



PORTISHEAD RAIL SERVICES

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Project Overview

The project to re-open the Portishead line to passenger rail services is now part of the MetroWest programme to improve local rail services across the West of England. This programme will use both existing and disused rail lines that feed into and across Bristol, operating half-hourly services subject to a proven business case being made and infrastructure constraints. Phase 1 of the programme includes re-opening the Portishead rail line to passenger services and increasing the frequency of services on the Severn Beach and Bath lines. The project is being led by North Somerset Council on behalf of the four West of England councils (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset). A further MetroWest Phase 2 project is also being progressed by the councils.

Ashton Vale Road and Pill Station Consultations

In February/March 2016 we undertook two micro-consultations. One concerned Pill Station, the other Ashton Vale Industrial Estate alternative access. The consultations ran for 28 days and drop in exhibitions were held locally. The Pill station consultation included 4 options for the station forecourt. The Ashton Vale Industrial Estate alternative access consultation included 6 options. A total of 21 responses were received for the Pill consultation, and 45 for Ashton Vale. The majority responded online using the dedicated link, with the rest emailing or writing. Further information is set out in the Consultation Report which is available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/prs

The two micro-consultations were successful in highlighting issues and gauging levels of support for the options. The consultation has raised some important issues that will help inform the development of the Outline Engineering Design. When the Outline Engineering Design has been completed, a further consultation exercise will be launched in spring 2017 to give members of the public, statutory bodies, affected parties and wider stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the Portishead Branch Line DCO Scheme proposals, before a Development Consent Order application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Edition 8. Summer 2016

Welcome to the summer 2016 edition of our Portishead Rail Services newsletter.

The micro-consultations we undertook earlier this year are assisting the development of our outline engineering design and we will use the design as the basis for our formal consultation on the whole branch line, in spring 2017.

Although our outline engineering design is taking longer than we expected, it's essential that the design is sufficiently robust to support the process of achieving planning consent (and where needed compulsory purchase of land), through the Development Consent Order process.

Nigel Ashton,
Leader of North Somerset Council



MetroWest+

Phase 1



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Update on the Outline Engineering Design

Our Outline Engineering Design, known as GRIP stage 3 is taking longer than we expected. The design for upgrading the Portbury freight line has encountered some challenges, but these are solvable.

The freight line currently has a 30mph line speed, however in order to operate passenger trains with a half hourly service frequency and also maintain slots for freight trains, it is necessary to increase the line speed to 50mph for the section of line through the Avon Gorge. To achieve 50mph, the track geometry needs to be altered and we need to straighten out a series of curves over several kilometers. There are some physical and environmental constraints in achieving this, however this design work is progressing and we anticipate it will be concluded by the end of the year.

Some works will also be needed to the track through the Avon Gorge including ballast cleaning and track tamping. The lack of good highway access and various environmental constraints mean that conventional construction methodology would be difficult. Therefore we are investigating using High Output (Factory) Trains, which have the capability to do these works through a more automated method of working.

At Pill the viaduct will need to have double tracks, then merge to a single track before entering Pill Tunnel. For Pill station it will be necessary to slightly widen the railway cutting (within the railway land) in order to provide sufficient space for a pedestrian ramp from the former Station Masters House to the platform. The Council is purchasing the former Station Masters House, which is to be demolished to create a station entrance and forecourt (as per consultation of March 2016). Also the bridge at Lodway/Avon Road will need to be replaced to enable double tracking through this section of line.

The design for the dis-used section of line between Pill and Portishead is more straight forward, than the freight line and has good highway access for the construction phase.

A number of temporary compounds along the side of the dis-used line and the freight line, will be needed for the construction phase. Also a number of small compounds/vehicle accesses will be needed permanently to enable the whole Portishead Line to be maintained by Network Rail, after the line re-opens. The main permanent compound on the dis-used line will be at Sheepway and on the freight line will be east of Pill Tunnel. We will provide further details about these compounds/vehicle accesses through our next public consultation which is likely to be in spring 2017.

In Portishead utility services will need to be diverted and we are investigating whether we can undertake the partial re-alignment of Quays Avenue in advance of the main construction works.

At Ashton Gate we are investigating the options for the alternative highway and pedestrian access for Ashton Vale Road and Barons Close, which we consulted on in March 2016. The design for the remaining infrastructure including upgrading Parson Street Junction is also progressing.

Further Information

If you have any questions or would like to be added to our email database please email us at: prs@n-somerset.gov.uk Information is also available at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/prs

More information about the wider project and wider sub-regional rail programme, including what's happening with the Severn Beach line, Bath line etc is available at www.travelwest.info/MetroWest