


Our Future Transport

West of England Sub Region

An initial overview towards the development of a
Transport Innovation Fund application

October 2007





our strong economy is set to grow,
bringing more opportunities
and more jobs...

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Introduction

The West of England sub region is made up of Bath and North East Somerset, the City of Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. An all-purpose unitary council governs each of these four areas. The four councils are working together as the West of England Partnership to tackle transport and other major strategic issues in the sub region.

The West of England has a bright future. Its strong economy is set to continue to grow bringing more opportunities and more jobs. This prosperity is good news but it has led to greater car ownership which means greater demands on our roads. We need to think now about how to manage the growing problem of traffic congestion to ensure that our economy, our quality of life and our environment are protected for future generations.

This document is part of a continuing discussion with the Department of Transport towards tackling the area's congestion challenges. It is the West of England's response to the Government's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) proposal to provide major investment in our transport systems. This will help us stem the growth of congestion, deliver the significant improvements our public transport services need and improve accessibility to key services in both urban and rural areas.

In this document we set out:

- » The area's future
- » The scale of congestion and its impact
- » Our vision for transport over the next 20 years
- » TIF proposition
- » What we are already doing
- » What we are planning to do next
- » Next steps

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Our area's future

1m people
already live in the
West of England
with 190,000
more expected by
2026

About a million people live in the West of England and it provides around 500,000 jobs. Most of these people live in the major urban areas of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare and in the area's seven towns but about one in six live in villages and the wider countryside. Forecasts suggest that by 2026 our successful economy will support 100,000 more jobs, an increase of 26%. The area's population could grow by about 190,000, an increase of 19%. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) consequently proposes large-scale housing development for the sub region, with the construction of 92,500 new dwellings.

The West of England is the major economic 'powerhouse' in the South West but road congestion is a cost to the economy. The sub region also contains areas of significant deprivation and disadvantage which suffer from poor transport links. Regeneration measures for these areas need to be closely linked to on-going economic development in the wider sub region.

This area also has a unique heritage and character, including Bristol's industrial and maritime past, Bath's status as a world heritage site and the rich traditions of North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. The people who live in the West of England are proud of this heritage and the quality of life that is generally enjoyed here. If this is to be preserved, action needs to be taken to tackle the expected growth in traffic congestion through the introduction of a range of measures designed to reduce demand on our roads and increase the availability and quality of public transport. This will in turn contribute to delivering the sub-region's wider social, economic and environmental vision.

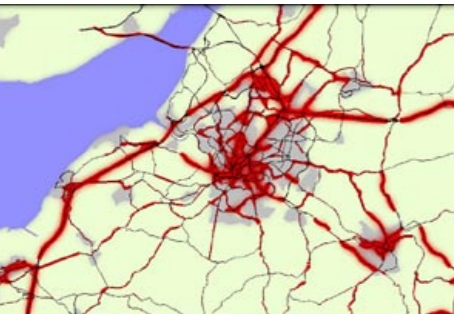
To continue this success and achieve our aspirations for economic, environmental and social development, we require an ambitious vision for our future transport that is set out in this document.



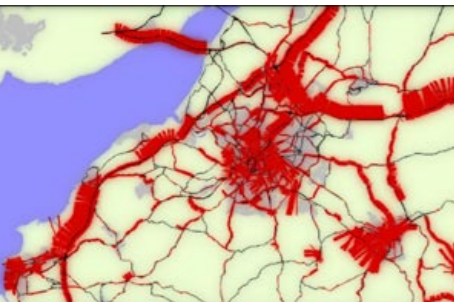
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How bad is congestion in the West of England?

Areas of severe traffic congestion now



Forecast areas of severe traffic congestion in 2016 without TIF transport improvements



At least £350m is lost to our economy each year due to time spent in congestion and this is expected to rise to almost £600m by 2016

Congestion in the West of England area is already a problem and with projected increases in population and employment, it is set to get much worse. It is already having an adverse impact on how we live and work and if we do nothing, it will deteriorate even further.

This is already apparent in central Bristol and Bath. Poor air quality, delays and unreliable journey times are placing huge pressures on existing infrastructure and services. Accessibility to key services and facilities is becoming increasingly difficult for many, including those in rural areas and the one in five households in our area without access to a car.

