

**Western Gateway**

Sub-national Transport Body



**Draft**

**Strategic Transport Plan  
(2020/25)**

**Version 0.5**

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**Section to be produced after final sign off from members:**

- Foreword

## Executive Summary

The Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body's (STB) Strategic Transport Plan (2020-25) identifies short-term strategic transport priorities, while providing the foundation for the development of a long-term plan that will consider transport connections in the context of travel corridors rather than in local authority administrative boundaries.

This approach enables a long-term vision to be developed that identifies a sequenced list of investment priorities based on regional rather than local need. Understanding this will provide clarity on transport investment priorities enabling more effective and meaningful engagement with Government.

The Western Gateway area supports over 1.6 million jobs and covers some of the country's most prosperous fast-growing conurbations. A function of transport is to support clean and sustainable economic growth by enabling key employment sectors to thrive. The Western Gateway STB will seek to improve strategic connectivity, to close productivity gaps and support sustainable growth.

The rate of population growth forecast to 2041 is higher within the Western Gateway area when compared to England as a whole. The Western Gateway STB will seek to improve strategic connectivity to reduce dependency upon the car and to create a more sustainable and low carbon transport network.

The Western Gateway STB will lead the transport decarbonisation agenda on behalf of its members and will actively engage with the Department for Transport and other STBs to support production of a national Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

The aim of the Strategic Transport Plan (2020-25) is *to deliver sustainable growth by ensuring the Western Gateway area is sustainably connected and provides high quality and value for money travel opportunities for all businesses, residents and visitors.*

To help achieve this aim a set of Economic, Environmental and Social Objectives have been identified and several overarching challenges are considered including:

- The legacy of COVID-19 which is likely to have a significant impact on traditional journey patterns;
- The need to decarbonise the transport network with partner authorities declaring a climate emergencies;
- The importance of improving connectivity to support the delivery of sustainable growth;
- Tackling rural accessibility gaps by working with partners to develop sustainable solutions to maintaining rural transport networks; and
- Reducing the regions productivity gap by removing travel constraints.

### Bus and Coach

It is essential to provide a robust multi-modal transport offer for people living within and travelling to the Western Gateway. The STB is aware of both the short- and long-term issues facing bus and coach travel across the region. Post COVID-19 we need to work collectively to develop a financially sustainable, socially inclusive and efficient bus and coach network

During this plan period the STB will establish a Task and Finish group to consider the implications of the National Bus Strategy, view bus and coach travel networks on a strategic basis and understand the decarbonisation transfer process, work with bus operators to identify solutions and facilitate longer distance bus and coach routes to support areas not served by rail, support the development of smart ticketing solutions, monitor the frequency of trips and how these may be impacted through greater adoption of agile working practices, support the digital aspirations of the Western Gateway Powerhouse and support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:

In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will identify digital connectivity gaps across the Western Gateway areas and understand the potential role of the STB to develop a regional Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform.

### **Cycling**

There is a clear need to provide for greater modal choice to enable individuals to choose how they travel and cycling provides a real opportunity to improve the physical and mental health of residents, improve air quality and ease congestion across the region.

During this plan period the STB will establish a Task and Finish group to identify gaps in strategic cycle routes, work with stakeholders to identify solutions and facilitate longer distance cycle routes and support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:

In preparing for the long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will commission a Strategic Cycle Strategy to feed into the long-term travel corridor plans of our four strategic travel corridors and understand how the STB can facilitate the delivery of strategic routes in partnership with stakeholders

### **Digital**

Improvements in digital connectivity open opportunities for changing traditional journey patterns and the management of transport networks and there is a need to consider where investment in faster and rural broadband could reduce the need to travel, reduce isolation and improve the local economy.

During this plan period the STB will promote examples of digital transport innovation, seek to establish a Rail Digital Solutions Taskforce, support the development of smart ticketing solutions, monitor the frequency of trips and how these may be impacted through greater adoption of agile working practices, support the digital aspirations of the Western Gateway Powerhouse and support existing schemes in the region which are already progressing the digital narrative.

### **Freight and Logistics**

It is essential for the strategic transport network to provide commercial freight operators with the most efficient way of transporting goods alongside reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality which is now imperative for the freight and logistics sector. The STB will work in partnership with freight and logistics providers to support the long-term use of alternative fuels

During this plan period the STB will continue to support the Transport and Business Forum, consider the need for a separate Freight operator working group and Rail Freight Task Force, work with Network Rail to promote the recommendations of our Rail Strategy through their planned Continuous Modular Strategic Planning process and additional studies such as Reintroduction of Rail Freight to Port of Poole currently in progress. Also work with Highways England in preparing their evidence base supporting the third round of the Road Investment Strategy process (RIS3) and provide key inputs into Highways England's M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Study.

In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of the Freight and Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategies. Ensure the outcomes of the studies inform the production of the four long-term travel corridor plans and work with stakeholders and Highways England to ensure that the recommendations of their M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic study are reflected in RIS3

### **Highways**

During this plan period the STB will maintain regular liaison with Highways England and support their RIS3 Route Strategy work, encourage Local Planning Authorities to identify sites where the demand for travel between homes and jobs can be minimised or served by a range of travel options to avoid reliance on the car as the main mode of transport. Continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on strategic vehicle movements and support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities.

In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of an Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy and establish our four strategic multi-modal travel corridor stakeholder groups to oversee the production of long-term travel corridor plans.

### **National and International**

The Western Gateway STB has several of England's busiest ports within or close to its area. In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of a Freight Strategy. Investigate the economic contribution of ports and airports to the Western Gateway region and 'lock-in' these benefits through our four strategic travel corridor plans, develop a greater understanding of the potential for maximising access to the leisure market (e.g. cruise, tourism, water sports) in the Western Gateway area.

### **Rail**

There is a clear need to increase the market share of rail through better regional connectivity and the legacy of the pandemic is likely to change travel behaviours as greater agile working policies are introduced which in the long-term could reduce traditional peak journey demands.

During this plan period the STB will continue to support the Transport and Business Forum establish a regional rail officer group to oversee the delivery of the Rail Strategy and appoint a Lead Rail Officer to own the process. Review the existing governance structure to establish the case for creating a number of rail taskforces, fully engage in any consultations

relevant to improving rail service standards within the Western Gateway area, work with other STBs and stakeholders to improve rail ticketing and support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities.

In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will set out a clear case for change by working with Network Rail through their Continuous Modular Strategic Planning process and ensure the outputs of these studies inform the four strategic travel corridor plans and establish a clear set of rail priorities and the role of the STB to support the Business Cases development process

### **Sub Regional Priorities**

The studies outlined in the STP have been identified as priorities to improve the regional evidence base as we move towards producing our long-term Strategic Transport Plan. The commissioning of STB studies identified is dependent on funding being awarded by the Department for Transport:

- Bus and Coach Strategy
- Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy
- Understand the potential role of the STB to develop a regional MaaS platform
- Strategic Cycle Strategy
- Strategic corridor plans
- Understand strategic modelling options
- Sustainability Appraisal of long-term Strategic Transport Plan

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Success of the Western Gateway STP will be measured through the continual monitoring and evaluation of schemes and programmes, to ensure the schemes are delivering against the overall strategic objectives. In order to do this, we are measuring performance through a series of performance indicators.

The overall approach to Monitoring is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Reporting requirements will follow DfT reporting requirements as well as being locally influenced and support delivery of local strategies
- Schemes and programmes will follow DfT and Western Gateway STB reporting guidance from inception into closure
- Monitoring and evaluation post-delivery will be the accountability of the individual members
- Data is collected once and used many times
- Baseline information is consistent across key initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation is a core part of all activities
- Lessons learned are used to inform future policy development

## 1.0 Introduction

At the time of writing this Strategic Transport Plan our nation and local communities remain in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). This pandemic has had and will continue to have a significant impact on society during the lifetime of this plan. The impact of COVID-19 are still unclear and the implications in relation to transport need to be fully understood, considered and incorporated as we continue to monitor and plan for the future.

With this in mind the Strategic Transport Plan will only cover the period 2020-25 and will require on-going monitoring.

Local authorities across England have responded to the Government's request for greater strategic thinking about transport investment by forming Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs). STBs were identified, with accompanying legislation, within the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 which introduced changes to Part 5 of the Local Transport Act 2008. The Act enables existing individual authorities to join formally in a partnership to produce a Strategic Transport Plan and represent its members in discussions and the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure.

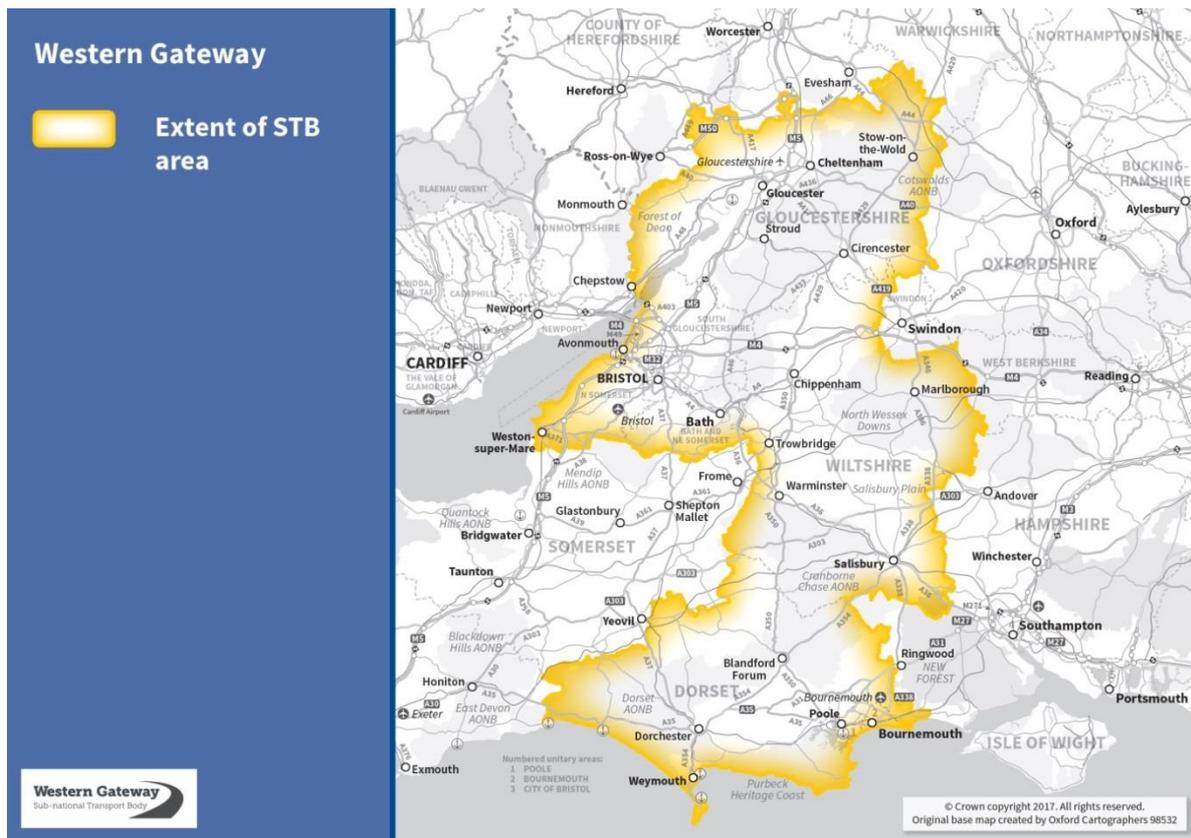
This Strategic Transport Plan considers all modes of transport within the context of strategic travel. Strategic travel is defined within this plan as both intra-regional travel between two local authority areas within the Western Gateway area and inter-regional travel between different STB areas. Figure 1 illustrates the communities covered by the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body and Figure 2 illustrates the geographic extent of the Western Gateway STB area within the national context.

By considering strategic connections at a Sub-national level, it enables local authorities to consider the role and function of the complete travel corridor instead of focusing on local issues. This approach enables a long-term plan to be produced that identifies a sequenced list of investment priorities based on assessing the whole travel corridor. It also recognises the collective impact of schemes and their mutual benefit across a wider area regardless of where the improvement is physically located.

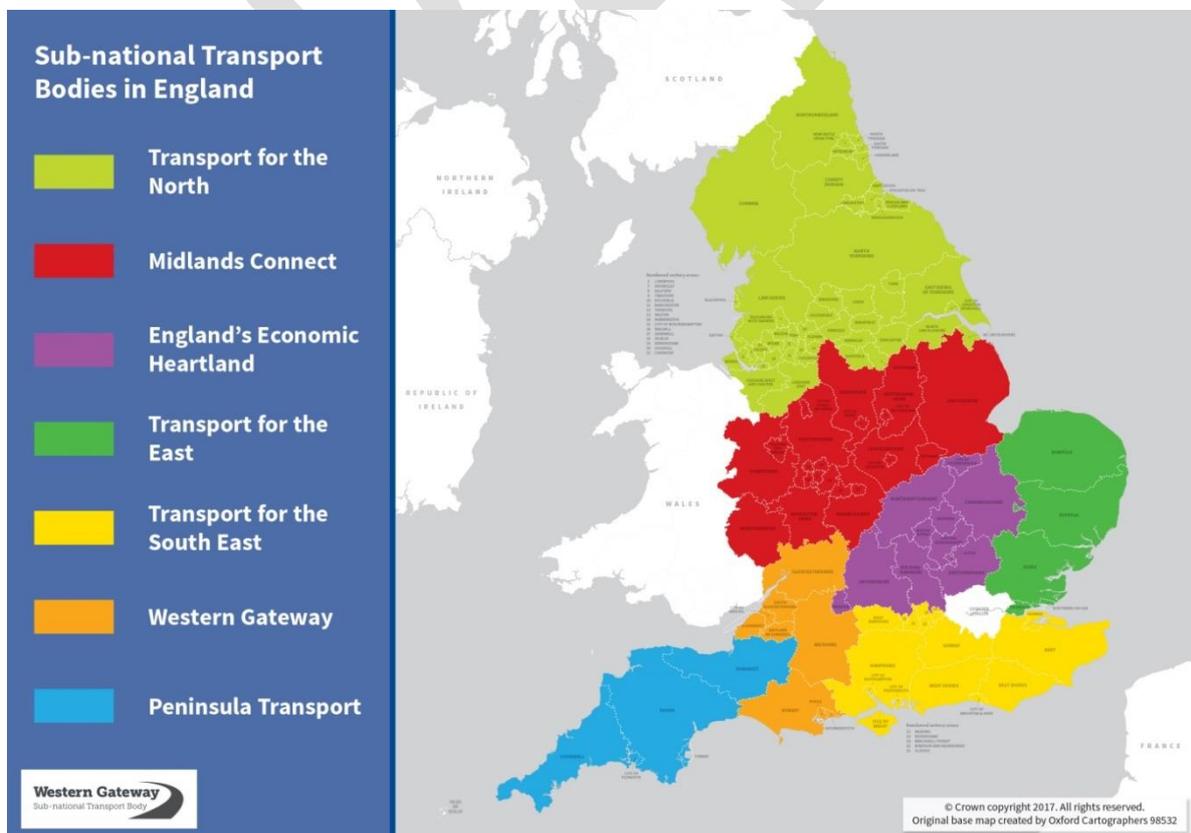
The Western Gateway STB is formed by a collective of local authorities and key stakeholders that have made a commitment to work together to improve strategic travel connectivity across South West England. Members of the Western Gateway STB are committed to working together and providing a single voice to Government on strategic transport investment and prioritisation. This makes working with the Department for Transport (DfT), Highways England and Network Rail much more streamlined and results in fewer, but much more coordinated conversations and removes the risk of competing local priorities.

In addition to the elected members which represent the constituent local authority members the Western Gateway STB board also includes members from the DfT, Highways England, Network Rail, Peninsula Transport STB and representation from the Western Gateway Transport and Business Forum. The STB is not about taking decisions and responsibilities away from local communities; instead it focuses on strengthening delivery by demonstrating strategic leadership and working collaboratively to benefit the Western Gateway area.

