



# 2019-24 Control Period 6 Western Strategic Business Plan

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A summary of our plans submitted to  
Office of Rail and Road February 2018



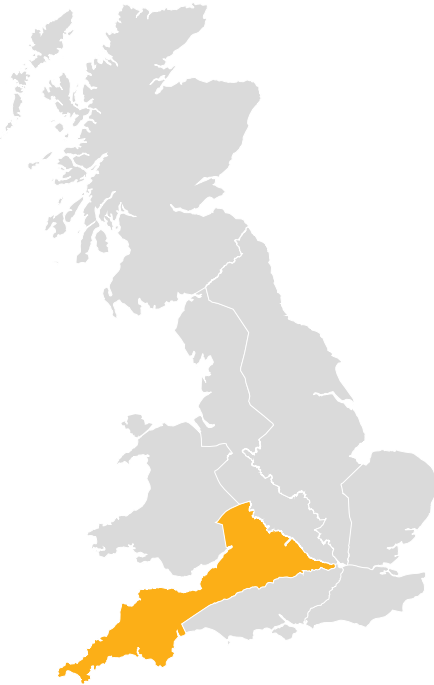
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# Western

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The Great Western Mainline is undergoing its most significant upgrade since it was built by Brunel over 175 years ago. Our Control Period 6 plan funds services to realise and support significant passenger benefits, particularly more services and new connections, enabled by the investment in Control Period 5.

By the end of CP5 we will have electrified the route from Paddington to Reading, Bristol and Cardiff and from Reading to Newbury, modernised signalling and infrastructure, and enabled the biggest fleet upgrade in a generation benefiting passengers across the whole route. In early 2019 passengers will benefit from the introduction of a new timetable which, combined with the new trains already delivered, will further improve their journeys, providing more services with more seats, faster journey times and new connections.

This has been a tremendous achievement and is the result of unprecedented levels of public investment from Government; the support of our customers, the train and freight operators; and of course passengers, line side residents and businesses across the route.

From 2019 we will enable higher frequency, long distance services across the route together with a new train service – the Elizabeth line – offering passengers a metro frequency service and new connections from Reading into and across Central London. We will also improve local and long distance cross-country services in the Bristol area through further signalling upgrades and the redoubling of the line between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway; and enable improved journey times to Devon and Cornwall and support the increase in services between Plymouth and Penzance, building on the doubling of trains from Plymouth to Penzance. We will work closely with HS2 as they start the construction of a new interchange station at Old Oak Common which will link the West with the Midlands and North West. Meanwhile we will continue to improve the reliability of the infrastructure supporting the Heathrow Express service and the national connections offered by CrossCountry Trains.

During CP6 we will deliver an even safer railway, aiming to get everyone home safe every day, further reducing train accident risk, improving passenger and workforce safety and reducing risks at level crossings. We will continue to drive a philosophy of “better every day” to deliver a net 6 % efficiency plan which we have set ourselves for the Control Period.

Bringing track and train closer together is critical to future success. We will continue our alliance with Great Western Railway, supported by the independently chaired Western Route Supervisory Board, and work closely with all our train and freight customers to deliver the targets for performance we have jointly agreed, and set out in our CP6 scorecards.

Given the continued growing demand for rail, improved passenger and freight services are essential to the region’s economic growth. To support this we will continue to develop affordable plans to grow the railway for Government and other funders to consider.

Our plans for CP6 have been developed with substantial input from our customers and stakeholders, and I thank them for their invaluable input. We look forward to working with them to deliver an improved, more reliable, growing and affordable railway for the communities and businesses we serve.



**Mark Langman**  
Route Managing Director  
Western

# At a glance

## Our purpose

Excel in delivering a safe, high performing, reliable and affordable railway; be ambitious in creating greater capacity; be responsible for connecting people and caring for the environment

The Western route stretches across the Thames Valley to Oxford, Worcestershire, the Cotswolds, South Wales, the West and South West. It encompasses some of Britain's most important towns and cities, as well as one of Britain's busiest rail routes, the Great Western Mainline. We own, maintain and operate over 900 miles of railway and manage London Paddington, Reading and Bristol Temple Meads stations.