Overall the volume of traffic on the area's roads has grown by 21% over the last 10 years compared to 16% nationally. As a result of a successful economy and new development the average speed in Bristol's urban area is 15 miles per hour during peak periods, the lowest in England outside London. In recent years the level of growth in the North Fringe, particularly in terms of industrial and commercial development, has led to increasingly unsustainable patterns of commuting and consequent traffic congestion. This area has experienced traffic growth of 30% over the last ten years. In Bristol and Bath the air quality has deteriorated significantly over the last three years. Currently, the average West of England household spends the equivalent of five days and nights each year in traffic jams. Delays and unreliable journey times caused by congestion are also costing businesses in the area real money. This is to the tune of at least £350m per year to the West of England economy and is expected to rise to almost £600m by 2016. To continue this trend puts the health of the economy at risk. Public transport is also badly affected by congestion impacting on reliability and journey times. This in turn affects public confidence in public transport and acts as a barrier to encouraging passenger modal shift.

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What is our vision?

Our vision is to provide a significant change in the delivery of transport across the West of England

An extensive technical study was undertaken to provide an assessment of the current and future strategic transport needs of the West of England area up to 2031. Known as the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study (GBSTS), this was commissioned by the Government Office for the South West (GOSW) in partnership with the Highways Agency (HA), South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and the West of England authorities, and was completed in 2006. GBSTS supported and demonstrated the need for significant investment in the area with much of this investment required within the next ten years just to tackle existing problems, let alone support the proposed growth in population, jobs and housing.

In 2006, the West of England authorities drew on the work of this study to develop the Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP). Consultation was carried out seeking views on strategy, funding and priorities from local people, businesses, transport stakeholders, health and education providers and a wide variety of interest groups.

The consultation findings showed there was general support for the need to inject more funding into the West of England's transport system. This could include demand management options as part of a comprehensive package of measures with a focus on delivering value for money through making best use of existing transport networks. In addition to the objectives outlined left, the package aims to:

- » Ensure that alternatives to the car are a realistic first choice for the majority of trips
- » Offer real travel choices – affordable, safe, secure, reliable, simple to use and available to all
- » Meet both rural and urban needs

Our vision for the next 20 years is illustrated in the diagram overleaf. It is estimated that to achieve our objectives it will cost a total of £2.5bn. Smaller schemes and improvements can be implemented through JLTP funding in the

Our future transport vision aims to:

- » Tackle congestion
- » Improve road safety for all road users
- » Improve air quality
- » Improve access to job opportunities
- » Help us to get to work and school efficiently
- » Strengthen the local economy
- » Improve our quality of life



