



# West of England

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council



North  
Somerset  
COUNCIL

South Gloucestershire  
Council

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Dear John

## West of England Major Schemes – Best and Final Bid (BAFB) Submission

We are delighted with the opportunity presented by the decision in February 2011 to include the five West of England major schemes – Bath Package, Ashton Vale to Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit, Weston Package, South Bristol Link and North Fringe to Hengrove Package – in the Department's Development Pool. However we recognise this is a competitive process and since the announcement the authorities have been undertaking a range of actions to seek to strengthen the delivery case for the schemes. These include:

- Refining the descopeing and cost reductions proposed in the December 2010 expressions of interest;
- Producing a joint procurement strategy to maximise opportunities for cost savings, efficiency benefits and joint risk management;
- Engaging with key stakeholders and communities;
- Developing a joint financial strategy to meet the authorities local funding contribution;
- Meeting the Department's needs for supporting technical information, including updating the value for money case.

These activities are outlined in further detail in the Strategic Business Case which supports the BAFB submissions.

### *Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)*

Since the award of LEP status the authorities have been working with the business community to develop the new Partnership's plans to drive sustainable economic growth and prosperity. The West of England LEP Board moved from interim to permanent status in April 2011, and they fully support the major schemes programme. The LEP have led the engagement with the business community to ensure that the key aspects of the schemes and the wider transport programme benefit from the experience and expectations of business. We have received over 125 letters of support from a wide range organisations across the area, primarily from individual businesses or business organisations. These are included with our submission.

The LEP Board have written under separate cover as part of this submission. In addition, recognising the importance of transport, the LEP Board includes a nominated transport lead.

### *Stakeholder Engagement*

We recognise the key role that stakeholder support can bring to the delivery of the major schemes. The major schemes have been developed through wide ranging consultation and engagement coordinated under the overarching Travel+ branding. Notwithstanding this we have listened to the Department's advice and renewed our efforts where needed, particularly to secure more explicit support from business and to meet again those whom have previously raised concerns. The Strategic Business Case provides details of targeted engagement undertaken in recent months, supported by a 'family' of Travel+ information leaflets, to update stakeholders and communities on the schemes and their interrelationship.

### *Procurement and Delivery*

The individual schemes originally developed their own procurement and delivery strategies. However, the closer alignment of the implementation profile of the schemes as a result of the Department's review heightened the need to consider the benefits which could arise from joint approaches. Therefore a Programme Delivery Board (PDB) has been created which is examining opportunities for cost reduction, efficiency benefits and joint risk management.

This Board was established in April 2011 and oversees the procurement and delivery of the programme, with a particular focus on the three Rapid Transit based schemes, reporting to the Joint Transport Executive Committee. A key task for the PDB has been to oversee a refresh of the procurement strategies of the individual schemes to consider where a joint approach will deliver efficiencies. This Joint Procurement Strategy forms part of the BAFB submission and key aspects are summarised in the Strategic Business Case. Further collaborative work will take place as the procurement processes themselves commence next year.

### *Financial Strategy*

The West of England authorities are committed to bringing these schemes forward and to meeting the local funding share. The cost reductions through descoping and value engineering identified in the December 2010 Expression of Interest have been honoured, and where possible further modest savings have been achieved. A joint financial strategy has been produced to fund the local contribution which has been developed and agreed by the authority Chief Finance Officers. This draws upon a range of funding sources to provide an affordable and deliverable approach. Again this is summarised in the Strategic Business Case.

I trust these activities help to illustrate the strength of commitment to the delivery of the major schemes programme as shown on the attached graphic.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Davies  
Head of Joint Transport Team