**Figure 1 – The communities covered by the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body**



**Figure 2 - Sub-national Transport Bodies in England**



The Western Gateway STB does not hold the relevant powers to deliver the services or schemes. It is therefore essential for the STB to engage and work with those stakeholders that can implement the priorities outlined within the plan. Figure 3 summarises those stakeholders which are essential to this process.

**Figure 3 – The role of stakeholders in the delivery of strategic transport priorities**

<b>Connectivity Theme</b>	<b>Stakeholder</b>
Bus and Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus / Coach operators</li> <li>• Local Authorities – Local Highway / Transport Authority</li> </ul>
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canal &amp; River Trust</li> <li>• Local Authorities – Local Highway / Transport Authority</li> <li>• National cycling organisations and campaign groups</li> </ul>
Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Private sector – digital providers and Tele-communications companies</li> <li>• Western Gateway (Powerhouse)</li> </ul>
Freight and Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Freight Operators (Road, Rail &amp; Water)</li> <li>• Highways England – Strategic Highway Authority</li> <li>• Local Authorities – Local Highway / Transport Authority</li> <li>• Neighbouring STBs</li> <li>• Port Operators</li> </ul>
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways England – Strategic Highway Authority</li> <li>• Local Authorities – Local Highway / Transport Authority</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnerships</li> <li>• Neighbouring STBs</li> </ul>
National and International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airport Operators</li> <li>• Commercial Freight Operators</li> <li>• Port Operators</li> <li>• Department for Transport</li> <li>• Neighbouring STBs</li> <li>• Western Gateway (Powerhouse)</li> </ul>
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbouring STBs</li> <li>• Network Rail</li> <li>• Train Operating Companies</li> <li>• Transport Authority</li> </ul>

## **2.0 Our Strategic Transport Challenges**

### **2.1 COVID-19**

The COVID-19 crisis has had a terrible impact on the lives and health of many people in the UK, as well as severe economic consequences. At the time of writing this plan the legacy of the crisis is not clear, but it is likely to have a profound impact on how, why and when people travel.

The Government's response to the pandemic continues to have a dramatic impact on how businesses and their employees use transport networks. To keep essential commuter routes open the Government has provided additional revenue support for passenger transport. The risk is that this revenue support may be withdrawn before passenger fare revenues return to their pre-pandemic levels.

When fully understood a legacy of the COVID-19 crisis may be a more receptive approach by employers to promoting agile working practices. The impact of this change and social distancing restrictions could have a significant impact on traditional journey patterns. For example, a reduced number of people travelling in the morning peak may negate the need for providing additional capacity on buses and trains as was required prior to COVID-19. New demands may unlock changes in the way people travel and the reduction in the need to travel in the first place will result in a positive impact on carbon emissions

Regardless of the frequency of the journeys, a balance will inevitably need to be met as physical access to a place of work will always remain for part of the week, but by removing the need for daily access, locations previously not considered accessible may now become more desirable if a commuter journey is only required once or twice a week or less. For example, a resident in North Somerset may consider a job based in London and be prepared to catch the train to attend the office one day a week.

It is essential as we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis to initially protect and then rebalance or level-up strategic commuter routes to close the national productivity gap. Within the Western Gateway area this will be facilitated through the development of our strategic travel corridor plans to inform our long-term Strategic Transport Plan 2025- 2050.

There will need to be a change from the traditional view of managing journey times to managing journey options for people. Finding a suitable work life balance is essential to everyone and the opportunity of increased leisure time created by reduced daily commuting needs to be considered in the design of places. Reducing reliance on the car (and other carbon intensive forms of transport) for daily travel offers the potential for more road space to be afforded to cyclists and pedestrians. This brings significant benefits in terms of air quality and improves an individual's health and wellbeing, and potentially reducing future health costs.

### **2.2 The need to decarbonise the transport network**

Transport is now the largest sector for UK greenhouse gas emissions (28%), of which road transport accounts for over 90%. It is essential that the Western Gateway area delivers on the legal requirement for net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050. The Paris Agreement

enshrines a commitment on the signatories to restrict the increase in global average temperature and the UK Government passed legislation requiring the government to reduce the UK's net emissions of greenhouse gases by 100% relative to 1990 levels by 2050.

The Western Gateway STB is committed to delivering decarbonisation. Most Western Gateway Local and Combined Authority partners have passed resolutions declaring a 'climate emergency'. The differing characteristics of the local authority areas within the Western Gateway region means that the current levels of carbon emissions, their available carbon budgets and trajectories to net zero carbon emissions will differ, and some authorities have the ability and the ambition to move forward at a faster pace.

In view of this, the Western Gateway's strategic environmental priority in relation to the climate emergency and relating to decarbonisation set out in this transport plan is to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 at the latest.

In March 2020 the Government published 'Decarbonising transport: setting the challenge' and is due to publish its Transport Decarbonisation Plan in the spring of 2021. This strategic environmental priority will be kept under review and will be updated as other plans develop.

We are committed to working with our members and partners, including the DfT, Highways England and Network Rail to implement the required actions as they develop proposals that are consistent with the Governments legally binding commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. We are also committed to supporting partners as they respond to any future changes in legislation relating to new infrastructure proposals. Together with our members and partners we will monitor and review policies, programmes and infrastructure proposals for compliance with the need to deliver carbon reduction in the necessary timeframe. We will also make a commitment to promote the opportunities created by changes in the scale and nature of travel demand to repurpose our existing infrastructure assets (with their embedded carbon) so they give priority to active travel and public transport.

### **2.3 Improving Connectivity**

The Western Gateway area is a crossroads for national connectivity and an area of significant areas of tourism and strategic transport interventions play a fundamental role in driving economic growth. Strategic transport interventions facilitate the development of housing and employment space, improve connectivity between business and skilled people, and improve connectivity between businesses and tourism.

The ability to provide a robust multi-modal transport offer for people living within and travelling to the Western Gateway's three strategic urban hubs is a key challenge. We define hubs as having a combined population of over 250,000 and forming one functional economic area. The three hubs identified in the Western Gateway area include:

- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
- Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury
- West of England including Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

Car ownership and dependency is generally high, in these hubs. The area's Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEPs) all fed back that congestion is a major concern for businesses and is

affecting competitiveness, both operationally and reputationally. This reflects factors such as the diversity of travel patterns, employment locations on urban fringes, and poor rail connectivity.

Traffic congestion at pinch points is a major barrier to increased productivity and increased tourism. We have hosted a series of Business and Transport Forums to seek stakeholder feedback. Many businesses reported significant time lost in congestion and the additional risks associated with damaging the reputation of the area. There is widespread agreement by stakeholders for the need to manage existing road space more effectively, with a balance required between better management of existing road space, supporting future growth and providing better facilities for walking/cycling/passenger transport. The provision of better facilities for sustainable transport would remove unnecessary local car trips from the strategic routes enabling a more efficient and reliable transport network.

There was recognition by stakeholders of the importance of transport hubs and the role of interchanges in urban areas, especially with improving the first and last mile walking and cycling links. Concerns were raised by stakeholders regarding land-use planning and the need to ensure development takes place in locations that can provide a range of transport options to reduce reliance on the car. Enabling access to jobs especially for the young, lower paid and apprentices (flow of labour and skills) was a key issue for the Chamber of Commerce. The need for greater modal choice to enable individuals to travel is inextricably linked to the wider performance of the economy.

## **2.4 Rural Accessibility**

The Rural-Urban classification is used to distinguish rural and urban areas. The classification defines areas as rural if they fall outside of settlements with more than a resident population of 10,000. When this classification is applied to the Western Gateway area the majority is classed as mainly or largely rural. This makes it important that the issues and challenges faced by rural areas are considered within the Strategic Transport Plan.

Rural communities face ongoing reduction in passenger transport services due to the ongoing need to find savings and a decline in funding support such as the rural bus subsidy grant leading to service viability issues. As services are reduced or removed this inevitably results in a greater dependency on the private car and this situation needs to be addressed. There is a very clear need to develop robust transport options including improved public and, increasingly importantly, community transport schemes.

Transport in rural areas is inextricably linked with most of the other issues affecting rural communities. The availability of services including health care and jobs in neighbouring towns is reduced without access to appropriate passenger transport facilitating access to the right place at the right time. In addition, a lack of safe footways, cycle provision and crossing points connecting people and local services act as a barrier. As a result, people in rural areas often have little choice but to use their private cars.

Anecdotally younger people in rural areas can have more difficulties accessing further education, training, employment, advice and other services. As a result, they can find themselves isolated. Limited opportunities, combined with a lack of affordable housing, are contributing to some young people moving away from rural communities. The cost and low

availability of public transport in rural areas is a significant challenge for people and can act as a barrier to their progress into employment.

For many of these young people, having a driving licence and being able to afford a car is essential. Insurance costs can be prohibitive, and there is a real risk that other basic household budgets are cut to own and run a motor vehicle. The consequences are reflected in the social and economic structure of rural areas, with some job seeking younger people needing to move away, and local jobs largely being taken by people with access to private transport.

Local bus services need to be able to provide a service which is attractive to different sections of the population in different locations. Crucially, this must include services connecting villages and rural areas with at least one of our towns, cities or major transport interchanges.

Rural areas have a big part to play in supporting our wider economy and it is essential for people to live and work there. Creating an enabling environment that will do that is therefore important along with building in travel convenience to facilitate access work and services. Whilst alternative modes of transport to car use must be encouraged, we also need to accept that car ownership is not a luxury but a necessity for many people living and working in rural areas. For this reason, this plan has to take a realistic and staged approach to the use of vehicles in rural areas that recognises the practical realities of travel.

The Wheels to Work scheme in the West of England is an example of an initiative that is already operating in the region to try to address the rural transport issue. The challenge, however, is that hard to reach places are often served by a patchwork of different forms and types of public transport with no sense of network. Services are run by different operators with little or no coordination between them, and a lack of integrated ticketing.

It is important for the long-term sustainability of the rural transport network to take a more comprehensive, consistent and concerted approach based on a planned network wide concept, as found in other European countries including the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden.

This can be built on some of the principles that we know can work, for example:

- Framework of inter-urban bus and local rail services;
- Demand responsive provision in areas of where the need for passenger travel cannot cover the costs of a traditional frequent bus service;
- Involvement of communities in the planning and development of transport services;
- Harnessing community-based transport, taxis and private hire vehicles as part of the public transport network;
- Using integrated (Total Transport) approaches to achieve efficient provision; and
- Using technology to support information provision, ticketing and on-demand service.

## **2.5 Productivity Gap**

Many of the conurbations and strategic travel corridors that traverse the Western Gateway area are subject to a variety of constraints, such as regular delays imposed by a lack of

capacity. This can negatively impact business productivity and the willingness of individuals to travel when accessing employment or the continual reliance on the car.

Connectivity improvements reduce or remove these constraints. The quantifiable impacts of these benefits include: Greater productivity from the existing workforce due to much improved journey times on the corridors, and additional Gross Value Added (GVA) from those employed at new employment sites across the Western Gateway area.

In addition non-quantifiable benefits include: enhanced connectivity to the international gateways, e.g. the major ports as well as the airports in the area; reducing levels of relative deprivation in certain parts of the STB area, e.g. by opening up access to more employment and other activities will benefit communities currently experiencing poor links to these opportunities; and generating tourism benefits as improved connectivity will help enhance the Western Gateway's important visitor economy.

Connectivity improvements will also generate a series of positive impacts that align with the UK Government's ambition to rebalance the economy including:

- **Supporting the national recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic:** providing strategic leadership to its local authority members in terms of long-term strategy development in response to the UK Government's post pandemic recovery plan and providing additional capacity for local authority officers to focus on front-line transport operations;
- **Boosting productivity levels:** as the UK is experiencing a widespread 'productivity gap' in relation to other countries, enhancements across the Western Gateway can help to redress this;
- **Boosting employment in developing, high-tech sectors:** The Government's Industrial Strategy White Paper sets out several sectors that need to be developed and several of these are in the Western Gateway (e.g. in the Bristol & BCP conurbations); and
- **Boosting housing delivery:** the UK faces a national shortage of housing units, especially in the affordable sector. By helping to unlock housing sites across the STB area, improvements to the strategic corridors will enable the region to meet its housing targets as well as providing those who work across the STB to find good, affordable homes, and also remain in the region.

An economic connectivity study undertaken to inform this plan has identified the benefits of improved connectivity within the Western Gateway area including:

- **Agglomeration-based productivity improvements:** £5.5 billion p.a. across strategic corridors (with labour supply benefits as well);
- **GVA impacts from employment at the new sites:** £12.3 billion; and
- **Total land value gains from unlocked housing:** £1.3 billion.

### 3.0 Our Long-Term Objectives for Strategic Transport

The purpose of the Strategic Transport Plan is to provide clarity on Sub-national transport priorities for investment discussions enabling more effective and meaningful engagement.

When fully understood the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals, society, the economy and the environment may be significant. The legacy of the pandemic may alter how people choose to travel in terms of their mode of transport, for example avoiding peak periods of travel demand and the frequency of weekday trips with a likely increase in homeworking and video conferencing. These individual decisions will collectively have a profound impact on the operation of the strategic transport network during this plan period and into the longer-term. The reallocation of existing highway capacity for walking and cycling will impact how urban environments function and increase demand for more strategic cycle schemes providing inter-urban connectivity.

The Strategic Transport Plan, once approved by its members, will provide the Department for Transport (DfT) with:

- greater assurance regarding future decision making as part of a wider devolution agenda;
- greater understanding of the nature of travel demands through and to are region;
- help the member authorities align their priorities in a more efficient way to maximise economies of scale; and
- support Sub-national supply chains.

Work on the long-term Strategic Transport Plan has already begun with the aim of having a new document agreed by March 2023 which will be used to inform future Government investment decisions post 2025. The plan will have an extended timeframe to 2050 and is intended to complement local transport strategies to enable the delivery of shared objectives. Part of the updated evidence base required to inform the plan will be overseen by four new strategic partnership groups each formed to consider one of the strategic travel corridors identified in the Western Gateway area. As the corridors span wider than the Western Gateway area it is intended that neighbouring STBs and strategic transport providers will be invited to join so that the corridor will be considered as a whole.

The four strategic travel corridors identified are:

- South East to South Wales;
- South East to South West;
- Midlands to the South West; and
- Midlands to the South Coast.

A high-level summary of each corridor is provided in Appendix A.

Figure 4 outlines the aim of the Strategic Transport Plan and how this will be achieved.

#### Figure 4 – The aim of the Strategic Transport Plan

***To deliver sustainable growth by ensuring the Western Gateway area is sustainably connected and provides high quality and value for money travel opportunities for all businesses, residents and visitors.***

The Western Gateway STB will do this by:

- With input from its members, will provide clarity, accountability and a focus on strategic travel issues by supporting national policy;
- Through the National STB Liaison group, look to help steer the development of policy at a national level;
- Speaking with the authority of its members in discussions with Government, Transport Infrastructure Providers, and Transport Operators regarding the prioritisation of transportation funding programmes;
- Providing certainty to stakeholders by producing a long-term programme of strategic investment priorities;
- Supporting members to ensure a carbon free transport network is deliverable by 2050;
- Supporting digital innovations and best practices through collaborative working and piloting rural and urban connectivity schemes;
- Working in partnership with the region's Local Enterprise Partnerships and Economic Powerhouse to facilitate and support growth; and
- Working in partnership with stakeholders outside the Western Gateway area to ensure cross boundary issues are considered and shared priorities for strategic transport improvements are identified.

## Economic Objectives

The Western Gateway area supports over 1.6 million jobs and covers some of the country's most prosperous fast-growing conurbations. A function of transport is to support clean and sustainable economic growth by enabling key employment sectors to thrive. The role for transport in this context is two-fold: ensure the transport network enables employees to get to work in a timely fashion, and in a post COVID-19 world acknowledge that employment sites may be in different locations than previously expected; and that goods can be transported to facilitate supply chains using good quality reliable strategic networks.

The Western Gateway STB's role is to improve strategic connectivity to close the productivity gap and support sustainable growth. Figure 5 outlines how this will be achieved.

