

## Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body

### Board Meeting

#### Paper C

Date	<b>25<sup>th</sup> March 2025</b>
Title of report:	<b>Cycling Strategy final approval</b>
Purpose of report:	<b>Share Western Gateway's final proposed cycling strategy for approval</b>

#### **Recommendations:**

The members of the Board are recommended to:

- I. Approve the Cycling Strategy for publication
- II. Defer approval for any minor changes required to Senior Officers Group

## **1. Background and purpose**

1.1 The Western Gateway Cycling strategy was initially developed by Sustrans and AtkinsRealis in 2022. Sub-national Transport Body (STB) members felt the strategy needed more development, due to:

- Excessive clustering of routes around Bristol and in areas of existing network
- Lack of a coherent regional strategic approach, leading to a piecemeal approach to route prioritisation based on local rather than regional priorities.
- Lack of confidence that all routes had been equitably captured and assessed.

A further “thematic sift” was introduced, but this still did not resolve the issue. Neither did additional in-house work to review and adjust scoring methodology on the existing route proposals.

1.2 In September 2023, the Board agreed to commit additional funding to undertake a more comprehensive review of the strategy. A new methodology for route identification and selection was presented to the Board in July 2024. The work agreed to be undertaken included a more strategic approach to regional network planning and measures to better align the Cycling Strategy with the new Strategic Transport Plan (STP). This involved three stages:

1. Identification of a target network for Western Gateway comprising long-distance routes linking significant regional origins and destinations, aligned with the STP

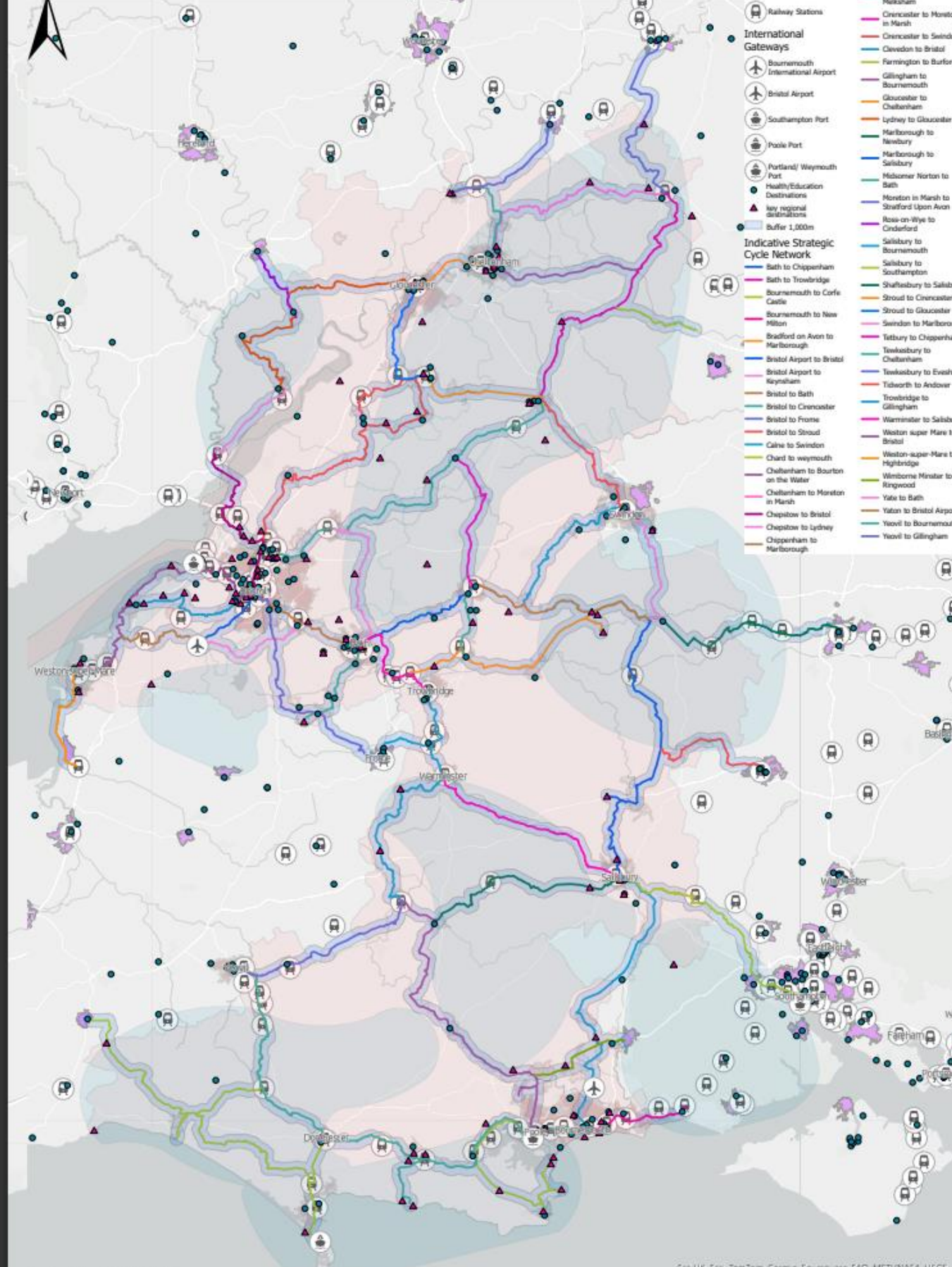
2. Assessment of individual routes comprising that network to identify those that provide the greatest connectivity to regionally significant destinations and are likely to experience the greatest demand.
3. Compilation into a final report, incorporating guidance on route selection and standards and indicating areas for further work.