2026 transport vision

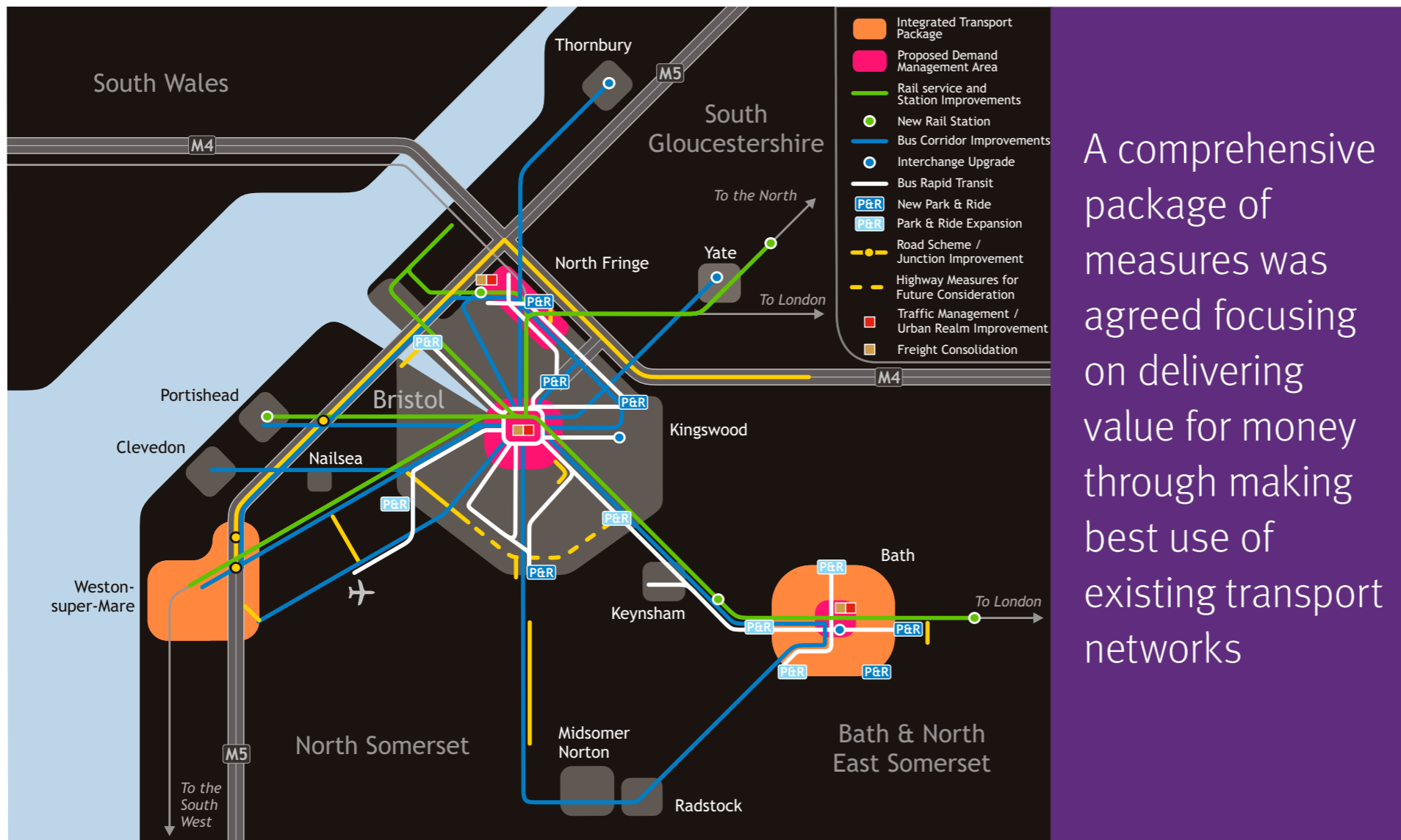
short term but major schemes can only be funded through separate applications to Government such as the Transport Innovation Fund.

In meeting this vision, we acknowledge the need to curb our future reliance upon the car as a preferred mode of travel by significantly improving public transport services and ensuring these improvements provide a real alternative to travel by private car. The plan proposes the extension of parking controls in the next three to five years and that possible charging schemes should be introduced within the next five to ten years. Both these approaches were identified in the consultation as a priority.

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The Transport Innovation Fund

Our transport vision to 2026 will cost £2.5bn. Existing and committed sources of funding already account for over £750m of this



In 'The Future of Transport' White Paper (2004), the Secretary of State announced the creation of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF). The fund aims to help local authorities reduce congestion on the road network by supporting innovative local transport packages that combine demand management initiatives, such as road user charging and workplace parking charges, with better public transport services and other measures to encourage us to use alternatives to the car.

Any local authority that wishes to apply for money from the fund has to put forward a proposal to be considered by the Government.

Do we need it?

Our transport vision for the sub region is estimated to cost £2.5bn up to 2026. The money allocated to committed schemes and funding from other organisations and bodies already accounts for over £750m of our needs - assuming existing funding continues at the same level up to 2026 - there is still a shortfall of at least £1.7 billion (**Funding Gap - graph overleaf**). The available funding for committed schemes include the JLTP, Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN), Bath Package, other Regional Funding Allocation prioritised schemes, Weston-super-Mare to Yate rail infrastructure and service improvements, and developer-funded projects.

Over the next 10 years TIF can start to help us bridge this £1.7 billion gap (**Funding Solution with TIF - graph overleaf**). It will enable us to go further to improve our public transport services and implement other transport measures to maintain our quality of life into the future and preserve the heritage of our area.

