

Great Western Main Line Forthcoming Investments – a local authority perspective

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Infrastructure, Connectivity and
Transport Forum

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Themes of the presentation

Swindon-Kemble railway re-doubling –
service benefits and opportunities

Overview of the Great Western Main Line
electrification

Work of the Great Western Partnership

Swindon-Kemble railway re-doubling – Passenger services and benefits

1. The re-doubling of the Swindon-Kemble railway will support a reliable and robust timetable on this route.

The Swindon-Kemble link is part of the strategic rail network, connecting Cheltenham and Gloucester with Swindon and the core Great Western Main Line railway onto London.

The current single tracked section only allows one train per hour in each direction.

2. Greater number of through services

- From 2017, Swindon will have an additional train per hour to London as all Cheltenham - London services will run as hourly through services using the new high-speed trains procured through the Inter-City Express Project (IEP).
- Outside the peak periods, there is currently only one through train between Cheltenham – London every other hour, with a local service running between Cheltenham and Swindon in the alternate hour.

3. Greater service frequencies between Swindon-Kemble

An opportunity to enhance the frequency of rail services from Swindon to Cheltenham Spa for connections to the Midlands and the North in the future, particularly at peak periods.

This option could emerge as possibility through the new franchise for the Greater Western.

4. Operational and reliability - Electrification and Engineering works

Whilst the electrification works take place on the approaches to and through the Severn Tunnel, the re-doubling works will provide the necessary capacity to operate a diversionary route for South Wales bound trains as well as an hourly London-Swindon-Gloucester-Cheltenham service.

This will enable reliable connections to South Wales and Gloucestershire whenever the Severn Tunnel is closed (for routine/emergency engineering works).

Network Rail-Local Authority relations

A stakeholder session was held with the Network Rail project team and Swindon Borough Council Officers in late July 2011. Similar meetings due to held other local authorities along the route.

Regular stakeholder update meetings will take place during the re-doubling works.

- **Great Western Main Line Electrification**
- July 2009: The former Secretary of State for Transport announced a £1.1bn plan for electrification projects – including sections of the Great Western Main Line.
- May 2010 – General Election – Coalition Government placed electrification programme on hold – return on investment review.
- 25 November 2010: Confirmation by Philip Hammond, the Secretary of State for Transport, of electrification from London Paddington – Didcot, Newbury and Oxford.
- 1 March 2011 – Philip Hammond announced that electrification would extend from Didcot to Bristol (via Bath and Bristol Parkway routes) and Cardiff.

Great Western Main Line electrification – Indicative timeframe for works

London Paddington-Maidenhead – this will be covered by Crossrail

2016: Maidenhead to Newbury, Didcot, Oxford and Bristol

2017: Bristol to Cardiff

Works will take place overnight to minimise disruption

Electric-diesel ‘bi modal trains’ will run on Swansea-London and Cheltenham-London routes

Great Western Partnership



Cardiff, Bristol and Swindon Councils have been working together with local economic development agencies since early 2010 to campaign for improvements to the Great Western Main Line railway – achieve faster journey times, improved connectivity.

The GWP worked with the private sector and local business representatives – such as Swindon Chamber of Commerce (in January 2011) - to collate a campaign letter in an effort secure electrification from Didcot to Bristol and into South Wales.

This letter was widely received

Western rail access to Heathrow Airport and incremental upgrades along the Great Western Main Line

- Lobbying in support for a western rail access to Heathrow International Airport. A letter signed by the Leaders of Cardiff, Bristol and Swindon Councils on behalf of the GWP was sent to the Secretary of State for Transport in July 2011.
- An opportunity to tie-in with the aspirations of local authorities and the private sector in the wider Thames Valley - for enhancements to the London-Didcot section of the Great Western Main Line.

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