**Figure 5 – Western Gateway STB's Economic Objectives**

Economic Objectives	Long-term Economic Outcomes	Long-term Economic delivery priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective access of labour markets</li> <li>• Enable greater integration between employment clusters</li> <li>• Enhance business connectivity to international markets</li> <li>• Improve North-South connectivity</li> <li>• Provide a robust regional evidence base in support of the local plan making process which understands different travel markets and use of strategic travel corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managed delivery of planned growth</li> <li>• Improved journey reliability</li> <li>• Quality travel connections</li> <li>• Highly resilient strategic transport network</li> <li>• Recovery and rebalancing of the national economy</li> <li>• A clear role in supporting strategic transport considerations involved with land-use planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks</li> <li>• High quality strategic transport network</li> <li>• Improved inter and &amp; intra-regional connectivity</li> <li>• Safe and resilient strategic transport network during extreme weather events</li> <li>• Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways</li> <li>• Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements and interactions that are inherently energy-intensive and carbon intensive resulting from unsustainable local plan making</li> </ul>

## Environmental Objectives

Reducing carbon emissions associated with infrastructure and transport pollution is fundamental to reducing the impacts of transport on climate change and air quality.

Outdoor air quality across the Western Gateway area is generally good. However, there are a number of Clean Air Zones (CAZ) and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) declared by local authorities due to exceedances in the allowed annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> level (at 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>).

Our transport network is vulnerable to the impacts of storms and flooding events. Climate change is likely to exacerbate the number of flooding incidences including surface water flooding, sea level rises, and tidal flooding that will impact strategic transport connectivity.

The longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on travel demand are not at this stage understood, but the decision taken to support the reallocation of highway space to support walking and cycling within urban centres does present a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change. The Western Gateway STB's role is to lead the transport decarbonisation agenda on behalf of its members and it is actively engaged with the DfT and other STBs in the production of the national Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Figure 6 outlines how this will be achieved.

**Figure 6 – Western Gateway STB's Environmental Objectives**

Environmental Objectives	Long-term Environmental Outcomes	Long-term Environmental delivery priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decarbonisation of the strategic transport network</li> <li>• Adoption of electrification and/or use alternative fuels to enable fossil-fuel-free transport</li> <li>• Improve air quality</li> <li>• High quality digital connectivity to reduce the need for travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net-zero transport carbon emissions by 2050</li> <li>• Integrated passenger transport network</li> <li>• Coherent network of electric vehicle and alternative fuel infrastructure</li> <li>• Strategic cycling network</li> <li>• Agree shared approaches to good infrastructure management to ensure longevity, low carbon construction materials, improved drainage and management of surface water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon free strategic transport network</li> <li>• Increased strategic travel options</li> <li>• Improved digital connectivity</li> <li>• Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel</li> <li>• Improved air quality in urban centres</li> <li>• Maximised use of strategic corridors for wider societal co-benefits including Biodiversity net gain</li> <li>• Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities</li> </ul>

## Social Objectives

The rate of population growth forecast to 2041 is higher within the Western Gateway area when compared to England as a whole. The Western Gateway's resident population is over 3 million. The Office National Statistics (ONS) population forecasts indicate the population of the Western Gateway area is set to increase by an additional 448,000 people by 2041. The projected rate of population growth within the Western Gateway is greater (15%) when compared to England (12%). The higher rate of growth recorded within the Gateway area demonstrates the desirability of the area as a location to live.

Population growth is a significant external driver of traffic growth and the rate of expected travel growth within the south west is between 0.3% and 1.2% annually. If growth is not sustainably distributed this could negatively impact a number of strategic travel corridors. To mitigate this it is essential for transport, land use and infrastructure planning to be fully integrated both at the local and Sub-national level to ensure sustainable patterns of growth.

Key to this is the STB's role in improving multi-modal strategic connectivity and reducing dependency upon the car. This will create a more sustainable and low carbon transport network and support widespread improvements in passenger transport networks. Figure 7 outlines how this will be achieved.

**Figure 7 – Western Gateway STB's Social Objectives**

Social Objectives	Long-term Social Outcomes	Long-term Social delivery priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the sustainable delivery of new homes and employment opportunities</li> <li>• Support multi-modal travel options within travel to work areas</li> <li>• Improve transport &amp; digital connectivity to reduce poverty and deprivation</li> <li>• Embrace the role of technology in supporting strategic travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure transport is not a barrier to growth and opportunity</li> <li>• Positive place making decisions</li> <li>• Improved access for employment, education and other essential services</li> <li>• Improved user experience of strategic transport networks</li> <li>• Increased collaboration &amp; support for the delivery of innovative ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing growth is appropriately placed, coordinated and mitigated to ensure strategic transport routes remain safe, resilient and fit for purpose</li> <li>• Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations</li> <li>• Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide</li> <li>• Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options</li> </ul>

## 4.0 Bus and Coach

The ability to provide a robust multi-modal transport offer for people living within and travelling to the Western Gateway is a key challenge. Interurban and local bus travel is an essential part of our transport system, providing many with their primary means of access. Unlike rail, and unless segregated, the reliability of bus and coach services is interdependent on other modes of transport and a well-performing road network, which for many urban areas is a significant challenge.

The Western Gateway STB acknowledges the need to create a coherent overarching narrative for larger-scale investments in passenger transport connectivity, and that the opportunities are not overlooked for the bus and coach services offer to achieve step changes in the quality and relevance of non-car alternatives for longer journeys. Providing reliable alternatives to car use within and between travel to work areas would help to mitigate the impacts of growth and help improve the quality of place for our communities. In addition to ensure that new communities have access to a full range of travel choices, we will look to improve urban and inter urban cycle provision when enhancing both new passenger transport routes and increased service frequencies.

The combination of the climate emergency and the acute pressure on strategic and local highways infrastructure makes it essential that bus and coach travel is empowered by a coordinated strategy. However, there is no question that the decarbonisation of all public transport will require substantial infrastructure investment, not least in local grid reinforcement, both for power and (bio) gas. The scale of electrification required to support decarbonisation is significant. Multi-agency collaboration needs to be prioritised to address energy production, planning policy and national security issues that may arise from the increase in energy demand.

The STB acknowledges the huge potential benefits for electrification or the use of alternative fuels for bus and coaches and the significant contribution this could make towards the long-term aim of decarbonising the transport sector and transforming transport options for all social groups. It is supportive of the views held by many stakeholders that recognise the need to manage road spaces better to provide more advantage to bus and coach services. It also acknowledges the role STBs have in driving forward innovations in transport and mobility through their close partnership working with local transport authorities, LEAs, and bus operators and other strategic stakeholders.

There was further recognition by stakeholders of the importance and role of interchanges in urban areas, especially with improving the first and last mile walking and cycling links. Concerns were raised by stakeholders regarding land-use planning and the need to ensure development takes place in locations that can provide a range of transport options to reduce reliance on the car.

Flexible bus services could also provide a sustainable way to support access when coupled with high frequency fixed services. In rural areas the dispersed nature of demand means that flexible services generally have to cover large areas. There is a trade-off to be made between service coverage and service frequency, and as such the ability to accept ad hoc journeys is diminished due to longer journey times.

There are many time-critical journeys such as for work, health care appointments and connections with other transport services, where delays have significant adverse consequences for bus and coach customers. Flexible bus customers will want the security of pre-booking and having a guaranteed arrival time for such journeys, therefore, systems used need to take these constraints into account and only accept ad hoc bookings that will not introduce a delay.

Flexible services should remain accessible to all user groups. The elderly are likely to be a big potential user group, particularly in rural areas with above average proportions of over 65s. Some groups of users may be less likely to use the full functionality of smartphone apps and will therefore want the reassurance of traditional timetabled service. There also remain significant mobile coverage issues in rural areas that make connecting to smartphone apps difficult for some users.

Community transport caters for a wide range of transport needs, especially those who find using public transport difficult. Flexible bus services clearly have a role in rural areas. However, it should be recognised that there are higher costs associated with operating in rural areas and lower revenue returns so it is highly unlikely that flexible services will be delivered commercially and will require ongoing subsidy. Integration with the wider public transport network is essential to ensure that the different types of service complement one another rather than compete against each other. This requires coordination at a local level and strong partnerships between local authorities and local operators.

The current COVID-19 crisis has had a disproportionate impact on bus use. The longer-term impacts of the crisis on levels of demand for public transport remain difficult to forecast. It must be acknowledged that the current crisis is likely to lead to notable shifts in patterns of demand and will affect the ability to sustain the whole pre-existing service offer as it existed prior to March on a fully commercial basis.

COVID-19 has highlighted how important buses are to the public services and economy of cities. The fall in passenger numbers has however, meant that bus operators needed additional Government support to keep services running.

The Western Gateway STB is aware of both the short- and long-term issues facing bus and coach travel across the region. One of the biggest weaknesses of existing bus and coach networks in many parts of the STB area arises from their historic development within county and municipal boundaries, whereas cross-boundary links have been very weakly developed.

All parties need to use this time as an opportunity to reset plans and agree to support the delivery of a National Bus Recovery Strategy which is due early 2021. The challenge for the STB is to coordinate work between its members and bus operators to ensure post COVID-19 we develop: a financially sustainable; socially inclusive and efficient bus and coach network that supports longer-distance bus and coach provision; which links with flexible local feeder services. This will ensure the bus and coach network become more attractive and effective than they are able to be today.

The STB wants to ensure that alternative technology can be delivered in a sustainable manner as well as maximising opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities. It is essential to also acknowledge the difficulties for full decarbonisation of the

bus and coach network, so we are aiming to provide valuable leadership to raise awareness of deficiencies within existing energy networks to facilitate electric transport development.

**Bus and Coach Summary:**

- It is essential to provide a robust multi-modal transport offer for people living within and travelling to the Western Gateway area
- The STB is aware of both the short- and long-term issues facing bus and coach travel across the region. Post COVID-19 we need to work collectively to develop a financially sustainable, socially inclusive and efficient bus and coach network
- There is a need to create a coherent overarching narrative for larger-scale investments in passenger transport connectivity. One that supports longer-distance bus and coach services which link with flexible local feeder services
- Integrated ticketing for end to end journey planning across operators and modes of transport – bus doesn't always bring you door to door
- There are huge potential benefits for electrification or the use of alternative fuels for buses and coaches which would support the decarbonisation of the transport sector

**During this plan period the STB will:**

- Establish a Task and Finish group to consider the implications of the National Bus Strategy, view bus and coach travel networks on a strategic basis and understand the decarbonisation transfer process
- Work with bus operators to identify solutions and facilitate longer distance bus and coach routes to support areas not served by rail
- Support the development of smart ticketing solutions
- Monitor the frequency of trips and how these may be impacted through greater adoption of agile working practices
- Support the digital aspirations of the Western Gateway Powerhouse
- Support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:
  - Metrobus - Cribbs Patchway
  - Bristol to Bath Strategic Travel Corridor
  - Bus Improvement packages across Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
  - Mass Transit – West of England

**In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Commission the following studies and ensure outcomes of the studies inform the production of the four long-term strategic travel corridor plans
  - Bus and Coach Strategy
  - Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy
- Identify digital connectivity gaps across the Western Gateway areas
- Understand the potential role of the STB to develop a regional Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform as described in Section 6.0

## 5.0 Cycling

The benefits of cycling are well documented, it is essential to provide safe and attractive routes for the ever-increasing demand from both commuting and leisure trips. Enabling access to jobs especially for the young, lower paid and apprentices (flow of labour and skills) was a key issue for the Chamber of Commerce. The need for greater modal choice to enable individuals to travel is inescapably linked to the wider performance of the economy and delivery of the STB's environmental and social objectives.

There is widespread agreement by stakeholders for the need to manage existing road space more effectively, with a balance required between better management of existing road space, supporting future growth and providing better facilities for walking/cycling/passenger transport. There was recognition by stakeholders of the importance of transport hubs and the role of interchanges in urban areas, especially with improving the first and last mile walking and cycling links.

Providing reliable alternatives to car use within and between the travel to work areas would mitigate the unsustainable impacts of growth, help improve the quality of place as well as air quality for our communities and improve the health of residents. In addition, we will look to facilitate inter urban cycle routes to ensure that new communities have access to a full range of travel choices.

We consider that our waterways have an important role to play in delivering aspirations for regional and local accessibility. These can provide safe and convenient walking and cycling routes that connect people to jobs, key services and recreational opportunities. Enhancing the capacity, safety and attractiveness of towpath and connecting pedestrian routes, particularly to and within a city centre may support increases in walking for local trips. Improvements made at a local level will also impact on more strategic routes and outcomes by removing traffic from local roads and by helping promote a modal shift in usage.

The COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on the lives and health of many people living in the UK, as well as severe economic consequences. But it has also resulted in cleaner air and quieter streets, transforming the environment in many of our towns and cities. The Government has placed an expectation on local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians to lock in many of these benefits. In response, local authorities are making or proposing radical changes to their roads to accommodate active travel.

During the national lockdown period many people have taken advantage of quieter roads to walk or cycle more regularly. As more people begin to return to regularly accessing school, college and work, we have a real opportunity to capture the positive changes we have seen to improve the physical and mental health of residents, improve air quality and ease congestion across the region. With current concerns over the use of public transport, as restrictions are lifted many of the roads in our key urban hubs may not be able to cope without providing safe and accessible cycle routes.

Residents across the region are being encouraged to find "joy in the journey" by swapping a short car journey for walking or cycling whether commuting to work, taking the kids to school or popping to the shops. The new campaign from the West of England Combined Authority

promotes the benefits of cycling and walking to boost health and wellbeing as well as helping to build a cleaner, greener future for the West of England.

The Government has announced the largest ever funding boost to create a 'new era' for cycling and walking. The first stage of the £2bn investment was a £250m emergency active travel fund to help councils reallocate road space for cyclists and pedestrians. Temporary measures to widen pavements, remove traffic from roads and improve cycling have been introduced by the Western Gateway members. Using this funding, across the region in response to the Government directive to place an emphasis on active travel, which is also at the core of the STB's vision to address the Climate Emergency and create connectivity across the region.

When identifying the short term and long-term issues the Western Gateway has identified the need to engage with motorists with the aim of instigating a mind set change to accept where and when it is appropriate to drive and where and when other modes of transport should take priority. A key prerequisite in this is the reallocation of road space and altering the perceived hierarchy of the road taking away the emphasis from the car and private vehicles and towards active travel modes and public transport.

We note the work being carried out by all the Western Gateway members on the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes across the regions and we intend to support any lobbying required for these schemes. With this in mind, the Western Gateway will be aiming to make the Strategic Cycle Network its focus so it can bring the region together looking at longer distance routes between local authority areas and identifying those schemes that might be too big for individual local authorities to tackle.

We also intend to strengthen our relationship with the Canal & River Trust, we recognise all of the canals represent valuable assets which not only represent our industrial and cultural heritage, but help shape the landscape, add ecological value, and have a great ability to act as a catalyst for regeneration and inward investment. They also provide opportunities for sport and recreation, both on and off the water, thus enhancing the wellbeing of local residents. Our waterway infrastructure provides a free public resource for walking and cycling, Green infrastructure corridor and links communities.

In order to inform the long-term Walking and Cycling aim of the Western Gateway, an STB Officer Task and Finish group will be established to oversee the production of the Strategic Cycle Strategy. Outputs from the Strategy will feed into the relevant corridor plans and move forward into the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan.

### **Cycling Summary**

- There is a clear need to provide for greater modal choice to enable individuals to choose how they travel
- Cycling provides a real opportunity to improve the physical and mental health of residents, improve air quality and ease congestion across the region
- It is essential to work with stakeholders to facilitate longer distance routes
- A key driver in this is the reallocation of road space and rebalancing highway capacity towards active travel modes and public transport.

### **During this plan period the STB will:**

- Establish an officer Task and Finish group to identify gaps in strategic cycle routes
- Work with stakeholders to identify solutions and facilitate longer distance cycle routes
- Support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:
  - Cheltenham to Gloucester strategic cycle route
  - Improvement packages across Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
  - Support the delivery of both BCP's and WECA's Transforming City Fund programme

### **In preparing for the long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Commission a Strategic Cycle Strategy to feed into the long-term travel corridor plans of our four strategic travel corridors
- Understand how the STB can facilitate the delivery of strategic routes in partnership with stakeholders (including National cycling organisations and campaign groups and the Canal and River Trust)

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## 6.0 Digital

Transportation is on the edge of a period of great change with new technologies and services offering improved access to a range of mobility options including some new types of service not seen before. Digital connectivity could have a major role to play as 'digital as a mode' opens opportunities for changing traditional journey patterns and the management of transport networks.