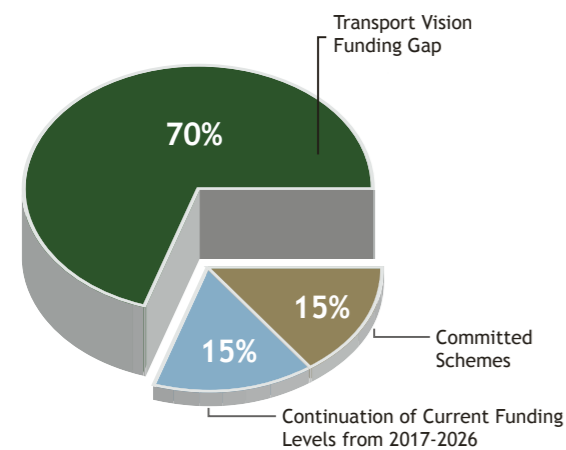
TIF proposals can help bridge this gap, providing £840m by 2018

Realising the TIF package also provides us with the springboard to further reduce the funding gap over the next 20 years through Government funds, annual revenue streams, developer contributions and other sources of funding.

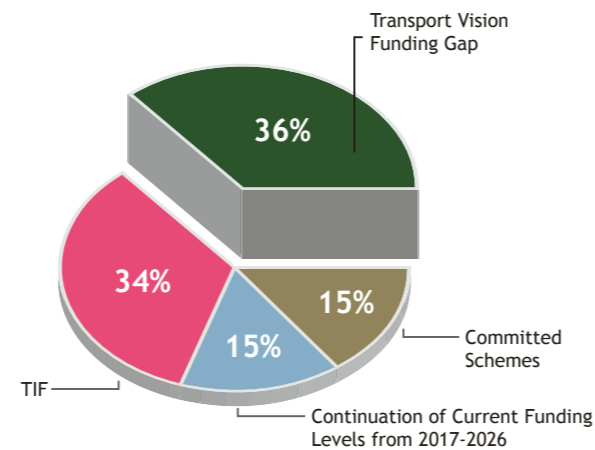
Preliminary consultation with the general public as part of the JLTP preparation showed 62% of respondents supported the exploration of a bid for TIF funding as a means of helping to meet this investment shortfall.

More recently, Business West in its Transport Policy document “The West of England Transport Challenge” has been broadly supportive of the principle, provided appropriate and viable alternatives to car travel are in place prior to its introduction. Business West will “support the concept of demand management measures and lobby for clear business involvement in the development of schemes and in current studies on road user charging”. However, they have serious doubts about the efficacy of Work Place Parking Charges, and therefore further detailed consultation with the business community will need to take place throughout the development of any future schemes.

Funding gap (no TIF)



Funding solution (with TIF)



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What are we already doing?

A number of transport measures have already been agreed with funds allocated to implement them

Our transport vision includes a number of measures which have already been agreed and have funds allocated to implement them. It also commits to a number of major schemes that still need approval by Government to implement. A description of these measures and schemes is listed and illustrated below.

Measures implemented each year based on existing levels of local authority funding

Each year, the four local authorities commit funding to ongoing smaller scale transport improvements which include a variety of activities and programmes.

JLTP measures

The package of transport measures agreed and being implemented through the Joint Local Transport Plan are various small investment projects ranging from cycle lanes to bus priority measures to road safety schemes. To seek to implement the 20 year vision relying on current funding would take over 200 years.

