

Greater Bristol Bus Network

Appendix 2C

Assessment Against Policy Objectives

JOB NUMBER: 5048504			DOCUMENT REF: 5048504.250.100.01.2C Rev1 Appendix 2C Policy.doc			
1	Final Draft	PC	DW	AC	AC	20/03/07
		Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
Revision	Purpose Description	ATKINS				

ATKINS

2C.1. Introduction

- 2C.1.1 This Major Scheme Bid (MSB) has been designed to provide maximum benefit to the sub-region through easing congestion and improving safety, accessibility and air quality. This, in turn, will help to ensure the economic vitality of the sub-region.
- 2C.1.2 Bus services are the backbone of the public transport network in the area carrying over a million people a week. No other mode can provide a mass alternative to the car on this scale in the short to medium term. Recent investment in the bus network by the Councils and the operators has demonstrated that significant growth in patronage can be achieved if whole route treatment of bus priority measures is combined with improvements in the quality of buses, services, waiting environment, information and marketing. This approach has seen growth in the region of 12% on individual corridors. To date, because of limited resources, investment has had to be on the basis of individual corridors. At this rate to complete the whole network could take in excess of 15 years. The overall impact on the whole network has been limited during the first LTP period with bus patronage fluctuating above and below the baseline at the start of the first LTP period 2001 – 2006.
- 2C.1.3 The Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) is predicting traffic to grow at 9.7% by 2011 if nothing is done. The modelling undertaken for this major scheme bid shows a similarly stark picture with traffic levels in the AM peak.
- 2C.1.4 During this period of forecasted traffic growth, public transport use is predicted to decline steadily. If no action is taken the GBSTS indicates that bus passenger kilometres will have declined by 6.4% by 2011. Clearly future investment at the same rate as in the first LTP period will not stop the ongoing decline in bus patronage in line with the national picture.
- 2C.1.5 The GBBN MSB involves a comprehensive investment in ten corridors. This provides not only significant benefits on each corridor but also added benefits to the network as a whole that would be lost if investment continued in an incremental fashion. First have expressed that elsewhere comprehensive network wide improvements, combined with investment from the operators, can achieve a 'halo' effect. Put simply, patronage levels rise far higher than if route improvements are implemented incrementally over time.
- 2C.1.6 The size of the scheme provides confidence to the major operator to enable significant additional investment in vehicles with up to several hundred new or improved vehicles added to the fleet.
- 2C.1.7 The logic of the approach is therefore simple: to provide a top quality bus system that encourages more people to use it, thereby removing car journeys from the roads, leading to improvements in congestion, air quality, safety and accessibility.

ATKINS

- 2C.1.8 The GBBN major scheme envisages investment of over £70M. Approximately 40% of this represents investment by operators or through financial support from new housing and other developments.
- 2C.1.9 The benefits include improved journey times for bus users and also some car drivers through better use of road space and the introduction of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. Improvements at critical junctions also deliver road safety benefits through reduced accidents and opportunities for incorporating walking and cycling into the scheme have been maximised.
- 2C.1.10 Investment in ten corridors simultaneously allows benefits such as increased interchange opportunities, development of cross-city links and positive improvements to punctuality, all contributing to reduced congestion in Bristol City Centre.
- 2C.1.11 In the context of targets for achieving public transport growth in the South West, the Greater Bristol area is critically important as around one third of all bus passenger journeys in the whole region take place in this area. Without increases in bus patronage in Greater Bristol it is unlikely that the South West will achieve its regional target.

2C.2. National Transport Planning Context

“THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT – A NETWORK FOR 2030” WHITE PAPER

- 2C.2.1 “The Future of Transport” White Paper, July 2004, identified six objectives for bus services:
- ◆ **Punctual** – which means giving buses priority in congested locations and using more pre-paid ticketing to speed boarding;
 - ◆ **Good value** – for the traveller and the taxpayer;
 - ◆ **Frequent and reliable** – with up-to-date travel information that is easy to obtain;
 - ◆ **Seamless** – with good integration of bus services and other travel networks;
 - ◆ **Safe** – both when travelling on the bus and when walking to and from the bus stop; and
 - ◆ **Clean, comfortable and attractive** – with well-designed and maintained buses.

- 2C.2.2 The MSB will help to deliver these as follows:

Punctual

- 2C.2.3 One of the key aims of the MSB is to provide network wide treatment of bus priority through a combination of segregated priority and technology based solutions such as signal controlled junctions providing additional ‘green flow’ time for late running buses.

ATKINS

- 2C.2.4 All of these will help to ensure that buses have priority over the general traffic and are insulated from congestion so that they can run as closely as possible to their timetables. The modelling results contained within this bid demonstrate clearly the reliability benefits of the bid and how this in turn translates into increased confidence in the bus system with higher passenger numbers.

