Langport Transport Group / Somerset County Council

RYR NEW STATION LANGPORT-SOMERTON AREA

Strategic Outline Case

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CONFIDENTIAL

Langport Transport Group / Somerset County Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Strategic Outline Case (SOC) presents the investment case for a proposed new railway station scheme in the Langport-Somerton area of Somerset. This scheme offers an opportunity to restore lost connectivity to the rail network for the communities in Langport and Somerton and beyond to include Glastonbury and Street. The scheme is very well aligned with the government's levelling -up agenda which includes an objective of enhanced public transport connectivity across the country. For Langport-Somerton residents, workers and visitors this means restoring lost connectivity in the Langport-Somerton corridor and reconnecting these local communities to a hierarchy of regional urban centres such as Taunton, Exeter and Bristol.

This new station scheme will address a longstanding issue of limited public transport connectivity. This area of south Somerset has been without a connection to the railway network since 1962. This 43-kilometre length section of the Reading to Taunton Line between Taunton and Castle Cary is one of the longest sections of double-track rail route in the country without a railway station. The railway line passes through the heart of the Langport-Somerton community, yet residents are unable to access the rail network. Figure E.1 shows the existing transport network in the Langport-Somerton area.

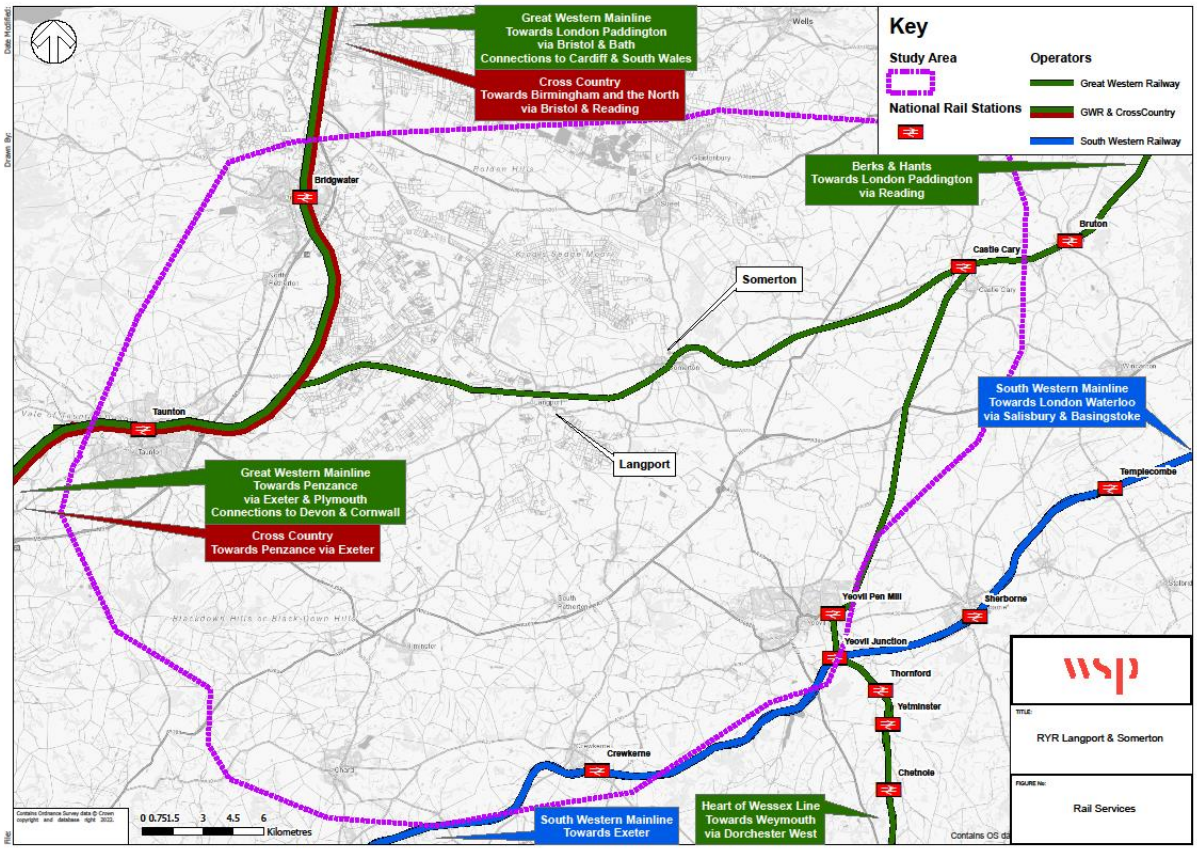


Figure E1 - Langport - Somerton Area Rail Network

A consequence of this lost rail connectivity is that residents and communities in the Langport-Somerton area have had to rely on car travel or limited public bus services for many trips resulting in lower productivity through longer journey times, highway congestion, constrained mobility and less accessibility to job, education and employment opportunities.

This SOBC demonstrates how a growing and dynamic community in the South West can be reconnected to the railway for the first time since the 1960s and enjoy the significant benefits that rail delivers to our national and local ways of life.