Major schemes

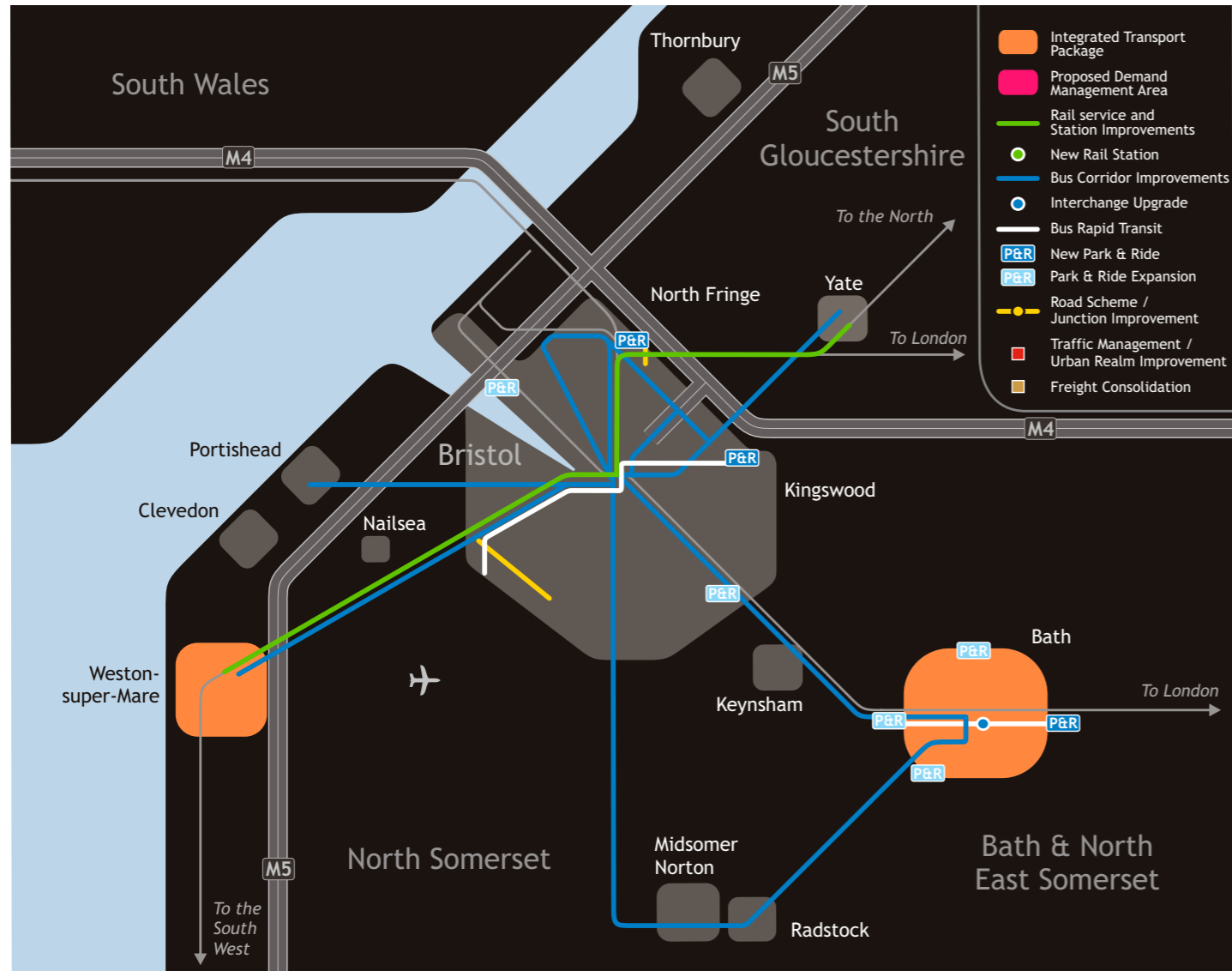
Major schemes (costing over £5m) are funded by bids to Government and prioritised within each region (in our case the South West) according to their contribution to regional objectives.

In recognising the West of England’s role within the region, eight schemes, estimated to cost over £200m, have been identified as priorities. These schemes will be developed and applications for funding submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) within the next five years:



JLTP committed schemes include funding applications for 8 major priority projects within the next 5 years

JLTP committed schemes



BRT will feature segregated bus lanes to provide fast and reliable journey times...



To seek to implement the 20 year vision relying on current funding would take over 200 years

