

**West of England Partnership
Joint Transport Executive Committee
4 February 2010**

South Bristol Link Major Transport Scheme Bid

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' endorsement of the proposed South Bristol Link major transport scheme bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) prior to its consideration by the Executive of North Somerset Council on 23 March and the Cabinet of Bristol City Council on 25 March 2010.

Background

2. In October 2009 the Joint Transport Executive Committee (JTEC) approved the concept of the South Bristol Link (SBL); that is, a combined orbital highway and Rapid Transit with adjacent foot/cycleway between the A370 and Hartcliffe. Later the same month, the Executive Members (with responsibility for transport) of Bristol City and North Somerset Councils approved an 'inner' alignment as the 'preferred' option for public engagement in November and December 2009; this scheme is outlined in Figure 1.
3. The Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the scheme on 22 January 2010 and agreed the following submission to JTEC for its 4 February meeting:

"The point that was highlighted above all else was the incompleteness of the officer report, particularly on the economic (jobs and regeneration) performance of each option and combination of options. It was understood that economic analysis work had been commissioned by at least one authority some time ago. Given the need to attract investment and jobs to South Bristol, this would seem a logical and quite essential component of the decision-making process.

Members asked that I list the other issues to highlight these with you and to suggest that additional information be taken into account or work commissioned before a final decision on the detailed bid is made.

- Community engagement – consultation undertaken appears limited
- The impact (and demonstrated need) associated with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) option and its relationship to other local public transport services (Greater Bristol Bus Network, rail etc). Also, the frequency of BRT services (18 minutes- is this right?)
- The impact of the preferred option on traffic flows on existing roads, particularly, Winterstoke Road and the Parson Street gyratory.
- As an extension of the economic case, details of business requirements in terms of accessibility and connectivity. A list of supporting business organisations is rather superficial for this purpose. For example, is the SBL about facilitating a better link for HGVs across South Bristol and onto the trunk/motorway network? If so, why the linkage to Bristol City Centre?

- The proposals to expand Bristol International Airport and the insufficient public transport accessibility to and from the airport now and with projected growth, with consequent pressure on local communities.
 - Concerns about community severance and impact on green space were also raised”
4. Where appropriate, the above points are addressed in the report and in the presentation to be given at the meeting.

Developing the Scheme

5. The SBL is one of several major transport schemes in the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP) that are being promoted by the West of England authorities. The schemes that would directly link with the SBL are the Ashton Vale – Bristol city centre Rapid Transit and the North Fringe-Hengrove Package. The SBL would link the A370 with the A38 and the A4174 at Hartcliffe Roundabout adjacent to Hengrove Park.
6. The local objectives of the SBL are:
- a. To facilitate regeneration and growth in South Bristol
 - b. To reduce congestion in South Bristol and adjacent areas of North Somerset
 - c. To improve accessibility from South Bristol to the city centre and to strategic transport links, including the trunk road network and Bristol International Airport (BIA).
7. The South West of England Regional Assembly re-confirmed the SBL as a priority in the second Regional Funding Advice (RFA2) for construction between 2014/15-2016/17 and allocated £47m plus preparatory costs. This is linked to some policies in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which propose significant development in South Bristol, but not to the draft RSS proposal for an urban extension to the south-west of the city, which is not supported by the local authorities. In addition, BIA has submitted an application to expand and Bristol City Football Club is in the process of seeking approvals for a new stadium in Ashton Vale.
8. Prior to consideration by JTEC and Joint Scrutiny, there were several years of option appraisal, comprising:
- Review of the evidence base, including the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS, Atkins, 2006) and the A38-A370 Link Road Study (JMP, 2002)
 - Developing a ‘long-list’ of potential options
 - Building a transport model to compare options
 - Distilling the long-list of options down to a ‘short-list’ of 5 options by considering how they performed against the project objectives and whether they would be deliverable and fundable
 - Comparing, appraising and reporting on the performance of the 5 options using Department for Transport [DfT] criteria
 - Public and stakeholder engagement (November 2008 to March 2009) and reporting on the opinions received

- Collecting additional data and updating the transport model
 - Identifying a preferred option
 - Public and stakeholder engagement on the preferred option (November and December 2009)
 - Bid preparation for submission to DfT in March 2010 (subject to Member approval).
9. This report summarises the opinions received in the consultation on the preferred option and describes the key features of the scheme that, subject to Member approval, will be submitted to the DfT in March 2010; this is called a bid for Programme Entry and if successful, would trigger the detailed design and planning permissions required to build the scheme.

