

## MAIN REPORT CONTENTS

### Background

- 1.0 Local Authorities across England are responding to Government's request for more strategic thinking about transport investment priorities to improve regional productivity and sustainable economic growth by joining up to become Sub-national Transport Bodies (STB).
- 1.1 The role of a STB is to provide the strategic leadership by providing one single voice when discussing strategic transport infrastructure requirements with Government. This will be supported by the production of a robust regional evidence base and a long-term Strategic Transport Plan.
- 1.2 In response, Government has said STBs will be given 'unprecedented access' to decision-making processes when developing national investment strategies and have a 'key role' in advising on the allocation of monies from the National Roads Fund (established from 2020/21) to the Major Road Network.
- 1.3 Bristol City Council officers have been working with other local authorities including Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and in the West of England to establish the principle of establishing a STB.

### Western Gateway Shadow STB

- 1.4 The logic for the formation of two STBs covering the South West was explored in detail through the ADEPT (Development Directors) South West Board and discussed with the Department for Transport.
- 1.5 The Western Gateway area is home to over 2.6 million people and is set for a step change in prosperity and productivity through an ambitious growth agenda over the next 20 years delivering 260,000 new homes and over 150,000 new jobs. It is both a highly desirable destination as well as a facilitator of movement through nationally significant travel corridors. The Gateway area links England's South Coast to the Midlands; London and the South East to South Wales and the South West Peninsula to the rest of the UK.
- 1.6 The strength of the Western Gateway area will be its ability to speak with one voice to Government on strategic transport priorities. This will be achieved through increased collaborative working between research institutions, the Local Enterprise Partnerships and local government which will ensure that transport is not a barrier but an accelerator of growth.

### Emerging Transport Priorities of the Shadow STB

- 1.7 An STB officer group has been formed to oversee the emerging shadow STB and identify the key challenges which will need to be addressed in a Strategic Transport

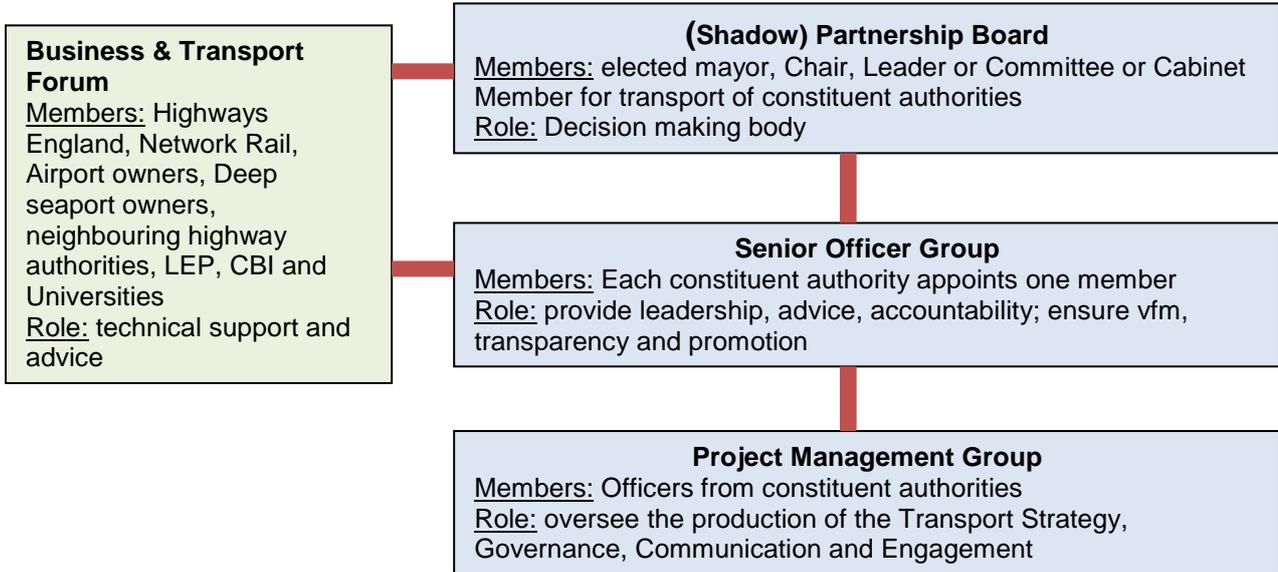
Strategy. The challenges identified are outlined in the draft prospectus included in Appendix I.1. This includes:

- 1.8 **Improving metro connectivity** - As the population of the Western Gateway area grows there will be increased need to travel within the area. Servicing local connectivity is vitally important and will include the opening up of passenger transport routes, increasing service frequencies and ensuring new communities have access to a full range of travel choices. It will reduce demand on the M5 as the demand for people travelling between the two areas is expected to increase over the next 20 years.
- 1.9 **Improving network resilience** - Resilience in this context is broadly described in terms of journey time reliability on strategic travel corridors and the opportunity to manage existing and forecasted demand. Addressing this will have a positive impact for Bristol and improve the business case for any future investment.
- 1.10 **Improving access to Sea and Air ports** - There are no motorway connections to Bournemouth Airport or the Port of Poole and the existing strategic road network connection experiences resilience issues. Addressing this challenge and providing better connectivity with the Port of Bristol and other South Coast ports will benefit the Western Gateway authorities by improving access to international markets, better supporting local businesses. Bristol International Airport is the largest regional airport in the South West with significant expansion plans. Connectivity is a major issue for the airport. It has no direct access onto the motorway network. Addressing this challenge will improve international connectivity and economic potential for the whole region.
- 1.11 **Improving strategic connectivity** - The Western Gateway area is a crossroads of national connectivity. Prioritising local transport investments to remove pinch points within these strategic corridors creates gateways of economic activity by opening up new and improving existing pathways to local, national and international markets resulting in economic success and prosperity for all. Addressing this challenge will benefit Bristol as it improves national connectivity. As a collective the STB will add further weight to BCC's priorities and promote dialogue with neighbouring areas, Highways England and Network Rail.
- 1.12 **Improving digital technology and innovation** - The Western Gateway area will take a collective approach to the development and delivery of transformational technology to provide for the transport systems of the future.