RYR Objectives

The new railway station scheme has been developed to address key RYR strategic objectives to:

- Support sustainable economic development
- Reduce the environmental impacts of the transport network
- Improve health, well-being and quality of life
- Ensure a safe environment in which to travel

Partnerships and Collaboration

The Langport-Somerton New Station project has been a local issue for well over a decade. Since the forming of the Langport Transport Group (LTG) in 2014, the project has demonstrated the highest levels of partnership and collaboration. The LTG has enjoyed the support of Somerset

County Council, South Somerset District Council and all the benefitting Parish Councils. The Langport-Somerton New Station Steering Group, chaired by the LTG, has been an extremely collaborative and successful partnership between the Department for Transport, Network Rail, GWR, and local government. Additionally, the project has been supported by the Local Economic Partnership, local business and community groups. Significant support has also been delivered by the local Member of Parliament, David Warburton MP. Evident Letters of Support are included in this SOBC.

Business Needs

The Five Cases business case model has been used to determine a solution to the disconnection of the Langport and Somerton area communities. This disconnection has resulted in significant travel distances to reach regional centres and the wider economy. This poor connectivity has had adverse effects in terms of relatively low productivity levels, increasing highway congestion and air pollution, dependency on the motor car, constrained social mobility and reduced access to healthcare, education and employment, particularly for those reliant on public transport.

Option Assessment

Alternative options were considered for providing a solution to the connectivity issue. After evaluating options, including a bus alternative, it was concluded that a railway station at Langport-Somerton would be the option which delivered, by far, the most benefits in terms of supporting the RYR strategic objectives. A new railway station at Langport-Somerton would provide a strong alternative to the car, deliver the greatest increase in sustainable transport accessibility and connectivity to regional centres and the wider region and deliver the safest method of inter-urban travel, as well as encouraging mode shift and improving the environment through reduced road traffic carbon emissions.

A new Langport-Somerton station is forecast to attract levels of patronage comparable to other neighbouring stations on the rail network, attracting similar passenger numbers to Castle Cary for the shortlisted options and more than Crewkerne, Sherborne, Bruton, Frome and Templecombe stations reflecting the impact of the new railway station in enhancing sustainable transport connectivity.

Strategic Case

The strategic case for the scheme describes how the new station will provide the following:

- Support sustainable economic growth including raising productivity benefits arising from better connectivity to the surrounding region and beyond, and support economic rebalancing as set out in the government's Levelling-Up White Paper.
- Support social cohesion through offering improved access for the communities to jobs, healthcare, education and other services and amenities, particularly for the younger and older demographic who have less access to a car and are reliant on public transport. Employment and mobility options are transformed with the introduction of a new Langport-Somerton station – commuting to London becomes a reality, as well as access to wider markets of Taunton, Reading and Exeter for local businesses.
- Reduce transport sector carbon emissions in support of South Somerset District's target for carbon net zero by 2030, and government policies for carbon net zero by 2050;

- Align with a raft of national, regional and local planning, infrastructure, environmental and transport policies, and has wide community support. This scheme funding bid is supported by sub-national organisations, local authorities, rail industry stakeholders including Network Rail, Great Western Railway (GWR) along with local business groups.

Economic Case

The economic case for the scheme where a new station is provided and is served by a new train service (hourly Westbury to Taunton) provided by others produces a positive NPV and results in a 'Very High (And Financially Positive)' value for money scheme. A new station served by stopping existing semi-fast trains services would produce a value for money category of 'Economically Efficient Cost Saving' for Langport 2 option and a value for money category of 'Economically Efficient Cost Saving' for the Somerton option.

The economic case becomes weaker when the full costs of the additional hourly train service between Westbury and Taunton are added to the station costs. In particular, the provision of a train service accounts for about 83% of the total construction and operating costs over the 60-year appraisal period and results in the station showing 'Poor' value for money.

If a train service is provided by others and is not part of the scheme, whether it be the proposed Westbury to Taunton service or a new call at the new station for existing GWR semi fast services, the scheme's economic case is improved significantly. Moreover, whilst the assessment considered the travel market for new rail users of the new station and new rail users at other stations served by the train service, a review of timetabling on other regional services as a result of introducing the new service were not considered. There may be further scope to increase the benefits of the new station and train service through changes to the timetabling of other train services to maximise the benefits for rail passengers across the regional rail network. Additional services may also be offered by the open access operator, GO-OP.

Financial Case

The Financial Case considered the costs for the construction of this project, which have also been an input to the Economic Case. Given the stage of business case development high-level indicative costs estimates (including risk and inflation) were produced for the delivery of the scheme. The capital cost for the shortlisted options to take forward to the next stage of the business case are £23.45 million for Langport 2 and £15.75 million for Somerton. Given the early stage of business case development these costs sit within lower and upper bound optimism bias of 50%.

Commercial Case

The Commercial Case sets out the commercial viability of the new railway station scheme, setting out the procurement strategy which will be used to engage with the market. The approach to risk management; commercial timescales, as well as how the capability and technical expertise of the team delivering the project will be secured are described.