The Option Selection Process

10. The option selection process was described in the report to the Joint Transport Executive (JTEC) Meeting of 1 October 2009; for convenience, the main points are summarised below:
- The project has followed DfT's prescriptive guidance on the development and appraisal of major transport scheme bids¹
 - The project started with a wide range of options in terms of route alignments and modes (i.e. car, bus, Rapid Transit, rail)
 - The project team undertook a first sift of options to leave five options that were appraised in more detail and were the basis for public/stakeholder consultation between November 2008 and March 2009²
 - The five options shown in Figure 2 were assessed against DfT and local objectives, it was concluded that Options 4 and 5 (combined highway and Rapid Transit) performed best and should be taken forward, but enhanced with the highway component extended from the A370-A38 section to Hartcliffe as well (to help deliver better the local objectives)
 - JTEC approved the enhanced Option 4 and 5 (Figure 3) for further assessment, following which the Executive Members (with responsibility for transport) of Bristol City and North Somerset Councils approved enhanced Option 4 (combined highway/Rapid Transit on an 'inner' alignment) as the 'preferred' option for public engagement in November and December 2009.

Scheme Description

11. The preferred scheme is shown on Figure 1 and described from north to south, A370 to Hartcliffe.

¹ 'Guidance for Local Authorities seeking Government funding for major transport schemes' and 'WebTAG' (Web-based Transport Appraisal Guidance), DfT.

² Further details are contained in the 'South Bristol Link Option Appraisal Report' (Mott MacDonald, February 2009) and the 'South Bristol Link Options Consultation Report' (BCC/NSC, June 2009). Both can be found on the West of England website: <http://www.westofengland.org/transport/south-bristol-link>.

12. The SBL Rapid Transit starts from the Long Ashton Park & Ride site and links with the planned Rapid Transit route to the city centre. The single carriageway highway has a separate roundabout junction with the A370 Long Ashton Bypass, southwest of the Park & Ride site. The latter is considered to be a better way of merging link road traffic with the A370, rather than combining it with the heavy traffic on the B3128 (from Clevedon) and then merging with the A370; to do so would require the rebuilding of the existing A370/B3128/Park & Ride junction, which would add significant cost to the project (~£9m) and could have an adverse impact on the adjacent Ashton Court Estate.
13. The Rapid Transit and highway routes head south across Ashton Vale, merging at a junction that would provide access to South Liberty Lane; both routes are safeguarded in the North Somerset Local Plan as the 'blue' and 'red' routes respectively. This would create a triangle of land in the Green Belt, up to half of which would have a large flood-attenuation pond to cater for surface water drainage.
14. There is concern that this layout would have a greater adverse impact on the Green Belt and could be more vulnerable to development than would be the case if the SBL highway also followed the inner blue route to the Park & Ride site. The concern about the greater footprint of the preferred scheme is acknowledged, however, the alternative would also require a large flood-attenuation pond.
15. The remaining land within the triangle of land is prone to flooding (ranging from 1-in-75 to 1-in-200 year probability), or is former landfill (the Kennel Farm Landfill). Given these land conditions and that the council would need to acquire most, if not all of the land in this triangle, the concerns about it being developed for housing or employment are not considered well-founded. The SBL would offer the opportunity to provide significant environmental mitigation, public access and preserve this area of land from development in the future.
16. At the point where the Rapid Transit and highway meet a signal junction and a Rapid Transit stop (Brookgate) would serve South Liberty Lane. The combined Rapid Transit/highway then crosses underneath the main railway line, which requires a new bridge structure to permit 2 highway lanes, 2 Rapid Transit lanes and a foot/cycle way. Consideration is being given to including greater width in the structure to facilitate future improvement.
17. South from the railway bridge, the SBL climbs the Colliters Brook valley to a new junction with the A38, which requires a southbound highway climbing lane for slow vehicles. As it climbs the side of the valley, the SBL would be built on terraces separated by retaining walls.
18. The junction with the A38 would be a roundabout with partial signal-control to manage the interaction between general traffic and the Rapid Transit vehicles; some of which would continue along the SBL to Hengrove Park, others along the A38 to BIA. A Rapid Transit stop (Castle Farm) would permit interchange between BIA and Hengrove Park services.
19. Southeast of the A38, the Rapid Transit vehicles would use segregated bus-ways in the centre of the route; the highway lanes would be on the outside and a parallel foot/cycle path would be provided. The SBL would cross the northern part of

Highridge Common; common land lost to the scheme will be replaced by acquisition of adjacent agriculture land.