## 2. Stage 1: Western Gateway cycle network

- 2.1 A region-wide cycle network has been developed based on connecting:
  - a) Settlements accommodating the top 60% of the regional population (equating to approx. £10k residents or more)
  - b) Smaller settlements to larger settlements
  - c) Regionally significant destinations (as defined and agreed in the STP)
  - d) National and international gateways (as defined and agreed in the STP) – ports, airports and major rail stations
  - e) Significant rural tourism areas (as defined and agreed for the SIP assessment)
  - f) Train stations
  - g) Existing and aspirational cycle networks (supplied by partners)
- 2.2 The regional network complements and extends the local cycle network planning undertaken by partners through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) or similar. It offers a view on a high-level network that connects mutually agreed strategic destinations over longer distances and across authority boundaries, complementing the more granular network that provides for shorter distance daily journeys at a local level and first/last mile cycle connectivity to individual origins and destinations.
- 2.3 The network has been built up in stages, starting from a straight-line network linking the key destinations outlined above. These desire lines have then been mapped on to real routes. Where possible/available these have been aligned with LCWIP routes, National Cycle Network routes/other named cycle routes or strategic routes in development, as provided by local authorities in June 2024. If not, they have been indicatively mapped on to the shortest available valid route. In some cases, an alternative preferred route has been selected by partners. In all cases, however, the exact route selection would be determined at a more detailed development stage.
- 2.4 The regional network should be viewed as a whole, with all component routes being important to achieve the overall vision of strategic cycle connectivity.
- 2.5 The draft network has been reviewed at each successive iteration by LA officers and/or members and updated in response to comments, with routes added, removed and altered. See Section 5 below for a summary.
- 2.6 The final network, as included in the full report, is shown below. ***It is important to note that the route alignments in the map are indicative only. The exact***

***alignments will be determined as part of more detailed individual scheme development.*** A buffer zone of 1km around the indicative alignment has also been shown to illustrate this uncertainty.

# Indicative Strategic Cycle Network



## Legend

- Train Areas
  - Railway Stations
  - International Gateways
  - Bournemouth International Airport
  - Bristol Airport
  - Southampton Port
  - Poole Port
  - Portland/ Weymouth Port
  - Health/Education Destinations
  - Key regional destinations
  - Buffer 1,000m
- 
- ### Indicative Strategic Cycle Network
- Bath to Chippenham
  - Bath to Trowbridge
  - Bournemouth to Corfe Castle
  - Bournemouth to New Milton
  - Bradford on Avon to Marlborough
  - Bristol Airport to Bristol
  - Bristol Airport to Keynsham
  - Bristol to Bath
  - Bristol to Cirencester
  - Bristol to Frome
  - Bristol to Stroud
  - Calne to Swindon
  - Chard to Weymouth
  - Cheltenham to Bourton on the Water
  - Cheltenham to Moreton in Marsh
  - Chipitow to Bristol
  - Chipitow to Lydney
  - Chippenham to Marlborough
  - Chippenham to Melksham
  - Cirencester to Moreton in Marsh
  - Cirencester to Swindon
  - Clevedon to Bristol
  - Farnington to Burford
  - Gillingham to Bournemouth
  - Gloucester to Cheltenham
  - Lydney to Gloucester
  - Marlborough to Newbury
  - Marlborough to Salisbury
  - Midworce Norton to Bath
  - Moreton in Marsh to Stratford Upon Avon
  - Ross-on-Wye to Cinderford
  - Salisbury to Bournemouth
  - Salisbury to Southampton
  - Shaftesbury to Salisbury
  - Stroud to Cirencester
  - Stroud to Gloucester
  - Swindon to Marlborough
  - Tetbury to Chippenham
  - Tetbury to Cheltenham
  - Tetbury to Evesham
  - Tidworth to Andover
  - Trowbridge to Gillingham
  - Warminster to Salisbury
  - Weston super Mare to Bristol
  - Weston-super-Mare to Highbridge
  - Wincborne Minster to Ringwood
  - Yate to Bath
  - Yate to Bristol Airport
  - Yovil to Bournemouth
  - Yovil to Gillingham

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Fourquare, FAD, METI/NASA, USGS  
 Figure 6-2 Indicative Strategic Cycle Network

### 3. Stage 2: Route assessment – demand and connectivity to regionally significant destinations

- 3.1 While the complete network forms the overall vision and aspiration for the Western Gateway Strategic Cycle Network, with a view to delivery and ability to respond to funding opportunities, the overall route network has been broken down into 50 individual routes/route sections of between 12-100km, starting and finishing at significant origins and destinations. Where possible, these have been aligned with existing route proposals, although the exact alignments are to be determined during more detailed scheme development.
- 3.2 Each route/route section has then been scored according to its proximity to receptors that are likely to generate demand/usage at a regional level and allow for connectivity to significant destinations. These include:
- resident population
  - workplace population
  - key destinations (defined in the STP)
  - additional significant destinations, including hospitals, universities and colleges
  - rural tourism areas (defined in the STP)
  - transport gateways e.g. train stations, ports and airports
  - connectivity with other cycle routes

To reflect both the high-level nature of this network and the uncertainties in the exact routing, a buffer zone of 1km from the indicative route has been used to assess connectivity to these origins and destinations.