For the Western Gateway area to benefit from new technologies it will be essential to adopt a collective approach to the development and delivery of transformational technology. Technology has a major role to play in helping to address transport issues. The Gateway area wants to be at the forefront of global digital technology and innovation to ensure transport networks are digitally enabled and ready to meet the needs of private travel, as well as facilitating the transition from petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles.

Digital connectivity is enabling many of the things we do including how we access work, how we shop, how we stay in touch with friends and how we pay for things and this, in turn, underpins much of what many of us do on a daily basis. This digital revolution is impacting the transportation sector with connectivity of vehicles enabling access to services on the move, monitoring the status of assets, the sharing of real time information and real time journey planning. It may be possible for digital connectivity to help make our highway network safer and more efficient and provide customers and users with more accurate travel information, travel choices and methods of payment. However, we recognise that 'digital exclusion' should not be allowed to disadvantage those who either can't access such services or choose not to use them. Investment in digital connectivity is essential for the Western Gateway area.

Remote or agile working can provide a means of mitigating the demand for travel and its adverse impacts. Good digital connectivity is key to this. Home working may not reduce overall trip numbers, but it is likely to impact journey purposes, destinations and mode uses as people find other activities to do with their leisure time. As a consequence, over time this could impact network pinch-points and traditional peak demand.

In addition, digital connectivity can offer the potential for innovative solutions to be developed where there remains a need to travel. This need will be met by prioritising opportunities which encourage the use of low-carbon travel choices.

The advances in digital infrastructure will also bring benefits to the Service-Based Mobility Models, such as:

- Mobility as a Service (MaaS), which integrates multi-modal public and private sector mobility services through digital platforms by incorporating travel information, payments, and reservation systems into a single application;
- Parking Platforms, which provide consumers with information and app-based payment functions to reduce the traditional problems associated with finding and paying for parking; and

- “Digital as a Mode”, which uses digital connectivity to reduce/remove the need to travel (e.g. by enabling remote working and remote access to services including health and education).

The potential to shift people’s travel behaviour using MaaS could help to encourage a greater use of public transport options as well as active and sustainable travel choices. Evidence from some of the MaaS pilots demonstrates that these behaviours increase with the use of MaaS. This could help to improve public health, social inclusion and air quality while reducing carbon emissions and congestion. The move away from private car ownership and increased use of public transport, active travel and taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) will have positive impacts for air quality and carbon emissions.

There is a role for the STB to provide a co-ordination – umbrella structure giving local identity and resource. Legislation does need to be reviewed as currently if strictly applied, co-ordination of activity between transport providers is against competition law. The STB could offer a registration service for operators that use the MaaS platform, but central Government must provide the regulatory framework that MaaS Platforms and operators must adhere to.

The Western Gateway is aware that the way in which MaaS is to be implemented is also a barrier. Travel cards are becoming less prevalent due to the rise in smartphone and app technology combined with the ability to use contactless payments direct from the phone. However, this limits these products to those who have a smartphone, internet access and an ability to pay contactless via their phones. Other members of society may not have access to such services and therefore may be excluded from travelling with the same ease. This would be contrary to local and central Government ambitions for accessibility for all and there is a danger of widening the equality gap.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the potential for remote working to enable business activity to be maintained in different ways. It is already clear that improved digital infrastructure will be critical moving forward, becoming integral to the way companies operate and services accessed. Planning for our future transport needs must be taken forward alongside that for digital infrastructure. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extent to which rapid and widespread use of digital connectivity can act as an effective and efficient means of maintaining business activity. It also illustrates the extent to which change can be affected at pace when the circumstances require it; providing the imperative for change is compelling.

There is an opportunity now to shape the future in ways that might otherwise have taken considerable time to achieve. Increased acceptance for home working has been embraced by businesses and employees. The Western Gateway needs to consider where investment in faster and rural broadband could reduce the need to travel, reduce isolation and improve the local economy.

Post COVID-19 may have significant impacts on wider travel patterns and the transport network. Affordability in review of economic impact is likely to change travel models, particularly against a backdrop of aiming for carbon neutrality in the transport sector.

Work to improve Digital connectivity is a key ambition of the Western Gateway Powerhouse and its ambition to deliver world class physical and digital connectivity, boosting productivity, and unlocking housing growth and leading our transition to a net zero future is supported by the STB and will feed into our long term strategy.

**Digital Summary:**

- Improvements in digital connectivity open opportunities for changing traditional journey patterns and the management of transport networks
- There is a need to consider where investment in faster and rural broadband could reduce the need to travel, reduce isolation and improve the local economy
- The Western Gateway powerhouse ambition for improvements in digital connectivity are fully supported

**During this plan period the STB will:**

- Promote examples of digital transport innovation
- Seek to establish a Rail Digital Solutions Taskforce
- Support the development of smart ticketing solutions
- Monitor the frequency of trips and how these may be impacted through greater adoption of agile working practices
- Support the digital aspirations of the Western Gateway Powerhouse
- Support existing schemes in the region which are already progressing the digital narrative including:
  - Delivery of a combined package of urban realm improvements for Lansdowne Business District, Bournemouth – including enhanced 5G digital connectivity, public transport and sustainable transport investment to support growth opportunity.
  - BCP' Council's Smart Place initiative
  - WECA's Future Transport Zone

**In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Identify digital connectivity gaps across the Western Gateway areas
- Understand the potential role of the STB to develop a regional MaaS platform
- Understand the application of the Western Gateway Powerhouse's aspirations for enhanced digital connectivity on the strategic transport network

## 7.0 Freight and Logistics

The Western Gateway STB needs to ensure the strategic transport network provides commercial freight operators with the most efficient way of transporting goods. However, it is essential that this network also supports the STB's wider social and environmental objectives and is future proofed to accommodate growth and digital transformation.

As a hub in logistics, advanced manufacturing and energy research, it is vital that the Western Gateway pays due regard to freight issues in the long-term planning of investment of the strategic transport network. One of the main aims of the plan is increased productivity and a keyway in which this can be achieved is via supporting businesses to move freight and goods efficiently and across modes.

The move towards e-commerce is clear, with a huge increase in the percentage of UK retail sales being recorded online. Demand has increased further during the Coronavirus pandemic including use of home deliveries (same day and same hour deliveries) and click and collect services. Other consumer deviations include changes in the way we use cities, with less shopping, more at-home eating and entertainment, and a shift of purchasing power from material things to virtual things or experiences.

Freight transport both contributes to congestion and is a victim of it. Congestion tends to occur at pinch points on road and rail networks, particularly where strategic and local traffic conflict.

Until now, where modal shift from road to rail has occurred, it has often been driven by the need to move bulk goods or avoid unreliable journey times on key congested road routes, with a shift to a reliable timetabled rail freight service from origin to destination that more closely meets customer needs. Actively supporting modal shift to rail will reduce road congestion, free up capacity, enable businesses to make sustainable choices and reduce emissions, but the constraining factors affecting rail as the mode of choice for freight must be acknowledged as currently having a relatively minor role compared to road.

In addition to the markets traditionally served by rail there is the opportunity to expand rail freight into new markets. Some specific examples where rail has the potential to play a greater role is in long distance movement of bulk retail goods between freight distribution centres, and also better penetration into large urban centres for high value, low density goods (e.g. parcel deliveries) that can then take advantage of a more sustainable First Mile / Last Mile choice.

Reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality is now imperative for the freight and logistics sector. The Government's Clean Growth Strategy includes the desire to work with the industry to reduce the impact of freight emissions and improve air quality across all modes including road, rail and shipping. There is a need to understand the different options for the region to move towards delivery of alternative fuelling and associated operations.

At present, diesel is the predominant fuel of choice for road freight vehicles, both HGVs and LGVs, due to its higher energy properties. However, recent years have seen growing interest in the use of alternative fuels nationally and internationally, particularly in response to environmental concerns (such as the DfT's 2017 [Freight Carbon Review](#)). According to DfT

figures, HGVs account for 17% of greenhouse gas emissions and 17% of nitrous oxides emissions from road transport (despite accounting for only 5% of vehicle kilometres). Related policy issues such as Clean Air Zones including the zone to be introduced in Bath City Centre, and proximity of communities to major roads has further raised the profile of the issue.

There are many benefits to the business community from switching to alternative fuels (such as biodiesel, electricity and hydrogen). In particular, the increasing cost of diesel, and the volatility of oil prices, means that alternatives are becoming increasingly attractive financially. Additionally, as clean air policies such as vehicle bans continue to increase on the political and public agenda, fleet operators may be forced into adopting less polluting vehicles to enable them to access markets, particularly in city centres.

Currently however, there are some challenges relating to the adoption of alternative fuel vehicles. These include the early stage of development of some solutions; the risks associated with being an early adopter of new technologies; the wide variety of vehicle types used; and fleet replacement cycles. These challenges pose a significant risk to competitive margins for UK freight and logistics companies, especially Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Road freight in isolation will not be able to meet the needs of heavy bulk markets, even with the emerging technological change, hence the need to consider how best to support moving more freight onto the rail network where this is feasible. Rail movements can offer an alternative way to move aggregates and bulk products for infrastructure projects, which are necessary to support population increase.

Coastal shipping or short-sea shipping is also an important form of logistics in the region and encompasses the movement of cargo and passengers mainly by sea along a coast, without crossing an ocean. This is a method currently being used to move quarried stone from the Mendips to Bristol Port by train and then taken by vessel to the Hinkley C construction site avoiding any road transport. The Western Gateway region also contains the Gloucester & Sharpness canal which is a commercial waterway, capable of carrying freight from Sharpness to Gloucester.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for the logistics sector. In the UK, land transport has been a vital factor in keeping the country going despite the lockdown, which has meant that many logistics firms have had to tackle one of their most intensely demanding periods alongside all the complexities of a national and global health emergency.

The start of lockdown in March 2020 came with an increased level of supermarket purchasing, and logistic companies increased deliveries to ensure food, medicine and essential supply chains continued to flow. Recognising this, the UK Government assigned many within the logistics sector as 'key workers', enabling them to carry on working through the lockdown.

The Government took further steps to ease the strain on logistics firms working through the lockdown, including keeping roadside facilities open, exemptions for freight workers in border quarantine arrangements and extending MOTs and annual HGV tests. These and

other support measures have proven vital to an industry tasked with ensuring the nation still has what it needs during the pandemic.

The Western Gateway fully supports Highways England's Strategic Business Plan where this emphasises the importance of collaboration and consultation with freight and logistics sectors to better understand their needs. An example of where Highways England has identified freight congestion issues is in the provision of efficient routes to global markets through international gateways: e.g. improving access to ports (Highways England, 2017). The Western Gateway will work closely with its partner Highways England to support it in its aims and objectives.

The long-term strategy for the region will be developed by building upon the recommendations outlined in the Western Gateway Port access study & Rail Strategy as well as the work being undertaken by other STBs including Midlands Connect.

The Freight Strategy will need to capture the extent of freight movements within the Western Gateway to understand the potential for modal shift including:

- Urban/local movements (First Mile / Last Mile) servicing towns and cities within the area, for both commercial (B2B) customers and for consumers (B2C).
- Regional movements within the area and also into South Wales for Newport/Cardiff and beyond serviced from distribution centres in Western Gateway.
- Strategic national/international movements, including trips generated within the area as origin/destination and those which travel through the area on longer distance movements to/from other regions, including further South West into the Peninsula area, as well as those heading to the Midlands, North and beyond.
- Flows to/from London and to/from South Wales and onwards via ferry into the Republic of Ireland (RoI) as the M4 corridor acts as a land bridge for RoI traffic to/from continental Europe).

The STB Business Forum will continue to be the main process for discussions with the identified stakeholders. The STB is considering the establishment of a separate working group to help oversee production of the Freight Strategy. Outputs will feed into the relevant corridor plans and move forward into the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan.

In addition to the Freight Strategy, we also want to build on the work undertaken by Midlands Connect STB regarding the application of an Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy. This will develop a vision of the future for alternative fuels in the freight and logistics sector in the Western Gateway area; and assess how the Gateway area can facilitate and benefit from a shift to alternative fuels for freight, and identify the factors or challenges which might constrain this transition.

**Freight and Logistics Summary:**

- It is essential for the strategic transport network to provide commercial freight operators with the most efficient way of transporting goods
- Reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality is now imperative for the freight and logistics sector
- The STB will work in partnership with freight and logistics providers to support the long-term use of alternative fuels

**Existing Evidence Base:**

- [Port Access Study](#)
- [Rail Strategy](#)

**During this plan period the STB will:**

- Continue to support the Transport and Business Forum
- Consider the need for a separate Freight operator working group and Rail Freight Task Force
- Work with Network Rail to promote the recommendations of our Rail Strategy through their planned Continuous Modular Strategic Planning process and additional studies such as Reintroduction of Rail Freight to Port of Poole currently in progress.
- Work with Highways England in preparing their evidence base supporting the third round of the Road Investment Strategy process (RIS3)
- Provide key inputs into Highways England's M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Study.

**In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of the following joint studies:
  - Freight Strategy<sup>1</sup>
  - Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy
- Ensure the outcomes of the studies inform the production of the four long-term travel corridor plans.
- Work with stakeholders and Highways England to ensure that the recommendations of their M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic study are reflected in RIS3

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<sup>1</sup> Having particular regard to Peninsula STB and quarrying activity

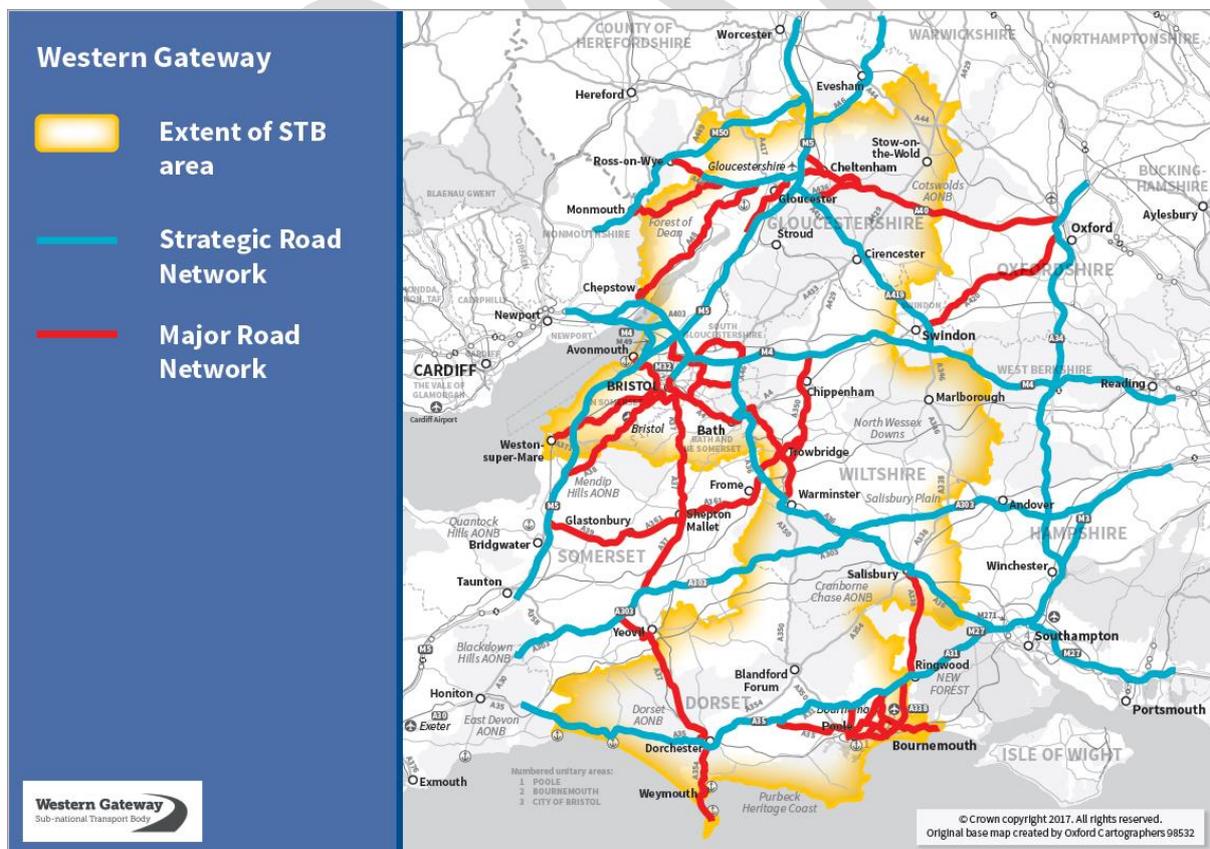
## 8.0 Roads

Highways play a fundamental role in supporting multi-modal transport options. They facilitate the development of housing and employment space, improve connectivity between business and skilled people and improve connectivity between businesses. In rural areas connectivity is equally important for unskilled workers by providing access to training for unemployed members of society. Without the broad functionality of the highway you would not have any multi-modal travel options.

