

Great Western Rail Franchise Consultation closing 21 February 2018

Overview

TransWilts CRP route Swindon to Westbury provides north-south connectivity in Wiltshire, which is crossed by three east-west lines GWR Paddington – Bristol, GWR Berks & Hants Paddington –South West and SWR Waterloo to Exeter. Interchange stations at Swindon, Chippenham, Westbury and Salisbury provide connectivity. The proposal (Table 1 and 2) is for an extended TransWilts line connecting with the Three Rivers CRP provides access to the Solent and the south coast with Channel ferries and Southampton Airport. This north-south corridor links the major economic centres in Wiltshire and the SWLEP economic growth zones defined as M4 Swindon and north Wiltshire, A350 and west Wiltshire market towns and south Wiltshire Salisbury below Salisbury Plain. The rail route links communities providing access to the major hospitals and services in Bath, Swindon and Salisbury. There are no universities in Wiltshire and higher education centres are located in Swindon, Bath, Bristol, Oxford, Southampton and Salisbury. Bath University have a campus at Corsham.

The A36 is a major congestion point in Salisbury with rising levels of pollution, 30% of the road traffic is through traffic from Southampton. Salisbury Strategic Regeneration Partnership are considering future rail P&R rail as part of the solution (Table 3).

The Cardiff- Portsmouth service provides an important “Cross County” service from Bristol through Westbury and Salisbury interchanges to the south coast.

The Swindon and Wiltshire LEP has a strategic plan, which focuses on transportation links as an economic challenge. www.swlep.co.uk/strategieconomicplan.pdf. Relevant quotes are:

“Our strategic location and connectivity is both a strength and a weakness. It is no coincidence that the peaks in our historic economic growth coincided with the arrival of the Great Western Railway in 19th century and the M4 five decades ago.” “ The western economic corridor not only joins the area together as a key route running north to south across Wiltshire, but facilitates access to the Midlands and beyond to the north and south to the coast with its various ports and airports and Europe beyond” Or focus here is on delivering....transport infrastructure developments along the A350 including rail improvements to support future economic growth, maximising the agglomeration effect of settlements along the A350” “The southern corridor extends along the A303 and the west of England rail line which offer second arterial routes to London and the far South West connecting Salisbury with the southern Home Counties, Gatwick and Heathrow airports..”

“None of the main north-south road connections in the wider sub region are fit for purpose and the increasing unreliability of these routes is significantly constraining business and development growth. In addition, improved rail connections are being compromised by a lack of key infrastructure. Further train service enhancements are hampered by the single track line through Melksham” “Salisbury station has growing capacity and interchange

issues, and improvements are needed at Chippenham and Westbury to help facilitate service enhancements and support their important hub roles.”

“Strategic Objectives [2]. Transport infrastructure improvements - we need a well connected, reliable and resilient transport system to support economic and planned development growth at key locations” “Priority actions[bullet 4] Deliver rail capacity and connectivity improvements to support economic growth and help realise improved travel opportunities”

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1:

Background

See paragraph 2.4 of the consultation document which lists the core objectives of the Great Western franchise in the 2020s:

a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with these objectives, and why?

- Agree with the objectives
- Agree with the majority
- Disagree with the majority
- Wholly disagree

ANSWER: – Agree with the majority, but there is an important missing priority.

These objectives are difficult to disagree with, but do not include sufficient emphasis on the need for connectivity between franchises and between routes. Connectivity is a function of train frequency and on reasonable timetabled connections. The Transport Focus passenger surveys for the Great Western Railway seem primarily centred around the direct commuter routes with some 75-85% of the 1,502 responses relevant to these routes representing only 14% of the franchise revenue applicable to season ticket passengers. Only 2% of the responses related to the TransWilts north-south route, which relies on timetable connectivity at Chippenham, Westbury, Salisbury and Southampton. In consequence the passenger views do not sufficiently represent those passengers relying on connections to make their overall journey on time. The late arrival criteria of 1 minute in the survey reflects this over emphasis on London commuter perceptions using direct frequent trains of any delay impact. Our north-south passengers rely on two trains connecting at Westbury, both being on time to make a connection and often with large connection waiting time. We suggest a target time of 10-15 minutes for connections would make a reasonable journey time with a contingency for small delays. Missed connections or cancelled trains can add up to an hour onto a one and a half hour journey, with in some cases a need for a further third connection. For example Westbury to Chippenham, using a train via Bath instead of via Melksham.

b) Are there any priorities you would change or add, and if so why?

ANSWER- We consider that there should be more emphasis on whole journey times and the introduction of target connection times at key interchanges to preserve target whole

journey times. The operator should have a penalty regime that encourages making interchange connections, for example where small delay of 5 – 10 minutes on a departing train would be acceptable to preserve a key connection when the arriving train is slightly late. Often the cancellation of a linking train destroys the only reasonable connection option with a substantial delay in hours rather than minutes. The penalty regime could reflect broken connections as substantial delay in the overall journey time with a passenger reimbursement. Where the connection relies on other operators, for example Cross Country services, the franchise specifications need to include obligations to consult and protect key interchange connections. Last train home connections are particularly important in rural station locations.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2: There is a proposal, if sufficient evidence supports it, to split the Great Western franchise into two: (a) Devon and Cornwall including inter-city services from London (Paddington) to those counties, possibly also with local services around Bristol and (b) the remainder including Inter City services London to Bristol, Cheltenham, Worcester and South Wales as well as branch lines in the Thames Valley and other local services. A map in the consultation document illustrates the option for this two-way (franchising) split.

a) Do you agree or disagree with the proposals outlined above for splitting the Great Western franchise into smaller franchises?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion

ANSWER – Disagree

b) Why?

ANSWER: Splitting the franchise will involve a lot of reorganisation and loss of focus just when the franchise is settling down. We remember the era of privatisation when too much time was spent on discussing the industry structure and the consequent navel gazing instead of focusing on business delivery.

Coordinating services between franchises is difficult because the requirements and obligations to cooperate are not well defined in franchise specifications. Wiltshire currently relies on two franchises for its services and the resulting connections at the Westbury franchise “border”, are poor. Compounded with “cross border” competition with incursions into the other franchise driven by revenue opportunity rather than improving service connections. The split franchise proposal would add another franchise interface and further increase the coordination complexity. This would require very careful franchise specification drafting covering all the interworking obligations. The prospect of including future open access operators will further add to the complexity. There is a further issue and complication with regard to the efficient procurement of rolling stock fleets and the depot logistics if the franchise was split

We recognise the concern is the size of the franchise and the contrast between London commuter issues and the regional SW.