20. SBL leaves Highridge Common at the junction of Highridge Green/Highridge Road/King George's Road, which would be signal-controlled and with an adjacent Rapid Transit stop. SBL would follow Kings George's Road, which would be widened to 2-lanes for general traffic and 2-lanes for Rapid Transit with residents' parking and landscaping areas on both sides, a foot/cycle path on the north side and a footway on the south. This layout can be accommodated on highway authority land and is considered the best compromise between fully segregated Rapid Transit and residents' concerns (e.g. loss of parking, front gardens, severance). Crossing facilities would be provided for pedestrians and cyclists. This arrangement is proposed as a result of early responses to recent consultation; and will be further revised with the involvement of the local community.
21. The SBL junction with Queen's Road and Hareclive Road would be signal-controlled, with adjacent Rapid Transit Stops; in between, the SBL would follow the safeguarded alignment and its layout would be similar to that on King George's Road. Beyond the Hareclive Road junction, the SBL follows Whitchurch Lane to the Hengrove Park roundabout with the same layout of general traffic and bus lanes. Crossing facilities would be provided to minimise severance. The Rapid Transit continues to a new terminus at the South Bristol Hospital to be built in Hengrove Park.
22. The SBL would build on the Rapid Transit that should be running between Ashton Vale and Bristol city centre by the time SBL is completed; it would also link with the proposed North Fringe-Hengrove Rapid Transit (which is at the same stage of planning as SBL). Hence, these three West of England major transport schemes in Bristol would form a Rapid Transit network, which would be the basis for future expansion.
23. The services using the SBL Rapid Transit route would comprise:
 - An extension of every third Rapid Transit service between the city centre - Ashton Vale to Hengrove Park, which would initially give a frequency of every 18-minutes during the day; at Hengrove Park, it would link with the proposed North Fringe–Hengrove Package Rapid Transit route (possibly with direct through running)
 - The BIA Flyer, running every 10-minutes, which with new vehicles, would divert from its existing route via the A38 to take advantage of the segregated, faster route via Ashton Vale to the A38.
24. Rapid Transit stops are proposed at the following locations:
 - Ashton Vale (for the South Liberty Lane trading estate and existing residents)
 - The junction with the A38 (for interchange with local bus services)
 - Highridge Green
 - Queen's Road
 - Hareclive Road
 - Imperial Park South
 - Hengrove Park Hospital.

25. Public rights of way would be maintained, with diversions if required.
26. A package of complementary measures would be implemented with the SBL, these could include:
 - Traffic management on the B3130 through Barrow Gurney to preserve the forecast traffic flow reductions
 - Traffic management on Kings Head Lane, Bishopsworth Road and Whitchurch Road to facilitate pedestrian crossings and improve safety
 - Improved traffic signal control through Cumberland Basin gyratory.

Scheme Impacts

27. The next section provides an overview of the performance of the scheme against the DfT and local criteria as known at the time of writing; more details will become available as the bid is finalised and will be reported to Executive/Cabinet of the two councils in March.

Environment

28. The overall ratings of the scheme against environmental criteria are 'slight to moderate adverse impacts'. The main adverse impacts would be in respect of the landscape and townscape (i.e. the visual impact of the scheme) and on biodiversity (it passes adjacent to two locally designated sites).

Safety

29. The overall impact on accident rates is expected to be neutral when compared to the do nothing.

Economy

30. To achieve Programme Entry from DfT it is necessary to achieve a Benefit to Cost Ratio [BCR] of at least 2.0. Latest modelling results suggest a BCR of more than 4.0, with 75% of benefits accruing to highway users and 25% accruing to public transport users. Work on optimising this will continue during February and be reported to the Executive Members prior to bid submission. The wider economic impacts are reported below against the first local objective.

Accessibility

31. The Rapid Transit component of the scheme would improve access to the transport system, especially for people without access to a car. The parallel cycle/footway would improve the local network for cyclists and pedestrians. The scheme could increase severance, but the design mitigates this impact by extensive provision of crossings, both controlled (signals) and uncontrolled.

Integration

32. The scheme is compliant with national, regional and local policies in respect of regeneration and growth, planning policy (i.e. land use) and interchange (i.e.

increased opportunity to link with other transport networks); it is less so against the environmental policies (see above paragraph on 'environment').

Local Scheme Objectives

1. To facilitate regeneration and growth in South Bristol.

- 33. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) reported in 2007 show that approximately one quarter of Lower Super Output Areas in the South Bristol Regeneration Area fall within the 10% most deprived in England. Since IMD 2007, unemployment rates have further deteriorated such that, for instance, male unemployment in Filwood and Hartcliffe has almost trebled in the past two years.
- 34. The SBL is being progressed as an integral part of a package of measures to support economic growth in the area and to improve access to new employment opportunities for local residents. It is considered critical that accessibility to existing employment and housing sites is improved in order to encourage developers and private sector organisations to invest in South Bristol.
- 35. Relatively poor transport connections between South Bristol and the wider strategic transport network are regarded by businesses to be a barrier to investment and hence job creation; similarly, poor connections hinder local people accessing employment opportunities. Better public transport helps the most people (including those without cars) to get to and from employment elsewhere, whilst better highways are considered more effective in encouraging local business to locate in the area. The preferred scheme, which combines both public transport and a new highway link, would therefore maximise the potential for regeneration and growth.
- 36. Research thus far shows that the scheme will lead to improved accessibility for a number of key sites and that this will result in increasing employment densities on these sites as well as an overall improvement in the quality of jobs that will be created on these sites. In addition, the commitment to the SBL would be taken as a clear signal to the private sector that local and national policy makers are tackling the current poor perception of South Bristol's ability to address its economic problems