- » **The Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN)** – a package of bus priority and other improvements on ten sub regional corridors. These ten corridors serve a much wider bus network, with 70 different services benefiting from the GBBN improvements. Subject to final approval from the DfT it is hoped that scheme implementation will start in late 2007.
- » **The Bath Package** – a range of measures aimed at improving alternatives to the car by providing a modern, integrated and easy-to-use public transport system. The scheme received first-stage approval from the DfT in early October 2007 with implementation planned to start in 2009, after further development work to obtain full approval.
- » **South Bristol Link Road Phases 1 and 2 (A370 – A4174 Hartcliffe Roundabout)** - improved orbital access in South Bristol and to Bristol International Airport, and to support regeneration and deal with traffic growth. It is planned to submit a major bid for this scheme in 2009 with implementation due to start in 2011, subject to detailed research looking at economic and environmental impacts.
- » **Weston-super-Mare Package Phase 1** – a range of measures aimed at supporting sustainable development, including improved interchange facilities, car parking and improvements at Worle station, improvements to bus routes to the town centre via new development areas and a park and ride. It is planned to submit a major bid for this scheme in 2008 with implementation due to start in 2011.
- » **3 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes** - starting with a scheme linking Emerson's Green and Ashton Vale, the BRT routes will feature segregated bus lanes on parts of the routes to provide fast and reliable journey times. Building on the BRT elements of the Bath Package, it is planned to submit a major scheme bid for the sub region's second BRT route in 2008 with implementation between 2011 and 2014.

Other schemes

There are other schemes attracting other sources of funding such as rail service improvements by operators or other transport infrastructure improvements resulting from private developments such as Southgate Interchange in Bath.

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What are we planning to do next?

TIF proposals include measures which look at transport in the round

Changing our travel habits will be challenging and will entail significantly higher levels of transport investment and a major change in public transport services in our sub region.

The West of England's vision for transport over the next 20 years is to tackle traffic congestion and improve air quality. Measures to address this should aim to be equitable, improve access to jobs and key services for all, support regeneration and economic growth and improve our overall quality of life. TIF provides us with an opportunity to identify and deliver a package of transport measures which help achieve this by preventing congestion taking a stranglehold on our local economy.

In order to tackle this growing congestion and provide real travel alternatives to the car, demand management measures and public transport improvements must go hand in hand. Demand management would only be implemented when real transport alternatives for people travelling during charging periods are available.

Measures seen as a prerequisite before charging schemes are introduced are to include key BRT routes; extensive bus network improvement schemes; rail improvements; new park and rides and improved routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Details of further transport improvements and other longer-term measures to be introduced by 2018 are indicated on the **Committed Schemes plus TIF** map at the end of this section.

Transport improvements

To provide attractive alternatives to the car TIF investigatory work has confirmed the need for an extensive and wide-ranging package of transport improvements measures totalling at least £840m at this initial stage. Many of these measures would need to be introduced before the proposed TIF road user and workplace parking charge schemes to provide genuine travel choices. They include public transport service improvements, broader concessionary fare schemes and other incentives, geared to encourage us to change in our behaviour:



Measures include hotspot demand management schemes such as phased charging for road use and workplace parking

- » **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** – a network of nine core routes plus route extensions supported by park and ride sites.
- » **Rail** – extra capacity on existing and additional services, the reopening of rail lines such as the Portishead line, new stations and improved facilities at existing stations.
- » **Park and ride** – three new and five expanded park and ride sites served by bus or BRT, improved service frequencies and new orbital services, and opportunities, where possible, to integrate these with the rail network.
- » **Bus** – bus services from outlying towns such as Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon, Portishead, Keynsham, Yate, Thornbury, Norton Radstock and Nailsea are key to ensuring good public transport access into the charged areas. Measures include London bus-style improvements over an extensive part of the bus network, more frequent services, smartcard ticketing, an extended concessionary fare scheme for young people, interchange sites, and rural services based on demand.
- » **Smarter choices** – expansion of personalised travel planning and workplace travel plans, car club schemes, and more public information and marketing.
- » **Walkways** – new and improved routes and other improvements to our public spaces.
- » **Cycleways** – new and improved routes, cycle tracks, cycle parking, interchange facilities and promotional activities.
- » **Highway measures** – new road schemes and highway capacity measures at 'pinch points' such as the remodelling of Bristol city centre, motorway junction improvements such as M5 junctions 19 and 21, the early delivery of schemes such as the Stoke Gifford Relief Road and improved road maintenance.
- » **Other schemes** – improving the efficiency of the road network through Intelligent Transport Systems, freight consolidation and measures which reduce the impact of displaced parking in residential areas close to road user charging areas.