Good Value

- 2C.2.5 The cost benefit analysis has demonstrated the value for money of this scheme. It is a good, affordable scheme which maximises benefits to passengers. The Councils will also expect First to reduce the support it requires on these routes as patronage builds and journey times are reduced. This will free up much-needed revenue support for other routes. The vision is simple – the core network should work efficiently to maximise the attractiveness to customers and ensure continued passenger growth.

Frequent and Reliable

- 2C.2.6 Thanks to the Concordat with First, the operator will ensure that frequent and reliable services are provided on these routes. The use of new vehicles will ensure that the buses spend more time on the roads and less time being serviced, ensuring that a reliable service is provided. As part of the agreed frequency enhancements have been included. If successful, these enhancements will form part of a partnership agreement committing both parties to delivering improvements to achieve the outcomes modelled in this bid.
- 2C.2.7 The new Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) points at bus stops will ensure that passengers have the latest information about their services, providing confidence in the services and making them more attractive. This will contribute towards an overall enhancement in the image of bus travel.

Seamless

- 2C.2.8 The GBBN would contribute towards greater integration between bus services through increased frequencies on the ten corridors, linking of services that are currently operated separately because of reliability problems, and enhancement of feeder services. The introduction of real time information and enhanced waiting facilities would also aid passengers changing buses. Other benefits would be the greater opportunities for interchange between bus and coach services at the bus stations in Bath and Bristol, the Cribbs Causeway bus station and the Weston-super-Mare bus focus. Interchange with rail would be improved at Bristol Temple Meads and Parkway stations and at stations at Weston-super-Mare and Worle.

Safe

- 2C.2.9 Buses provide one of the safest modes of transport and so by encouraging a shift from private cars to buses, the casualty rate should be reduced. The provision of additional pedestrian and cycle facilities along the major Scheme Bid corridors will also lead to a reduction in casualties.

ATKINS

- 2C.2.10 Other quality of life improvements will be achieved by the GBBN through the provision of modern bus shelters, raised kerbs and enhanced paving. Community safety would be increased by better lighting. Buses to be used on the GBBN network would be equipped to maximise the security of bus drivers and passengers.

Clean, Comfortable and Attractive Buses

- 2C.2.11 This bid is the only way to ensure that this area gets the newest, highest specification buses.

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT (PSA) TARGET 3

- 2C.2.12 PSA target 3 gives local authorities a clear indication that public transport growth is a priority. It states that: "By 2010, increase the use of public transport (bus and light rail) by more than 12% in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region." If the South West is to make an appropriate contribution towards meeting this target then a significant amount of growth will need to come in the Greater Bristol area (as the Greater Bristol area already accounts for one third of all trips in the South West). This MSB will ensure that this target is surpassed in Greater Bristol.

THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004

- 2C.2.13 The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management responsibility on local authorities to keep traffic flowing, taking account of their other duties and responsibilities. This responsibility has been borne in mind throughout the design of the MSB, ensuring that the provision of priorities for buses by means of bus lanes and selective vehicle detection does not disadvantage general traffic flow.
- 2C.2.14 The Act also covers civil traffic enforcement legislation covering parking, bus lanes and some moving traffic offences. This will allow parking penalty charge notices to be issued by post, use of cameras to detect parking contraventions and issue penalty charges for parking within the area of a pedestrian crossing. These powers will help to ensure that the measures within the MSB are enforced so as to maximise the benefit.
- 2C.2.15 At the construction stage the Councils will follow their own permit schemes and will carefully consider how to minimise the impact of the building of the scheme on general traffic. This could include, for example, building critical elements during school holidays.
- 2C.2.16 Schemes on the trunk road network are being developed in conjunction with the Highways Agency. It is envisaged that these schemes could equally be delivered if responsibility for parts of the trunk road network passed to the Councils.

ATKINS

THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000

2C.2.17 The statutory powers under the Transport Act 2000 provide a range of opportunities for the Councils to take action where bus improvements are not being achieved by other means. The Councils acknowledge that the Act gives scope for quality contracts but that these are only intended to be pursued where there is no other practical way of delivering the JLTP Bus Strategy (see also IC.2.10 'Putting Passengers First'). Through the Concordat the Councils intend to forge an informal quality partnership with First, taking forward the four informal partnerships agreed previously between the operator and the individual Authorities. However, to ensure that the significant investment in infrastructure planned in the MSB is used to maximum effect it may be necessary to put this quality partnership on a statutory footing.

EXTENSION OF CONCESSIONARY FARE SCHEME

2C.2.18 The four Councils are working towards the introduction of a joint concessionary travel scheme. In August 2004 concessionary travel was allowed for the first time anywhere in the sub-region irrespective of local government boundaries. Further joint working was carried out in the period to April 2006 when the Government's free travel concession proposals came into effect. The service enhancements proposed in the GBBN bid, combined with the April 2006 joint concessionary travel arrangements, will substantially widen bus travel opportunities for bus pass holders.

