

WESTERN GATEWAY SUB-NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY (WGSTB)

Draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The frequently asked questions below are to help explain the work around the draft SIP. If you have any further queries, please do get in touch at westerngatewaystb@westofengland-ca.gov.uk.

FAQs on Consultation

What is Western Gateway STB?

[The Western Gateway](#) is one of seven Sub-national Transport Bodies in England, setting out the transport strategy for the region, adding value to the work of its local authorities, and offering a unified voice for the region's priorities to the government in order to boost economic growth.

It comprises of Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council, Bristol City Council, Dorset Council, Gloucestershire County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Wiltshire Council and the West of England Combined Authority. We work directly with the Department for Transport, alongside National Highways, Network Rail and Homes England.

What is the role of the Western Gateway?

Our primary role is to develop and implement a comprehensive transport strategy for the Western Gateway region. We provide leadership on strategic transport matters and present our collective priorities for greater investment to the government, offering a unified voice for our area. Our work is underpinned by a robust regional evidence base that informs our [long-term Strategic Transport Plan](#).

How is Western Gateway STB funded?

The Western Gateway is funded through a combination of contributions from the Department for Transport and its constituent authorities. We aim to submit a business plan to the Department for Transport on a yearly basis.

What is the [Strategic Investment Plan \(SIP\)](#)?

The SIP is a requirement from the Department for Transport (DfT) that will outline priorities for transport interventions across the Western Gateway region. It is developed in partnership with our 9 Local Transport Authority partners, our SIP builds on our [Strategic Transport Plan \(STP\)](#) and brings together our evidence base and Local Authority Partners proposals, to present an investment plan which aims to boost the economy and make life better for people, for business and for the environment.

With input from Local Authorities across the region, Network Rail, National Highways and other key stakeholders, this investment plan is one that will truly be developed by the Western Gateway, for the Western Gateway people.

What is the purpose of the SIP?

The SIP fulfils three important functions:

- 1) Identifies regional transport proposals that are best able to deliver the aims of our Strategic Transport Plan (STP).*
- 2) Enables us to respond to calls from the Department for Transport or other bodies to provide a prioritised list of investment opportunities in the region, in response to policy or funding opportunities.*
- 3) Maintains an inventory of regional-level schemes proposed by our partner authorities.*

The SIP is not intended to present a comprehensive catalogue of all transport schemes in the Western Gateway region. The proposals included in the current SIP are only those that are significant

to the region as a whole and which can be started by 2035. There are many excellent schemes that are not included here because the scope of the scheme is mostly restricted to one Authority area and therefore can be most effectively delivered through their Local Transport Plan – i.e. they are out of scope for a regional strategy. Nor is the SIP intended to pass judgement on the absolute merit of each proposal, but only considers (at a high level) its ability to contribute to the aim of the adopted Strategic Transport Plan.

How does this relate to the existing Strategic Transport Plan?

The Strategic Investment Plan builds upon and complements the existing [Strategic Transport Plan](#), focusing on implementing its goals through specific investment priorities.

How was the Strategic Investment Plan developed?

The development process involved engagement with key stakeholders, including our 9 constituent Local Authorities partners, Network Rail, National Highways and our Transport and Business forum. This partnership approach ensured that the needs and perspectives of various regions within the Western Gateway were considered. It builds upon the existing Strategic Transport Plan along with the [Western Gateway's evidence base](#).

How were proposals assessed?

Each proposal was assessed against 12 criteria drawn from the Strategic Transport Plan. These criteria were formulated by a series of officer and member workshops/discussions and approved by the STB Board. An assessment panel assisted with the application and interpretation of these criteria and associated scoring.

What are the limitations of the process and outputs?

This is a very high level assessment with little independent verification of the information provided by partners submitting proposals. This information itself is limited. The assessment process has been informed by standard DfT processes, including the Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) and Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG), but has not been undertaken in accordance with those processes. No account has been taken of interactions between proposals or of changing baseline conditions in the future. The uncertainties and risks in the assessment are therefore high. Our current STP was developed and approved in March 2024, under the previous Conservative government. The adopted objectives relate to the national transport policies, objectives and funding priorities pertaining at that time. Further, the planned housing, business and transport development underpinning the STP assessment related to the targets and commitments agreed under that previous government. These are now in a state of change. It is therefore acknowledged that the Strategic Transport Plan and this associated Strategic Investment Plan is likely to require review and revision when the targets and priorities of the new government are published. This SIP should therefore be viewed as an interim position, pending that review.

How does the Strategic Investment Plan address environmental concerns?

The SIP will recommend schemes and other proposals for delivery that may have an impact on the environment, on health and on equalities. Hence, a [Strategic Environmental Assessment](#) will be conducted to assess and evaluate the Strategic Investment Plan through formal processes, in consultation with statutory bodies.

How will the Strategic Investment Plan benefit the Western Gateway region?

The SIP aims to boost the economy and improve quality of life for people, support businesses, and enhance the environment through strategic transport investments.

How can I participate in the consultation?

Your input is invaluable in our mission to develop an investment plan that works for everyone and is fit for the future. Take a few moments to fill out our survey and share your thoughts on our future transport schemes. Your feedback will ensure the shortlisted transport schemes reflects the regional priorities and address public needs. Nothing is set in stone - that's why we're consulting you. The draft list of schemes will be opened for public consultation from 18th December 2024 – 2nd February 2025.

What are the next steps?

After the consultation, the feedback will be analyzed, and the investment plan will be refined accordingly. A final draft version will be presented to the Western Gateway Partnership Board for approval, after which it will be finalised and published.
