



Meeting note

Status	Final
Author	Kate Mignano
Date	20 September 2016
Meeting with	North Somerset District Council
Venue	Bond Dickinson Offices, 3 Temple Quay, Bristol
Attendees	North Somerset District Council James Willcock, Steven Penaluna and Jenny Devereux Network Rail Infrastructure Limited Colin Field, Amie White CH2M Andrew Linfoot, Carolyn Francis Bond Dickinson LLP Richard Guyatt, Claire Rees, George Morton Jack Planning Inspectorate Susannah Guest, Richard Hunt, Kate Mignano
Meeting objectives	Portishead Branch Line - MetroWest Phase 1 Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The developer was reminded of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy that any advice given would be recorded and published on its website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) (PA2008) and that any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which developers (or others) can rely.

Introductions were made by everyone present, and individual roles were explained.

Project Update

An update on various aspects of the project was provided by the developer. North Somerset District Council (NSDC) explained detailed design considerations for different parts of the Development Consent Order scheme and wider elements of the MetroWest Stage 1 proposals including:

- Re-opening the railway from Portishead to Pill

- updating current freight line speed from 30 to 50mph for passenger services through the Avon Gorge;
- rail signalling communication masts at either end of Pill tunnel and in the Gorge;
- double track upgrade to Parson Street Junction;
- the relief line reinstatement of 1 km of track at Bedminster Down;
- simplified design solution for signaling at Avonmouth/Severn Beach; and
- progress on Bathampton turnback.

Construction Methodology

NSDC are engaging with Network Rail's internal team and external contractors to develop the construction methodology for the scheme.

Some sections of the line are anticipated to be delivered through the use of the High Output Plant System 'factory trains'. It was explained that these factory trains can speed up construction and reduce the environmental impact during construction. It was also noted that more conventional plant and construction methods may be required for certain works, including some the Avon Gorge section of the scheme.

Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP)

NSDC confirmed they are nearing completion of Network Rail's GRIP stage 3. Approval in Principal design deliverables for the redline boundary are on target for completion at the end of November 2016. NSDC explained that a revised cost estimate is expected March 2017.

The developer has completed ground investigation works through the Avon Gorge and is continuing its assessment of the asset condition in the gorge. The ground investigation works have also uncovered potential contamination issues at Portishead, which the developer is considering.

Ownership of Land

NSDC explained that the majority of land within the current red line boundary was owned by the local authority and Network Rail. NSDC stated that discussions with owners of the remaining land were ongoing and two key parcels have now been acquired with papers for a third being with the landowner; however Compulsory Acquisition powers may be required within the Development Consent Order. NSDC were alive to potential issues related to common land and public open space.

Consultation

Targeted non-statutory consultations were carried out February – March 2016 for both Pill Station and Ashton Vale Industrial Estate, the latter specifically focused on access arrangements. Each consultation had targeted letter drops and one day exhibitions were held close to the individual sites.

The Ashton Vale Industrial Estate consultation had six options, five of which entailed highway adjustments. A single option will be established prior to submission of the application, although options may remain at S42.

The Pill Station consultation had four options concerning the station entrance and forecourt. A clear preference for option four had been identified through the consultation.

The results from the consultations have been compiled into a consultation report which has been published on the developer's project specific website.

The Statement of Community Consultation has been drafted and commented on by the local authorities and is in the final stage of development. NSDC indicated that statutory consultation was expected to take place in March 2017.

Flood Risk

NSDC confirmed a draft Flood Risk Assessment was submitted to the Environment Agency in summer 2016 for review. Comments have been received and are currently being considered by NSDC. Discussions are ongoing with the Environment Agency and Bristol City Council in relation to the wider Bristol Flood Defence Scheme. It is hoped the schemes will complement each other.

Protective Provisions

The developer is working closely with statutory undertakers and reported protective provisions are currently being agreed. There has been a lot of engagement with the Environment Agency and National Grid in particular. The Inspectorate stressed the risk of submitting an application that did not have protective provisions included.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations (HRA)

Survey work has been undertaken in the Avon Gorge in respect of Whitebeam trees. NSDC confirmed site management talks with Natural England are on-going.

Discussions have been held with the owners of the former Portbury Station building regarding the need for noise insulation.

Draft Documents

NSDC confirmed that they plan to send draft documents to the Inspectorate for review prior to submission, these documents could include a draft Development Consent Order, Explanatory Memorandum, Land and Works plans, Consultation Report, Book of Reference, and draft Habitats Regulation Assessment Report.

Other matters

A meeting was arranged for October 2016 to discuss HRA and EIA in more detail.

It was suggested that the next update meeting would take place in January/February 2017.