TRANSPORT 2010: THE 10 YEAR PLAN

2C.2.19 One of the Government's aims set out in the 2000 White Paper Transport Ten Year Plan was to drive up service standards for existing bus passengers, and an attractive alternative for people who currently drive for short journeys. Part of the solution was seen as lying in statutory bus Quality Partnerships to build on the success of existing voluntary Partnerships. (para 6.50). The White Paper saw Statutory Quality Partnership schemes giving greater confidence for both parties to invest, and enabling quality standards to be set and enforced. They would deliver more new buses and new infrastructure, including improved interchange and waiting facilities, better passenger information services and bus priority measures. Reallocating road space to buses, allowing them to avoid the worst congestion spots, was promoted to improve journey times and reliability. (6.51). The White Paper expected to achieve over the period of the Plan:

- ◆ A 10% increase in bus passenger journeys;
- ◆ More reliable bus services, supported by a new customer satisfaction survey; and
- ◆ Better quality, less polluting, more accessible buses, with the average age of the bus fleet reduced to eight years by 2001 and speeding up introduction of low-emission vehicles (6.62).

ATKINS

2C.2.20 The GBBN bid is fully in line with the 2000 White Paper objectives which have been updated in the July 2004 'Future of Transport' White Paper (see also IC.2.10 'Putting Passengers First').

NEW DEAL FOR TRUNK ROADS IN ENGLAND WHITE PAPER (SEPT 1998)

2C.2.21 Under the heading of 'Making it easier to switch away from the private car' (Section 2.7) the White Paper envisages the Highways Agency, the local authorities and the bus and train operators all having a role and working in partnership to deliver better services. The White Paper identified a number of options for helping bus services to operate more reliably, for example re-allocating road space for dedicated bus lanes and giving priority at junctions to buses. These are being pursued through the GBBN bid.

2C.2.22 The White Paper described the Highways Agency's toolkit for making better use of the network and foresaw this being developed to integrate the trunk road network with other roads and other forms of transport. This would be achieved by providing priority measures to assist public transport and vulnerable users. Traffic demand on the network would also be managed, including giving priority to buses. The GBBN bid has been drawn up with close reference to the Highway Agency's toolkit.

MULTI-MODAL STUDIES

2C.2.23 The London to South West and South Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS), May 2002, was one of a series of multi-modal studies carried out to take forward the policies in the Government's 10 Year Plan.

2C.2.24 The study had wide ranging transport and planning objectives and focussed on improvements to the whole transport system (for both passenger and goods traffic) that support the economic, social and environmental aims for the area in a cost effective and sustainable manner.

2C.2.25 SWARMMS was made up of ten component plans. The one of particular relevance to the Major Scheme Bid was the plan for the Greater Bristol Principal Urban Area.

2C.2.26 The problems and issues in the Greater Bristol area identified by SWARMMS were:

- ◆ Congestion on the trunk road network, especially the M4/M5 and particularly at peak periods;
- ◆ Unreliability of travel times on the road and rail networks, both are under severe pressure and minor incidents can result in major delays;
- ◆ Poor information and difficulties in achieving seamless travel between different transport modes;
- ◆ Severance, noise and poor air quality caused by busy roads passing through local communities;

ATKINS

- ◆ Poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and inadequate accessibility for the mobility impaired;
- ◆ Public transport services do not provide adequate or attractive alternatives to private; and
- ◆ Transport for a large proportion of journeys and is perceived as being insecure by some sections of the community.

2C.2.27 The GBBN will contribute to the improvement of all of these problems and issues identified for the Greater Bristol area by SWARMMS.

2C.2.28 Although the study was primarily concerned with strategic (or long distance) journeys there is a clear link between these and journeys starting and ending in the Greater Bristol area. If journeys can be removed from the strategic road network by providing a good bus service on that network or on parallel routes, then this will help to ease the severe pressure on the M4 and M5 in the vicinity of Bristol. Examples of the sorts of journey where this effect could happen are journeys between Portishead and Central Bristol or between Emersons Green and the North Fringe.

2C.2.29 In addition to measures to improve the motorway and rail networks, SWARMMS made the following key recommendations for the Greater Bristol area for other public transport modes:

- ◆ Provide Coachways at Cribbs Causeway and Weston-super-Mare;
- ◆ Provide bus and coach traffic priorities to limit the effects of congestion;
- ◆ Improved interchanges at Bath bus/coach and rail stations, Bristol bus and rail (Temple Meads and Parkway) stations Weston-super-Mare bus and rail stations, Worle rail station and Cribbs Causeway bus terminus;
- ◆ Implement Road User Charging in central Bristol and strengthen traffic restraint policies in suburban centres. Improve local bus services through bus quality partnerships and develop the proposed light rail system. Line 1 should be started as soon as possible as the first stage of a larger network;
- ◆ Improved public transport access to Bristol International Airport; and
- ◆ Provide comprehensive Park & Ride services from locations close to the strategic road network linking to key centres within Bristol.