The Western Gateway area is a crossroads for national connectivity. The impact of peak loads on the resilience of the Strategic Road Network, especially during the summer peak season on the Bristol Motorway Box, perfectly demonstrates the interlinked nature of many of the most serious transport operational issues the STB area faces. A lack of resilience within a transport network results in its failure with poor journey times and commensurate harmful impacts on productivity, economic growth and local business activity.

Figure 8 illustrates the extent of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) managed by Highways England and the Major Road Network (MRN) managed by local highway authorities. The Local Road Network (LRN) is not illustrated, but this vast network forms the majority of trips and is managed by local highway authorities.

**Figure 8 - Extent of the Strategic Road Network & Major Road Network in the Western Gateway area**



Highways England is the strategic road authority and as such manages the SRN in line with the priorities set by the Secretary of State. It receives a rolling five-year funding settlement from Government to implement the existing Road Investment Strategy (RIS) while preparing for the next. It is during the preparation stage of the RIS process that the STB alongside its local authority members have the opportunity to identify and promote regional priorities.

The timeframe of the Strategic Transport Plan is 2020 to 2025 to match the existing RIS2 timeframe. It is intended that the next iteration of this strategic plan will identify regional priorities for the next RIS, and these will be considered by Highways England when determining the priorities for investment post 2025.

The Western Gateway STB is committed to ensuring that there is regular liaison with Highways England as associate member of the STB and key partner in our four strategic travel corridor stakeholder groups. The multi-modal travel corridor plans produced to inform our Long-Term Strategic Plan will be shared with Highways England to inform the evidence base of their RIS3 route strategies and reduce any potential duplication of work.

The Western Gateway area is home to some of the UK's most dynamic businesses and economies. We have strong and growing expertise in world-leading industries including advanced engineering, high-value manufacturing, aerospace, military, financial and professional services, digital information and communications technology, cyber security and defence. These sectors will benefit greatly from Multi-modal investment that both provides better links between economic hubs, and results in improvement of the SRN and MRN.

Our MRN and Large Local Major (LLM) investment priorities support our broader multi-modal investment approach. Better management of the MRN can benefit all road users, including those using public transport, pedestrians and cyclists by improving journey times and journey time reliability, improving safety and reducing vehicle emissions.

Achieving more reliable journey times to and from international gateways within the area will support the competitiveness and productivity of businesses with international supply chains and/or markets. The same applies for links to international gateways, where connectivity to the SRN becomes the key factor.

During this plan period the Western Gateway has prioritised 6 MRN schemes and 2 LLM schemes. The schemes prioritised focus on three key policy themes identified through the regional Evidence Base:

### **1. Improve urban travel within urban hubs to enable future housing and employment growth**

Improving metro connectivity was one of the challenges identified from the outset of producing the Regional Evidence Base. The two city regions of the West of England and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) provide 53% of the Western Gateway Area's existing jobs and both have plans for further economic growth, which if unmitigated is likely to impact travel times and have a negative impact on Sub-national connectivity.

As the economy grows, journey time reliability and choice will be critical in travel decisions. If the Western Gateway is to achieve its full potential with respect to

delivering housing and employment sites, connectivity enhancements will help to unlock sites by removing transport constraints.

Attracting and retaining businesses within the Western Gateway area is essential to ensure sustainable economic growth. Feedback provided through our Transport and Business Forum outlined the need to manage existing road space more effectively. The efficient use of the highway network is essential. Providing the necessary infrastructure for Walk/Cycle/Passenger Transport trips can give a capacity benefit for the longer motorised trips as it removes many of the short local car trips that take up valuable capacity.

The two MRN schemes being prioritised under this theme are both located in the West of England. They provide a phased set of junction improvements on the A4174 Bristol Ring Road and are designed to improve multimodal transport capacity to enable the delivery of housing and employment growth. An additional scheme in BCP was also recognised as a priority although this was subsequently withdrawn from the initial round of MRN funding. The Wessex Fields scheme in Bournemouth will provide a second phase of improvements required to unlock a key strategic employment site adjacent to Royal Bournemouth Hospital and reduce congestion on the surrounding highway network.

## **2. Improve north/south connectivity within the Western Gateway area**

The need to improve north / south links between the Midlands and South Coast is a fundamental challenge that the Western Gateway needs to address. The importance of strategic connectivity and network resilience was highlighted by the Transport and Business Forum especially in relation to the freight challenge and accessing international ports.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the government confirmed its Road Investment Strategy (2020-25) for the Strategic Road Network (RIS2). Within this there was recognition for the case for improving north/south connectivity within the Western Gateway area and Highways England will commission a strategic study examining strategic access between the M4 and Dorset Coast.

Good connectivity is an essential component of the Western Gateway economy. Improving business to business or business to skilled people connectivity will help close current 'productivity gaps' by reducing non-productive travel time. Improving north / south connectivity is considered vital to improving productivity and increasing access to markets located in the Midlands and the North of the UK.

Five schemes in total have been identified under this theme including three MRN schemes and two LLMs. Three of the schemes (2 MRN and 1 LLM) are located on the A350 in Wiltshire. This route is a centre of growth and the three schemes are located in the northern part of the route. A phased approach to improving this corridor has been identified and it is intended that improvements to the central and southern sections will be prioritised within our Long-term Strategic Plan. The other LLM scheme includes improvements to M5 Junction 9 and the A46; this transformational scheme will enable significant growth to be delivered at Ashchurch in Gloucestershire. The A46 has also been recognised by Midlands Connect STB as a priority corridor and is referred to as

the Trans-Midland Highway. The final scheme under this policy theme is an MRN scheme in Salisbury which enables delivery of the Salisbury Transport package. Salisbury acts as a crossroads for three of the Western Gateway's strategic routes. The scheme includes a number of junction improvements to aid strategic vehicle movements around the city centre.

### **3. Improve connectivity to international gateways**

Bristol Airport is the largest airport in the South West. It has no direct access onto the motorway network and is served by the single-carriageway A38. This together with no direct rail access impacts the airport. A need for improved connectivity to Bristol Airport was highlighted by the Business and Transport Forum.

One MRN scheme has been identified under this policy theme. The scheme includes a number of junction improvements along the A38 between Bristol and M5 J23. These enhancements could improve access to the airport as well as enabling a number of strategic development sites to be delivered.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a marked impact on everyday life, including the prevalence of congestion on the highway network. From mid March 2020, the volume of traffic fell significantly and only started to return to pre-lockdown levels following a relaxing of national lock-down restrictions. Data published in October 2020 by the DfT, reported that motor vehicles travelled 305.4 billion vehicle miles in Great Britain for the year ending June 2020 – down by 16%. These statistics cover the period following the Government's announcement of measures to limit the impact and transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Analysis, based on provisional road traffic statistics, suggests that without the impact of COVID-19, the figure for the year ending June 2020 would have increased by 1% to 357.1 billion vehicle miles.

The analysis also suggests that the impact of the pandemic affected road traffic differently by vehicle type and road type. The decline in road traffic levels at the end of March 2020 was more pronounced for cars, than for vans and lorries, with the biggest fall in traffic volumes on motorways as drivers tended to stay local during the lockdown periods.

With the introduction of further local and national lockdowns, we expect to see traffic volumes fluctuate in line with restrictions. During the pandemic, public transport use reduced significantly, but as lockdown restrictions ease, concern remains over the use of public transport. There is a risk that personal car use will increase significantly resulting in increased congestion and greater environmental cost. It is imperative that the STB encourage alternatives to the car when commuting or, through agile working practises, reduce the need to travel during traditional peak periods.

The Western Gateway recognises that there are a number of highway resilience issues within the region which have been raised through our members and stakeholders, these include;

- The impact on the local highway network following any accidents on the M4/M5/A303;
- The safety issue of mainline queuing on the motorway at several junctions on the M4/M5 during peak travel times;

- Constrained urban networks within the historic centres of Bath, Cheltenham and Salisbury;
- Limited capacity and delays on important strategic routes including A350, A31, A35, A338, A36, A303, A37 and A46; and
- Poor connectivity and delays which are pushing tourists to different destinations and causing considerable issues during seasonal peaks.

#### **Highways Summary:**

- Highways play a fundamental role in supporting multi-modal transport options
- Improving metro connectivity is a key challenge.
- The need to improve north / south links between the Midlands and South Coast is a fundamental challenge that the Western Gateway needs to address.
- East-west connectivity on the south coast is constrained and impacts on economic competitiveness.
- Bristol Airport is one of the largest airports in the South West and connectivity is a significant issue.

#### **Existing Evidence Base:**

[MRN funding submission](#)

#### **During this plan period the STB will:**

- Maintain regular liaison with Highways England and support their RIS3 Route Strategy work.
- Encourage Local Planning Authorities to identify sites where the demand for travel between homes and jobs can be minimised or served by a range of travel options to avoid reliance on the car as the main mode of transport.
- Continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on strategic vehicle movements.
- Support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:
  - M5 J10 junction improvements
  - M5 J19 improvements
  - M5 J21 improvements
  - A31 widening (Ringwood)
  - A303 (Amesbury to Berwick Down & Sparkford to Ilchester).
  - A350 Yarnbrook/West Ashton Relief Road
  - A417 Missing Link
  - Wessex Fields – Connectivity Improvements
  - West of England area-wide electric charging network

Support the following Sub-national priorities through the business case process to achieve programme entry:

- A4174 corridor improvements (subject to successful MRN bid)
- A38 corridor improvements (subject to successful MRN bid)
- M4 J17 (subject to successful MRN bid)
- A350 Chippenham Bypass (subject to successful MRN bid)
- A338 Southern Salisbury Improvements (subject to successful MRN bid)
- M5 J9 and A46 (subject to successful LLM bid)
- A350 Melksham Bypass - (subject to successful LLM bid)

#### **In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of an Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy.
- Establish our four strategic multi-modal travel corridor stakeholder groups to oversee the production of long-term travel corridor plans.

## 9.0 National/International

Ports and airports need to be considered within an international context driven by the demand for goods and personal travel and the Western Gateway STB supports the aspirations of operators by ensuring that the sites are well-connected to national and international transport networks. This will help to ensure the gateways continue to play a key role in a changing economy by facilitating international trade whilst also acting as focal points for both economic development and technological innovation. Figure 9 identifies the ports and airports within and adjacent to the Western Gateway area and Figure 10 provides the geographic context of these important assets.

The International gateways within the Western Gateway area are subject to a variety of policies at a national and local level. There are gaps which need to be filled in order to ensure policy alignment. One of the main disjoints exists between the need for transport decarbonisation versus the expansion and development aims of the international trade and commerce. Although all development policy must uphold the principles of 'sustainable development' as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework, a commitment to reducing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation must be balanced and offset against the sustainable growth aspirations promoted by the private operators of the ports and airports.

Brexit is generally perceived as both an opportunity and a challenge for most businesses due to the lack of certainty about the UK's future trading relationships with the EU; currently the country's most significant trading partner. In contrast, the ports in the Western Gateway area generally do not see Brexit as a threat to business due to the current balance of non-EU and EU trade links resulting in a non-dependence of traffic from the EU.

Gaining planning permission for expansion and change of use is almost universally seen by operators to be a problem and a future cause for concern for ports in the region, despite stakeholders stating that they have productive, positive relationships with their local authorities. Although there is some conflict between the needs of local communities and the economic ambitions of the region and its businesses, it is the planning process that is largely seen as the greatest issue. It is regarded to be slow and cumbersome, taking too long to reach a conclusion.

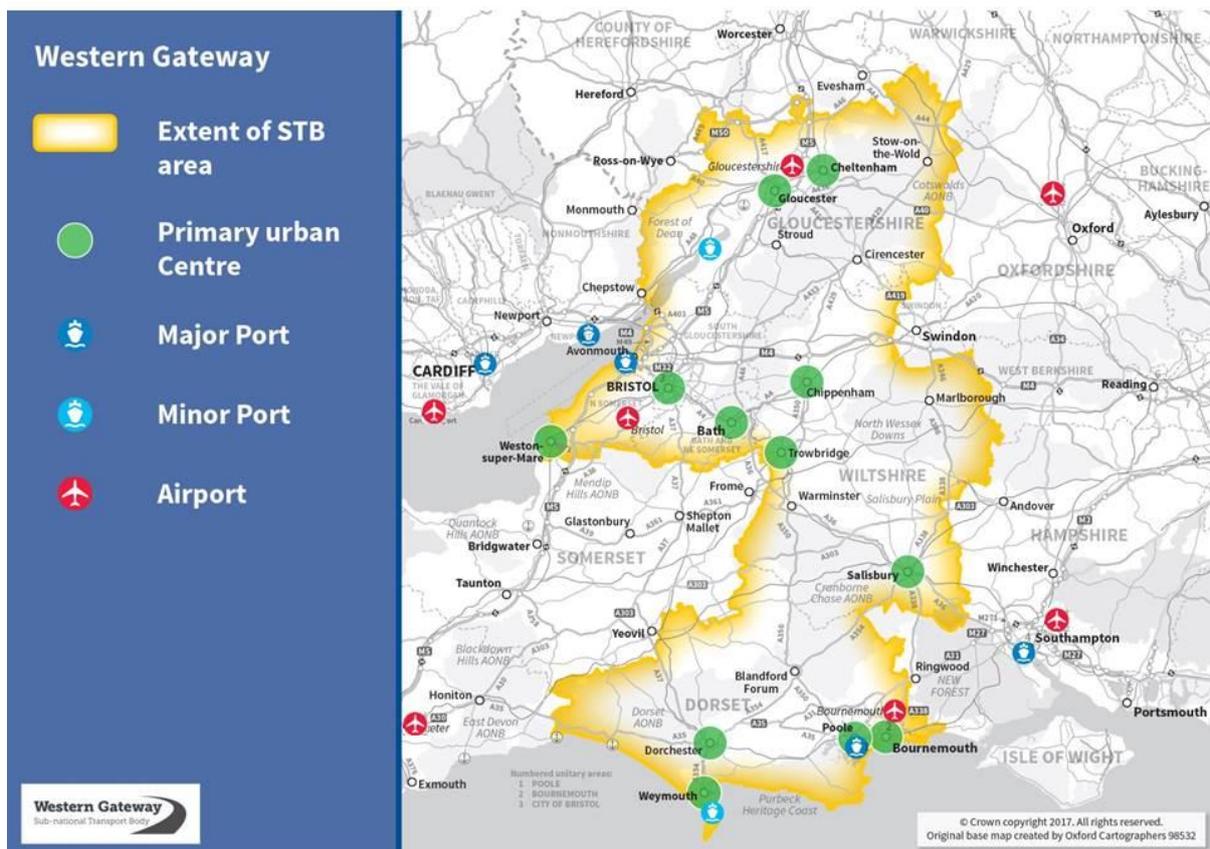
Government policy is also keen to adopt small ports as centres of innovation, and maritime and aviation research. According to the DfT's [Maritime 2050 - Navigating the Future](#) report, small ports will be important hubs for joining with local councils and research institutions to lay out the technological and digital capabilities necessary to deliver the Government's commitment to smart ports, for example through the SPEED programme, which aims to improve ports in the UK by using new advances in technology and data science as is being delivered in Poole and Portland. Moving forward, LEPs are keen to target funding for research and development to promote the uptake of new technology (e.g. autonomous vehicles, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and shore to ship charging to reduce idling emissions). National policy through the Government's Marine Innovation Hub strategy also identified smaller ports as potential test beds to help explore the opportunities associated with trialling new technology before scaling up to larger operations.

