scale of some of the measures required and the cost of developing business case an incremental approach will need to be taken with early feasibility work.
- 3.4 Outputs from the strategic corridor studies will need to link up with and complement emerging proposals from the various Bus Service Improvement Plans under development by the local authorities.
- 3.5 It is recommended that members agree to reallocate the £65,000 rail strategy funding for 2021/22 to taking forward the outputs from Network Rail's strategic corridor studies with delegation to the Senior Officers Group to confirm the programme.
- 3.6 The existing rail work programme as agreed by the Board on 17 March 2021 will continue subject to funding.

Station Parking Policy

- 4.1 The Western Gateway Rail Strategy contains targets for car parking at stations. Gap analysis undertaken by the consultants who produced the Strategy indicate there is a 21,821 shortfall in spaces. This sits uncomfortably with the climate emergency declarations of the Western Gateway local authorities and with Local Transport Plans aimed at encouraging a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport. It is proposed to delete the target and revise the supporting text in the Rail Strategy as set out in Appendix Two.

East-West-Rail Consortium

- 5.1 The East-West-Rail Consortium (EWRC) is producing a prospectus for restoring the rail links between Oxford and Cambridge via Bedford and Milton Keynes with potential extension to Ipswich, Norwich, Bristol and Southampton. Membership of the EWRC is made up of local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships along the route and the England's Economic

Heartland and Transport East STBs. A

Passenger Rail Study undertaken by EWRC shows there are high value rail journey pairings between Oxford and Bristol and Southampton. This strengthens the case for EWRC looking westwards and creating new long distance regional services from the South West to East Anglia. To this end EWRC are renaming themselves as the East West Mainline Partnership. The Western Gateway STB has been asked if it wishes to join the Partnership. There are no fees for joining.

- 5.2 The EWRC prospectus aligns closely with the Western Gateway Rail Strategy (adopted September 2020) with Conditional Output 5 (CO5) for new Direct Services. Top of the list in Category A1 (new direct services that connect at least one national hub) are Bristol-Chippenham-Swindon-Oxford and Southampton-Salisbury-Westbury-Swindon-Oxford. It also aligns with the West of England Combined Authority 10 Year Rail Delivery Plan (December 2020) and the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Rail Strategy (July 2019) aspirations for a Bristol to Oxford service and new stations at Royal Wootton Bassett and Corsham. EWRC furthermore covers both the South East to South Wales sustainable travel corridor and to a lesser degree the Midlands to the South Coast corridor in the Strategic Transport Plan. For the Western Gateway, therefore, the benefits of working with the EWRC on delivering these aspirations is evident. EWRC has asked if in support of their prospectus the Western Gateway logo could be added to it.
- 5.3 Overall this is an opportunity for joint working and strategic collaboration on Bristol to Oxford and Southampton services which aligns with and has considerable benefits for West of England Combined Authority, Wiltshire, Western Gateway and EWRC aspirations.
- 5.4 It is recommended that the STB:
- Delegate to officers to work closely with EWRC on developing the business case for Bristol to Oxford and Oxford to Southampton services.
 - Delegate to officers to confirm membership of the East West Mainline Partnership (formerly EWRC).
 - Agree to the Western Gateway STB logo being added to the EWRC Prospectus.

Consultation, communication and engagement

- 6.1 The Rail Officer Group has been re-established with officers drawn from the all the Western Gateway local authorities. It now meets monthly. The Senior Officer Group has been consulted on this report.
- 6.2 Stakeholder and public participation in the work of the rail programme and task forces will provide useful local insights and promote awareness of proposals and the wider Rail Strategy. An engagement plan will be drawn up.