2C.2.30 The GBBN will directly address those recommendations shown in bold.

ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING

2C.2.31 The ODPM Social Exclusion Unit's Feb 2003 'Making the Connections' acknowledged that bus priority measures, for example bus lanes and traffic light priority, can reduce the length of journeys and make them more reliable. This makes people more likely to use buses, and means the full effects of capital expenditure on bus infrastructure and fleets can be realised (para. 4.10).

ATKINS

2C.2.32 The DfT's December 2004 'Guidance on Accessibility Planning in Local Transport Plans' stresses the key role that buses have to play in delivering improved accessibility and social inclusion (para. 6.9). It suggests that authorities with other providers and operators should consider the scope for addressing accessibility problems through improved public transport availability. The Major Scheme is an important response to this.

'PUTTING PASSENGERS FIRST' AND ROAD TRAFFIC BILL

2C.2.33 The Government's current proposals for a modernised national framework for bus services are put forward in 'Putting Passengers First' published in December 2006. These proposals recognise the crucial role of buses as part of the Government's strategy for tackling congestion and meeting environmental goals and put forward a package of measures that will feed into the draft Road Transport Bill due to be published in spring 2007.

2C.2.34 Measures of particular relevance for this MSB which will be kept under review by the Councils as the scheme progresses include:

- ◆ Enhancements to the existing arrangements for partnership agreement allowing statutory schemes to cover frequencies, timings and where appropriate fares;
- ◆ Reform to quality contracts provisions; and
- ◆ New performance regime, with both the Councils and operators being held to account by the Traffic Commissioners.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND STERN REVIEW (MARCH AND OCTOBER 2006)

2C.2.35 The UK Climate Change Programme, published in March 2006, predicts emissions from transport increasing by about 3% between 2004 and 2010 without intervention. This increase is seen as being potentially offset by better vehicle efficiency, the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation and investment in public transport and smarter choices. Specific reference is made in the Programme (para. 39) to the development of a good bus network playing a role in cutting congestion and carbon dioxide emissions. This Major Scheme is in line with this national policy.

2C.2.36 The urgency of tackling climate change is highlighted in the October 2006 Stern Review. An essential element in reducing carbon emissions is seen as the removal of barriers to behavioural change. The GBBN would make a significant short term contribution towards this objective.

EDDINGTON TRANSPORT REPORT (DECEMBER 2006)

2C.2.37 The Eddington Transport Report to the HM Treasury sees congested and growing city catchments as an economic priority for future transport investment. In Chapter 4.3 the report focuses on buses and the increased role they could play (3.90). Securing the effective operation of buses in urban areas to tackle congestion is seen

ATKINS

by the report as a challenge, including decisions by local authorities and operators on bus investment (3.92).

- 2C.2.38 The Greater Bristol authorities and First have risen to this challenge by championing this MSB.

REGIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATION

- 2C.2.39 Regional Funding Allocations (RFA) were introduced by the Government in 2005 to provide a basis for regions to advise the Government on regional priorities on the basis of realistic funding assumptions, in order to improve future spending decisions. The regions were invited to produce advice by the end of January 2006, focusing on capital funding for major transport schemes.
- 2C.2.40 The South West Region agreed the Advice to Government on the RFA following consideration by the South West Regional Assembly on 27 January 2006. The GBBN was included in a list of major schemes where the region had concluded “that there is a strong case for inclusion within an RFA programme to 2016”. This list was subsequently accepted by the Government in a letter to the region in July 2006
- 2C.2.41 A technical ‘refresh’ of the RFA schemes was undertaken in 2006 and the results are being submitted to the Government. The GBBN remains a priority in the regional list of Major Schemes

2C.3. National Spatial Planning Context

THE PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

- 2C.3.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaces Regional Planning Guidance with statutory Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) drawn up by regional planning bodies (RPBs). These will replace existing Structure Plans. Contained within the RSS for the South West region, the subject of an Examination in Public starting in April 2007, are proposals for the West of England, covering the same area as the current Structure Plan. At the local level, the Act introduced a requirement for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) containing a range of documents to replace the existing single document Local Development Plans. The LDFs will contain Development Plan Documents (policy setting documents) and Supplementary Planning Documents (additional guidance such as area based or topic based explanations of policy application and interpretation).
- 2C.3.2 The LDFs will provide the long term spatial vision and the means to reflect those aspects of the Community Strategies, of Council strategies such as housing and economic development strategies and of the JLTP that relate to development and use of land.