**Figure 9 –Airports and Ports within or adjacent to the Western Gateway area**

Port	Size / Passengers	Freight (per annum)
Bristol Port	524.3ha	8.7 million tonnes
Port of Poole	28.2ha	820,000 tonnes
Sharpness Docks	18.3ha	432,000 tonnes
Portland Port	19.1ha	500,000 tonnes
Southampton Port	368.6ha	36 million tonnes
Bristol Airport	8.96m passengers/yr.	10.64 tonnes
Bournemouth Airport	803,000 passengers/yr.	0.24 tonnes
Southampton Airport	1.78m passengers/yr.	203 tonnes
Gloucestershire Airport	-	N/A
Exeter Airport	1m passengers/yr.	N/A
Cardiff Airport	1.65m passengers/yr.	1,803 tonnes
London Oxford Airport	-	N/A

2019 Airport Passenger & Freight values - <https://www.caa.co.uk/Data-and-analysis/UK-aviation-market/Airports/Datasets/UK-Airport-data/Airport-data-2019/>

**Figure 10 – Map of Airports and Ports within or adjacent to the Western Gateway area**



The Government has made clear its position on the importance of the UK’s ports to the economy; the recent £10m Port Infrastructure Resilience and Connectivity Fund, as well as funding for specific projects, speaks to the necessity of preserving their function after Brexit, and the economic opportunities that exist within Britain’s maritime and aviation industries. The Western Gateway STB is in a unique position, with several of England’s busiest ports within or close to its area. Although the challenges facing these ports vary with size and

location, several conclusions can be drawn from the policies that govern their use and future prospects.

Many of the comments made by the port/airport officials and LEPs during our Port Access Study reference the challenges they face concerning surface access and connectivity.

This includes feedback from several ports that have experienced bottlenecks and issues on the road network in the immediate areas surrounding the port and on wider strategic links across the area. Roads in Dorset, for example, can be unsuitable for HGVs with connectivity hindered by the lack of dual carriageways; this coupled with congestion in the BCP urban area results in delays to onward freight movements. The lack of north-south connectivity is also an issue for ports on the South Coast due to delays in accessing the Strategic Road Network and the constraints of the A350 corridor resulting in longer journey times for vehicles travelling north-south. Constraints and limited capacity on east-west routes in the Dorset and BCP areas put the Portland Port and Port of Poole at a competitive disadvantage compared to Southampton. Bournemouth Airport has no SRN connection or rail link, again putting it at a disadvantage compared to Southampton Airport.

Connectivity to international gateways is a key driver for the Western Gateway economy, but the full potential of the ports and airports in the region is currently underserved by slow average speeds, high journey times and low journey time reliability. Due to unreliability, many hauliers plan their movements outside the AM peak – for example, in Southampton; the busy time for container terminal HGV movements is 04:00hrs – 06:30hrs followed by a second peak early afternoon. Cruise activity also occurs outside the main AM /PM peak thus weekend traffic movements are also relevant for this sector.

The need for mass transit solutions has also been highlighted as a priority for several LEPs and port operators to support the productivity of the area. Specifically, connecting the major urban hubs and international gateways by public transport would expand the pool of potential employees at the ports and airports, improve access to the ports for people living in the area, and play a part in improving journey times and congestion through decreasing the mode share of private transport.

Stakeholder engagement in the Western Gateway area has highlighted the area's consciousness of environmental issues. The region is well placed to lead the way in driving down carbon emissions and focusing on a sustainable future. Ports have traditionally been perceived to have a negative impact on the environment and are a cause of environmental degradation both directly through the activities on site and indirectly through the transport of goods across the country, often by road. However, working alongside the ports in the Western Gateway area will be a crucial driver for success in climate change action and mitigation, including addressing threats to property from rising sea levels and severe weather events. There is the potential for interplay between climate-focused policy and innovative technological solutions which will allow this to happen e.g. a greater transition to electric propulsion for maritime vessels, and a move towards shore-to-ship power to vessels at berth.

There is a wide variety of approaches to technology within the ports; some such as Southampton and the Ports of Poole and Portland have embraced the advent of new

technologies while others are balancing the risk associated with investment within a competitive marketplace.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the aviation industry due to travel restrictions. Significant reductions in passenger numbers have resulted in flights being cancelled or planes flying empty between airports, which in turn has massively reduced revenues for airlines and forced many to lay off employees or declare bankruptcy. Some have attempted to avoid refunding cancelled trips in order to diminish their losses.

To promote a sustainable recovery for the aviation industry, it has been suggested that Government policies should prioritise sector-wide measures and competition. In particular they need to:

- Strike a reasonable balance between the need for support and the risk of distorting competition.
- Foster restructuring and avoid backing non-viable firms but support displaced workers.
- Encourage investments in the green transition and thereby increase the long-term resilience of the aviation industry.
- Address sustainability along the whole aviation value chain, including aircraft manufacturers and airports.

The conclusions drawn in the Western Gateway Port Access Study highlighted the issues facing the ports and airports in the Western Gateway area. The outcomes of this report will feed into the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan and help inform future work packages.

**International Summary:**

- The Western Gateway STB is in a unique position, with several of England's busiest ports within or close to its area
- Connectivity to international gateways is a key driver for the Western Gateway economy
- The need for mass transit solutions is a priority to address surface access and connectivity challenges
- One of the main policy disjoints exists between the need for transport decarbonisation versus the expansion and development aims of international trade and commerce

**Existing Evidence Base:**

- [Port Access Study](#)

**During this plan period the STB will:**

- Continue to support the Transport and Business Forum
- Support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:
  - Access improvements to Bristol Airport (A38) Major Road Network funded opportunity for online capacity improvements on A38 from Churchill Gate to Bristol Airport
  - Junctions 19 and 21 to support growth in the region by improving access to Bristol's international gateway at the port and Airport attracting further investment and development at J21 Enterprise Area.
  - Connectivity improvements related to the expansion of Aviation Business Park at Bournemouth Airport

**In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Seek collaboration with neighbouring STBs on the commissioning of a Freight Strategy
- Investigate the economic contribution of ports and airports to the Western Gateway region and 'lock-in' these benefits through our four strategic travel corridor plans

- Develop a greater understanding of the potential for maximising access to the leisure market (e.g. cruise, tourism, water sports) in the Western Gateway area, as well as continuing to increase its attractiveness to potential customers both domestic and international
- Collaboratively identify viable sustainable access improvements to Bristol and Bournemouth airports
- Actively support Highways England RIS 2 M4 to Dorset Coast study

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## 10.0 Rail

The Western Gateway's Rail strategy is the first strategic rail document to consider the area as a whole and is integral to this strategic plan. The Strategy identifies a series of conditional outputs which identify a target or goal for the rail network which, if realised, will help deliver one or more of the objectives and priorities developed by the strategy. The conditional outputs are dependent upon interventions required to deliver them being proven to be deliverable, affordable and economically viable.

There is a clear need for change to increase the market share of rail through better regional connectivity to make a tangible difference to residents, businesses and visitors to the Western Gateway and support future growth in the region. Figure 11 illustrates the existing rail network, the key stations, the division between Network Rail routes and the Train Operating Companies that provide passenger services within the Western Gateway area.

**Figure 11 Existing Western Gateway Rail Network**



Through discussions with stakeholders five themes emerged as being the most important. Within the separate Rail Strategy each theme and its associated condition outputs are explained in detail. To aid understanding each theme is summarised here:

**Theme 1 – Choice** – This theme seeks to make rail the mode of choice across the Western Gateway. Although in some parts of the region (e.g. in the Greater Bristol area), rail is competitive with car, for most people, aspects such as infrequency of services, on-train journey times and the need to interchange, push them to choose their cars. Coupled with the association that rail is unreliable and expensive, there is a real need to improve both the reality and the perception of rail travel. A series of standards have been identified including minimum services frequencies for Intercity, Regional, Urban and local routes.

**Theme 2 - Decarbonisation** – This theme acknowledges that rail will be a positive contributor in responding to the Climate Emergency, Net Zero targets and the national

decarbonisation agenda. This theme is important in the Western Gateway because most transport in the area uses combustion engine road vehicles. Successful delivery of this objective will reduce emissions and improve air quality, while also reducing railway operational costs. A series of aspirations have been identified including the aim that 100% of Western Gateway stations to be electrified and/or zero-emissions routes aligning the delivery timing with the Network Rail Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy.

**Theme 3 - Social Mobility** – This theme focusses specifically on addressing the needs of the remote, less connected and/or deprived parts of the Western Gateway, with the priorities set to unlock access to rail in its widest sense – physical, social and financial. The target is to make rail an integral part of connecting those remote and often deprived communities. Successful delivery of this objective will lead to a rebalancing of the regional economy, providing equal opportunities to all Western Gateway residents.

**Theme 4 – Productivity** – Productivity was found to be a key policy consideration and the core message from the Industrial Strategy. Statistics strongly suggest that the Western Gateway area is much less productive in comparison to most regions outside of London and the South East, which is in part driven by poor transport connectivity. Target service speeds have been identified. This should be used to engage with the rail industry and inform the basis of our expectations.

**Theme 5 – Growth** – This theme picks up the importance of the link between housing and industrial growth as identified in Local Plans, and transport policy. It is directly linked to all 4 other themes due to its alignment with land use and planning policy and practice, and aims to provide sustainable travel options for population and employment across the Western Gateway, aligning rail investment, including in new stations and lines, with future growth areas – and influence the selection of those growth areas towards locations which can be served by rail, where appropriate. The rail network must also be resilient to climate change so that economic growth is sustainable.

There are three national strategic freight routes that pass through the Western Gateway area. They play a significant role in connecting ports with domestic intermodal hubs, particularly Bristol and Southampton to the Midlands. If rail meets freight clients' expectations, there is high potential to attract transport of goods by rail. By making sufficient capacity on the rail network available, this will increase the attractiveness of rail to freight customers, thereby enabling a transfer of goods from road to rail. The purpose is to increase choice for freight shippers by making rail a viable alternative for more journeys.

The COVID-19 pandemic is substantially affecting passenger rail traffic, its impact in the short-term perspective is a large decrease in demand. As the lockdown restrictions on workplaces, schools, shops and leisure facilities change this has a direct impact on the number of passenger journeys made. To maintain services and the industry, and ensure transport for key workers, the Government stepped in with financial support for transport operators as fare revenues collapsed and train operators on DfT let franchises have been temporarily suspended and transitioned onto Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs), transferring all revenue and cost risk to the Government. Operators continue to run day-to-day services for a pre-determined management fee, set at a maximum of two per cent of the cost base of the franchise before the pandemic began.

The legacy of the pandemic is likely to change travel behaviours as greater agile working policies are introduced which, in the long-term, could reduce traditional peak journey demands. This change in focus provides the opportunity to transform the rail system and open up new markets as new routines are established which are bolstered by flexibility in response to increased demand from leisure activities. To adjust to these anticipated long-term changes to work patterns, operators will need to collaborate with the STB to offer services which are more clearly customer orientated and fulfil customer expectations. The rail sector will also need to rise to the challenge of delivering simplified ticketing solutions, with greater options for customers to build flexibility into their journeys.

The STB would also like to prioritise working with the Rail Industry on the role of rail in facilitating sustainable growth, meeting legal obligations around carbon emissions and air quality, and tackling social exclusion through more reliable regional connections. It is also essential to improve the quality of station facilities within the Gateway area. Stations need to be accessible for all users and the Western Gateway will support those members with funding applications as part of the Network Rail Access for All Programme which will enable them to provide an obstacle free, accessible route to and between platforms ensuring an improved user experience and quality travel connections.

**Rail Summary:**

- There is a clear need to increase the market share of rail through better regional connectivity
- The legacy of the pandemic is likely to change travel behaviours as greater agile working policies are introduced which in the long-term could reduce traditional peak journey demands. It is important to define the role of the Rail Industry to better facilitate sustainable growth, it is also essential to improve the quality of station facilities within the Gateway area

**Existing Evidence Base:**

- [Rail Strategy](#)

**During this plan period the STB will:**

- Continue to support the Transport and Business Forum
- Establish a regional rail officer group to oversee the delivery of the Rail Strategy
- Appoint a Lead Rail Officer to own the process
- Review the existing governance structure to establish the case for creating a number of rail taskforces
- Fully engage in any consultations relevant to improving rail service standards within the Western Gateway area
- Work with other STBs and stakeholders to improve rail ticketing
- Support delivery of the following Sub-national priorities:
  - Bristol East and West rail junction upgrades
  - MetroWest Phases 1 & 2
  - Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance
  - Improvements at Weymouth, Wareham Poole stations

**In preparing for the Long-term Strategic Transport Plan the STB will:**

- Set out a clear case for change by working with Network Rail through their Continuous Modular Strategic Planning process and ensure the outputs of these studies inform the four strategic travel corridor plans
- Establish a clear set of rail priorities and the role of the STB to support the Business Cases development process

## 11.0 Sub-National Delivery Priorities (2020-25)

The following studies have been identified as priorities to improve the regional evidence base as we move towards producing our long-term Strategic Transport Plan. The commissioning of STB studies identified is dependent on funding being awarded by the Department for Transport:

- Bus and Coach Strategy
- Alternative Fuels Vehicle Strategy
- Understand the potential role of the STB to develop a regional MaaS platform
- Strategic Cycle Strategy
- Strategic corridor plans
- Understand strategic modelling options
- Sustainability Appraisal of long-term Strategic Transport Plan

Figures 12a to 16a provide a high-level summary of the Western Gateway's scheme priorities. Each of the schemes is at a different state of the delivery process and is dependent on a variety of different funding streams.

The need to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal is recognised and this will be undertaken as part of the development process for the long-term Strategic Transport Plan. The aim is for this document to be approved in March 2023. A Sustainability Appraisal would be required during 2022 and its development would conform to best practice in terms of stakeholder engagement. Figures 12b to 16b provide a high-level appraisal of the schemes and studies against the delivery of the long-term delivery priorities. It is fully acknowledged that a more robust appraisal process will be required before the long-term Strategic Transport Plan is adopted. However, the high-level assessment outlined is considered appropriate due to the status of the schemes identified having either funding committed or being in the process of attracting funding through the Business Case development process. As such, each scheme would be subject to a robust sustainability appraisal.