2. To reduce congestion in South Bristol and adjacent areas of North Somerset.

- 37. The Rapid Transit service is predicted to carry around 200 passengers between Hengrove Park and central Bristol in the AM peak hour.
- 38. Preliminary traffic flows on selected links for the AM peak hour at opening are set out below.

| AM Peak Hour, 2016 | Do Nothing | With SBL |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Link Rd at railway crossing | 0 | 1070 |
| Long Ashton Village | 410 | 350 |
| A370 Long Ashton Bypass | 2300 | 1810 |
| B3130 Barrow Gurney | 1160 | 910 |
| A38 north of BIA | 2280 | 2330 |
| A370 at Bower Ashton | 3170 | 3440 |
| Winterstoke Rd | 2520 | 2400 |

| | | |
|--------------------|------|------|
| King Georges Road | 130 | 440 |
| Kings Head Lane | 640 | 560 |
| B3130 Winford | 770 | 710 |
| A4174 Hengrove Way | 2000 | 2040 |

Notes

The above excludes the complementary measures outlined previously, which would help provide traffic flow reductions on parallel routes (to the SBL).

3. To improve accessibility from South Bristol to the city centre and to strategic transport links, including the trunk road network and BIA.

39. Improving accessibility is concerned with enabling people to have better access to the city centre, the wider transport network and to BIA regardless of car ownership, income or age. Since car ownership in the South Bristol urban area is relatively low, it follows that the Rapid Transit would be beneficial, making non-car access to BIA, Ashton Vale and the Cumberland Basin in particular easier.
40. Local bus services currently take 40/50-minutes in the peaks (Hartcliffe to the centre), but with frequencies of 10/12-minutes, average waiting time would be 5/6-minutes. Rapid Transit via SBL would take around 30 minutes from Hartcliffe to central Bristol, but service frequency would be every 18-minutes, so average wait time would be ~9-minutes. Hence, passengers from Hartcliffe/Bishopsworth with access to the SBL Rapid Transit would have a choice between SBL Rapid Transit (faster, better quality, more reliable but less frequent) and local bus (slower, but with higher frequency).
41. Ultimately, the goal of the West of England is a network of Rapid Transit routes; in South Bristol, this would be provided by both SBL and North Fringe to Hengrove routes.
42. Rail is not an easy option for many people in South Bristol, other than those who live within walking distance of Parson Street and Bedminster stations; however, the West of England is also promoting two other major transport schemes that would improve rail (Bristol Rail Metro and Portishead re-opening), which would complement SBL and the North Fringe-Hengrove Package.
43. The highway element of SBL would be signed as the new strategic highway route between Hengrove Park and the A38, A370, A4 Portway and thence to the M5 motorway; it would supersede the current (congested) route via the Parson Street gyratory and Winterstoke Road (as well as the various rat-runs, such as Kings Head Lane). Similarly, the signed route to BIA from the motorway network (M5 Junction 18 at Avonmouth) would move from Parson Street gyratory and Winterstoke Road to the SBL.
44. It is not anticipated that the highway element of SBL would significantly improve car access into the city centre; however, by transferring some orbital movements off the local South Bristol highway network, these radial routes to/from the city centre would benefit, which would facilitate introduction of bus priority measures and Rapid Transit (i.e. the North Fringe to Hengrove Package routes).