ATKINS

2C.3.3 The West of England Partnership which comprises Bath & North East Somerset Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils has drawn up a vision looking ahead to 2026 and prepared First Detailed Proposals to inform the RSS (see E4.4). Three of the authorities are progressing their Local Development Plans through the old system and will commence work on their LDF's following adoption. Bristol City Council has commenced work on the LDF to replace the Adopted Local Plan (1997) and the Proposed Alterations (2003).

PPS1: DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2005)

2C.3.4 PPS1 advises that development should be promoted that creates socially inclusive communities. Objectives include the need to seek to reduce social inequalities and to address accessibility (both in terms of location and physical access) for all members of the community to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities. Policies should promote mixed use developments for locations that allow the creation of linkages between different uses and can thereby create more vibrant places. The MSB is fully in line with these aims.

2C.3.5 To achieve sustainable economic development authorities are expected to ensure that infrastructure and services are provided to support new and existing economic development and housing. The infrastructure and service improvements proposed in the Major Scheme will make a major contribution towards this.

PPS3: HOUSING (NOVEMBER 2006)

2C.3.6 PPS3 emphasises the importance of linking development with public transport provision. The corridors in the scheme have potential to serve not only existing development but also development areas identified in the RSS. These developments will in turn be reflected in the relevant LDFs. Paragraph 38 of PPS3 considers that local planning authorities should take into account:

- ◆ “The contribution to be made to cutting carbon emissions from focusing new development in locations with good public transport accessibility and/ or by means other than the private car”;
- ◆ “Accessibility of proposed development to existing community facilities, infrastructure and services, including public transport”.

2C.3.7 The guidance states that, to promote more sustainable development, both regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should promote development that is linked to public transport. The GBBN would make the proposed developments more sustainable and would allow a greater intensity of development as recommended by PPS3.

PPG4: INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL FIRMS (MARCH 2001)

2C.3.8 Development plan policies must take account of the locational demands of businesses. New development should be encouraged in locations which minimise the

ATKINS

length and number of trips, especially by motor vehicles, and that can be served by more energy efficient modes of transport (this is particularly important in the case of offices, light industrial development, and campus style developments such as science and business parks likely to have large numbers of employees).

- 2C.3.9 The GBBN would create the energy efficient transport network needed to assist businesses in line with PPG4.

PPS6: TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS (2005)

- 2C.3.10 Paragraph 2.49 recognises that good access to town centres is essential and specifies that “jobs, shopping, leisure and tourist facilities and a wide range of services should therefore be located in town centres wherever possible and appropriate, taking full advantage of accessibility by public transport”. PPS6 states that in considering proposed new development local planning authorities should consider the need for accessibility by a “choice of means of transport”. Accessibility: ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel (which includes the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served) is a key indicator for measuring the vitality and viability of town centres contained in chapter 4 of PPS6 (Monitoring and Review). The scheme will improve the accessibility of town centres within the Greater Bristol area.

PPG13: TRANSPORT (MARCH 2001)

- 2C.3.11 The scheme is in accordance with the aims and objectives of Government guidance set out in PPG13. A key objective of PPG13 is to “*promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling*”. The guidance emphasises the need to link planning and transport and to ensure that strategies in the development plan and the LTP are complimentary. The majority of the development options currently being investigated through the emerging Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy can potentially be served by the showcase bus routes (see E.4.4). The scheme meets the guidance in paragraphs 73 and 74 in relation to improving public transport in ways which reinforce the effectiveness of locational policies in development plans. It is anticipated that planning obligations will be sought from developments proposed in the vicinity of the GBBN routes. This approach accords with paragraph 85 of PPG13.
- 2C.3.12 The implementation of the scheme will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public transport and will provide a significant contribution towards achieving a sustainable transport system for the Greater Bristol area. This is fundamental to realising the Government’s transport objectives.

PPG17: PLANNING FOR OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION (JULY 2002)

- 2C.3.13 In identifying where to locate new areas of open space, sports and recreational facilities, PPG17 advises local authorities to promote accessibility by walking, cycling

ATKINS

and public transport. The Major Scheme would provide an enhanced public transport network to maximise access to facilities in line with PPG17.

PPS9: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (AUGUST 2005)

- 2C.3.14 PPS9 advises regional planning bodies and local planning authorities on the conservation, enhancement and restoration of England's diversity of wildlife and geological features. Planning decisions should aim to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological interests. These interests have been taken fully into account in preparation of this bid (see letters from statutory bodies in Appendix 4J).

2C.4. Regional Context

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE SOUTH WEST (RPG10 SEPT 2001)

- 2C.4.1 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG10) sets the current regional context for transport planning, although it will be superseded by the RSS when approved. One of the sub-regional objectives for the northern sub-region, which includes the Greater Bristol area, contained in Policy SS3 is to "develop and improve sustainable urban and inter-urban transport networks". The implementation of the proposed new showcase corridors will improve public transport links between areas within the Greater Bristol area. Paragraph 3.24 acknowledges that high priority needs to be given to securing improvements to the public transport system in the Bristol area.
- 2C.4.2 It is considered that the Major Scheme accords with the 5 key objectives of the RTS and policies TRAN3, TRAN5 and TRAN10 (especially "encouraging the efficiency of public transport and reducing the impact of traffic congestion on bus and coach services by promoting bus priority measures.....").