Regarding fare structure, there is an opportunity to differentiate between the business unit fares serving fast direct services to London and the regional semi-fast stopping services with timetable connections. After all the service justification is based on a time saving algorithm, why should not direct trains carry a fare premium when compared to service routes requiring connection time and a longer journey? This could give passengers a choice of route, potential congestion relief on direct services and passengers an understandable premium fare structure.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 3:

Proposals -

a) Transferring Greenford branch services to the Chiltern franchise. Transferring the existing Brighton-Southampton portion of the current Great Western Bristol – Salisbury – Southampton – Brighton service to the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise;

Giving reasons, do you agree or disagree with the options outlined above for:

ANSWER: - Greenford branch services - **Agree**

We note that this would be the only local diesel service that will be operated by GWR east of Slough and it may more readily be provided by the Chiltern franchise which operates diesel only trains.

ANSWER: - Southampton-Brighton Service - **Agree but only subject to a satisfactory (15 minute maximum) connection and matched frequency of service connection from Southampton.**

Connection to the Cardiff - Portsmouth train and transfer to Brighton train needs to be seamless. The third rail service is an important coastal connection for ferries and leisure destinations and a connection with the Cardiff-Portsmouth in both directions should be provided to both Weymouth and Brighton.

We note the logic of rationalising services with the power supply network. This is particularly relevant to the Wiltshire region, which borders 25kV and 3rd rail networks. The consideration of suitable rolling stock for Wiltshire should include bi-modal trains which can take advantage of the operational area with 25kV on the Cardiff to Bristol Parkway and Chippenham to Swindon sections.

A solution may be to introduce business units operating inside a single franchise, which can focus on the different aspects of the business, inter-city versus regional, whilst preserving the ability to coordinate service connections. These business units would be able to concentrate on the infrastructure issues which provide best economic return. Currently we feel the scale of Network Rail infrastructure projects on the Cardiff/Bristol to London route has meant there is limited capacity and focus to deliver the small scale “quick win” infrastructure projects already identified in the wider region.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 4:

a) What do you think are the main challenges that might be addressed through greater co-ordination and integration between the train operator and Network Rail?

ANSWER: As already stated in question 2, currently we feel the scale of infrastructure projects on the Cardiff/Bristol to London commuter routes and large station projects has meant there is very limited Network Rail capacity and focus to deliver small scale “quick win” infrastructure projects in the wider region. We have experience of long delays on small Network Rail projects at Melksham, Chippenham and Westbury. The region has wide range of “low hanging fruit” small infrastructure projects that are not progressing yet would yield immediate benefit to the economy of the region. A regional or business unit approach, which focuses on the deliverable infrastructure related to service and economy issues, would we feel be of advantage.

At a community rail level we find it impossible to get Network Rail attention on our projects. As a result we have seen the introduction of two car operation in the January 2018 timetable without the lengthening of the one car platform at Melksham even being started.

b) What do you think should be the future priorities for strengthened partnership working between the franchise operator and Network Rail?

ANSWER: To agree joint priorities between the operator and Network Rail on infrastructure improvements that are linked to connectivity, service frequency and the prime causes of repeated cancellations and delayed services.

Improve station platform connectivity and accessibility by organising across platform connections.

Support of small-scale new station schemes, in particular those with economic benefit linked to housing construction and access to jobs and services.

We believe there should be an obligation to consult with Community Rail Partnerships with Designated Line/Service status on small infrastructure schemes and to cooperate with data requests on small NR land related projects. Also including an obligation to provide suitable representation at the regular CRP reviews held with the operator.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 5:

Improvements in frequencies and capacity additional services are planned for 2019 when new timetables are introduced to reflect the full introduction of the new Intercity Express Trains and their operation under electric wires from Cardiff to London and Chippenham to London. There will also be enhancements to the TransWilts service between Swindon and Westbury and beyond (some recently been implemented others that are planned in the near future). These are likely to address most of the current concerns about capacity and

service frequencies provided these are maintained in the new Great Western franchise. We would however note that a later evening train from Bristol to London serving Bath and Chippenham is needed.

(a) Which routes do you believe could benefit from improvements to train frequencies?

ANSWER: We agree with key issue of north-south connecting services which make good interchange connections at Swindon/Chippenham, Westbury, Salisbury and Southampton.

An hourly service is needed and we have attached to this report a phased implementation Table 1 of enhancements to achieve this service through to Southampton Airport. Improving from the current 9 trains per day to a two hourly 13 trains per day by 2020 and 18 trains per day hourly service by 2022. The hourly service requires a passing section in the Melksham single track section to support the regular passenger service, plus freight capacity and diversionary capability. The current platform use at Salisbury is inefficient and operationally difficult. Improvements have been identified to facilitate cross platform connections and integration of the Three Rivers and TransWilts services. Westbury as an interchange gains in importance with the MetroWest connection and there is a need for re-commissioning the 4th platform to facilitate improved logistics and cross-platform connections. This cost should be included in the MetroWest funding budget.

We have ambitions in the new franchise period from 2022 to extend the TransWilts hourly service to Oxford. This provides the critical north-south connectivity to link to the Midlands, North and the East-West line. This corridor economic need is recognised in the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP Strategic Economic plan. This Oxford extension would provide an early solution for a service to support Oxfordshire's new station proposal at Wantage Grove. Three Rivers/TransWilts extended service timetable has a stop over at Swindon. There is time to extend the service to Oxford with the addition of just one additional train. We would not propose to stop at Didcot Parkway in view of the line capacity between Didcot and Swindon. With bi-modal rolling stock the service could take full advantage of the 25kV section Chippenham to Didcot and operate within the high speed London passenger trains timetable.

(b) What times of the day or week are these improvements needed?

ANSWER: The TransWilts service is needed through the day to provide continuity of services and connections. There is a need for a late train to coordinate with the later Bristol to Swindon service you are rightly proposing and also make connections from London and between Chippenham and Swindon. There is a need for a later train northbound, especially on Saturday evenings where the last train is currently at 18.32 making the last train connection 17.10 from Southampton or 18.08 from Weymouth. Post electrification in 2013 we understand the c387 Bristol service is stabled overnight at Swindon, this could be utilised as a late night Swindon-Bristol-Swindon service.

(c) Why?

Bristol theatre shows end too late to get the current last train, with a similar problem at Bath. We are told some opening night premiers at the Bristol Hippodrome have been retimed to start half an hour earlier so that the London critics can attend and make the last

train back. The current last train is too early for nights out in Bristol and Bath. There is severe overcrowding on the return train for sports events, such as Bath Rugby with mid-week evening fixtures starting at 19.45. A later evening service would ease after match congestion at Bath station and support the local restaurant and theatre economy.