Equalities Implications

7.1 No adverse impact on any protected groups.

Legal considerations

8.1 The Western Gateway STB remains an informal non-statutory partnership.

Financial considerations

9.1 For 2021/22 there is a rail budget of £65,000 subject to DfT approval.

Conclusion

10.1 The Board is asked to agree the recommendations set out at the beginning of this report.

Appendices

Appendix One: Briefing note on Williams-Shapp plan for Rail

Appendix Two: Western Gateway Rail Strategy - Proposed revisions to car parking policy

Contact Officer

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Appendix One

BRIEFING NOTE ON WILLIAMS-SHAPP PLAN FOR RAIL - “SIMPLIFICATION NOT NATIONALISATION”

(Courtesy of Andrew Wiles at Somerset County Council/Peninsula STB)

Background

Based on key outputs of the Williams review which was set up in the wake of the failures of the Great Western electrification scheme and the 2018 timetable fiasco:

- Lost sight of customers
 - Call for simplified ticketing
- Missing opportunities to meet community needs
 - Improve access and better coordination with buses and cycling
- Fragmented with no clear accountability
 - Simplified leadership and accountability
 - New ‘Public Service Contracts’ to replace franchising
- Lacks strategic direction
 - Commitment to continued growth and investment
- Need to raise productivity and reduce long term costs
 - Costs too high and guilty of over-specification
- Lack of innovation and flexibility

Key Points

- Clearer accountability and strategic leadership
- New Public Service Contracts to replace franchises
- Commitment to continued growth and investment
- Simplified ticketing
- Improve efficiency and reduce costs
- Continued focus on safety and security

Great British Railways

- Establishes new overarching body – Great British Railways (GBR)
- Remit to develop a new 30 year strategy (aiming for 2022) - with supporting 5 year business plans to replace the current Control Period structure in 2024
- Overarching mandate to ensure customer is key focus in all areas of operation:
 - Operate in the interests of all customers (including freight)
 - Grow passenger numbers and open new markets
 - Increase efficiency and open new revenue streams

Accountability

- Sec of State will be accountable to Parliament and will hold GBR to account with support of new primary legislation.
- GBR role is to balance whole system view with local needs through:
 - 5 regional divisions (based largely on current Network Rail regions) with increased local empowerment
 - New partnerships between GBR and local and regional governments
 - Joint governance to allow local political scrutiny (more detail to be provided in levelling up white paper)

Supporting local economies and communities

- Improve links to unlocking housing and economic growth, and significantly to add place and social value, eg through increased use of current and former rail buildings and estate

Other bodies

- Transport Focus is to be reformed to strengthen their role as rail customer champion.
- Changes at the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to improve independent scrutiny, monitor accountability and act as appeals body.
- Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to lose functions in ticketing and cross sector coordination but to remain as a trade body.

Passenger Service Contracts

- While accepting past benefits of franchising, it is not felt to have kept pace with increasing needs for improvements with too much focus on short term plans.
- To be replaced with new Passenger Service Contracts (based on concession models seen in Europe):
 - GBR specifies timetables, branding, fares and service levels
 - GBR agrees fees with operators to deliver against specification and standards
 - In most cases fare revenue will go to GBR and operators carry the cost risk
 - Incentivised to increase passenger growth, meet standards and wider network cooperation
 - Will not be a one size fits all approach with regional variations according to need and types of usage
 - Reduce barriers to entry and encourage new operators

Accelerate innovation and modernisation

- Expand electrification and introduce alternatives such as hydrogen and battery
 - *(of particular interest to the south west due to very high costs of electrification throughout)*
- Costed options to decarbonise whole network (still aim to remove diesel only by 2040)
- Improve 'open data' and data sharing to attract more private initiatives
- Focus on more innovative approaches to flexible, digital and whole journey ticketing
- Improve access, ease of use and onboard storage for cyclists
- National strategy and long term investment in accessibility
- New skills and training offer and drive to increase diversity.

Additional Points

- Community Rail Partnerships to be empowered to strengthen rail's social and economic impact.
- There will be no shadow GBR although there will be a pilot of integrated local teams. DfT indicated this will be for industry teams only.
- No changes to rolling stock procurement. GBR will take a strategic approach and provide guidance.

Appendix Two

Western Gateway Rail Strategy

Proposed revisions to car parking policy

May 2021

Purpose

To revise the car parking policy and targets set out in the Rail Strategy targets for stations across the Western Gateway area.