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY (FEBRUARY 2006)

- 2C.4.3 The Regional Economic Strategy sees urban congestion as a major challenge that could constrain economic success. It aims to improve the region's transport network and one aspect highlighted is the need to increase the reliability and speed of public transport in the region's main urban areas. The GBBN bid is in line with these aims.

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY (RSS) FOR THE SOUTH WEST (MARCH 2006)

- 2C.4.4 The new 2006-2026 RSS for the South West region was submitted to the Government in March 2006 and will be the subject of an Examination in Public starting in April 2007. Among the guiding principles set out in the RSS are the need to reduce reliance on the private car by improving public transport (SD1); to encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport (SD"); and to create

ATKINS

and maintain sustainable communities by promoting a step change in public transport (SD4).

- 2C.4.5 The RSS makes clear (5.2.2) that realising the economic potential of the 'Strategically Significant' Greater Bristol area is absolutely dependent on the sub-region functioning more effectively with well-planned urban environments and transport systems. To help achieve modal shift the RSS (5.2.6) stresses the need to develop "major public transport systems including bus 'showcase' routes on congested corridors including reallocated road space and re-engineering junctions to give buses priority".
- 2C.4.6 The Regional Assembly strongly supports the Major Scheme.

PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST OF ENGLAND SUB-REGION (MARCH 2006)

- 2C.4.7 Contained within the RSS are specific proposals for the West of England area. The West of England Partnership consulted on a Vision Statement (Your Area: Your Vision – directions for change) and spatial strategy issues in early 2005 and these proposals have informed RSS preparation.
- 2C.4.8 The West of England spatial strategy (RSS 4.2.3) sees the area as the economic hub of the the South West. Investment in critical transport infrastructure and services is regarded as vital for delivering the RSS and the GBBN is specifically identified on the Inset Diagram 4.1, which illustrates the sub-regional spatial strategy. The Major Scheme will help achieve substantial public transport improvements in Bristol (4.1.11, 4.2.13); help maximise public transport opportunities for Bath (4.1.16) and help reduce reliance on car commuting for Weston-super-Mare (4.1.22)
- 2C.4.9 Areas that have experienced rapid growth in housing and employment have not seen the public transport network expand at the same pace. The GBBN will begin to address this imbalance as well as ensure that new areas of development are more adequately served. During the period of this JLTP there will be significant development in areas such as Emersons Green North, Filton Northfield, Portishead and Western Riverside in Bath: all of these locations would be served by the enhanced network.
- 2C.4.10 Various urban extensions are proposed in the RSS for the sub-region. The GBBN would complement these by providing better transport links to many of the areas identified for potential urban expansion.

GREATER BRISTOL STRATEGIC TRANSPORT STUDY

- 2C.4.11 The Final Report of the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS) was published in June 2006 and concluded that:

"improvements to urban bus services would be a main focus in the strategy for enhancing the public transport system in the short to medium term. The Showcase

ATKINS

bus corridors which form the Greater Bristol Bus Network are the subject of a Major Scheme Bid...and it is important that (it) is introduced as soon as practical” (GBSTS, Executive Summary).

JOINT REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN (SEPTEMBER 2002)

- 2C.4.12 The Joint Replacement Structure Plan, the current basis of strategic land use and transport policy until superseded by approval of the RSS, aims to promote more sustainable transport and secure long-term shifts in travel behaviour. The transport policies seek to improve alternative modes of travel to the car, encourage their use and discourage car use and improve road safety. The locational strategy focuses development in and adjacent to the main urban areas or, where this cannot be accommodated in settlements with good public transport accessibility. The Structure Plan adopts a corridor and area based approach to transport improvements. It seeks to integrate new development and transport by locating in areas where there is potential for minimising dependence on the car and maximising public transport use.
- 2C.4.13 The scheme is considered to be in conformity with the aims and objectives of the Structure Plan and in particular Objective E, Policy 1, Policy 4, Policy 5 (which includes bus priority measures along the main corridors), Policies 6- 14 and Policy 47 (encouraging alternatives to the car). Policy 48 has particular relevance. It states that LTPs will provide for whole corridor improvements to bus transport

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GROWTH POINT (OCTOBER 2006)

- 2C.4.14 In October 2006 the Government announced that the West of England had been successful in its bid to become a New Growth Point. This initiative will support the sustainable development of housing, jobs and infrastructure. As part of the national Sustainable Communities Plan the aim is to achieve an increase in house building in the sub-region. The GBBN will help lay the foundations for this growth. Local Spatial and Transport Planning Context

REVISED DEPOSIT BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (2003)

- 2C.4.15 The scheme meets the following transport and access objectives, which are contained in the Local Plan:
- ◆ To pursue (an) area and corridor approach to the integration of development and transport proposals with the aim of reducing dependency on the private car (T.1); and
 - ◆ To seek improvement of existing and the provision of new public transport facilities (T1).
- 2C.4.16 Policy T8 sets out corridors where traffic management proposals will be sought to improve the efficiency and reliability of bus and coach operations. This includes the A4, A367 and A37 corridors, which are covered in the scheme.

