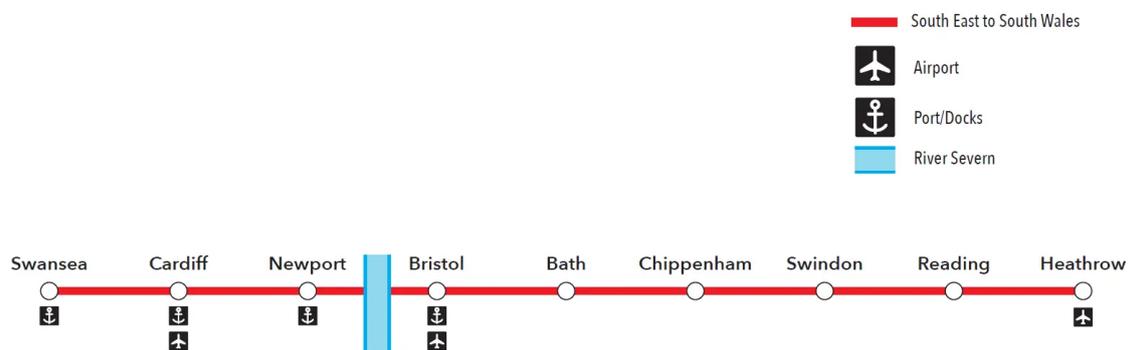


## Strategic Policy Context

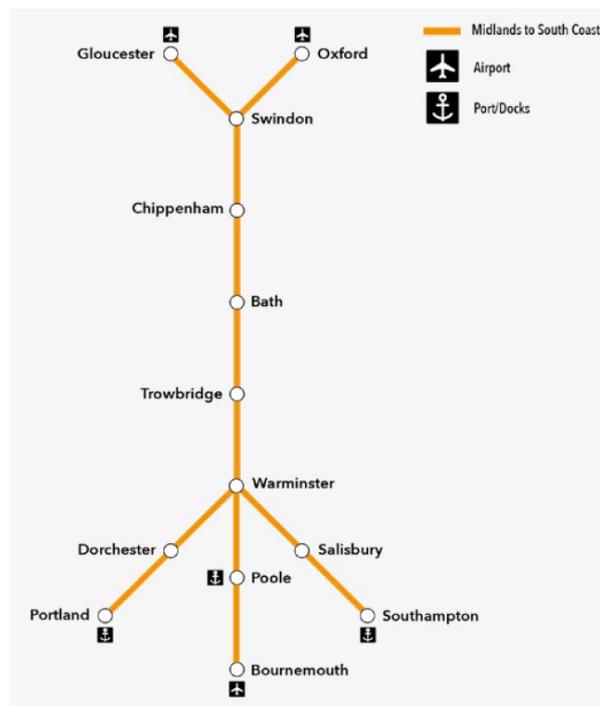
The **Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body's** (WBSTB's) Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2025 highlights that "There is a clear need to increase the market share of rail through better regional connectivity...".

Two of the four strategic travel corridors identified by the WGSTB are relevant to this proposal:

- The South East to South Wales Corridor focuses on the strategic movements along the M4, M32, M37 and A4 and the Great Western and South Wales mainlines.



- The Missing Link Strategic Corridor (Midlands to South Coast) links the South Coast to the M4 and onto the Midlands. It has the potential to drive change in the Dorset and Wiltshire economies.



In its Rail Strategy, the WGSTB has identified the following routes for investigation to increase the number of direct passenger services through hub stations and create new direct journey opportunities by rail between places that are not currently rail connected:

- Bristol Temple Meads – Chippenham - Swindon – Oxford (Category A1 - New direct services that connect at least one National Hub)
- Weston Super Mare – Bath Spa – Westbury/Chippenham (Category A2 - New direct services that connect Regional hubs).