**Figure 12a - Summary of Sub-national Scheme Bus Priorities (2020-25)**

ID	Scheme Name	Brief Description	Current Status	Timescales
1	Bus - Metrobus Cribbs Patchway	Local funded scheme - The scheme will improve the public transport network by providing an alternative, fast and direct bus route between Parkway Station and The Mall at Cribbs Causeway. It will benefit communities in Stoke Gifford, Patchway and the forthcoming Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood on the former Filton Airfield.	Under construction	Delivery 2023/24
2	Bus - Bristol to Bath Strategic Travel Corridor	Local funded scheme - Work has commenced on delivering a bus rapid transit system between Bristol and Bath as the first stage of any longer-term solution, to start in 2023 and be completed by 2028.	Strategic Outline Business Case	Delivery 2023-2028
3	Bus - Improvement packages across Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire	Local funded scheme - The West of England Bus Strategy looks at how improvements to bus services can help us to tackle traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions at a regional level. The Bus Strategy is one of three interlinked programmes which support the delivery of bus services within the region: Bus Strategy; Bus Infrastructure delivery including MetroBus Consolidation and Strategic Park & Ride projects; and Integrated Ticketing. All three projects are progressing in parallel to deliver in Phase 1 corridor improvements on the A37/A4018, A38 (South Gloucestershire Council ), A4174/A432, Bristol City Centre, A37/A367, Yate P&R, Portway P&R, M32 P&R and in Phase 2 improvements to A38 (Bristol City Council ), M32, A420/A431, A4 (Bath & North East Somerset), Portway.	Options Assessment	Delivery 2023-2030
4	Mass Transit – West of England	Work is currently underway planning a Mass Transit Network for the region that envisages four major routes branching out from central Bristol to the north, south and east of the city and to Bath.	Strategic Outline Business Case	Delivery 2025-2034

**Figure 12b - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Bus Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities**

Scheme ID		1	2	3	4
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>					
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks	✓	✓	✓	✓
	High quality strategic transport network	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events				✓
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways				✓
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network				
	Increased strategic travel options	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved digital connectivity				
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel				
	Improved air quality in urban centres	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits				
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities				
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options		✓		✓

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

**Figure 13a - Summary of Sub-national Scheme Cycle Priorities (2020-25)**

ID	Scheme Name	Brief Description	Current Status	Timescales
5	Cycle - Cheltenham to Gloucester strategic cycle route	<p>Highways England and Local funded scheme - The B4063 Gloucester to Cheltenham Cycle Improvements Scheme began as a Highways England-led scheme with the strategic aim to link the major conurbations of Gloucester and Cheltenham. The route follows the B4063 corridor in preference to the A40 corridor managed by Highways England, which is a high-speed route not appropriate for cyclists. Approximately 10km (6 miles), the proposed scheme runs between Arle Court roundabout to the west of Cheltenham to London Road (junction Black Dog way) Gloucester via Staverton, Churchdown and Longlevens.</p>	Final design stage	Delivery 2021/22
6	Cycle - Improvement packages across Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire	<p>Local funded scheme - WECA is currently establishing a five-year infrastructure delivery plan which will incorporate Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan schemes alongside other transport infrastructure schemes.</p> <p>The delivery of bus infrastructure through the West of England Bus Strategy is providing opportunities to fund and co-deliver walking and cycling improvements, improving sustainable transport options to help us meet the ambitious targets set out in the JLTP4.</p> <p>The West of England's two city centres (Bath and Bristol) have received significant investment to upgrade pedestrian infrastructure via the Emergency Active Travel fund, and strategies are being developed to continue this delivery as part of this work.</p>	Scheme development	Delivery 2021- 2023

**Figure 13b - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Cycle Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities**

Scheme ID		5	6
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>			
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks	✓	✓
	High quality strategic transport network	✓	✓
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity	✓	✓
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events	✓	✓
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways	✓	✓
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements		
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network	✓	✓
	Increased strategic travel options	✓	✓
	Improved digital connectivity		
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel		
	Improved air quality in urban centres		
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits	✓	✓
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities		
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations	✓	✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide	✓	✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options		

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

**Figure 14a - Summary of Sub-national Scheme Digital Priorities (2020-25)**

ID	Scheme Name	Brief Description	Current Status	Timescales
7	Digital -Urban realm improvements for Lansdowne Business District.	Combined package of urban realm, deployment of council operated 5G digital connectivity, public transport and sustainable transport investment to support growth opportunity.	Under construction	Delivery 2020/21
8	Digital - Heart of Poole regeneration scheme	BCP Council's largest town centre housing regeneration opportunity Holes Bay; circa 850 new homes generating £200m GDV and estimated £56m of temporary GVA impact during construction period. This is supported by a £21.8m programme funded by Dorset LEP aimed at improving strategic access to the Port of Poole, this includes the recently delivered £13m Townside Access programme. The regeneration of Poole's historic town centre and regeneration sites are further supported by the Transforming Cities Fund programme, improving strategic connectivity to the town centre, a £25m Future High Streets Fund bid seeking in part to improve connectivity to public transport hubs and a £1.5m Heritage Action Zone project.	Under construction	Delivery 2020 -2027
9	Digital - Future Transport Zones	West of England Combined Authority's Future Transport Zone (FTZ) aims to improve access to public transport by local communities through trialling innovative new transport technologies. A Future Transport Living Lab will work with local communities, stakeholders and innovators to co-design, trial, demonstrate and find solutions to overcome mobility challenges make better use of our transport network and support our air quality and climate change initiatives. We aim to do this by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building a data hub and mobility stations to improve physical and digital connectivity;</li> <li>2. Developing a Mobility as a Service Platform and trialling the use of mobility credits for improving access to employment; and</li> <li>3. Trialling new mobility services, including dynamic demand responsive travel and supporting the use of more sustainable travel solutions.</li> </ol>	Scheme development	Delivery 2023/24

**Figure 14a - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Digital Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities**

Scheme ID		7	8	9
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>				
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks			✓
	High quality strategic transport network			✓
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity			✓
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events			
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways			
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements			✓
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network			✓
	Increased strategic travel options			✓
	Improved digital connectivity	✓	✓	✓
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel			✓
	Improved air quality in urban centres		✓	✓
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits			
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities			
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓	✓
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations			✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide	✓	✓	✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options	✓	✓	✓

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

**Figure 15a - Summary of Sub-national Scheme Road Priorities (2020-25)**

ID	Scheme Name	Brief Description	Current Status	Timescales
10	Road - West of England area-wide electric charging network	Local Authority funded scheme - As part of creating a better environment, all the West of England's local authorities are committed to encouraging the widespread use of electric cars, vans and bikes. Go Ultra Low West is a £7m project that aims to accelerate the purchase of electric vehicles across Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset. The West of England contains approximately 150 public use charge points, and this is growing, thanks to the Go Ultra Low West project which will be installing over 120 new charge point connections by March 2021. This Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4) major scheme will deliver a regional electric charging network. Go Ultra Low West is the starting point for this and the JLTP4 will continue to support ongoing work, as appropriate, in the development of zero and low emission vehicles, including the necessary infrastructure. Supporting this West of England Combined Authority's Climate Emergency Action Plan aims to decarbonise the transport system and commits to working with partners to develop an approach to identify and address the infrastructure needs and barriers to the uptake of ULEVs.	Under construction	Delivery 2019- 2030
11	Road - M5 J19 improvements	RIS Scheme - To alleviate congestion at J19 of the M5, Highways England is reconfiguring the lanes within the exit-slip and roundabout to allow traffic to flow more freely.	Under construction	Delivery 2020/21
12	Road - A303 Stonehenge - Amesbury to Berwick Down	RIS Scheme - The A303/A358 corridor is a vital connection between the South West and the South East. While much of the road is now dual carriageway, there are still over 35 miles of single carriageway road. Improving the A303 past Stonehenge is just one of eight schemes planned along the corridor, announced by the Government in 2014. Highways England are committed to delivering a high quality, high performing dual carriageway along the A303/A358 corridor between the south west and south east.	Planning	Delivery 2021- 2024
13	Road - M5 J10 junction improvements	Housing Infrastructure Funded scheme - M5 Junction 10 currently only has limited on and off movements because the slip	Options Assessment	Delivery 2021- 2024

		roads only face to the north. This puts increasing pressure on already congested local roads and particularly on Junction 11, which provides access to and from Cheltenham on the eastbound A40. After successfully being awarded funding for the scheme from Homes England's (HIF, the county council the scheme includes south facing slips and improvements to the local road network		
14	Road - M5 J21 improvements	Growth & Housing Fund and local contribution from development - The improvement scheme will make the northbound on-slip wider to enable more cars to merge onto the motorway. The scheme will change the existing single traffic lane into twin lanes for the entire length of the slip road. This will increase vehicular capacity onto the M5 and help to reduce congestion on the approaches to the motorway in nearby St Georges and Worle.	Planning	Delivery 2022/23
15	Road - A4174 corridor improvements	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - A4174 Ring road capacity improvements - junction improvements at Wraxall Road, Lyde Green and Kingsfield Roundabouts. The scheme will also facilitate localised traffic growth associated with a potential new motorway junction at M4 Junction 18a	Outline Business Case	Delivery 2022/23
16	Road - A38 corridor improvements	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - Package of improvements including: safety, road widening, and junction improvements. The scheme supports Airport connectivity and housing delivery	Preparing Outline Business Case	Delivery 2022- 2024
17	Road - A303 Sparkford to Ilchester).	RIS Scheme - The dualling of a three-mile single carriageway section between Sparkford and Ilchester. On an average day the road carries 23,500 vehicles, but numbers increase significantly in the summer, particularly at weekends making journeys unreliable and unpredictable. This scheme will reduce congestion, improve journey times and make our network safer for customers. The new dualled section will start east of Podimore Roundabout and will follow the alignment of the existing A303 to Downhead. Travelling eastwards, it then moves north of the existing A303 single carriageway, allowing the existing road to be kept for use as a local road in this section.	Planning	Delivery 2023-24 +
18	Road - A350 Yarnbrook/West Ashton Relief Road	Partial Housing Infrastructure Fund (TBC) - Construction of 2.5km of new carriageway, between a new roundabout on the A363 east of the railway line at Yarnbrook to a point connecting with the existing alignment of the A350, circa.	Planning	Delivery 2023-24 +

		800m east of West Ashton Crossroads. The scheme will include 2 further roundabouts along its length, providing access to West Ashton and the Ashton Park Housing development.		
19	Road - A350 Chippenham Bypass	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - The scheme entails: Phase 4 dualling: widening the A350 to dual 2-lane between Chequers roundabout and Lackham roundabout extending the dualling completed during Phase 3 of the A350 improvement programme; Phase 5 dualling: widening the A350 to dual 2-lane along full stretch between Cepen Park South roundabout and Bumpers Farm roundabout, connecting the dualling completed during phases 2 and 3 of the A350 improvement programme. If implemented with Phase 4 this would extend the dualling to cover the full stretch of the A350 Chippenham Bypass; Bumpers Farm roundabout capacity enhancements: increasing the circulatory from 2 lanes to 3; signalling all approach arms; increasing approach arms from A350 (S), A420 (W), A350 (N) and A420 (E) to 3 lanes; and dualling the exits onto the A420 (E) and A420 (W); and Lackham roundabout capacity enhancements: dualling of all approach arms and dualling exits to the A350 north and south.	Preparing Outline Business Case	Delivery 2023-24 +
20	Road - A4174 corridor improvements – MOD Roundabout	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - A4174 MOD Roundabout improvements - Major Junction improvement, to increase capacity and improve traffic flow and safety for all road users	Pre-Strategic Outline Business case	Delivery 2023-24 +
21	Road - M4 J17 junction improvements	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - The scheme entails upgrading the eastbound M4 on and off slips and westbound off slip, full signalisation of the circulatory and delivering 3 narrow lanes across the over-bridges. The scheme builds upon a previous scheme to signalise the northern elements of the circulatory which was undertaken in 2018. The scheme is required to accommodate planned growth and anticipated development coming forward through the Local Plan Review.	Preparing Outline Business Case	Delivery 2024-25 +
22	Road - A338 Southern Salisbury Improvements	MRN prioritised scheme seeking funding - The scheme package includes enhancements to Harnham Gyratory, Exeter Street Roundabout and Park Wall junction. The scheme is an essential component of the Salisbury Transport	Outline Business Case	Delivery 2024-25 +

		Strategy (STS) that was adopted as part of the Wiltshire Core Strategy to mitigate planned growth. The scheme accords with the principles of MRN funding through achieving higher capacity and journey time reliability upon the approach to the SRN at the A36 Churchill Way South.		
23	Road - Wessex Fields	Package of improvements to unlock key development site located close to Bournemouth Royal Hospital, reduce congestion on A3060 Castle Lane, A338, provide for sustainable transport improvements and improved access for cluster of key employment sites.	Scheme development	Delivery 2024-25 +
24	Road - A417 Missing Link	RIS Scheme - The A417/A419 provides an important route between Gloucester and Swindon that helps connect the Midlands/North to the South of England. It's an alternative to the M5/M4 route via Bristol. This landscape-led highways scheme that will deliver a safe and resilient free-flowing road while conserving and enhancing the special character of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Highways England's scheme will improve the connection between two dual carriageway sections of the A417. The Missing Link itself is a three-mile stretch of single-lane carriageway on the A417 between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout in Gloucestershire. The Development Consent Order application is anticipated the first half of 2021	Options Assessment	Delivery TBC – before 2025
25	Road - A31 widening (Ringwood)	RIS Scheme - The A31 is an important route between Bournemouth and the Southern Coast. It experiences delays at peak times. This is caused by a high volume of traffic and by the number of junctions that are close together. The route also experiences heavy seasonal congestion during the summer months, particularly during the August Bank Holiday weekend.	Design Stage	Delivery TBC – before 2025
26	Road - M5 J9 and A46	Large Local Major prioritised scheme seeking funding - The Scheme to resolve a critical pinch-point on a route linking the M5 with the M40 and M1. Once completed the corridor will provide an alternative for strategic vehicle movements using the heavily congested Birmingham Box (M40 / M42), as well as improved accessibility to the Trans Midlands Trade Corridor from the Western Gateway area. The route is also identified as a priority corridor by Midlands Connect STB and is	Preparing Outline Business Case	Delivery 2024-25 +

		essential to the delivery of the recently announced Garden Town at Ashchurch (>10,000 dwellings by 2041).		
27	Road - A350 Melksham Bypass	Large Local Major prioritised scheme seeking funding -Scheme is developing through Options Appraisal for the Outline Business Case. The options being appraised include bypass schemes to both the east and west of the town and enhancements to the existing A350 corridor. The SOBC concluded with a preference for an eastern bypass and this is being tested through public consultation and technical assessment. The scheme aims to resolve a critical pinch-point on a route prioritised by the Western Gateway STB to improve north / south connectivity and complements some of our MRN priorities. This scheme forms part of a package of measures to initially improve access within the northern section of the route. Improvements to this corridor will fundamentally improve access and enable significant opportunities for growth throughout the Gateway area.	Preparing Outline Business Case	Construction starting planned 2027/28

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**Figure 15b - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Road Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities**

Scheme ID		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>										
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	High quality strategic transport network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways		✓				✓		✓	
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements	✓						✓		
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network	✓								
	Increased strategic travel options	✓					✓			
	Improved digital connectivity									
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel									
	Improved air quality in urban centres	✓								
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits	✓		✓						
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities	✓						✓		✓
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide									✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options									

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

**Figure 15b - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Road Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities (continued)**

Scheme ID		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>										
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	High quality strategic transport network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways									
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements		✓		✓					
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network									
	Increased strategic travel options		✓			✓				
	Improved digital connectivity									
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel									
	Improved air quality in urban centres	✓			✓				✓	✓
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits					✓				
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities		✓				✓			
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide				✓				✓	✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options									

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

**Figure 16a - Summary of Sub-national Scheme Rail Priorities (2020-25)**

ID	Scheme Name	Brief Description	Current Status	Timescales
28	Rail - Bristol East Remodelling	Network rail funded scheme - Bristol East Junction Remodelling: remodelling of the junction outside Bristol Temple Meads (BTM) Railway station to provide increased flexibility in getting trains in and out of BTM and enabling an increase in capacity. Replacing the old track will provide greater reliability. Programmed to commission in September 2021 following the disruptive possession work in the summer.	Scheme development	Delivery 2023-24
29	Rail - Bristol West Junction Renewal: (Network Rail)	Network Rail funded scheme - Bristol West Renewal: like for like replacement of track and signalling on the approaches to Bristol Temple Meads from Parson Street. It will improve the reliability and resilience of the network.	Scheme development	Delivery 2023-24
30	Rail - Bristol Temple Meads Eastern Entrance	Network Rail funded scheme To increase the capacity of the existing station and provide a new pedestrian access to the east of the station, on to the old Post Office Site which the University of Bristol are currently developing as a new campus. The new entrance will extend the existing subway with a new eastern entrance and ticket hall. The layout and design of the eastern entrance is still in development; however, it is currently envisaged that it will comprise a new glazed ticket hall located externally to the east of the new subway entrance.	Scheme development	Delivery 2023-24
31	Rail - MetroWest Phase 1	Large Local Major funded scheme - MetroWest Phase 1a & 1b Portishead Line and Severn Beach to Westbury – Reopen the Portishead line with new stations at Portishead and Pill, hourly services on the Severn Beach line with half hourly services to Avonmouth, and improved services to Westbury via Bath.	Planning	Delivery 2021-2024
32	Rail - MetroWest Phase 2	Local Authority funded scheme - MetroWest Phase 2 - Half hourly train services to Yate with an anticipated extension to Gloucester and hourly services on a re-opened Henbury Line with new stations at Henbury, North Filton and Ashley Down.	Scheme development	2023
33	Rail - Improvements at Weymouth, Wareham Poole stations	Network Rail funded scheme subject to the outcomes of Network Rail's Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (CMSP) process - Weymouth Throat and the level crossings at Poole and	Options Assessment	Delivery 2025+

		Wareham are barriers to increased service frequency. Constraints caused by Poole and Wareham level crossings require to be resolved to deliver a 'Dorset metro' service from Wareham to Brockenhurst.		
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**Figure 16b - Summary of how the Sub-national Scheme Bus Priorities will support delivery of the delivery priorities**

Scheme ID		28	29	30	31	32	33
<b>Long-term Delivery Priorities</b>							
<b>Economic</b>	Increased productivity by managing the impact of peak loads on strategic transport networks	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	High quality strategic transport network	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Improved inter & intra regional connectivity	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Safe and resilience strategic transport network during extreme weather events						
	Improved surface access connectivity to international gateways						✓
	Reduced unsustainable patterns of strategic transport movements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Environmental</b>	Carbon free strategic transport network						
	Increased strategic travel options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Improved digital connectivity						
	Reduced demand for longer-distance commuter travel						
	Improved air quality in urban centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Maximise the use of strategic corridors for wider co-benefits						
	Maximised opportunity for the development of renewable energy opportunities						
<b>Social</b>	Growth is appropriately paced, coordinated and mitigated	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Safe strategic travel networks that fulfil customer expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Quality places that maintain social cohesion through opportunities they provide	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Digitally connected region enabling future mobility options						

**A map will be included in the final document to aid further understanding of the schemes**

## 12.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Success of the Western Gateway STP will be measured through the continual monitoring and evaluation of schemes and programmes, to ensure the schemes are delivering against the overall strategic objectives. In order to do this, we are measuring performance through a series of performance indicators.

