



PORTISHEAD RAIL SERVICES

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/prs

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.

Portishead Branch Line Consultation June – Aug 2015

The public response to our consultation over the summer was very considerable. A total of 599 people attended the four manned public exhibition events and we received 858 consultation responses. In addition to this we also received a good level of response from statutory bodies e.g. Historic England, Utility companies etc.

We have now completed analysis of the responses and this is set out in our 'Report on DCO Stage 1 Consultation'. The level of support for our project is very high with 95% of responses either supporting entirely or mainly supporting our proposals. The report sets out in detail the level of support for the individual elements of the project and the areas of concern, which generally relate to localised impacts such as parking and traffic impacts and environmental impacts.

We are currently feeding the consultation responses into our outline engineering design. Following completion of this, we are aiming to undertake stage 2 consultation in June 2016. This will provide an opportunity for people to make final comments on our proposals before we submit our Development Consent Order planning application.

Edition 7. Winter 2015/16

Welcome to the autumn 2015 edition of our Portishead Rail Services newsletter.

The number of responses to our consultation over the summer was very high, possibly the highest ever for any council project. We are grateful for the time people took to engage with us and we are now actively feeding this into our outline engineering design.

We have completed our analysis of the consultation responses and produced a consultation report. The report 'Report on DCO Stage 1 Consultation' is available from:

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/prs



MetroWest
Phase 1


Travel
in north somerset
www.innorthsomerset.co.uk


North Somerset
COUNCIL

working with Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire councils to improve your local transport

Outline Engineering Design

Our outline engineering design commenced in the summer and is scheduled to be completed by spring 2016. There are three distinct engineering design elements of MetroWest Phase 1:

- The dis-used line Portishead to Pill
- Upgrading the freight line and its connection onto the main line (Parson Street Junction), and
- Other engineering enhancement works beyond the Portishead branch line

Our engineering design must provide sufficient railway line capacity to operate both the existing freight trains and our proposed passenger train service.

There have been major land use and demographic changes along the line, since scheduled passenger trains last operated in the 1960's. Royal Portbury Dock makes an important contribution to our local and regional economy and moving large volumes of freight by rail (that otherwise would go onto our roads), yields economic and environmental benefits. While currently just a few freight trains operate on any typical day, we have to allow for one freight train per hour in each direction, for our engineering design. Furthermore our proposed passenger train service includes operating considerably more passenger trains than operated on the line in the 1960's. Our proposed half hourly passenger train service (day time) will result in approximately 30 trains per day (Mon – Sat) in each direction.

Providing sufficient line capacity for these freight train and passenger train requirements, has some challenges. There are some physical challenges and constraints with the existing freight line due to the limitations of the four (single bore) tunnels, through Avon Gorge. This means the 5km section of track from below the Clifton Suspension Bridge to Ham Green will remain single track. This section of single track also has

some environmental challenges due to the various National and European environmental designations.

It will therefore be necessary for the freight line speed to be increased and for the remaining sections of single track to be upgraded to double track, along with complete replacement of the signalling system. Consequently, these requirements and constraints complicate our engineering design, which means the project is not about putting back the track and related infrastructure that existed in the 1960's; it's about re-building the dis-used line to modern engineering standards and upgrading/modernising the freight line.

'Hendy Review' - Network Rail's National Programme

The Chairman of Network Rail Sir Peter Hendy has recently published a review of the organisations' national programme, up to March 2019. The implications of the review are currently being scoped in more detail within Network Rail. The implications for MetroWest Phase1 are therefore not yet fully known, however there are a number of key projects that have to be delivered before our proposed train services can operate, the most significant project being BASRE (Bristol Area Signalling Renewal & Enhancement).

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