## Our vision

To deliver a great railway that supports jobs, housing and the economy across our route, now and for the future.

## Our strategic priorities

- Everyone Home Safe Every Day
- Delighting our customers
- Affordable and efficient
- Supporting jobs, housing and growth
- Great people and great culture

## What our stakeholders told us

In developing these plans we engaged with a wide range of stakeholders through a series of workshops and written submissions. We engaged with over 85 separate organisations in two series of workshops across 2017.

Our stakeholders' views influenced the plans set out in this document, including our vision, our approach to business development, the performance metrics we will use, and our boundaries.

## Our stakeholder priorities

- Growing the economy through rail;
- Attracting more third-party investment;
- Providing meaningful performance figures;
- Increasing our focus on environmental impacts;
- Reducing journey times;
- Investing in stations.

 2,200 train services per day


 92m journeys per year

 2,839 bridges

 1,847 miles of track

 650 level crossings


 2,600 employees


 Management of London Paddington, Reading and Bristol Temple Meads stations

 £2.1bn operations, maintenance and renewals spend in CP5

 £7.5bn investment modernising and electrifying the Great Western Mainline

 Carrying more than 20,000 people a day to and from Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport

 Working with the Port of Bristol to deliver 10% of the UK's coal and 25% of the UK's aviation fuel, and 600,000 motor vehicles annually

 Serving seven passenger and six freight operators

 Engaging with 55 local authorities, ten local enterprise partnerships, 66 members of parliament and four elected mayors

## Our plans for CP6

### Everyone Home Safe Everyday

We will continue to work day and night to keep our railway one of the safest in Europe.

We are committed to continuous improvement for workforce safety through our planning and delivery of safe work, improving trackside working; improving manual handling; reducing slips, trips and falls, and maintaining a focus on safe driving. To support this, we have increased funding for our route workforce safety and health improvement programme, with a focus on fatigue risk amongst signallers and improvements in general health and wellbeing of our workforce, aspiring to match world class organisations for workforce safety.

We will work with our alliance partners GWR, other train operators and stakeholders to keep passengers and the public safe, continuing to reduce the risk of train accidents. We will work with operators to better assess and manage risks to passengers at stations and reduce operational risks across the route. In CP6 we will invest £70m upgrading level crossings in addition to other asset improvement funds so that we continue to reduce safety risks on our infrastructure.

We will continue to promote our social responsibility for safety and the environment so that we work more safely and responsibly, reducing our impact on the environment and the communities we serve.



### Delighting our customers

Working with our customers we will work to improve performance through asset reliability, excellence in operations, a robust timetable and collaborative joint working, with a 1.6% improvement in PPM performance for GWR, while running 140,000 more trains per year across the route.

Following our customers' feedback, we will introduce additional measures to monitor performance against punctuality of trains at all recorded stations to help drive better services for passengers.

With 20,000 passengers a day travelling to and from Heathrow Airport and 114,000 local jobs based there we will continue to make sure that services to the airport are the best they can be, both via Heathrow Express and MTR Crossrail.

To enable and support the passenger benefits enabled in CP5 we will:

- Work with a new operator – MTR Crossrail – and GWR to improve maintenance planning to improve infrastructure reliability and reduce delays
- Work closely with GWR, MTR Crossrail, Heathrow Express, CrossCountry and other train and freight operators and BTP to improve our response times to train-delaying incidents and restore services quicker
- Work closely with HS2 Limited to manage building a new rail interchange station at Old Oak Common on the Great Western Mainline with minimal disruption
- Continue to deliver the final elements of the Greater West and Crossrail Programmes

#### Track & Train together: Our Alliance with GWR

In 2016 we successfully established an Alliance with GWR that covered working together across a range of areas including operations, HR, commercial development, safety and communications.

Our Alliance has been critical to enabling us to jointly deliver CP5 passenger benefits including new trains with more capacity, more modern infrastructure and station improvements.

We will continue working together to pursue our Alliance objectives of cost-effective delivery of capacity, improving customer experience and reducing industry costs. We will work together to efficiently deliver our CP6 works; minimising disruption whilst seeking to maximise passenger outcomes when we do work. We will also improve the alignment of our operations teams to improve joint working and manage disruption better, while we seek to embed a more customer focussed culture measured in our jointly agreed customer scorecard.