3.3 The Top 26 routes identified by this assessment are:

Route	Length (km)	Score
Gloucester to Cheltenham	15.0	32
Bristol to Cirencester	66.7	30
Bristol to Bath	20.4	30
Bristol Airport to Bristol	12.5	30
Midsomer Norton to Bath	17.4	29
Weston super Mare to Bristol	49.2	29
Bournemouth to New Milton	17.2	28
Stroud to Gloucester	20.9	27
Swindon to Marlborough	22.8	26
Bristol to Stroud	77.3	26
Cirencester to Swindon	25.7	24
Tewkesbury to Cheltenham	18.4	24
Chepstow to Bristol	32.8	24
Bristol to Frome	42.5	24
Bath to Chippenham	22.5	23
Chippenham to Melksham	11.7	23
Yate to Bath	24.9	23
Bournemouth to Corfe Castle	48.8	22
Salisbury to Southampton	45.8	22

Clevedon to Bristol	25.5	22
Bath to Trowbridge	19.9	22
Weston-super-Mare to Highbridge	23.7	21
Gillingham to Bournemouth	70.5	20
Salisbury to Bournemouth	54.6	20
Calne to Swindon	27.7	20
Stroud to Cirencester	19.7	20

3.4 It is important to note that this list above does not constitute a recommendation for investment in individual routes. Several of the routes on the list have been either wholly or partly delivered to a good standard and may require little further investment. Some may experience significant barriers to delivery, while others may be able to take advantage of delivery opportunities (e.g. through development). The list is merely indicative of potential demand and contribution to regional connectivity.

#### **4. Stage 3: Final report**

4.1 The network map and route assessments have been incorporated into a final draft report, which is circulated with this paper. As well as the route plans, the report contains:

- A review of relevant local and national policy
- Benefits appraisal and evidence base
- Guidance on route selection (for more detailed development)
- Principles of good route design, drawing on guidance for rural and urban areas

4.2 The final outputs will also offer the opportunity to sift routes by theme to respond to policy or funding opportunities that arise, such as those that are in the vicinity of planned development (and thus can support that development while also having the opportunity to be delivered through planning contribution), those primarily in rural areas and/or those in the vicinity of the Strategic Route Network (SRN) (which could potentially benefit from designated funds from road improvements.) Cross-boundary routes are also identified as a potential key focus of WGSTB support.

4.3 The Business Plan for 2025/26 includes a £20,000 contribution towards developing the business case for a selection of key cycle route interventions from the Cycling Strategy. Match funding from partners or other sources will be sought.

#### **5. Consultation and engagement with partners**

5.1 The development of the cycling strategy has been informed by regular workshops and meetings with Local Authority officers and members throughout the whole programme. Draft versions of the network have been shared with all

partners at each key stage and feedback used to inform updates and changes. Follow-up and one-to-one meetings have been held as required.

5.2 A near-final draft of the network was shared with all partners on 5<sup>th</sup> February and comments invited. Following that, WGSTB officers received comments and held one-to-one meetings with officers from the following LAs to resolve final issues and agree a final approach:

- Gloucestershire
- South Gloucestershire
- BANES
- WECA
- North Somerset
- Wiltshire
- Dorset
- BCP

Material changes to the network were made in response to all these representations, so we believe this final version should meet the needs of all partners within the framework of a consistent region-wide approach.

## 6. Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no specific equalities implications identified. Improvement of facilities for cycling typically also improves conditions for people with mobility impairments and widens access to a low-cost, healthy form of transport.

## 7. Legal Considerations

7.1 No legal considerations identified.

## 8. Financial considerations

8.1 The final cost for the cycling strategy incorporates a number of incremental budget approvals, representing the need for revisions and new work over the last 3 years of development. The final cost totals almost £90,000, broken down as follows:

Original commission (2021/22)	£49,660
Thematic sift (2022/23)	£11,842
Network revision (2023/24)	£17,867
Final revisions (2024/25)	£9,978
<b>Total</b>	<b>£89,347</b>

8.2 Assuming there are no additional changes to be made, there will be no further costs incurred on this stage of the project.

8.3 The Business Plan for 2025/26 includes a £20,000 contribution towards developing the business case for a selection of key routes.

## **9. Conclusion and recommendations**

9.1 The Board is recommended to approve the final version of the Cycling Strategy, presented alongside this paper, with approval for any minor changes deferred to the Senior Officers Group

### **Contact Officer**

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