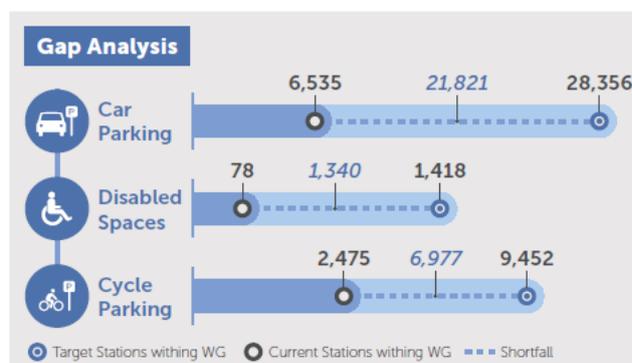
Reports to the Western Gateway Partnership Board on 16/12/2020 and 17/03/2021 identified the need to review the appropriateness of car parking provision and targets for stations across the Western Gateway area. It was agreed the Rail Officer Group were to lead on this.

Background

The Western Gateway Rail Strategy includes the target for parking provision as set out in the Type of Provision table below (p45) under Conditional Output M1.

TYPE OF PROVISION	% DAILY STATION USERS PROVIDED FOR		
	National Hubs	Regional Hubs	Local Hubs
Car Parking	5%	15%	10%
Cycle Parking	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Disabled Parking (including Wide Spaces)	10% of total car parking provision (as specified in DfT Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations – A Code of Practice)		
EV Charging Points	5% of total car parking provision, but can be linked with disabled spaces		

According to the consultants WSP who produced the Rail Strategy the resulting gap analysis from applying these % targets results in a shortfall in spaces of 21,821 – see table below (from p45). This sits uncomfortably with the climate emergency declarations of the Western Gateway local authorities and with Local Transport Plans aimed at encouraging a modal shift to sustainable forms of transport.



The shortfall of 21,821 spaces was derived by WSP by applying the % parking requirement across all stations regardless of whether it was physically possible or acceptable to provide more spaces. Many Western Gateway stations provide no parking at all. The methodology used by WSP produces anomalies where Bath Spa for example would be required to provide an additional 3,892 spaces. This is neither deliverable in the centre of Bath or from a sustainable transport perspective desirable. Under the same criteria Pokesdown station in Bournemouth which is located on a constrained site and serves a high density residential area and has no parking requires 206 spaces.

It is accepted that there are stations which have a regional hub or gateway role where providing more parking as part of improving wider access is more acceptable. Such stations will be treated on an individual basis as the need arises to review the level of parking.

For the disabled, cycle and EV charging spaces targets it is proposed to review these as part of the station audit work. In particular the 7.5% target for cycle parking across all stations is on the low side and especially so for local stations where it would be expected that cycling along with walking is the key mode. It should be noted that the figure for the current number of disabled spaces is extremely inaccurate. There will also be some stations where there is a need to improve the quality of the parking offer for example lighting, CCTV and surfacing. This will also be picked up under the station audit work.

Whilst not included in the text of the Rail Strategy WSP's view on parking was that the generation of more road trips for first mile/last mile through providing more parking at stations is outweighed by the modal shift for the main leg of the journey by rail. There is some substance to this but it is that very first mile/last mile that people need to be persuaded to cycle or walk or catch the bus or DRT alternative to the station.

Recommendation

- 1) It is proposed that the car parking targets in the Type of Provision table and the Gap Analysis table on p45 in the Rail Strategy under Conditional Output M1 are deleted.
- 2) Under Conditional Output M1 the 'What, Why and Governance/Delivery' table be amended to:

What?

Improvements to active modes access to stations, including safety, routing and signposting. Where a station provides a regional hub or gateway role additional parking will be reviewed on an individual station basis.

Why?

To drive modal shift and promote rail as an integral part of a sustainable transport network, passengers need to feel that they are able to get to their local stations quickly and safely, and be confident that when they get there, space will be available for cycle and disabled parking.

Governance / Delivery

Stations & Access to Rail Taskforce

- 3) The Gap Analysis Table to be replaced with the following text.

For the number of disabled, cycle and EV charging spaces to be provided at stations it is proposed to review these as part of the Western Gateway station audit work.