ATKINS

ADOPTED BRISTOL LOCAL PLAN (1997)

- 2C.4.17 The scheme meets the aims and objectives of the Bristol Local Plan. The following objective is of particular relevance: “Promoting and making available more attractive alternative modes of transport to the private car, in particular, public transport, for journeys to work, thereby improving accessibility for all sections of the community”.
- 2C.4.18 Paragraphs 5.4.5 and 5.4.6 recognise that if there is to be a fundamental change in the balance between the use of public and private transport then further positive promotion of bus use will be required and that it is essential that buses are given priority over other general traffic. The plan acknowledges the City Council’s commitment to the promotion and implementation of bus lanes and associated traffic management measures.

REPLACEMENT NORTH SOMERSET LOCAL PLAN (2004)

- 2C.4.19 The first objective of the policies of the transportation chapter of the Adopted Local Plan (2000) is particularly relevant: “to reduce traffic congestion in North Somerset by safeguarding Park & Ride sites, disused railway lines and supporting improvements to public transport including introduction of bus priority measures”.
- 2C.4.20 The Second Deposit Draft Local Plan (March 2004) contains the following relevant transport objectives:
- ◆ “To improve public transport infrastructure and services, including the provision of effective interchanges”.
 - ◆ “To develop an integrated approach to improving the main corridors of movement within North Somerset”.
- 2C.4.21 The scheme would bring about major enhancement of two North Somerset corridors (A369 and A370) in line with these objectives.

ADOPTED SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN (FEB 2006)

- 2C.4.22 The scheme accords with the following element of the Local Plan’s transport strategy which seeks to promote more sustainable travel choices by: “securing efficient and reliable bus services, by implementing bus priority measures, which facilitate bus flows on existing congested highway networks, and providing preferential bus access to major new development schemes”.
- 2C.4.23 Policy T4 and paragraphs 6.53 to 6.63 of the written statement set out details concerning the Council’s bus strategy, bus priority measures and bus partnership routes. The scheme complies with the approach set out in the South Gloucestershire Local Plan.

ATKINS

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

- 2C.4.24 The Bath and North East Somerset Local Strategic Partnership's 2004 Community Strategy aims to improve travel for all users and meet the needs of local communities.
- 2C.4.25 The Bristol Partnership's 2003 Community Strategy aims to develop a sustainable transport system; actions include the provision of reliable, affordable, accessible and safe public transport.
- 2C.4.26 North Somerset Partnership's 2004 Community Strategy envisages transport systems that are sustainable and effective, with people choosing to walk, cycle and use accessible and public transport.
- 2C.4.27 South Gloucestershire Partnership's 2003 Community Strategy aims to achieve a convenient, safe and inclusive transport network with less traffic congestion and improve travel choice.
- 2C.4.28 The GBN will make a significant contribution towards meeting the aspiration of all four community strategies.

2C.5. Joint Local Transport Plan (March 2006)

- 2C.5.1 The Government guidance for second local transport plans puts strong emphasis on getting best use out of existing infrastructure and value for money and requires an ambitious but realistic strategy. The focus of the JLTP is around the Shared Priorities for transport: congestion, accessibility, safety and air quality.
- 2C.5.2 In the December 2006 Settlement Letter the Government Office for the South West assessed the JLTP as 'good' and commented that it is "overall a very competent document".
- 2C.5.3 The Vision for the JLTP is a transport system that supports the vision for the West of England and:
- ◆ Strengthens the local economy;
 - ◆ Supports rising quality of life and social inclusion;
 - ◆ Improves access and links;
 - ◆ Ensures that alternatives to the car are a realistic first choice for the majority of trips;
 - ◆ Offers real choice - affordable, safe, secure, reliable, simple to use and available to all; and
 - ◆ Meets both rural and urban needs.
- 2C.5.4 This vision is reflected in the aims and objectives of the JLTP and the MSB is essential in achieving these. The aims and objectives of the JLTP are as follows:

ATKINS

Aims

To tackle congestion

To improve road safety

To improve air quality

To improve accessibility

To improve quality of life

Objectives

Promote use of alternatives to the private car;
Encourage more sustainable patterns of travel behaviour;
Manage the demand for travel by the private car.