GWR's new Intercity Express train crosses the recently-restored Royal Albert Bridge over the River Tamar

Our CP6 plan provides the services and support to build on CP5 investment and deliver more new services, improved journey times, greater capacity and new connections.

**Working with our Train and Freight operating partners, in CP6 we will support:**

- 140,000 more trains per year on the Route
- Two more fast off-peak trains per hour from Bristol Temple Meads and London Paddington via Bristol Parkway
- One more peak time train per hour between Bristol Temple Meads and Paddington via Bath
- One more peak time train per hour between South Wales and Paddington
- Doubling the service between Plymouth and Penzance to two trains per hour
- Journey time reductions:
  - Bristol - London reduced by up to 17 minutes
  - Cardiff – London reduced by up to 14 minutes
  - Penzance – London reduced by up to 14 minutes
- The new Elizabeth line at the end of 2019 will bring:
  - New, longer Class 345 trains, each with space for 1500 passengers
  - direct links from Reading, Maidenhead and Heathrow Airport directly to the West End, the City of London and Canary Wharf
  - Paddington - Liverpool Street in 10 minutes, Paddington - Canary Wharf in 17 minutes



New Intercity Express trains are bringing more seats and better journeys to the route



The Elizabeth line will allow non-stop cross-London journeys

**Improving freight services**

The Western Route is the second-busiest route into London for the UK's rail freight industry, which contributes £30bn to the UK economy annually. This in turn supports a number of major industries, including the Port of Bristol, car plants in Swindon and Oxford, aggregate industries in Somerset and petroleum businesses in Berkshire.

During CP6 we will:

- Improve reliability of the network for freight transport through our asset reliability improvement plan;
- Continue to support “jumbo” stone trains, which consist of 34 wagons against the normal 21, freeing up extra capacity on the network by moving more freight in one go;
- Further examine the potential of improved freight facilities in west London.



We are improving freight services across the route



River Parrett Bridge, Somerset

## Affordable and efficient

### Our plans to maintain the railway, improve its reliability and affordability

Renewing and maintaining the railway to make sure it is safe, reliable and affordable is one of our core, continuous jobs. Parts of the railway we maintain are over 145 years old, built for Victorian levels of use. So repairing and renewing the railway at the right time, with minimal impact to operators and passengers, is critical to maintaining service levels, improving reliability and making the railway more affordable for passengers.

In CP6 we will continue our programme of renewals to maintain the sustainable condition and performance of the railway infrastructure including:

- investing £407m renewing or refurbishing 543 km, nearly 20%, of the 2974 km of plain line railway track we maintain
- renewing or life extending 280 points out of the 1,792 points we maintain
- maintaining the safety and performance of the signalling system including significant life extensions to signalling systems in Cornwall, Exeter Gloucester, Westbury and Worcester
- repairing, maintaining or renewing more than 150 underbridges including Windsor Viaduct and bridges across the River Fowey and Parrett
- investing over £93m repairing or renewing more than 2,300 individual earthwork structures like embankments and cuttings, including renewing Doublebois embankment in Cornwall and renewing Kelston Park embankment near Bath
- investing £17.9m on steps to prevent rock cuttings falling onto the railway
- renewing a number of our coastal and estuary sea defences including the sea defences between Lostwithiel and Fowey



Renewing and repairing track



Signalling upgrades improve reliability and safety



Protecting our cuttings



Trialling traffic management at Thames Valley Signalling Centre



Bristol Temple Meads Station roof

We will invest £40m on the renovation of the heritage roof at Bristol Temple Meads station which is essential to the continued safe use of the station and improving user experience.

We will also invest £35m in works to improve the railway's resilience to extreme weather in particular at Teignmouth, Dawlish and other flood-prone areas.

We will invest £50m to significantly reduce delays into Paddington by replacing over 700 track circuits systems on the approach to Paddington with modern axle counter technology which is far more reliable at monitoring train locations and therefore reducing delays caused by signalling failures.

Taken together, our asset management plans aim to improve reliability by over 11%, to support the increased levels of usage across our route.