Public Engagement

45. In the years leading up to development of the preferred scheme there have been several relevant public consultation exercises. These have included:
- Three rounds of consultation and information supply in developing the wider transport strategy for the GBSTS (2004-2006);
 - Two rounds of public consultation as part of the A38-A370 Link Road Study (2001);
 - Consultation associated with development of Local Plans and Core Strategies for the two councils;
 - Consultation regarding short listed options for the SBL, November-March 2009³.
 - Consultation on the preferred option, November-December 2009.
46. Consultation regarding short listed options invited people's views about different transport modes and their concerns about each. Responses were considered as part of the process of identifying the preferred scheme that was subsequently taken forward. For example, more people favoured a combined rapid transit/highway scheme than any other option.
47. Given that previous consultation had covered issues such as mode preferences, attitudes to congestion and accessibility, and concerns regarding transport in the wider area, the second round of public consultation for SBL (November/December 2009) aimed to gather views on the preferred scheme rather than whether or not a project was needed. Nonetheless, responses to the questionnaire tended to polarise into those who are opposed to the principle of a link at all and those who see it as important and needed as soon as possible.
48. The consultation included distribution of over 6,000 postcards to households in affected areas, notices to local press and other media, and printing of 3,000 pamphlets and questionnaires distributed via local libraries, community centres and at three public exhibitions. 95 questionnaires were returned plus 91 responses via the web site and 92 letters from individuals, groups and businesses.
49. A report of the consultation is being prepared at the time of writing; the following summary presents a preliminary assessment of views received.
50. Those who oppose the scheme generally believe that it is of no benefit; that it will damage the Green Belt, add to pollution, divide local communities and harm local business. A large majority of opposition originates from residents of King George's Road, Highridge Green and from Long Ashton, where some residents see the scheme as potentially facilitating housing development.
51. Groups who have written expressing opposition to the scheme include:
- Hands Off Long Ashton
 - Bristol Green Party

³ 'South Bristol Link Options Consultation Report' (BCC/NSC, June 2009). Can be found on the West of England website: <http://www.westofengland.org/transport/south-bristol-link>.

- Malago Valley Conservation Group
 - Alliance Against South Bristol Ring Road
 - Bristol South Green Party and Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance (in statements to the Joint Scrutiny meeting on 22 January).
52. The views of those who support the scheme are that it will improve access, help regenerate South Bristol, be good for local businesses and form a valuable component of essential infrastructure. A frequently stated concern is that it is taking too long to implement. Support for the scheme has come from businesses, including those at Imperial Park, Symes Avenue, Hengrove Park, Cater Business Park and Ashton Vale, from individuals and from neighbourhood groups.
53. Groups supporting the scheme include:
- GWE Business West
 - South Bristol Business Group
 - Withywood Community Forum and Park Group
 - The University of Withywood
 - Better Transport Links 4 South Bristol
 - Highridge Neighbourhood Forum
54. There are many suggestions for modifying the preferred scheme, both from those who oppose it and from those who support it. As mentioned above, the design has recently been modified in response to early concerns regarding severance (better crossing facilities have been introduced) and preference for more prominent rapid transit (now proposed to occupy the middle of the carriageway where shared with road). There are some who would support the scheme if it did not include new highway, notably the NHS, but these are matched by those who would favour the scheme if it dropped the rapid transit component.
55. Some responses, including that from GWE Business West, seek consideration of potential need for dual carriageway road and higher capacity junctions. Others would favour a different alignment, further west for the section between A370 and Highridge Common.
56. Both opponents and supporters raise environmental issues: the former refer to conflict with existing local and national environmental policies; the latter point out the damage and pollution currently caused by queuing and rat-running vehicles, especially HGVs, on unsuitable local roads.
57. In conclusion, there are strongly held views regarding the South Bristol Link. Most of the opposition to the scheme comes from local residents who understandably feel concern at the prospect of an increase in traffic outside their homes, and from those who regard Green Belt as sacrosanct. Support for the scheme is strongly expressed by businesses that regard it as a valuable way of helping regenerate South Bristol and improving access for their staff and deliveries. Despite many residents' opinion that the scheme would not benefit business, no business has responded to concur with this view.

Financial Implications

58. The estimated outturn capital scheme costs at the time of writing are shown in the following table, assuming construction 2014/15-2016/7 and inflation at 2.7% per annum. All costs and contributions would be split equally, 50/50, between Bristol City and North Somerset Councils.

Preferred Scheme Capital Costs

| Cost (£m) Out-turn | Source | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | Total |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Preparatory costs ¹ | RFA (reimbursement) | | | | | (2.2) | (0.6) | | (2.8) |
| | Local | 0.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.5 | | | 6.9 |
| Scheme costs ² | RFA ³ | | | | | 4.8 | 23.0 | 19.5 | 47.3 |
| | Local ⁴ | | | | | 0.3 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 3.1 |

Notes:

- The preparatory costs of £6.9m from Programme Entry to Conditional Approval and Final Approval have to be secured locally initially, but up to 50% of eligible preparatory costs can be reimbursed by DfT in arrears for successful bids; the above assumes a 40% return (£2.8m).
 - The scheme costs include a value of land based on its use for Green Belt agricultural use, not its possible development value (given the draft RSS, which would be much higher); land in Bristol is owned by the council. They also include the value output from a Quantified Risk Assessment (£6m), which reflects the current best estimate and likelihood of cost increases due to, for example, worse than anticipated ground conditions or higher utility diversion costs.
 - The DfT capital contribution is currently capped at £47.27m in RFA2; if scheme costs escalate, these are initially shared between the local authorities and DfT, but if costs escalate beyond a level agreed with DfT, these would be wholly borne by the local authorities.
59. As stated above, the councils would have to secure £6.9m for preparatory costs to secure Conditional and Final Approvals, but could receive a £2.8m reimbursement from DfT in arrears; this could be used to part-fund the local contribution to scheme costs that DfT requires or the councils could use it for other purposes. The local funding requirements will have to be underwritten by the councils in the bid, with the sources of funding assumed to be:

- Councils' capital
- Developer contributions (including BIA and sites in South Bristol).

Procurement and Operation

60. The procurement of the scheme involves the following major work streams:

- Infrastructure (e.g. the carriageways, structures, signals)
- Hardware systems (e.g. ticket machines)
- Rapid Transit services

- Client-side management of the Rapid Transit operation.
61. At the time of writing, the preferred approach for infrastructure would use a combination of 'design and build' for the infrastructure, together with selected use of existing framework contracts for ancillary construction and some of the hardware systems.
62. The Rapid Transit services would be procured on the same basis as that currently being established for the route between Ashton Vale and the city centre. To maintain quality, it is considered essential that the councils specify all aspects of the services and, hence, that services are contracted. A contracted service approach has the advantages of providing the ability for the councils to:
- Fully determine the service specification (including ticketing & fares);
 - Tailor service specification to budgetary and other constraints by tendering a range of specification variations (to counter over specifying and or tenders coming in over budget);
 - Provide incentives for the appointed operator to maintain operational performance of the service by use of financial penalties / rewards;
 - Contractually safeguard the provision and timing of the introduction of the Rapid Transit service;
 - Ensure value for money to the councils and that they secure a share of any operating surpluses arising from the investment;
 - Reduce conflict with operators of existing commercial bus services (such that they would not challenge the scheme as 'anti-competitive');
 - Reduce risks to both the operator and the councils in respect of cost and continued operational performance.
63. The SBL would be adopted and, hence, its maintenance costs would fall to the local authorities. The other revenue costs identified that could potentially fall upon the council are to support the Rapid Transit services; the latest modelling working suggests the following:
- The BIA Flyer would be a commercial service and pay an access fee to use the Rapid Transit between the A38, Long Ashton Park & Ride and the city centre;
 - The services to/from Hengrove Park might require an initial operating subsidy; this will be confirmed before bid submission.

Risk Management

64. A full Quantified Risk Assessment is being undertaken, but to-date some of the main risks and mitigation measures are considered to be:
- Lack of government funding (scheme delayed or cancelled) – risk accepted
 - Lack of local funding for preparatory costs (scheme delayed) - secure funding from council capital, developer contributions, other third parties (e.g. SWRDA)

- Lack of local funding for the local capital contribution (scheme delayed) - secure funding from council capital, developer contributions, other third parties (e.g. SWRDA)
- DfT delays in making decisions (scheme delayed) - close liaison with DfT, prompt replies to questions
- Changing political priorities (scheme delayed or cancelled) – risk accepted
- Difficulty in securing requisite statutory powers (scheme delayed) - follow appropriate processes for planning applications, Side Road Orders, Traffic Regulation Orders, etc
- Need for utility diversions (increased cost) – increase budget and incorporate into risk assessment
- Construction of railway under-bridge (increased cost, delay) – early and ongoing discussion with Network Rail incorporate into risk assessment.

Governance

65. The SBL project will continue to use the now well-established West of England governance arrangements for major schemes; it is anticipated that to meet DfT's reporting requirements, the lead authority would be North Somerset Council.

Next Steps

66. A report seeking approval to bid (to the DfT) will be taken to the meeting of the North Somerset Council Executive on 23rd March and the Bristol City Council Cabinet on 25th March 2010. Subject to endorsement at JTEC, finalisation of the bid document will continue, culminating in submission to the DfT at the end of March 2010.
67. Once a bid is submitted, there is a 3 stage preparatory process before DfT releases funds and scheme construction starts, namely:
- Programme Entry
 - Conditional Approval
 - Full Approval.
68. **Programme Entry** is when DfT conditionally agrees to fund a scheme having considered the bid submitted in March 2010. Further preparatory work is then required to secure **Conditional Approval**; namely, detail design, public engagement, obtaining statutory powers (e.g. Compulsory Purchase Orders, planning permission, public inquiry), method of procurement, delivery programme, updating and submitting the bid to DfT. With Conditional Approval secured, tenders for scheme construction have to be prepared, issued and a preferred bidder selected; a bid for **Full Approval** would then be submitted to DfT that contains the final confirmed scheme costs and forecast benefits.
69. Assuming that DfT judge the March 2010 bid for Programme Entry to be compliant, history suggests that DfT would take at least 6-months to grant 'Programme Entry', during which period DfT officials will be seeking clarification and asking further questions of the SBL project team.