(d) If the only way of achieving earlier first trains or later last trains was to curtail services at other times of the week or year so Network Rail can carry out essential maintenance, what times would you suggest?

ANSWER: We have to be realistic. We have become used to weekend and working week cancellations for electrification construction. The key is to inform the passengers early and provide good feasible alternatives with rail diversions and bus replacement services. CRPs have an important potential role in communicating with passengers and "Community Ambassadors" providing on platform support particularly important on unstaffed stations, - but only if they are included early enough in the preparations.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 6:

- a) Are you promoting a scheme for a new station or line which has a realistic prospect of being funded? If so, please provide brief details here

ANSWER: Yes we are proposing three new stations.

Wilton Parkway.

This station would be served by the extended TransWilts service providing an hourly park and ride service to Salisbury and direct trains to London, including the existing Salisbury-Waterloo service, which waits at Salisbury and could be extended to Wilton Parkway. Some revised platform arrangements are needed at Salisbury station including a western depot access. Salisbury has considerable congestion along the A36 and capacity at Salisbury is limited with the current car park full by 7.30 in the morning. The new station serves some 2,300 new houses being built west of Salisbury. In addition the station site is 7.5 miles from the Stonehenge visitor centre with 1.4 million visitors per year. The station provides a sustainable access by shuttle bus to Stonehenge with feasible day return journeys from London. "Drive by" viewing of Stonehenge from the A303 will not be possible once the tunnel is constructed.

Wilton Parkway Table 4 summarises the results from Atkins Phase 2 report for Wiltshire Council 26th January 2018 which provides a bcr above 2.0 and as high as 4.05, depending on train service strategy, passenger growth rate scenarios and station cost sensitivity. The combination of Cardiff-Portsmouth and TransWilts services would provide a half hourly P&R service between Wilton Parkway and Salisbury. The addition of direct London Waterloo trains provides the highest bcr but includes turnback infrastructure implications.

Wilton Parkway station could potentially be the first P&R as part of a transport policy being developed by the Salisbury Strategic Regeneration Partnership, which is seeking to solve the A36 congestion and resulting high pollution through Salisbury. Hampshire Council reported that 30% of the A36 through traffic is from Southampton. A successful TransWilts hourly service could serve a southern Salisbury Parkway station, "Bourne Parkway" at an existing A36 south P&R. This is included in Table 3 which provides a longer term "phase 3&4" vision. The Regeneration Partnership and SWLEP are promoting the Porton Science Park which is adjacent to Boscombe Down airfield (with QinetiQ and Boeing already in residence). The twin sites are adjacent to the former Porton station site and could in the longer term provide a further P&R to serve the science park and connections to London Waterloo and the 8,000 soldiers and dependants returning to Salisbury Plain under the 2020 Army rebasing from Germany. Table 3 is included to inform the DfT of this future direction, which depending on the length of the next franchise award, could be relevant during the franchise period.

Devizes Parkway

Devizes is three mile from the Berks and Hants line between Pewsey and Westbury. Devizes area population is the 5th largest in Swindon and Wiltshire 31,030 in 2011 census and forecast 37,000 by 2026. Existing road infrastructure is poor and providing a rail link will have a large impact on the local economy. The station would together with Pewsey and Bedwyn provide mid-Wilts connectivity for a population corridor poorly served by road and connecting bus services. The town is close to the other WHS site at Avebury and Devizes Museum contains the prehistoric relics associated with the WHS sites in Wiltshire. The train service for the station would connect to Reading in the east, and Westbury-Frome-Taunton-Exeter to the west. A suitable station site has been identified at Lydeaway where the old GWR railway connected to the Berks and Hants line. A 3rd party development group Devizes Development Partnership (DDP) has acquired options on the land for a park and ride station and some housing.

Corsham Station

Corsham has identified the previous railway station site as suitable for re-opening, with a strong economic case tied to the MOD cyber security base and congestion relief both into Bath and Chippenham. There is interworking between MOD staff at Filton Abbey Wood and Corsham. Bath Spa University have a campus at Corsham and would increase student numbers with a Bath-Corsham rail connection. Wiltshire Council has secured the land adjacent to the site. The need is for a train service, which could be provided by a introducing a third bi-mode train per hour operating on the Bristol to Swindon section. We anticipate a skip stop strategy could provide a one train per hour service stop at Corsham. A Corsham station would also reduce the immediate and future pressure on commuter car parking at Chippenham station.

b) What actions would you like the franchisee to undertake in order to support the development of this scheme?

ANSWER: We would seek inclusion of the schemes in the franchise obligations to work with stakeholders to deliver the new stations in the franchise term. Our Table 1 provides a recommended phased implementation strategy.

Wilton Parkway – implement the strategy to extend the TransWilts as an hourly service to Southampton Airport. Include in the infrastructure requirements, the passing loop in the Melksham single-track section and the revised platform working at Salisbury.

Devizes – Introduce an additional hourly stopping service to serve all the Wiltshire stations, Somerset stations and Mid Devon stations between Taunton, Westbury and Newbury. Making better use of the trains terminating at Bedwyn, this service could serve the new stations being proposed at Devizes Parkway Wiltshire, Wellington Somerset and Cullompton mid Devon.

Corsham – Introduce a third stopping service per hour between Bristol and Swindon that would serve Corsham and connect with TransWilts services at Chippenham.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7:

- a) Do you agree or disagree with reducing journey times to destinations in the South West by reducing stops at intermediate stations?

– Agree – Disagree – No opinion

ANSWER: **We agree with the following important proviso.** We believe for reasons of connectivity that all trains should stop at the key interchanges i.e. Swindon, Westbury, Salisbury, Southampton Central. How can passengers connect to fast services if they do not stop in Wiltshire? However we can see that a mix of Fast and Semi-Fast services could serve to connect regional towns and provide fast services to Reading, London and to Devon and Cornwall. The current strategy of skipping Westbury is flawed, being based on a time saving algorithm for passengers on the trains to London. The approach takes no account of the impact on extended journey times for passengers unable to make a connection. Ironically after missing Westbury for a 10 minute saving on a three hour journey, the train becomes a regional train in Cornwall stopping at all stations. A mix of different semi-fast stopping services could serve Wiltshire stations on one service and Cornwall services on another. Provided that the service stops are maintained at all the key interchanges.

- b) Which services or stations would benefit or be disadvantaged by this approach?

ANSWER: Westbury has already suffered from the skip stop strategy. There is a need to make north-south connections at Westbury and choices for London routes Paddington

and Waterloo. A competition between franchise fares to London is maintained with the route to Waterloo via Salisbury offering fare advantages over the Paddington route. Competition is removed if the train does not connect. Westbury will also provide an interchange with the MetroWest, which then offers a choice of routes into Bristol, but provided all London trains stop at Westbury. The addition of a third 'stopper train' to mix with the fast and semi fast services would serve the corridor from Newbury to Taunton including new stations Devizes in Wiltshire, Wellington in Somerset and Cullompton in Mid Devon.