We are excited to trial a traffic management system in 2018-2019 to see if we can help reduce the operational impact of incidents on service punctuality by as much as 12%. In CP6 we will analyse the results of this trial and take further steps should digital traffic management visibly improves train performance.



Coastal defence improvements at Dawlish



The approach to Paddington Station



Axle counters improve signalling safety and reliability

## Supporting jobs, housing and growth

Western Route provides rail and freight services to important, dynamic and growing economies, supporting jobs, housing and growth across the Thames Valley and South West.

### Supporting jobs, housing and growth

The Office for National Statistics values the economies we support as:

- South West Tourism economy: £10.3bn
- M4 corridor, Oxfordshire: £113.3bn
- Bristol, Bath & surrounding areas: £66bn
- Gross Value Added of the South West is £126bn (the amount being generated by production of services and goods, this includes fishing, tourism, farming, and manufacturing)

Where we invest in rail we see more growth. For example, property values in some areas directly benefiting from future Elizabeth line services have risen by between 20-30% as people look to move to benefit from better rail connectivity.

### Supporting a growing railway

Rail and freight passenger demand continues to grow. The ORR annual figures below demonstrate the significant growth we have seen on Western route in recent years.

In 2016/17 London Paddington was the UK's 8th busiest station with 35.8 million entries/exits recorded, and overall passenger exit and entry figures at London Paddington increased by 4m in 7 years.

In 2016/17 Reading was 7th busiest station in the UK outside of London with 17.1 million passenger exit & entries recorded, up 2.7m passengers from 14.4m passengers 2010/11.

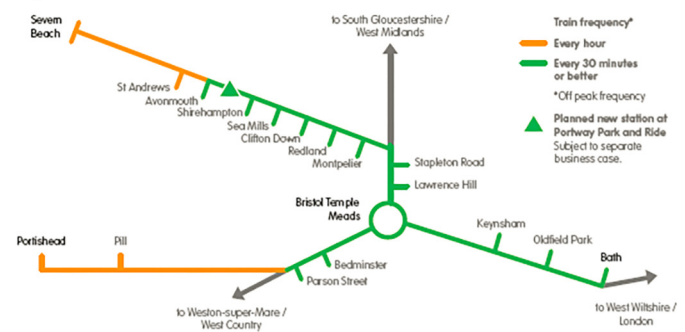
And in 2016/17 11.3 million passengers exited or entered Bristol Temple Meads up 5.6% from 10.7m passengers recorded in 15/16.

## Proposed CP6 projects to grow or improve the railway

**Speed to the West:** To support the growing demand for rail travel to Devon and Cornwall our core plan proposes funding to improve track condition between Totnes and Hemerdon as the first stage to enable higher line speeds and reduce journey times to Devon and Cornwall. We will also explore more opportunities for further improvements with our customers and the Peninsula Rail Task Force.

**MetroWest:** On behalf of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council we will continue to develop their proposed MetroWest scheme to provide better rail services for Bristol, Bath, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

Proposed MetroWest Phase 1 Network



## Choices for funders

We will continue to develop business cases and investment option choices for funders, both Government and third parties, including ongoing development work to link Heathrow to the Great Western Mainline for consideration by HM Government.

System Operator is also working on a number of other investment options on the route, to be worked through in due course with third parties interested in providing funding for the railway.

## Great people and great culture

Our people are our most valued asset and we will continue to invest in their development such that everyone can achieve their potential. The focus for CP6 is to invest in the building blocks we put in place in CP5 to strengthen our people manager capability and attract and retain talent more effectively. To succeed we need to continue to improve our culture, creating a route which is even more welcoming, diverse and inclusive. Our ambition in CP6 is to increase the percentage of women in our workforce from 11.9% (2017) to 20% by 2020.

Our efficiency and value strategic priority is directly supported by the Better Every Day programme which has, at its core, the principle of removing waste and becoming more efficient as integral to the way we do day to day business.

The key objectives for CP6 include:

- People manager training delivered to all people managers
- Succession plans for all key roles
- 100% attendance at Everyone Learning facilitated or online sessions
- Embedding Better Every Day Lean principles throughout our business and delivering £14m efficiencies through Better Every Day initiatives
- Investing £10m to improve our work place facilities; improving access to basic facilities to support safer and more efficient working, the needs of a more diverse workforce and making efficiencies through better use of our property portfolio.