Demand management

Much of the investigative work already carried out with initial TIF funding has found that high priority measures which address traffic congestion ‘hotspots’ would be efficient at tackling concentrated levels of congestion and deliver realistic and attractive alternatives to car travel in the short to medium term. Whilst this will not address all congestion occurring in the sub region in the first instance, it will reduce chronic levels of congestion in the worst affected areas at the busiest times. The TIF development work has included a detailed investigation of congestion – where and when it occurs now, and what is forecast to happen in the future. This work showed that although congestion is widespread in urban areas and around the motorway networks there are three identifiable hotspots in central Bristol, central Bath and the North Fringe. As a starting point, the authorities have therefore been seeking to identify focused demand management and complementary sub-regional packages of transport measures. This is based around these ‘hotspots’ as well as being based upon a high level appraisal of a package of sub regional measures.

Ultimately, and subject to realistic alternatives to the car being made available, there are advantages in a system whereby drivers across the sub region are charged according to the level of congestion on the network and based on the length of time, distance and location of their road usage. This system, as suggested in the GBSTS study, would both reflect our individual usage and enable us to make choices about our lifestyles and travel choices.

However, it is recognised that the concept of managing congestion to this extent is a complicated issue and requires complex systems and technology to make the measures to deal with it as equitable as possible. The TIF proposals outlined in this document seek to start the process towards a more flexible system in the long-term.

Since such a sophisticated system is unlikely to be feasible for at least another 10 years, it is proposed that demand management gradually progresses beyond the ‘hotspot’ approach as the technology and experience develops (as identified and tested through the GBSTS). This approach would aim to tackle the problem of wider areas of congestion and involve a much broader package of transport improvements.

Full consultation with residents and businesses will be undertaken prior to the introduction of any demand management scheme.

Other transport improvements measures look to broaden our transport choice



TIF proposals aim to raise the money via a combination of public funding and revenue raised from charging for road usage and workplace parking

Road user charging

As a means to address congestion and provide funding for a package of high quality alternatives to car use, road user charging schemes are proposed for central Bristol and Bath once significant additional public transport is in place. The operational details of these schemes are still under consideration but a weekday morning road user charge during the peak period of approximately 7-10am could be implemented, with a daily charge of around £4.

Depending on the scheme adopted, road users would either pay each time they crossed a cordon or charging boundary or purchase an area licence covering travel within the charging area. To ensure that the system is easily understood and simpler to implement, the same operational system and general conditions are being considered for both central Bristol and Bath.

