

CS10: Transportation and Movement	
Scheme : Re-opening Portishead Passenger Rail Line	
Scheme Prioritisation within Infrastructure Delivery Plan: Critical	
Cost Estimate: £39.9m (2010/11 prices)	Funding Source: A funding package for the scheme is in the process of being developed through on-going dialogue with the Department for Transport (DfT)
Expected Completion Date: 2017 scheme opening and commencement of train services	
<p>Scheme Description:</p> <p>The Portishead rail branch line was closed in 1964 as part of the Beeching cuts. In 2002 a major part of the line was reopened between Royal Portbury Dock and Bristol as a freight only line. This project involves reinstating the remaining 4 miles of track between Portishead and Pill and upgrading the branch line infrastructure to meet passenger train standards, and provide sufficient line capacity to enable both passenger and freight train to operate to the required service patterns. See Scheme Plan.</p> <p>The base project option is to operate passenger trains every half an hour at peak times and hourly off peak, from Portishead calling at Pill and terminating at Bristol Temple Meads. In 2009 North Somerset Council commission Network Rail to undertake GRIP stages 1 to 3*, to determine the scope of the engineering requirements needed for the half hour service pattern. In October 2010 the GRIP stage 3 report was completed and published. The engineering requirements identified in the report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading works to the existing Portbury freight line to a line speed of mainly 55 mph, • Replacement of manually operated line signaling with an automated system, • Reinstatement of Pill railway station, • Replacement of the dis-used track between Portbury Dock Junction (Pill) and Portishead, • A new road bridge at Quays Avenue (road over the railway), • A new rail station at Portishead, Harbour Road. <p>The report included the production of a validated passenger train timetable which provides a journey time from Portishead to Bristol Temple Meads of just 17 minutes. The GRIP Stage 3 estimated construction cost of the project is £38.9 million in 2010/11 prices. Since the completion of the report a further £1m of additional cost has been identified, giving a current estimated cost of £39.9m in 2010/11 prices.</p> <p>Taking account of the major project milestones in terms of funding approval, the processes for seeking planning approvals and Network Rail processes,</p>	

the earliest construction could start is 2015, with passenger train services re-introduced in early 2017. The next stage of the project is to establish a funding package for the project, with central Government.

*GRIP is Guide to Rail Investment Projects. It is Network Rail's project management framework for major investment projects.

Scheme Deliverability:

In addition to the GRIP Stage 3 work on the supply side of the project, the demand side of the project has been investigated. Through the use of transport modelling and appraisal techniques, the volume of demand and the economic performance of the project has been assessed. This work forecasts 1,092 single passenger trips will be made each working day on the line, after a short period of establishing the demand after the project opens and train services commence operation. This work also forecasts that by the end of year two the fare box revenue will begin to exceed the operating costs, thereby yielding an operating surplus. In terms of economic appraisal the scheme has a benefit to cost ratio of 2.4 which falls with the Department for Transport's 'high value for money' category. In summary, GRIP Stage 3 work has established what needs to be done in terms of engineering and how much it will cost, while the modelling and appraisal work has established that the project has a positive business case and is economically viable and sustainable.

The focus of the project now is to establish and agree a funding package and the council continues to have an on-going dialogue with the DfT. The DfT are currently only considering projects which are known as 'Major Transport Schemes', for delivery within the CSR period (i.e. up to 2015). However, the DfT have announced that they will be consulting in early 2012 on a new funding framework through 'Local Transport Consortiums' for schemes post 2015.

The dis-used section of rail line west of Pill to Portishead was safeguarded in the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan. Appropriate car parking and passenger facilities sites along the route were also safeguarded in the Replacement Local Plan. The policy to deliver the Re-opening of the Portishead Passenger Rail Line is set out in the 3rd Joint Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).

Consultation: Key stakeholder consultation was conducted as part of the Portishead Rail Line Study (August 2008). Meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders, including the Highways Agency, Bristol Port Company and Portishead Rail Group as well as with rail industry stakeholders including Network Rail and First Great Western. Stakeholders indicated strong support for the reopening of the Portishead rail line for passenger services, with some disquiet that rail services to Portishead had not already been reinstated. Strong support for the scheme was received from local groups, in particular Portishead Town and Parish Councils, citing the positive effect that re-opening passenger rail would have on alleviating the current road traffic situation in the peaks and in providing a reliable

public transport service for Portishead. Support for the project was re-affirmed at a West of England Rail conference held on 4 November 2011, attended by 70 stakeholders, including business and community organisations. Delegates were asked to prioritise a range of rail enhancement schemes and select their top three schemes for the sub-region. The overall top three schemes, in priority order were:

1. Greater Bristol Metro
2. Portishead Passenger Rail
3. Additional rolling stock

Scheme Justification:

The Portishead to Bristol corridor (A369) suffers severe congestion and journey time reliability problems. This not only causes delays and lost productivity for car drivers and goods vehicle operators but also presents a major hurdle for providing an attractive public transport offering along the corridor. The problems and context of the A369 corridor are summarised as:

- The A369 is the only transport corridor directly linking Portishead with Bristol which is just 10 miles to the east.
- The capacity constraints on the A369 are exacerbated further by the fact that the A369 crosses junction 19 of the M5.
- This is one of the busiest parts of the M5 with the Avonmouth Bridge immediately to the north towards junction 18.
- The A369 continually suffers from the knock on effects of incidents on the M5 with traffic high volumes of traffic over spilling onto a constrained local road corridor with very few alternative route options.

This lack of transport network resilience and limited travel choices would best be addressed by utilising the heavy rail corridor between Portishead and Bristol and re-instating passenger train services. The re-opening of the Portishead railway line for passenger train services would:

- Reduce traffic congestion on the arterial roads,
- Reduce journeys times for commuters and business to and from Bristol, supporting economic growth,
- Provide a much needed improvement to transport network resilience,
- Improve air quality,
- Improve the provision of sustainable transport options,
- Assist in the delivery of wider social wellbeing and quality of life objectives,
- Provide opportunities to re-instate further dis-used rail stations, subject to business case feasibility,
- Provide opportunities to operate through rail services from Portishead to destinations beyond Bristol Temple Meads.

The project would increase the UK's passenger rail network by 10 miles and connect an additional 30,000 people to the network. Furthermore

there is a huge ground swell of support in the local community for the project. This is evidenced by the frequency with which the project is raised positively by business, members of the public and community organisations, to the council.

Portishead Passenger Rail Line – Scheme Plan