Ensure significant reductions in the number of the most serious road casualties;
Achieve improvements for road safety for the most vulnerable sections of the community.

Improve air quality in the Air Quality Management Areas;
Ensure air quality in all other areas remains better than the national standards.

Improve accessibility for all residents to educational services;
Improve accessibility for all residents to health services and healthy food;
Improve accessibility for all residents to employment.

Ensure that quality of life is improved through the other shared priority objectives, contributing towards the enhancement of public spaces and of community safety, neighbourhood renewal and regeneration, healthier communities, tackling noise and protecting landscape and biodiversity.

2C.5.5 The GBBN is essential in delivering the aims and objectives of the JLTP. Table 2C.1 summarises the impact of the GBBN bid on delivering the shared priorities.

Table 2C.1 – Impact of the GBBN Bid on the Shared Priorities

Shared Priority	Impact of GBBN Bid
Tackling congestion	<p>Critical for providing high quality alternative to the car</p> <p>Provides building block for future upgraded corridors to 'guided bus' or 'future bus'</p> <p>Delivers high quality bus services to existing and planned development to 2011</p> <p>Extensive Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) measures allow optimisation of traffic flows at busy junctions to give benefits to buses and at the same time improving general traffic flows or at least making general traffic conditions no worse.</p>
Improving Accessibility	<p>Improved frequencies and coverage of bus network</p> <p>Interchange improvements to support 'feeder' services to core network</p> <p>Improved passenger and information, waiting environments</p> <p>Low-floor services provide benefits for wheelchair users, push chairs and those with mobility impairment.</p> <p>Improved accessibility to key employment, education, retail and leisure destinations</p>
Improving Road Safety	<p>Improved pedestrian and cyclist facilities on all major corridors as part of bid including upgrades to puffin crossings, cycle lanes and pedestrian build-outs</p> <p>Improved control of traffic flows and speeds through extensions to UTMC to all main corridors</p>
Improving Air Quality	<p>By providing real opportunities for mode shift on key corridors, in particular the M32</p> <p>Significant reduction in the average vehicle age (and emissions) through massive bus fleet renewal programme from First</p>
Improving Quality of Life	<p>Reduced community severance through better public transport, walking and cycling links</p> <p>Reduced fear of crime through quality infrastructure and reliable services</p> <p>Improved confidence in reliable services allow users to spend less time travelling and waiting</p>

ATKINS

2C.6. Bus Strategy

2C.6.1 The objectives for the GBBN bid are the same as those for the new JLTP Bus Strategy. They are to:

- ◆ Increase the number of bus passengers;
- ◆ Increase satisfaction with bus services;
- ◆ Improve bus reliability and punctuality and reduce bus journey times; and
- ◆ Increase the percentage of the population within 45 minutes journey time by bus of the major centres of Bath, Bristol, Cribbs Causeway, the North Fringe and Weston-super-Mare.

2C.6.2 Increasing the number of bus passengers is recognised as essential to securing additional private investment in the bus fleet and expanding the bus network. This increase will be achieved through mode shift away from single occupant car use associated with a successful bid combined with investment from the bus operator and developers. Putting improving bus services at the heart of the Joint Local Transport Plan will contribute to increased satisfaction with bus services, improved reliability and punctuality.

2C.6.3 The four Councils joint approach to meeting these objectives can be summarised as:

- ◆ Improving reliability (improving the proportion of scheduled journeys operated, achieved through improved operator practices);
- ◆ Improving punctuality (increasing the proportion of journeys operating on-time; defined as 1 minute early and 5 minutes late);
- ◆ Reducing overall journey times (faster journeys, achieved through bus priority, express bus services and quicker boarding times);
- ◆ Improving all aspects of quality (i.e. buses, services, interchanges, waiting facilities, information);
- ◆ Increasing frequency and capacity of the bus network;
- ◆ Improved interchange, both between bus services and between the bus and other modes; and
- ◆ Improving accessibility to the bus network, ensuring that the network provides access to jobs, education, healthcare, food shopping etc. by means of a larger, more frequent network; bus stop improvements; route extensions/ modifications).

2C.7. Cycling Action Plan

2C.7.1 The GBBN supports the Cycling Action Plan set out in the JLTP through the delivery of comprehensive cycling facilities across the network. Cyclists are permitted to use all bus lanes and additional facilities have been provided across traffic junctions.

ATKINS

2C.8. Walking Action Plan

2C.8.1 The GBBN supports the Walking Action Plan set out in the JLTP through the provision of safer routes and crossing facilities in a number of locations across the area.

2C.9. Summary

2C.9.1 The GBBN bid has been designed to provide maximum benefit to the sub-region through easing congestion and improving safety, accessibility and air quality. This major scheme successfully meets the full range of national, regional and local targets.