- c) Are there any specific locations or routes elsewhere where it could be appropriate to reduce station stops in order to speed up longer-distance journeys?

ANSWER: Dilton Marsh station is served by local shuttles between Westbury and Warminster, some extended, and stops of Cardiff - Portsmouth trains to fill gaps where the local shuttle service isn't available to reach current franchise requirements. We propose that with the exception of the early train from Portsmouth (06:00), which provides a commuter service to Bath and Bristol, the stops in the Cardiff to Portsmouth services are removed, and that local shuttles are replaced by extensions of Swindon to Westbury services to the north, and Solent area to Salisbury services to the south. The current peak Warminster to Bristol, and return service, continue to run and we welcome the South Western Railway timetable proposals for many of their trains, including through London to Bristol trains, to call at Dilton Marsh. This will give Dilton Marsh (nearest station for a population of around 9,000 and close to Longleat and Centre Parcs) a significantly increased service, evened out to provide useful direct commuting opportunities to (and returns from) Bath, Bristol, Chippenham, Swindon, Salisbury and Southampton. It will also offer Dilton Marsh residents returning from these places at other times a better choice of "last leg" connections. Finally, it will also allow a gain of a couple of minutes useful resilience on the current Cardiff to Portsmouth services that currently call there.

Some station platform improvements would be required as the passenger volume grows.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 8:

- a) Which direct services such as those described above should be preserved in the next franchise?

ANSWER: There should continue to be a direct service between Bristol and Exeter St. David's Devon and Cornwall.

We have already referred our concern about the need to preserve through connections from Cardiff to Portsmouth.

Why? ANSWER: The proposed removal of the route via Didcot, Swindon, Chippenham and Bath to the SW removes competition with the Cross Country service which becomes the sole provider of services through Bristol. We do not know whether the franchise arrangements will protect critical connectivity of the Cross Country service with the GW franchise.

b) Are there any other stations between which you feel direct services should be provided?

ANSWER: The planned re-opening of the railway linking Oxford and Bicester with Milton Keynes and Bedford (the East West Railway), with potential further extension to Cambridge, provides scope for extending the TransWilts services to Oxford.

Why? ANSWER: This direct service supports the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP economic ambitions and facilitates the opening of Wantage Grove station being promoted by Oxfordshire. The link extends the north south corridor from Solent to the Midlands and is an alternative to via Reading routes.

c) At which locations should connections between different services be improved?

ANSWER: Westbury

Why? ANSWER: Our previous answers have emphasised the importance of Westbury as an interchange in both travel connectivity and route choice. The reinstatement of the fourth platform will facilitate cross platform connections reducing overall travel times and improving accessibility for transferring passengers with some form of mobility impairment.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 9:

What additional seasonal train services do you consider to be particularly important to retain or improve in the next franchise?

ANSWER:

- a) Bath has become a congestion point with the Christmas Market combined with Bath Rugby matches and events in Bristol. Additional or longer trains are needed to move the high volumes. We noted this year that all the spare First Group buses were diverted to Bath during the Christmas market period, leaving a shortage of buses needed for rail replacement services for cancellations. There is a need to plan the combination of rail and bus services, with contingency during seasonal demand.
- b) Salisbury has a high volume of summer traffic generated by traffic to the ports, airport and cruise ships. A36 congestion and pollution mean Southampton coach drivers cannot plan cruise ship multi location day trips through Salisbury. A regular train service and Stonehenge coach connection at Wilton Parkway will provide a sustainable alternative in the summer for access to Salisbury and the ports.
- c) Festivals: Glastonbury Festival attracts 150,000 visitors with some 11,500 travelling via Castle Cary. Stonehenge attracts 1.4 million visitors and the Summer Solstice attracts more than 20,000 visitors on one day, Wilton Parkway will be the closest station. Salisbury race course is 3 miles from Wilton Parkway with 55,000 visitors over 16 race days between May and October.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 10:

What other train service enhancements do you believe should be considered for inclusion in the next franchise?

ANSWER: a) We have been working with our CRP neighbours, in particular Three Rivers in proposing a joined up north-south strategy, which is deliverable with minimum infrastructure interventions. We fully support their proposals for a "Solent Loop" service at the south of the line and the conversion of the Fawley freight line into a west of Solent passenger service.

b) At the northern end of the Swindon-Southampton Airport hourly service, it can be easily extended to Oxford with the addition of just one additional train.

c) An hourly stopping service in the Berks and Hants corridor serving all stations Taunton to Newbury.

Why? ANSWER:

a) The north-south Wiltshire corridor provides connectivity between the majority of the economic centres from Southampton to Swindon. At the southern end, we recognise the whole Solent Interchange as an important group of stations that could be operated more effectively and integrate with connecting services. It complements the MetroWest strategy at the northern end of the corridor linked via Cardiff to Portsmouth service. Thirty percent

of the A36 trunk road traffic through Salisbury comes from Southampton. Congestion and pollution are becoming key issues and Highways England are carrying out a new route strategy for the A36. This will be a long term road project and the connectivity through Salisbury by rail is part of a sustainable solution. We recommend that the DfT ensure road and rail are “joined up” on this issue. We include a schematic Table 3 with the Salisbury regeneration stations identified. It is possible that subject to the success of Wilton Parkway, another parkway station on the A36 south of Salisbury “Bourne Parkway” located at an existing P&R, and served by the extended TransWilts line would be promoted during the next franchise term.

b) The link to Oxford has important economic benefits for the whole north-south corridor through Wiltshire and provides the critical infrastructure link to support the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP economic strategy. The link to Oxford in the east balances the current Bristol/Cardiff rail service bias towards the west.

c) The mid Wilts corridor Westbury-Pewsey-Bedwyn is poorly served with services terminating at Bedwyn and fast services skipping the key interchange at Westbury. A linking stopping service would serve all the north Somerset stations from Taunton, through Wiltshire to Newbury, - a 100,000 population corridor. The service would support new stations proposed at Devizes, Wellington and Cullompton.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 11:

If you are a freight operator or represent the freight industry, please set out your expectations of likely future demand for freight capacity across the routes served by the franchise.

ANSWER:

We have no detailed information, but the input on freight movements in the Melksham single section is particularly important in understanding the capacity requirements and timing of the need for a passing loop. We are aware that the HS2 construction will increase the required freight movements in this section.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 12:

- a) What do you think are the main priorities that we should seek to address in relation to rolling stock?