#### **Governance arrangement for the Shadow STB**

- 1.13 Appendix I.2 outlines the draft Heads of Terms and Constitution for the Shadow STB.
- 1.14 The structure of the Shadow STB is outlined below:

**Proposed Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body Structure:**



1.15 The Shadow Partnership Board is the ‘decision making’ body for the Western Gateway STB. The scope of decision making will be limited and require reference back to the individual decision making processes of the individual partner authorities. Each Constituent Authority will therefore appoint one person as a member of the Shadow Partnership Board. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Transport represents the Council. Each Constituent Authority will have one vote and decisions will be made unanimously.

1.16 The membership of the Western Gateway Shadow Partnership Board includes:

<b>Voting Members: -</b>	<b>Co-opted members:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bath and North East Somerset Council</li> <li>• Bristol City Council</li> <li>• Borough of Poole</li> <li>• Bournemouth Borough Council</li> <li>• Gloucestershire County Council</li> <li>• North Somerset Council</li> <li>• South Gloucestershire Council</li> <li>• West of England Combined Authority (WECA)</li> <li>• Wiltshire Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair Business &amp; Transport Forum</li> <li>• Highways England</li> <li>• Network Rail</li> <li>• Department for Transport</li> <li>• Homes England</li> </ul>

1.17 Each Constituent Authority will also appoint one person as member of the Senior Officer Group. It is recommended that the Director of Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, represent the Council.

- 1.18 Over the summer (July to September 2018) other member authorities will formally confirm their own commitment to the formation of a Western Gateway STB. The Senior Officer group will then write to the Department for Transport to confirm this and formally establish a new STB Board to oversee the work of the STB.
- 1.19 Subject to approval, the first Shadow Partnership Board will meet in Autumn 2018. At this meeting the Chair of the group will be nominated and the Board will be asked to agree its 'asks' of Government to improve quality of sub-national evidence base to inform a Strategic Transport Strategy.
- 1.20 Longer term the STB will stay in shadow form for a number of years as its formal constitution will require an Act of Parliament and the DfT have indicated that the earliest there is likely to be parliamentary time for this is 2021/22. This delay will allow the STB to establish working practices and governance, which will need to be formally confirmed over the next few years and before any Statutory Instrument is laid before parliament.

## **Options**

- (1) Bristol City Council enters into an agreement with Transport Authorities within the Western Gateway area to establishing a Shadow STB in recognition of our mutual and shared interests;
- (2) Bristol City Council does not engage with Transport Authorities across the South West to form a Shadow STB. There is no statutory requirement to be part of a STB; however it may negatively impact on future funding opportunities; or
- (3) Bristol City Council becomes an associate member of an existing STB only; however this would limit the authority's ability to influence the priorities of any STB joined and this could impact on future funding opportunities.

## **Risk Assessment**

A risk register is being developed by the Officer group. The headline issues include:

- Reputational in terms of not responding to Government's request for more strategic thinking about transport investment priorities to improve regional productivity.
- Missing out on future funding streams including the National Roads Fund for the Major Road Network.
- The priorities of the Shadow STB may not benefit each authority equally.
- The unknowns associated with potential resource implication for establishing a new project. It may occupy more officer time than was originally estimated and may require a larger financial contribution to establish the STB.

## **Resource Implications**

As a Constituent Authority the Council will be expected to provide officer time to support the shadow Sub-national Transport Body which will be provided from existing resources. The Council is also expected to provide a revenue commitment of up to £50k to kick-start the shadow body in 2018/19 which will be found from existing Transport budgets.

It is currently unclear about the level of funding each constituent authority will be expected to contribute going forward. This will only become clear when the resource plan has been produced and the level of financial commitment is expected to be reciprocated by all Constituent Authorities.

The possibility of central government funding to support ongoing costs are being investigated with the Department for Transport and we should have a better understanding of any award in Autumn 2018. Should no funding be awarded than alternative funding sources would need to be investigated.

### **Officer Advice**

Given the future funding opportunities that might become available to STBs it would be sensible for BCC to enter into the draft Heads of Terms and Constitution (set out in Appendix I.2) with Transport Authorities across the South West on an informal partnership basis until formal arrangements can be agreed with the Secretary of State.

### **Equalities considerations**

There should be positive consequences on people who have protected characteristics of BCC and the other local authorities working together to promote successful communities. No specific Equalities Impact Assessment is necessary at this stage.

### **Consultation feedback**

None at this stage.

### **Performance Management/Follow-up**

The Director of Transport will provide updates on the progress of the Shadow STB.

### **Appendices:**

**I.1** – Draft Western Gateway Prospectus

**I.2** – Draft Heads of Terms and Constitution