



## Meeting note

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<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	Rachel Gaffney
<b>Date</b>	02/02/2016
<b>Meeting with</b>	North Somerset District Council, Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, CH2M, Bond Dickinson LLP
<b>Venue</b>	Bond Dickinson Offices, 3 Temple Quay, Bristol
<b>Attendees</b>	North Somerset District Council – James Willcock, Steven Penaluna and Jenny Devereux  Network Rail Infrastructure Limited – Colin Field, Andrew Holley and Simon Snell  CH2M – Andrew Linfoot and Carolyn Francis  Bond Dickinson LLP – Duncan Tilney and Richard Guyatt  The Planning Inspectorate – Susannah Guest, Will Spencer, Tracey Smith and Rachel Gaffney
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	All attendees

### Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate advised on its openness policy, explaining that any advice given would be recorded and placed on the National Infrastructure website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Introductions were made by everyone present and the developer provided a project update with a slideshow presentation to illustrate the key points regarding the scheme.

The Hendy Review and Network Rail's Enhancement Delivery Plan were discussed. The developer explained that the Metrowest phase 1 development was dependent on the completion of certain Network Rail schemes (Filton Four-Tracking and Bristol Area

Signalling Renewal project). The developer noted the delivery dates for both these project was anticipated as April 2019.

The relationship of the Portishead Branch Line scheme to the wider Metrowest Phase 1 and Metrowest programme was discussed. The Inspectorate stressed that it was important to clearly distinguish the wider programme or phases that include other work in, for example, Bathampton, from the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and associated development that would be consented through the Planning Act 2008 process. Whilst many terms were used interchangeably, the Inspectorate advised that clear and consistent use of terminology would assist in clear and accurate consultation material.

The developer highlighted that they were aware of local interest amongst stakeholders and campaigners to open a train station at Ashton Gate. The developer explained that they had reviewed the feasibility of opening a station at Ashton Gate and concluded that it was an insufficient business case to deliver a station within the Metrowest Phase 1 programme, because of the impact on timetabling of services, and the cost of delivering the station. The developer noted that a station could be added to the network at a later time, if funding could be secured. The Inspectorate recommended that the Environmental Statement should include a full explanation of the consideration given to alternatives, in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations.

The developer explained issues that had arisen in respect of Ashton Vale Road Level Crossing. The developer noted that the barriers operate on average four times per day for freight trains at this location; given the proposals for the Portishead Branch Line this was likely to increase, up to six trains per hour. This could mean that the barriers would need to be down for 20 minutes or more per hour, which could affect the local highways network and access into the adjacent industrial estate. The developer briefly noted a range of options that were being considered in terms of providing access and explained that the next stage will involve engagement with all relevant businesses; further consultation had been planned.

The developer provided some background information on some elements of constructability in respect of Avon Road Bridge and Pill Station. A revised plan for the station and access arrangements at Pill was discussed and the developer discussed plans for further engagement with parish and neighbouring properties at this location.

The existing freight line was discussed; and the developer suggested that previously unanticipated costs may arise due to asset conditions.

The developer outlined the various options for construction compounds. The developer is engaging with Bristol Port.

The developer advised that a new telecommunication mast may be required within the Avon Gorge SAC/SSSI. The developer indicated that the proposed mast could be approximately 10m in height and located at the side of the operational railway line. The potential impacts on the designated features of the sites (and the mitigation measures required) are being considered.

The Inspectorate queried if the developer had considered idling trains and any potential impacts upon residential areas around Portishead and Bedminster. The developer stated there is no intention of idling trains through the Gorge, but the

developer did suggest that freight trains in Bedminster may be held at signals at certain times of the day to wait for the branch line to become clear.

The developer noted they intended to carry out further engagement with both Ashton Gate and Pill stakeholders as well as progress with the planned statutory consultation in summer 2016.

The developer noted that the proposed development is in close proximity to the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads bus rapid transit route at Ashton as well as the highway network at Winterstoke Road. The options being considered to deal with this were described.

The developer discussed Compulsory Acquisition and explained that the primary land owners were already engaged with the project, as the project promotor. Areas of additional land are required however; the developer noted that some negotiations over land ownership were on-going.

In terms of likely future programme, the developer indicated a revised anticipated submission date of November 2016 and indicated that the development could be operational by 2020. The Inspectorate advised that assumptions of timings and the phasing of the scheme should be included within the Environmental Statement in terms of sensitivity testing and the susceptibility to change.

The developer explained how issues associated with its separate role as a statutory consultee on the proposed development were being addressed (i.e. through implementation of a 'chinese wall' between the relevant departments of North Somerset Council).

#### **Specific decisions / follow up required?**

- Potential to arrange a separate Environmental Impact Assessment meeting
- Arrangements for future project update meetings; early April 2016 was suggested
- The developer provided the Inspectorate with a set of presentation slides used for the meeting
- The Inspectorate will update their website with a new anticipated submissions date