70. With Programme Entry secured, the programme for the next phases of work would include the following:

- 2010, October Programme Entry, gear-up project team and start work on surveys and design
- 2011, continue survey and design work, prepare application for planning permission, public/stakeholder engagement
- 2012, planning permission, prepare applications for statutory powers
- 2013, public inquiry, receipt of inspector's decision and submit bid for Conditional Approval
- 2014, Conditional Approval, prepare and issue tender for scheme construction, submit bid for Final Approval
- 2015, Final Approval and construction start
- 2016, construction
- 2017, complete construction and open.

Recommendation

That Members:

1. Provide their views and comments on the proposed South Bristol Link major transport scheme bid.
2. Endorse the South Bristol Link major transport scheme and recommend the bid to the meetings of the North Somerset Council Executive on 23rd March 2010 and the Bristol City Council Cabinet on 25th March 2010.

Officer presenting the report:

Karuna Tharmananthar, Assistant Director North Somerset Council and Senior Responsible Owner for the South Bristol Link Project.

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Figure 1: South Bristol Link Preferred Option, January 2010

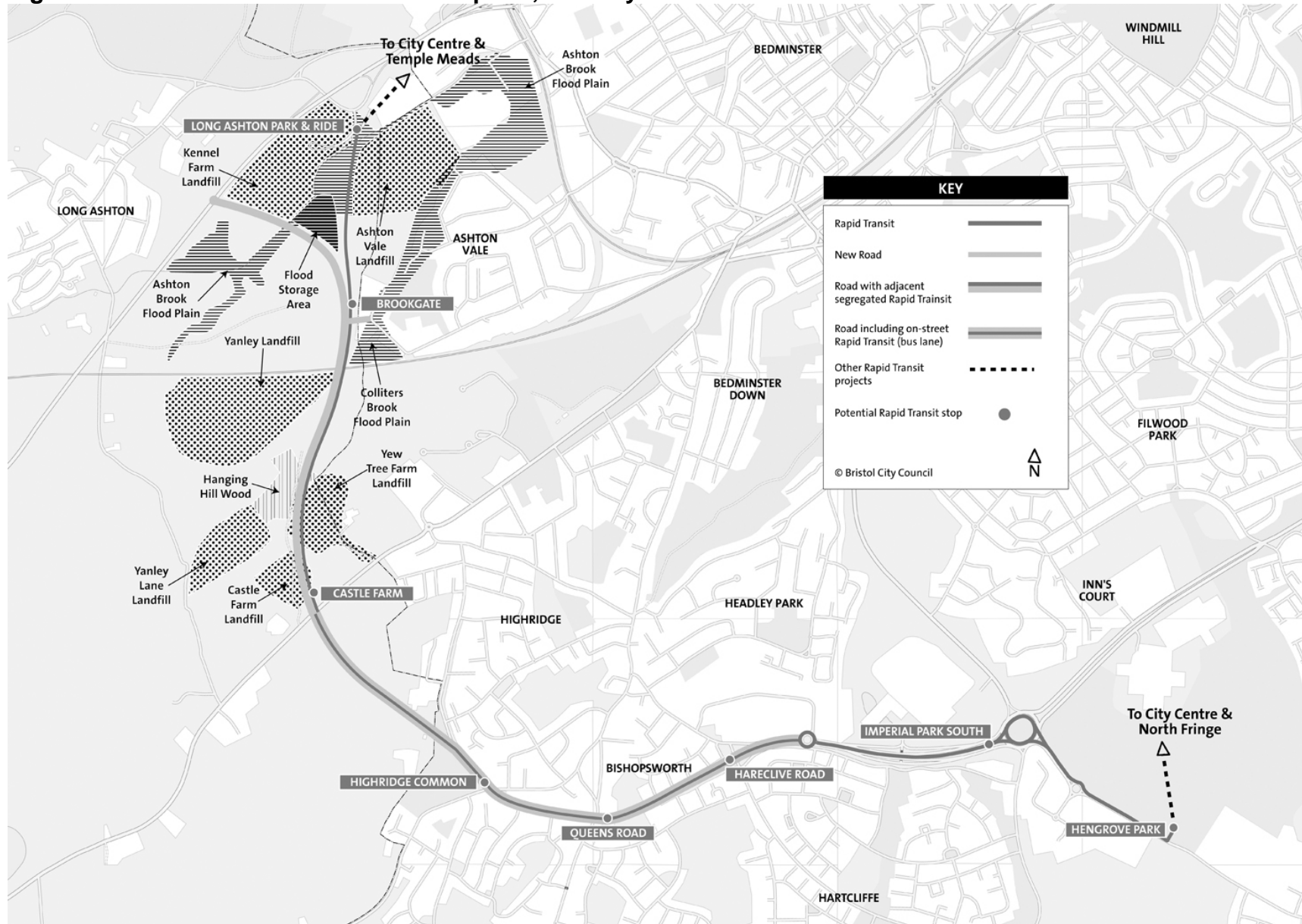


Figure 2: South Bristol Link Options, February 2009

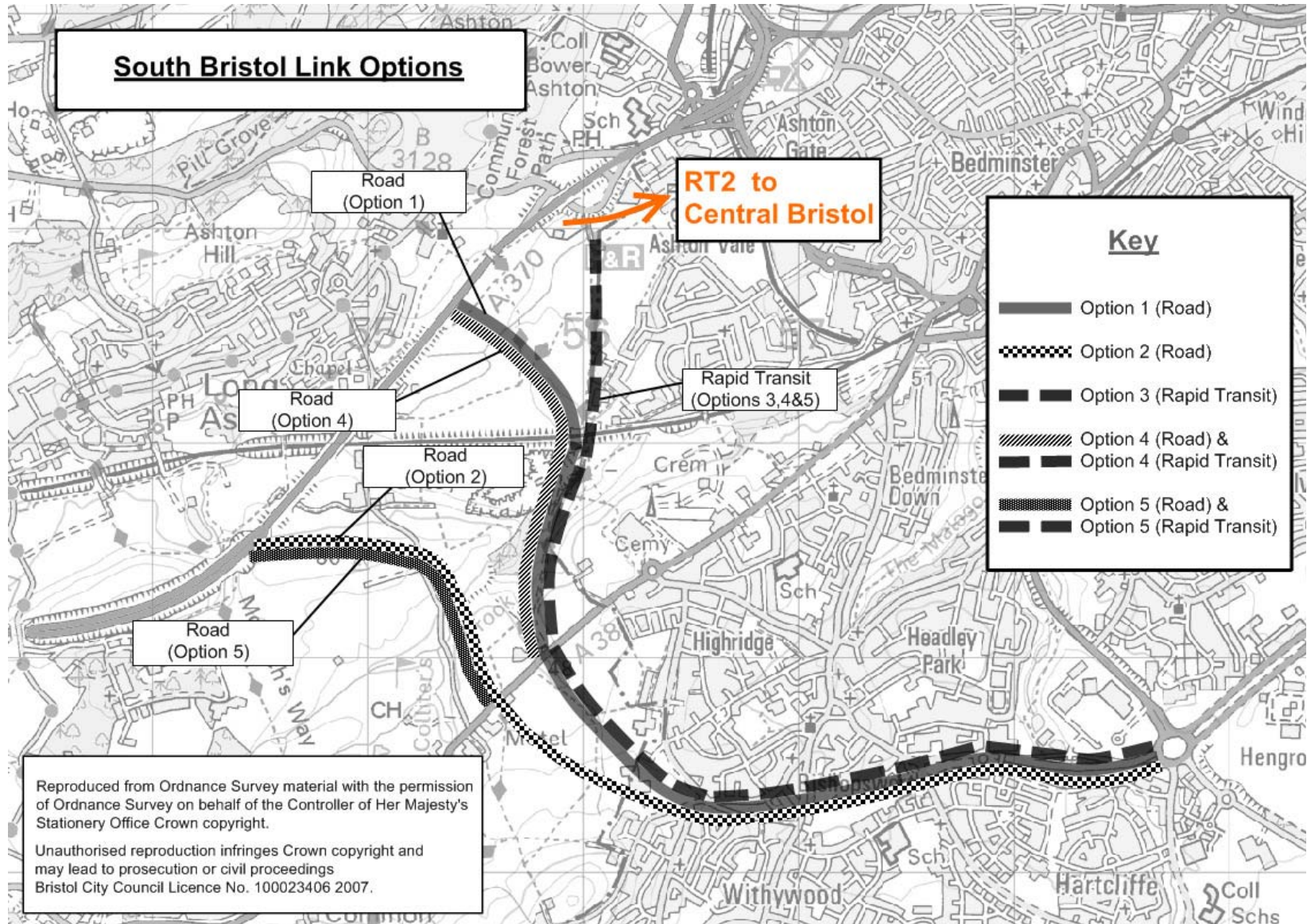


Figure 3: South Bristol Link Options for Further Appraisal, September 2009