Workplace parking charge

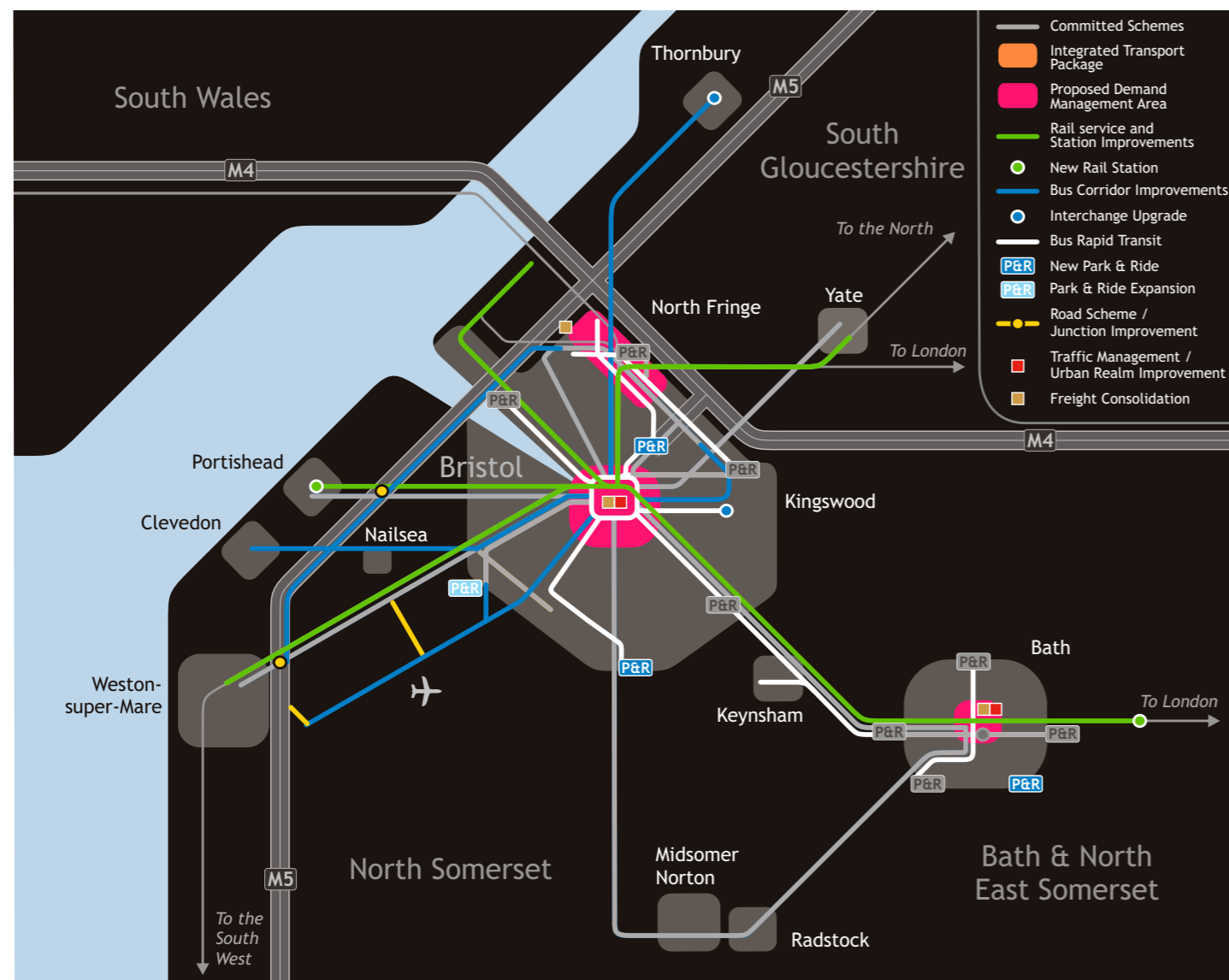
The dispersed nature of the key employment sites, and the mix of businesses, housing and other land uses, makes the North Fringe area less well suited to a cordon or area licence-type road user charging scheme.

Nevertheless, given the high rate of traffic growth experienced in the area and current and forecast levels of congestion, it is recognised that this ‘hotspot’ also needs to be addressed.

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What's next?

Committed schemes plus TIF



The proposals outline the authorities' initial assessment of the measures required to reduce congestion and realise a step change in public transport...

The TIF proposals outlined in this document are the authorities' initial assessment of the measures required to provide congestion reduction and realise a step change in public transport by securing funding to help move towards the sub region's transport vision for the next 20 years.

Details of the charging system boundaries, design, timings and costs are all to be considered further as part of the development of the formal TIF submission or business case to the DfT in early 2008.

Over the coming months, the proposals will be developed further into a full business case application document which is expected to be submitted to the DfT in early 2008. To assist us in this process, we will be discussing our initial plans with a range of stakeholders to help us refine the details of the measures. Our discussions will include an analysis of what appropriate and robust governance arrangements will be required to ensure the effective operation of the measures outlined, and to address public acceptability of the package as a whole.

The submission of the business case to the DfT will trigger a three-year process, during which comprehensive community consultation will be undertaken across the sub region. The first consultation phase is expected to start during the first half of 2008 to seek community and other stakeholder views on the TIF application. Further details of the TIF development process are outlined below.

Next steps

Outline timetable of the TIF development process:

- » October 2007 – outline proposition submitted to the DfT
- » October – December 2007 – refinement of outline TIF proposals
- » Early 2008 – business case submission to the DfT
- » Spring/Summer 2008 – community and stakeholder consultation
- » 2008 – 2010 – ongoing community and stakeholder consultation and technical refinement of package schemes

Information can be supplied on request in alternative formats - for example Braille, audio, large print, community languages - by calling:

0800 019 3235

To register for future updates:

- » Call our hotline on: 0800 019 3235
- » visit www.westofengland.org/transport
- » Write to (*no stamp required*):
West of England - Transport Innovation Fund
Freepost, (BS 6529)
Bristol
BS1 5BR

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