ANSWER: In the short term we believe it is some 10 years since the turbo fleet has had an interior refurbishment. Whilst the cascaded rolling stock is welcome, our passengers should benefit from the more modern interiors that a refurbishment would bring. Based on recent TransWilts growth we anticipate the need for the early introduction of 3 car services. Wiltshire is a significant transition point between 25kV and Diesel services plus 3rd rail SW franchise. In the new GW franchise we see the need for bi-modal trains Class755/3 as standard that can take advantage of the faster speeds and electric power available on the Chippenham to Swindon line and via Didcot with an Oxford extension.

Similarly a Class 755/4 or possibly 5 car bi-mode version for the Cardiff to Portsmouth service which has a considerable 25kV section between Cardiff and Bristol Parkway which should take full advantage of the electric section.

A Class 755/5 3rd rail bi-mode version would provide South West to Waterloo services via Salisbury. Consideration could be made to transfer this service into the GW franchise to rationalise rolling stock depot use and maintenance.

We see a big cost advantage in standardising the design versions to take advantage of the volume cost benefit. In addition the Class 755 will be proven on the Anglia franchise, so the GW and SW regional franchises will benefit from proven designs.

- b) Are there any routes which do not currently have First Class accommodation where you think it should be provided?

ANSWER: Cardiff to Portsmouth and the proposed Oxford to Southampton service.

- c) Should the franchisee provide specific services and facilities for a) business travellers or b) families travelling with children or c) other passengers?

ANSWER: YES but not exclusive use, we need flexible layouts that serve a wide range of passenger needs. Two plus two seating configuration with wide gangways, luggage and cycle storage.

- d) If yes, please provide more information on what you think should be provided

ANSWER: a) Business travellers like tables to work at. b) Families also like tables and easy gangways for push chair access and storage. Where possible babies are left in push chairs during the shorter journey. c) Our trains need to accommodate passengers with luggage making connections at interchanges. Size of baggage is more than the norm due to the high proportion of cruise and holiday passengers. Storage for bicycles is important on a route that accesses WHS sites and leisure destinations.

- e) What benefits or disadvantages do you think innovative technologies for rolling stock, e.g. hydrogen or battery power, could bring?

ANSWER: Please avoid green banana innovations! We will be looking to see the new bi-modal trains settle down. We do not want to be a testing ground for new technologies. Too often we take innovative technologies much too early – look at the European approach, let others take the risk and the cost. The best cost solution for rolling stock will come from higher volumes of standard designs, such as a bimodal Class755 solution with 3,4,5 car variants which could be specified for either 3rd rail or 25kV. This would maximise the flexibility of future rolling stock and standardise depot support. We are assuming the electrification of the Chippenham to Bristol TM section will not be carried out until the early part of the new franchise - if at all.

- f) Are there any routes which would be particularly suitable for these types of innovative technology within stations.

ANSWER: We want to exploit technology with immediate advantage to the passenger. For example, TransWilts have invested in and launched a free App which uses the GWR 'Tiger' departure information to provide live departure information on all Wiltshire stations and popular destinations. The App was launched to give passengers up date information on whether the train is cancelled and delay information to a passenger relying on an infrequent service and on an unstaffed station. The same Tiger departure information is being rolled out in the SW Railway franchise. We are proposing for the future to incorporate bus information into the system to show whole journey information for bus-rail connections. It is essential that the new franchise builds on this progress which builds on existing information technology. The "TransWilts" app can be downloaded from the usual app sites or via www.transwilts.org/app Bedwyn station for example shows the bus services which connect with Marlborough High Street. The app is being adopted in Devon and Cornwall and other GWR CRPs such as Severnside. An example of use of CRP project funding. The introduction of existing Smart card technology would benefit regular users and provide access to better fare algorithms and penalty regime refunds.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 13:

Improving station facilities. This includes the provision of seating, shelters, accurate, up-to-date information, improving access for all, with clear direction signs and safe, well-lit routes, designs to allow a greater throughput of passengers, maintaining safety and security, improving car and cycle parking, greater provision of electric car charging points.

a) Which stations do you think should be a priority for improving accessibility?

ANSWER: Westbury and Salisbury

b) Why?

ANSWER: Both Westbury and Salisbury stations would benefit from cross-platform connections for disabled, parents with push chairs, elderly with luggage.

c) What other improvements could help to make rail services easier to access and use for all passengers?

ANSWER : Timetabling that enables passengers make connections. I travelled with a wheelchair user who was unable to make a 4 minute connection at Westbury with a substantial delay in consequence. Same platform interchanges make a huge difference to accessibility. Often the platform choice comes from operational simplicity rather than the passenger convenience. Stepping distance is an issue with some rolling stock. New stock should have suitable steps as standard on much of European rolling stock.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 14:

a) Do you think these are the right priorities for stations in the new franchise?

ANSWER: **We agree with the general approach**

b) Which priorities would you change or add, and why?

ANSWER: We would seek the inclusion of the need for bus-rail integration at stations, particularly in rural areas. The bus connection is part of the overall journey time and there is an opportunity to engage more with community rail partnerships on schemes funded from the franchise providing connecting bus services that integrate with the train timetable.

c) At which stations do you think co-ordination between transport modes could be improved?

ANSWER: We remain convinced that key interchanges at Swindon, Westbury, Salisbury and Southampton are the important intermodal interchanges. Real-time information on bus departures is not currently available. TransWilts have invested in and launched a free App which uses the GWR Tiger departure information to provide live departure information on Wiltshire stations and popular destinations. We are proposing that we incorporate more bus information into the system to show whole journey information for stations with bus-rail connections. It is essential that the new franchise builds on this progress which builds on existing information technology. The "TransWilts" app can be downloaded from the usual app sites or via www.transwilts.org/app Bedwyn station for example shows the bus services which connect with Marlborough High Street, as does Bristol Temple Meads airport bus and Exeter St. David's Bude bus.

Platform destination indicators should be installed which include connecting bus information.

d) How do you believe these areas could be improved, e.g. through timetabling connections or through physical works at the location?

ANSWER: Timetabling connections including buses coordination is the most important issue at interchanges. Consideration to the maximisation of same platform and cross platform connections.

e) What do you believe are examples of best practice elsewhere which could be relevant for stations on the Great Western franchise network?

ANSWER: We refer again to the GWR destination indicator information at Bedwyn, which includes Bus information and the support of the local stations live destination app on mobile phones.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 15:

a) Do you agree or disagree with these priorities for i) fares and ii) ticketing? – Agree – Disagree

ANSWER: **Disagree**

Which priorities would you change or add, and why?

