

## Strategic road and rail infrastructure

Local engagement, regional representation, global opportunity

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This statement outlines the Thames Valley Chamber's policy position for strategic road and railway infrastructure and the implications for business based in the sub-region. The purpose is to provide partners and stakeholders including media channels with a position statement which to draw upon.

### Background / Current Position

The Thames Valley has consistently been one of the highest performing economies in the UK. Outside of London, the region out-performs most other UK regions on established performance criteria including for annual GVA growth and employment growth and retains higher than average numbers employment in the key-sectors driving the UK economy.

The UK Government must continue to invest in the Thames Valley if it is to help deliver a stronger economy and create the conditions where successful business can emerge and grow. Ensuring Thames Valley businesses also stay is predicated by Government backing them and investing in the long-term future of the region (and UK) through sustained levels of infrastructure investment.

Whilst recent new investment has and will have a significant impact on the UK and Thames Valley economy many of these schemes were deemed long overdue. The growth of the Thames Valley in the past 25 years has not been matched by commensurate investment in the region's road, rail and telecommunications infrastructure. To effectively compete with the world's premier economic sub-regions, it's imperative that a dynamic infrastructure programme is in place.

### Matching Growth with Investment

Thames Valley Chamber supports sustained investment in strategic infrastructure projects that bring economic growth and prosperity to the sub-region and UK-economy as a whole, without compromising the environment impact on the area.

#### **Specifically, the Chamber strongly supports:**

- The third runway at London Heathrow (LHR) offering every effort to secure the relevant permissions and investment to build the third runway in the most efficient timescale possible.
- The need for additional parallel investment at London Gatwick, including the construction of a second runway, based on a clear evidence base and needs assessment.

- The need to work with relevant bodies to help secure investment for the construction of West Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) and its timely delivery without further delay. Subject to details, and the evidence base, proposals for improvements to southern rail access.
- The Great Western (GW) line electrification programme and additional investment along the GW to free capacity to London and reduce congestion at Paddington. This includes bringing Swindon within *'the golden hour'* of London and lobbying for the scheduled deferrals for the Oxford to Didcot Parkway and Thames Valley branches (Windsor and Henley) to be lifted.
- The improvement of road safety and capacity of the A34 Trunk Road through Oxfordshire, which is a main arterial route connecting the city with the M40 / M4 and the south coast ports.
- The expedient delivery of the M4 smart motorway programme between junctions 3-12 against the current timetable<sup>1</sup> and without any unnecessary delay or impact. We welcome the initiative that will bring with it increased road safety and more efficient traffic flows along the M4 and as a result A4 corridor. Highways England's timetable (02/2017) indicates main works will start in late autumn 2017, with a completion date of the end of March 2022. For more information visit <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m4-junctions-3-12-smart-motorway/>

For further information on this statement or the Thames Valley Chamber please contact Gareth Ralphs on 01753 870 500 or email at: [garethralphs@tvchamber.co.uk](mailto:garethralphs@tvchamber.co.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> Highways England's timetable (02/2017) indicates main works will start in late autumn 2017, with a completion date of the end of March 2022. For more information click [HERE](#).