The overall approach to Monitoring is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Reporting requirements will follow DfT reporting requirements as well as being locally influenced and support delivery of local strategies
- Schemes and programmes will follow DfT and Western Gateway STB reporting guidance from inception into closure
- Monitoring and evaluation post-delivery will be the accountability of the individual members
- Data is collected once and used many times
- Baseline information is consistent across key initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation is a core part of all activities
- Lessons learned are used to inform future policy development

Our approach is structured around three levels which are illustrated in Figure 14, with details of each level set out in the following sections.

**Figure 14** - Overall approach to Monitoring & Evaluation



The governance structure for the Western Gateway STB is as follows:

- **Western Gateway STB Board** – this is the decision-making body of the STB.
- **Western Gateway STB Senior Officer Group** – this will comprise senior officers from the Constituent Authorities. It will provide expertise and recommendations to the Board and will oversee delivery of the programme.
- **Western Gateway STB Stakeholder Group** (Transport and Business Forum)– this will be an advisory body to the Senior Officer Group and shadow Board, comprising a wider group of representatives including but not limited to; the CBI, LEPs, Universities, public transport operators and port authorities, as well as Government and National Agency
- **Western Gateway STB Programme Management Group** - will comprise officers from the Constituent Authorities. This will be kept under review and may vary according to the work programme and funding available.

The officer groups will maintain an overview of the activities taken forward as part of the Board and ensure that the work programme adopted by the Board is delivered and appropriate decisions taken by the member authorities.

The Board may establish task and finish groups where this is appropriate in order to address specific issues: sub-groups may be either time-limited in their duration or standing sub-groups where the issue is on-going.

Western Gateway STB operating framework sets out our overarching goal, to be a driving force for clean and inclusive economic growth. It identifies key priorities for infrastructure, skills and business and aligns with the themes of the partnerships Constitution.

Western Gateway STB business plan sets out the key activities that the STB will deliver each year and is formally approved by the board. Whilst essentially a one-year plan, the business plan includes reference to activity that STB is committed to in the coming years.

Quarterly reports on progress in delivering the business plan are taken to the Board and will be reported to DfT for DfT funded projects.

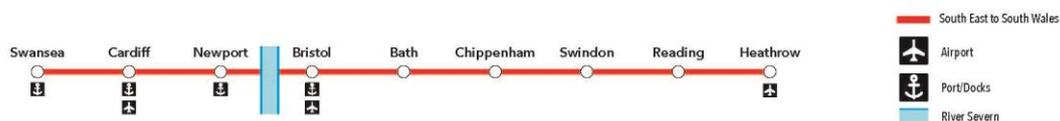
For further information on the Western Gateway STB and the Strategic Transport Plan please visit <https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/>

## Appendix A – Outline of Strategic Corridors

### The Western Innovation Corridor (South East to South Wales)

The Western Innovation Corridor links London and the South East to South Wales. It is home to world leading public and private sector research, science and technology institutes and attracts a range of industry leading businesses. The corridor also facilitates connectivity between the Western Gateway and other key locations for research, academia and innovation such as Oxford, Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and Basingstoke. The strength of the corridor's economy creates a significant travel demand.

The removal of the Severn Bridge tolls has changed the economic dynamic of this corridor with increased economic activity now taking place between the West of England and South Wales. Ambitious plans are now in place via the Western Gateway Powerhouse to strengthen these economic links further.



The Government is committed to rebalancing the UK economy. The completion of the Great Western Mainline electrification and the delivery of improved city region connectivity through initiatives such as metrobus in Bristol and the South Wales Metro will help productivity and economic performance. This strategic corridor has a key role to play in supporting further devolution of funding and decision making and help the South West achieve its economic potential.

International connectivity remains essential for developing future trading relationships, increasing exports and supporting growth industries located in the corridor such as advanced engineering, high-value manufacturing, aerospace, renewables, financial and professional services, digital information and communications technology. A major function of this corridor is providing access to Heathrow Airport and the international markets which can be accessed directly.

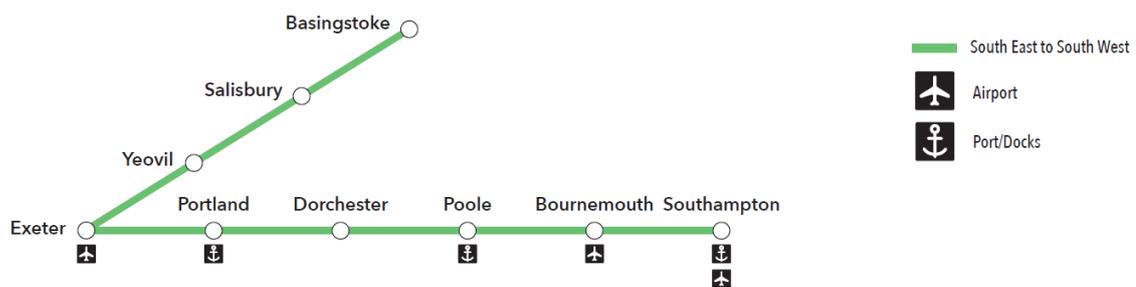
As the UK develops new global trading relationships, Bristol Port is well-placed to support UK exports to new global markets, particularly those outside of the EU and in America. Bristol has consent to construct a deep-sea container terminal on the foreshore of the Avonmouth Docks which will further enhance Bristol Port's role as a crucial international gateway in a post-Brexit trading economy.

## The Southern Growth Corridor South East to South West

The Southern Growth corridor provides two important functions; it provides inter-connectivity for coastal communities and ports while also being a key tourist route, linking holidaymakers from the South East to the South Coast, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Network resilience is a key issue with seasonal travel peaks often causing widespread congestion on strategic routes which negatively impacts upon productivity.

One of the major challenges of this corridor is managing the variability in travel demand throughout the year. Average measures of flow and congestion often do not accurately capture the extent of the disruption in the summer months. Highways England report that traffic levels on the A31 approaching Bournemouth in the summer peak rise by up to 20%.

The unique aspect of this route is its proximity to several AONBs which are a major asset of the Western Gateway area. Access to the natural environment is key for quality of life and creates additional, high-quality tourism opportunities in the area. However, the environmental designations also limit the type of schemes which are viable.



The economic potential of the southern region of the Western Gateway area is marked by its current productivity gap. Rural productivity in the South West is currently 8% lower than in urban areas. In economic productivity Dorset contributes £2.5bn below the national average. However, investing in the connectivity of this corridor would begin to reduce the gap by bringing people closer to jobs and improving access of rural businesses to urban centres and population hubs.

## The Western Growth Corridor - Midlands to South West

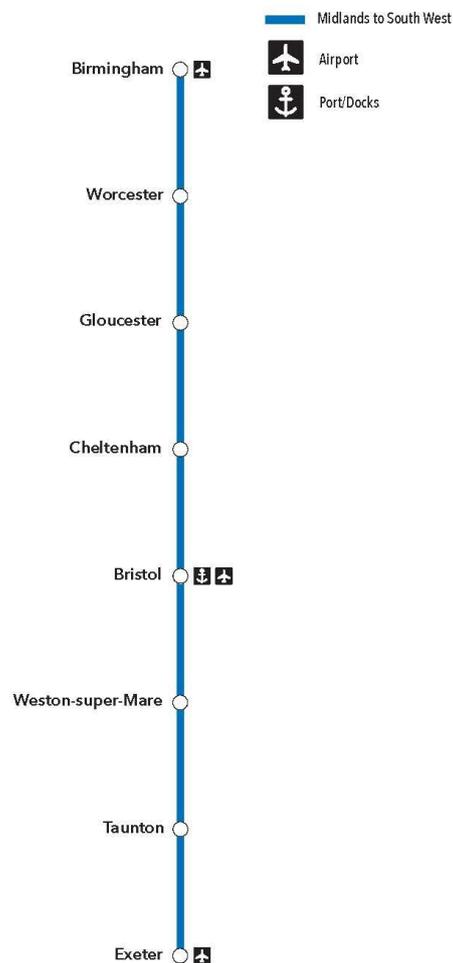
The Western Growth Corridor is a nationally significant economic corridor connecting the economies of the Great South West, Western Gateway and Midlands Engine. This corridor supports access to national and international markets and helps drive growth and economic performance for the country as a whole.

This employment and trade corridor brings together businesses in the Midlands and the South West from similar industry clusters. The Midlands and the South West are centres of worldwide expertise in aerospace, advanced manufacturing and professional services, and connecting businesses in these areas could provide significant agglomeration benefits and knowledge-sharing, as well as increasing the size of the pool of employees for businesses in the west of the UK

The M5 is also the UK's 'holiday motorway' and acts as a funnel for traffic from the Midlands and the North to the Western Gateway and Peninsula, giving it economic significance for the tourism industry.

A consequence of the role played by the M5 and reliance on the car for private and business travel is that regional rail offering along this corridor is poor. Long-distance strategic rail connectivity between major urban areas is good, but this offer is at the expense of shorter regional trips. Limited alternatives to the car will continue to result in the majority of people living along the corridor being reliant on the car for shorter distance regional trips. As new growth is delivered, this will result in an increased use of the M5 and a significant reduction in its ability to fulfil local growth ambitions. Without modal shift, the corridor will also fail to support the overriding need to decarbonise the transport network and increase conflicts between private and freight trips.

The future economic success of this corridor is intrinsically linked to the growth that has been planned in the area. Managing future demand particularly with regards to increased operational resilience, future capacity and the management of seasonal traffic will play a pivotal role in the economic growth potential of the corridor and the wider area going forward.

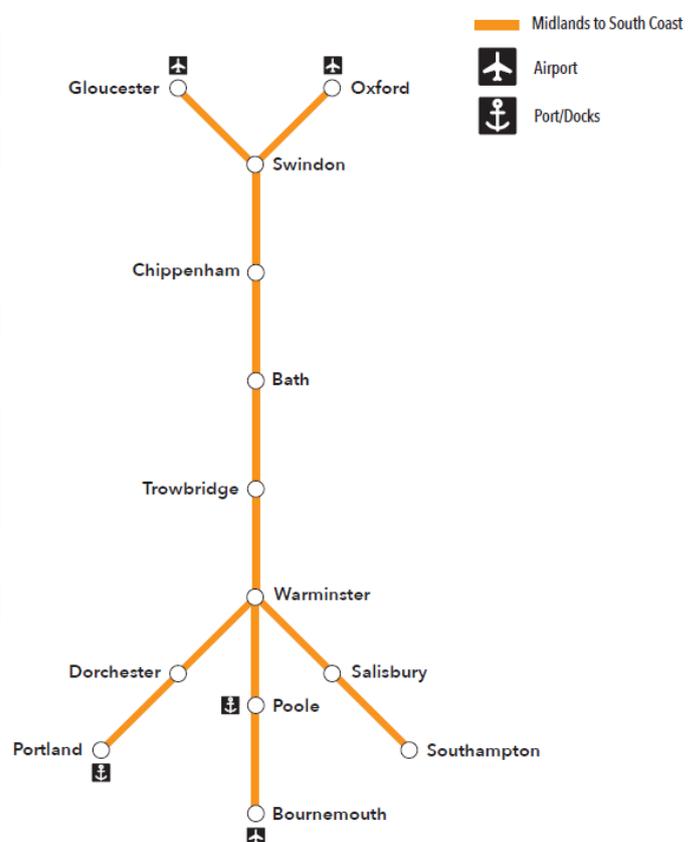


## The Missing Link Strategic Corridor Midlands to South Coast

This corridor is viewed as the missing strategic link within the Western Gateway area and links the South Coast to the M4 and onto the Midlands. It has the potential to drive change in the Dorset and Wiltshire economies and benefit the whole of the Western Gateway region through better access to its coastal international gateways and providing additional strategic resilience during seasonal peaks in demand.

Strategic connectivity improvements for this corridor have the potential to realise both local growth ambitions and forge significant agglomeration benefits by removing barriers to increased north and south connectivity in the Western Gateway area.

This corridor is currently characterised by a blend of economic zones driving local economies without any clear corridor relationship. The potential for greater agglomeration is evident through the balance of industry sectors currently located to the north and south of the Western Gateway Area including concentrations of employment in financial services and business, and professional services in Bournemouth, Bristol and Swindon. Likewise, the commitment from all the LEPs in the Western Gateway to build on their strengths of advanced manufacturing, innovation and technology means there is latent potential to improve business interaction along this corridor.



The economic potential from improvements to journey times on the A36 and A350 has been estimated in the South of England North-South Connectivity (2019) report as leading to £20.5bn agglomeration impacts over 60 years. The establishment of the A350 as part of the Major Route Network between the M4 and A36 should help to promote the delivery of this further.

However, to fulfil its economic potential it is essential to develop a strategic programme of interventions which balance investment in highway infrastructure with a longer-term ambition to improve connectivity by rail.

## Document Control

- Purpose of this section is to outline key changes made to the document to ensure version/change control is managed effectively.
- Detailed clarifications and requested for amendments will be used to keep track of granular amendments and circulated which each major version change.
- It is also to outline who needs to review/consult or be informed of this document.
- Also, who is required to approve the finalised copy before it is presented to the WG STB Board.

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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### VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Change	Change Description
V0.1	01/04/2020	Ben Watts	Original Version	n/a first draft for TOG peer review
V0.2	16/04/2020	Ben Watts	TOG comments	Updated to reflect comments received by Transport Officers
V0.3	14/05/2020	Ben Watts	SOG comments	Updated to reflect comments received by Senior Officer Group
V0.3.1	26/05/2020	Ben Watts	South Glos update	Minor updates requested by South Glos Council
V0.3.2	02/06/2020	Ben Watts	Cycling update	Minor changes to increase prominence of cycling within the strategic transport context
V0.4	16/11/2020	Ben Watts & Helen Holm	Complete restructure	Updated following engagement feedback from stakeholders
V0.5	04/12/2020	Ben Watts & Helen Holm	SOG feedback	Updated following engagement feedback from SOG + Members
	08/12/2020	Ben Watts & Helen Holm	Final Draft	Updated following final comments from officers

### DOCUMENT SIGN OFF

Name	Department/Role	Sign-off	Date
Ben Watts	Western Gateway – Programme Management Team	BW	09/12/2020