ANSWER: The priorities appear driven by main commuter requirements to London with ticket gates in place. Consideration should be given to Community Rail Partnerships on Designated services being able to issue tickets at unstaffed stations. We need a low technology solution to provide a passenger with a ticket to show the conductor and staff at a barrier. The GWR already issue scratch card tickets for community rail volunteers to use. Could a similar system enable CRP's to issue tickets and importantly receive commissions on ticket sales? Currently the ticket agent system is too complicated and only large providers such as Train Line can deal with the overheads and current low commission rates which only seem viable to organisations with electronic bulk ticket sales web sites. Why not support CRP's as well with a sustainable ticket system?

d) What changes to the fares structure could be of benefit to you?

ANSWER: Transparency of split fares and incorporation into the lowest fare offers. It is ridiculous that a private split fares site can make significant commission on providing transparency rather than the operators. Allow the CRP to offer split fare advice and tickets for a ticket commission. Introduce a Rover fare type of ticket for commuters who do not work 5 days a week. Or a carnet type system, which enables purchase of ticket bundles. Provide the CRP Designated Lines with some fare flexibility to cross subsidise linking bus services to the station. Currently the via Melksham fare is much lower than the any route. We would prefer a smaller differential that could be used to support extra rail services, such as a late night service, and bus linking services.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 16:

What more do you feel that the franchisee could be doing to help the Community Rail sector increase its contribution to society and the railway, for example in harnessing local community relations and outreach into the community?

ANSWER:

a) TransWilts would refer you to our comprehensive Community Rail Consultation response we made in January 2018 to Kulvinder Bassi at the DfT.

b) Representatives of the six existing Community Rail Partnerships and ACoRP met on 15 February to discuss this consultation and agree a common response.

Our request is as follows:

A minimum of £300,000 per financial year to be distributed to the six existing Community Rail Partnerships (and any successor CRPs) to assist with core and project costs.

The six existing CRPs are (in alphabetical order) – Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, North Downs CRP, Severnside CRP, Three Rivers CRP and TransWilts CRP.

We feel there is scope for more CRPs to be established within the GW franchise area and would wish the franchisee to help facilitate this and to be able to help fund any new CRPs.

To this end, we request a minimum of £200,000 additional funding per financial year to be made available as both extra project funding for existing CRPs and from which support for any new CRPs would be provided.

We feel that facilitating the work of the CRPs needs a greater management resource within the franchisee than has been the case so far. To this end, our request is for three dedicated Regional Community Rail Managers to be employed by the franchisee. These need to be senior posts within the franchise and to report direct to a Board director with responsibility for community rail. There also needs to be a dedicated Community Rail support officer within the headquarters team.

In addition, the franchisee's property team (enhancements and renewals) needs a dedicated person to take forward and implement community rail schemes.

Community rail needs to be embedded at all levels within the franchise and we would like to see a community rail module included in all staff induction courses. This module needs to be led by someone who works in or closely with CRPs.

The franchisee's website needs a section on community rail which includes suggestions for how people can get involved.

The annual community rail conference should continue and we would like to see an annual "Thank you" trip for members of CRPs, station friends and other volunteers.

We very much like the idea of Community Ambassadors and understand these are included in the recently let South Western franchise. These should be employed by CRPs where they exist and if the partnership agrees. The franchisee would provide additional funding to cover the cost of employing these additional members of staff.

Some of the individual partnerships wish to expand their activities, for example the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership would like to provide a much bigger, structured programme of engagement with schools and young people both in terms of encouraging tomorrow's passengers, on the rail safety front. This would be achieved by employing two new dedicated officers (one for each county) managed by the Partnership's current Development Officer who would herself cover Plymouth, the Tamar Valley and Looe Valley. The Partnership is seeking an additional £75,000 per financial year to achieve this.

We request that all sums are index-linked.

c) The CCIF scheme has been successful, oversubscribed and has delivered substantial value for money community benefits throughout the region. TransWilts for example have been able to fund a scheme for improving Melksham Station and pedestrian and bus access that would not otherwise have been possible. We request that the CCIF scheme is fully funded and included in any negotiated direct award period as well as included in the new franchise specification.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 17:

What more should the franchise do to invest in the workforce and wider industry skills?

ANSWER: Increase investment in project management training. Consider including some time with CRPs as part of the NR and operators apprentice scheme.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 18:

a) Are there any other priorities you would wish to see addressed?

ANSWER: None other than previously responded.

b) Which of the priorities in Chapter 4 do you think should be pursued most urgently in the period between 2020 and 2022?

ANSWER: See our Phased Summary Table 1. Our immediate priority is the 13 trains per day extended TransWilts service, which maximises the use of current infrastructure and rolling stock. By including the Melksham section loop infrastructure in the franchise the hourly service objective will be deliverable.

c) What initiatives not currently offered can, in your opinion, be provided through improved technology to meet the changing requirements of passengers?

ANSWER: Our passengers are more concerned with delivering reliable connecting train services together with good information and bus links, than seeking new technology solutions. An on-going problem is the lack of fares integration and the continuing anomalies of split ticketing fares. We do not need new technology just an industry wide commitment to sort it out.

d) In what ways do you think that the franchise could promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and other protected characteristics within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010?

ANSWER: We are unaware of lack of equality for people except the lack of wheelchair users and the mobility impaired access and lifts at many of our smaller older stations. Cross platform changes are much easier for the elderly and mobility impaired, including those who are elderly and with some mental incapacity which makes managing connections at stations confusing and stressful. Franchise operational timetabling should include the requirement to maximise the provision of cross platform and same platform connections. We should make much better use of in train announcements for helping connecting passengers, which could include the platform number in the "change here for..." which is too often delivered incoherently and routinely. Visual displays in the train could include connecting services and platform information included in the "next station display".

e) Do you have any other comments?

ANSWER: We have very much appreciated the opportunity to respond to this consultation, which is particularly important for our Wiltshire area. We have attended several of the DfT consultation events, which we have found to be excellent, useful and patiently conducted – thank you. The consultation has involved us in a great deal of work, investment in time and travel for a small CRP, liaising with members, other CRPs and stakeholders. We hope the result has been worthwhile, of assistance and hopefully of some significant influence in informing your GW franchise specification content.