In addition, one of the conditional outputs/targets of the WGSTB's Rail Strategy is to 'Increase proportion of population living within 15-minute drive, walk or cycle ride from a rail station'. As one of five taskforces being set-up to deliver the strategy, the expected outcomes and impacts of the Stations and Access to Rail Taskforce's work (which are all considered relevant to Corsham Station) are:

- Higher % modal share, particularly from disadvantaged parts of society and international tourists.
- Reduced congestion and carbon emissions.
- Economic growth (GVA uplift), especially in visitor economy driven by improved connectivity.
- Improved ranking on Indices of Multiple Deprivation driven by higher levels of education and employment for socially disadvantaged areas.
- Rail network provides equal access opportunities for all.
- Increased % of disabled people in employment and education.
- Creation of transit oriented communities that are less reliant on car travel.
- Health and social wellbeing improvements.

The **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership's** (SWLEP's) Local Industrial Strategy sets out that "*Infrastructure is a key enabler, cutting across the other foundations of productivity*". Reflecting this, the SWLEP's Strategic Economic Plan (January 2016) includes that "*...improved rail connections are being compromised by a lack of key infrastructure*" and a priority action to: 'Deliver rail capacity and connectivity improvements to support economic growth and help realise improved travel opportunities'.

To help progress the above priority action, the SWLEP produced a Swindon and Wiltshire Rail Strategy which was published in August 2019. One of the top five identified priorities is related to this Ideas Fund proposal:

- New GWML stations – Corsham, Royal Wootton Bassett / Swindon West and Swindon East.

The Rail Strategy highlights the limited access to the rail network in parts of Wiltshire including in the SWLEP's M4 Growth Zone (see Map 8.1 in Section 8) which is currently only served by two stations at Swindon and Chippenham.

In February 2019, **Wiltshire Council** resolved to acknowledge a **climate emergency** and to seek to make the county carbon neutral by 2030. A new climate

strategy is being prepared for adoption in early 2022 which will, in line with the DFT's emerging Transport Decarbonisation Plan, prioritise 'Accelerating the modal shift to public and active transport'.

The adopted **Wiltshire Core Strategy** sets out specific issues to be addressed in the Corsham Community Area including the following:

- Despite the area's proximity to the M4 corridor, the transport network in the area is generally poor, characterised by a rural road network with limited rail connectivity.
- The bus network in the area lacks connectivity and this creates a reliance on the car to travel to work, yet highway capacity in and around Corsham is poor.
- Reopening the railway station could be a significant boost to local businesses and should remain a priority.

And Core Policy 66 'Strategic Transport Network' in the Wiltshire Core Strategy identifies that the development of Corsham Station will be "...*promoted and encouraged*".

Corsham Station would fit closely with priorities identified in **Wiltshire and Swindon's Destination Management and Development Plan** and with **VisitWiltshire's** aspirations and plans to develop the visitor economy while reducing road congestion, pollution and improving the general environment.

The made **Corsham Neighbourhood Plan** (November 2019) safeguards land for the reopening of the rail station and fully supports its reinstatement. This is also supported in the Wiltshire Core Strategy which states that "*Reopening the railway station could be a significant boost to local businesses and should remain a priority...*". The Wiltshire Core Strategy also outlines that Corsham has seen significant housing growth in recent years which has not been accompanied by appropriate increases in services and facilities.

The **Corsham Community Area Framework** (June 2016) sets out that Corsham is an historic market town which sits in an important location and which has a rich history in communications and the military, and has seen substantial recent growth in key sectors. The Framework identifies a Corsham Station has one of five projects to substantially address identified local issues and opportunities. Key public transport opportunities include:

- Increasing rail connectivity through a new railway station at Corsham and the provision of bus-rail links
- Addressing the increased pressures on rural roads, in particular the A4 and Bradford Road.

Further information from the Framework on the context and opportunity of a Corsham Station is presented in Appendix 3.

**Bath and North East Somerset Council** is to introduce a **Clean Air Zone (CAZ)** on the 15 March 2021 as several places in Bath currently exceed the legal limits for

nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution which is mainly caused by diesel and older petrol vehicles.