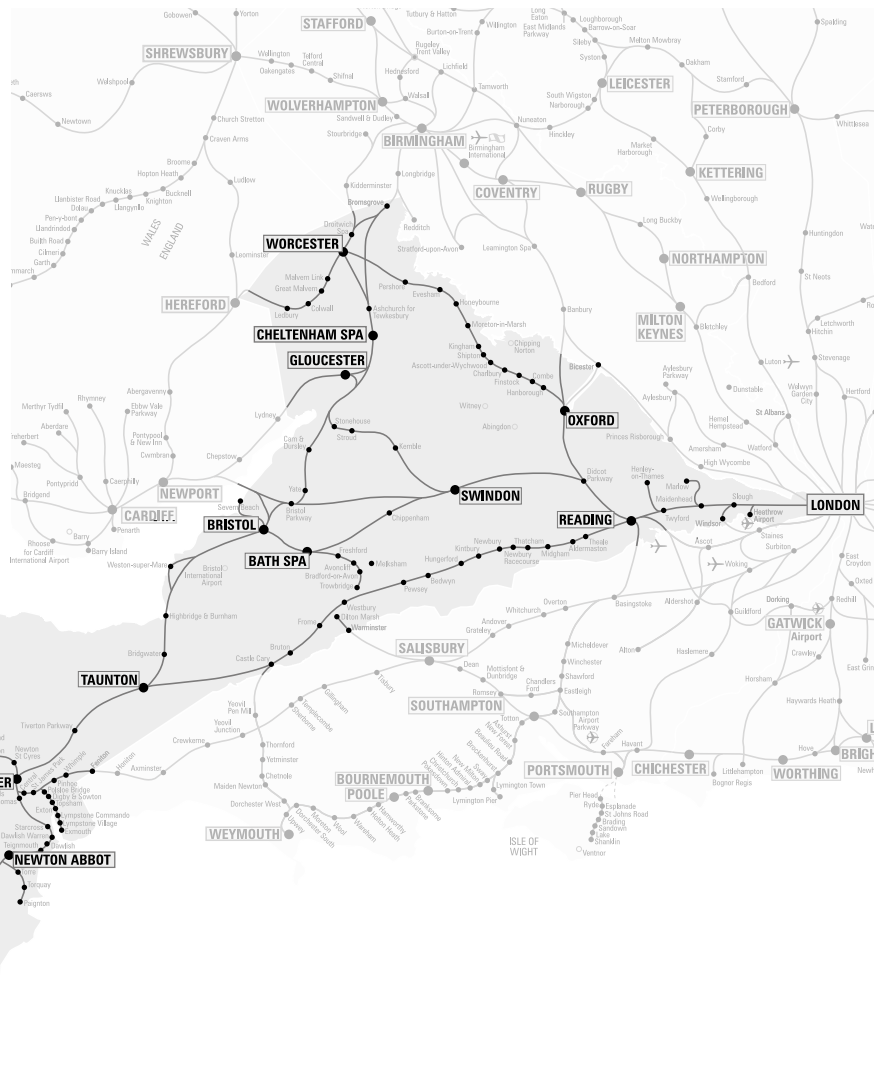


Engineers Claire Notton, Kasey Gommo, Helen Warren with Mark Langman on the roof at Temple Meads

## The future of the Great Western rail franchise

The Department for Transport (DfT) is currently undertaking a review into the shape of the Great Western Franchise which, at the time of our planning for CP6, is scheduled to end in 2020. We will support the DfT as they conduct their review and public consultation on the future of the Great Western franchise. We will prepare accordingly following any decisions that Government takes before and during CP6 on the future shape and service levels that we will be required to offer future franchisees.

As a result the plans set out in this document are based on the current service levels provided to GWR in the existing franchise, and as such may require review if this service level is changed during CP6.



**Network Rail Western Route**

Western House  
1 Holbrook Way  
Swindon SN1 1BD

**Network Rail Limited**

1 Eversholt Street  
London NW1 2DN

Tel **020 7557 8000**

**[networkrail.co.uk](http://networkrail.co.uk)**

Company number: 4402220  
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