Paul Johnson – Chair TransWilts CIC



info@transwilts.org | www.transwilts.org | Registered address: Dryfields House, Bristol Road, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 6LG
Community Interest Company (Company Number 9397959 registered in England and Wales)

TABLE 1 - Phased Implementation Summary Table GW Franchise Response by TransWilts CRP

Item	Existing 2018	Phase 1 2019-2020	Phase 2 2021-2022	Phase 3 2023- onward
1.	<p>a. TransWilts operates a 9 trains/day Swindon-Westbury</p> <p>b. Rolling Stock: C150/ c165/ c166 GWR 2 car units</p> <p>c. Single track Melksham section</p> <p>d. One car platform Melksham being extended to 2/3 car in 2018 by NR.</p> <p>e. An operationally inefficient Salisbury platform layout for “South Wilts Interchange”.</p>	<p>a. TransWilts North-South Corridor” Two hourly service with 13 trains per day merging with Three Rivers timetable for service to Southampton Airport and “Solent South Coast Interchange” and ferries.</p> <p>b. TransWilts service includes Dilton Marsh Halt. Provides Chippenham – Westbury link to the South West services from London. Bristol and Castle Cary London Waterloo services also stop. No new infrastructure required, except possible relocation of signal SY60.</p> <p>c. Introduce existing C158/C159 SW Railway 3 car rolling stock</p> <p>d. Melksham Two/Three car platform extended to 4/5 car with implementation of Melksham Station CCIF masterplan.</p> <p>e. Wilton Station construction commences.</p> <p>f. Timetable Westbury connections with Berks & Hants 10-15 minute target.</p>	<p>a. TransWilts “hourly service” 18 trains per day. Infrastructure: Passing loop in Melksham single section.</p> <p>Rolling stock: bimodal C755/3 bi-mode 4 car 2+2 seating & 1/3rd car 1st Class (212 std seats & 36 first) takes advantage of Swindon-Chippenham electrification.</p> <p>b. Open new Wilton Parkway Station. Shuttle bus connection to Stonehenge and 2020 Army rebasing at Larkhill</p> <p>c. SWR Castle Cary - London Waterloo services stop at Wilton.</p> <p>d. SWR Railway Salisbury-Waterloo service extended to Wilton.</p> <p>Infrastructure: Passenger signal at existing Wilton freight crossover</p> <p>e. Salisbury Station Platforms reconfigure to an efficient operational layout with cross platform connections:- Platform 1 reopen Platform 2 make bi-directional Platform 5 reopen</p> <p>Create a Depot western access.</p> <p>f. Dilton Marsh station improvements</p>	<p>a. Extend service north to Oxford, links to “East-West Varsity line” . Service facilitates an opening of Wantage Grove station.</p> <p>Confirmation of timetable capability with dual-mode rolling stock and Didcot-Swindon line capacity.</p> <p>b. New rolling stock Class 755/3 bi-mode trains</p> <p>c. Potential future parkway station on A36 south of Salisbury “Bourne Parkway” part of Salisbury Regeneration project and relief of Salisbury A36 congestion/pollution.</p> <p>d. Phase 4 Note: growth of Boscombe Down and Porton Down Science Park provides potential for a Salisbury Regeneration Porton P&R station reopening proposal in the SW Franchise.</p>

Item	Existing 2018	Phase 1 2019-2020	Phase 2 2021-2022	Phase 3 2023-onward
2.	<p>MetroWest</p>		<p>MetroWest opens, service extends to Westbury. Timetable coordination with TransWilts Swindon-Southampton service target 5 minutes cross platform. f. Infrastructure: Westbury 4th Platform [0] re-opening.</p>	
3.	<p>Cardiff – Portsmouth “Cross Wilts” service Rolling Stock : C158/159 3car</p>	<p>e. Dilton Marsh Halt stop transferred to TransWilts. Service. f. Cascade Class 319 4 car rolling stock 2+2 seating & 1/3rd car 1st Class (212 std seats & 36 First seats) g. Connecting Brighton service at Southampton target 10 minutes connection</p>		<p>e. New rolling stock class 755/4 bi-mode trains</p>
4.	<p>Swindon – Bristol TM Rolling Stock: c800 bi-mode service “North Wilts Corridor”</p>	<p>h. Introduce a later evening return “theatre” service from Bristol to Swindon circa 23.10 i. Timetabled connections to TransWilts at Chippenham.</p>	<p>g. Increase Bristol – Swindon – London timetable 3 trains/hr h. Timetabled connections with TransWilts at Chippenham</p>	<p>f. Potential Corsham Station opening, new rolling stock class 755 or class 800</p>
5.	<p>Taunton - Westbury – Reading c802 bi-mode “Mid Wilts Corridor”</p>	<p>j. Trains stopping at Westbury “Mid Wilts Interchange” hourly</p>	<p>i. Westbury 4th Platform [0] re-opening (as required in 2. MetroWest)</p>	<p>g. Devesey Parkway station opening with hourly service connections Taunton-Reading stopping train</p>

