

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
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Stephen Morgan MP
Shadow Minister for Rail
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Delivered via email: stephen.morgan.mp@parliament.uk

1st November 2023

Dear Stephen Morgan MP,

Western Rail Link to London Heathrow

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Shadow Minister for Rail - we wish you all the success in your new role. We have enjoyed a good relationship with your predecessor, Tan Dhesi MP, with whom we continue to work in his capacity as both local MP and chair of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).

Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) has been a longstanding supporter of the WRLtH project. Through our dedicated business-led working group, at the forefront of championing its timely delivery, supported by business and stakeholders across all the beneficiary areas outlined below, we remain committed to delivering WRLtH.

The national [benefits of the WRLtH scheme](#) are well-established – notably 14m beneficiaries across the South East, South West, Wales and the Midlands and both a levelling-up and carbon-reduction project - and consistently presented through our work and that of the APPG.

We remain encouraged that the project retains [cross-party backing](#). Referencing your most recent written questions, WRLtH will also contribute to the local and national economy, will improve connectivity speed (and safety) to the UK's only hub airport, and has the potential to reduce the cost of delivering a rail infrastructure project.

You will be aware of the full background of the scheme which included, in January 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Treasury approving a business case. Prior to COVID intervening we were due to progress to a Development Consent Order (DCO) application, subject only to an agreed funding statement.

Earlier this autumn, the DfT provided us with the original data for the case (approved in late 2019) and invited our WRLtH working group to progress with a new economic assessment using current data. We are currently fundraising to start this updated research and considering a business-led case for the timely delivery and costing of the project.

We also believe the timely delivery of the WRLtH project has the potential to be a significant distinguishing factor in the upcoming election and for the Labour Party if included in its manifesto, a strong statement to regional development and sustainable infrastructure.

We welcome the opportunity of speaking with you directly and introducing you to our working group chair – Ruth Bagley, who can provide you with a fuller background and update on our work programme moving forward into 2024. We would also welcome you joining one of our virtual working group meetings.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Britton
Chief Executive
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group

About the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) is one of the largest accredited Chambers within the UK and the only accredited Chamber of Commerce for the Thames Valley region. The Chamber is a proven centre of excellence for trade and inward investment services.

Representing over 4,000 companies in membership, with an economy estimated in size to be more than £83,848m (2015), it is home to over 115,000 businesses, including: 11 of the world's top 15 tech companies; the No.1 University in the world (Oxford); fastest growing city (Reading) in the UK (EY); once again, the two highest performing cities (Oxford and Reading) according to PwC; the second largest trading city in the UK (Slough); the most productive city per capita (Slough) (Centre for Cities) and the No.1 region, outside of London, for attracting inward investment. In addition, the Thames Valley Chamber credits a range of impressive statistics:

- 295,000 combined number of staff employed by members.
- 5000+ number of active trade customers.
- £3,847,682,487 – the value of Chamber facilitated exports during 2022.
- Average 150 new trade customers each year.
- 183 countries trading with our customers.
- 83 sectors represented by members and international trade customers.
- Consistently one of the UK's most attractive locations for attracting inward investment.
- 65% of international companies setting up or expanding in the Thames Valley have been supported by TVCC.