Table 2 North- South Wiltshire Core Schematic

TransWilts North-South Link

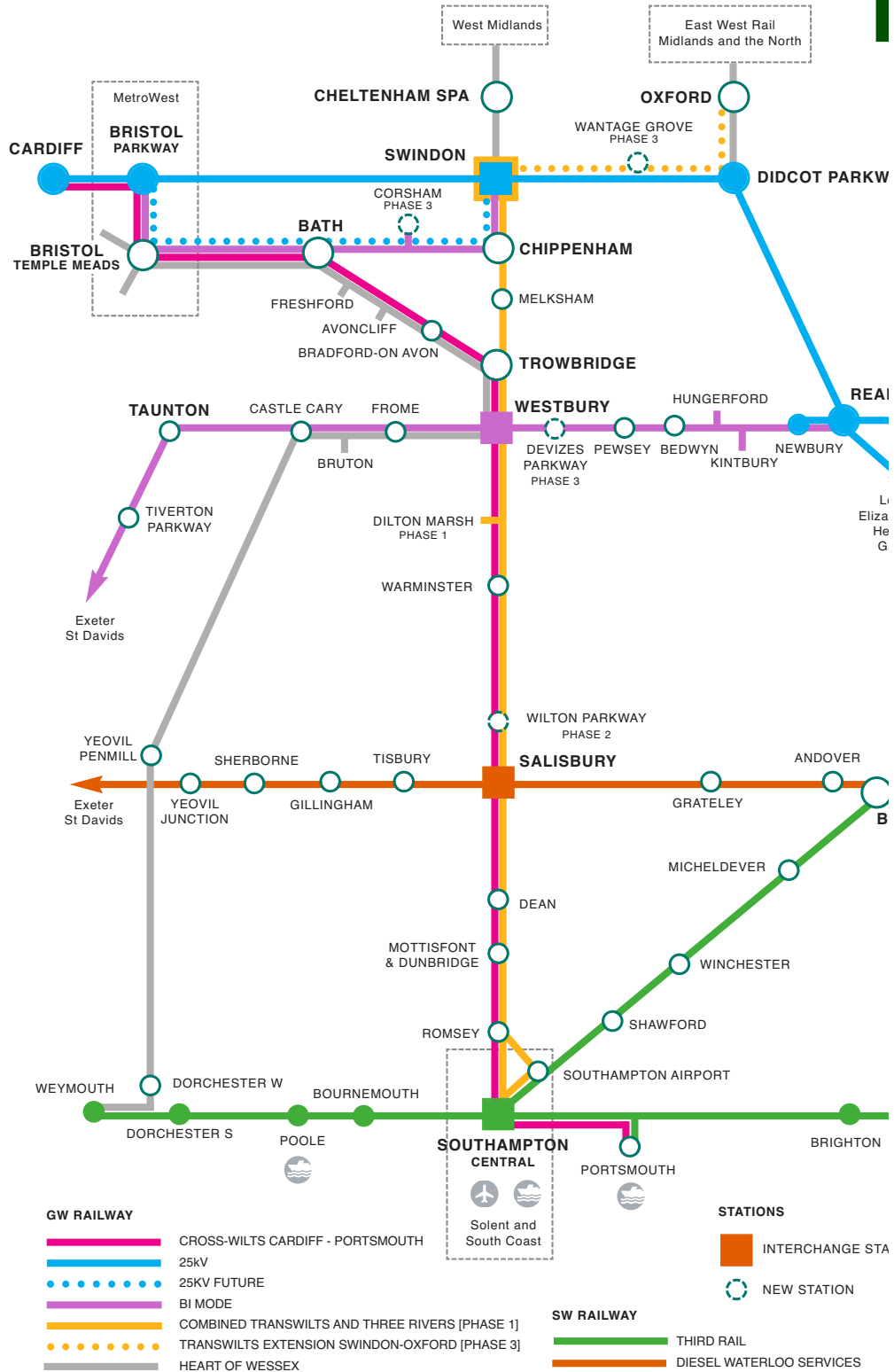


Table 3 Longer term (2024 onwards) including Salisbury Regeneration potential new Station Proposals

TransWilt's North-South Link

Including Salisbury Strategic Regeneration Project

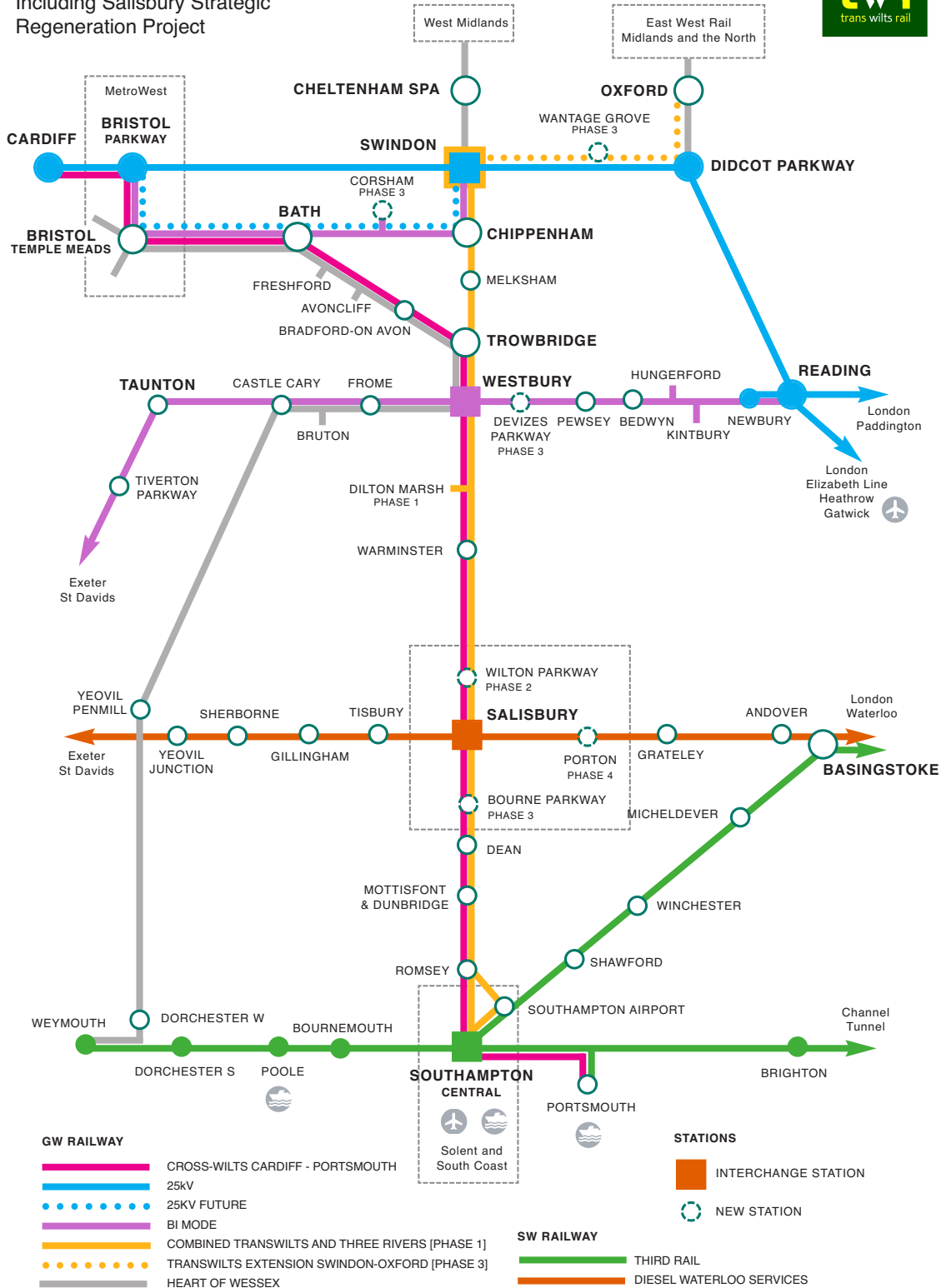


Table 4**Wilton Parkway - Atkins stakeholder report for Wiltshire Council 26th Jan. 2018
based on existing service frequency 2017**

Assuming 3 minute journey time impact on existing service and a 5 minute journey time Wilton to Salisbury

Service Options for Wilton Parkway	Net Annual Demand	Revenue £k	PVB £ discounted to 2010	BCR	BCR with station cost sensitivity
A Cardiff - Portsmouth	48,398	285	32,579	1.98- 2.31	1.65 – 2.89
B London – Salisbury extended	61,471	548	23,843	1.45- 1.67	1.21 – 2.08
C TransWilts extended	44,959	243	8,404	0.51 – 0.59	0.43 – 0.73
D Combined options A+B+C	109,358	595	45,873	2.79- 3.24	2.33 – 4.05