Management Case

The Management Case provides the delivery framework for the new railway station scheme describing how rail industry partners will manage this project to achieve successful delivery of the next stage of development through to the implementation of the design. The Management Case sets out the proposed stakeholder engagement, risks to the programme, scheme dependencies,

delivery approach, the monitoring and evaluation plan and approach to adherence with industry governance, including Network Rail and DfT processes. All rail industry partners and stakeholders have collaborated in the preparation of this SOC, with a strong commitment to deliver the scheme and will provide a sound basis for the governance of the scheme going forward.

Conclusion

The project is aligned with the vision and requirements of the RYR fund and is supported by national and local organisations. It has enjoyed collaborative support, through the Steering Group from the Department for Transport, Local and Regional government, Network Rail, GWR and local community groups.

It is a strong case that will reconnect Langport, Somerton and their surrounding communities to the rail network and end this area's 60-year isolation from the rail network.

Given the substantial benefits generated by the new station, particularly in terms of new users to rail, and the scope for further study of the benefits (regeneration of the local economy and 'Levelling-Up', building social cohesion, improving access to education and decarbonising transport) and costs of the scheme, both Langport Option 2 and Somerton rail options are recommended to be taken forward to the next stage of business case development.

2

INTRODUCTION

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 CONTEXT

2.1.1. Langport Transport Group (LTG) and Somerset County Council (SCC) have prepared this Strategic Outline Case (SOC) as lead promoter and lead stakeholder partner respectively for a Restoring Your Railways (RYR) Ideas Fund funding bid to the Department for Transport (DfT).

2.1.2. This funding bid is for a solution to the current poor sustainable transport connectivity in the Langport-Somerton area of South Somerset. This bid aims to contribute to the regeneration of the local economy, build social cohesion and decarbonise transport. This scheme considers solutions to the transport connectivity issue, addressing local concerns regarding increasing highway congestion, increasing air pollution, dependence on the motor car, constrained social mobility and access to education and employment. The scheme considers these issues with respect to improving the use of existing transport infrastructure.

2.1.3. In the past, local and regional transport connectivity included rail services calling at local stations provided connectivity to regional centres and wider connectivity across the country for local residents, particularly for those without access to a car. Current transport connectivity for the Langport/Somerton communities is reliant on the local road network. Residents' mobility options for travel to regional centres for services and amenities not available locally is to use the car or use public bus services.

2.1.4. Improved transport connectivity provides increased opportunities to services in larger regional centres and beyond to the rest of the country. Local economic growth has been affected as the quality of transport connectivity between the Langport-Somerton area and its connections to the regional and national economies is heavily dependent on car-based travel.

2.1.5. Transport connectivity for Langport/Somerton travellers dependent on, or choosing to use public transport, is provided by taxi or local bus services connecting to Taunton, and Yeovil. As there is no public bus service to Castle Cary, taxi is the only option for those travellers without access to a car wishing to travel on rail services calling at Castle Cary. The local bus services serve a role of connecting a dispersed community and hence often provide indirect connectivity with regional centres and railway stations. The recently published Somerset BSIP provides proposals for a significant enhancement in the local bus network and access to bus services improving sustainable transport connectivity to regional railway stations, however, these plans will not significantly address the need to restore connectivity in the Langport-Somerton area. Moreover, implementation of these proposals is subject to securing funding.

2.1.6. Langport and Somerton are growing communities with new housing and employment planned in both communities to support their role as Local Market Towns providing services and facilities for a large hinterland of smaller rural communities. Improved access to services and amenities provided in regional centres to support this growth is a key factor in securing the future prosperity of these communities. This study has sought to identify a value for money transport connectivity solution which supports national, regional and local policy. The demand forecasts for the Langport-Somerton railway station indicate that there will be strong passenger demand for the station due to its role in restoring connectivity to the railway network for a long corridor of 43.5km which has not had a local

railway station since the 1960s. The demand forecasts for the new railway station are comparable to other existing stations on the rail network serving local communities in the region.

2.2 RESTORING YOUR RAILWAY IDEAS FUND

2.2.1. This SOC has been developed in line with DfT's *'Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund Strategic Outline Case Guidance'*, which aligns with HM Treasury's Green Book[1] and DfT's Transport Business Cases guidance[2].

2.2.2. In February 2020, HM Government announced a new 'Restoring Your Railway' Fund, in recognition of the importance of better connectivity driving local economic growth, reconnecting communities, regeneration of communities and restoring lost connectivity as a result of railway closures.

2.2.3. A proportionate approach has been applied in this SOC, focused on presenting an assessment of transport solutions to address the Langport and Somerton communities' disconnection from regional and national centres and reliance on the car for many trips resulting in highway congestion, increasing air pollution, constrained social mobility and constrained access to education and employment. Alternative transport connectivity solutions are assessed, and a preferred scheme identified with an evaluation of the potential for its success, based on the development work undertaken to date.

2.2.4. The next five chapters set out the Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management Cases respectively. Appendices provide further detail to support the cases.

2.2.5. The Five Cases business case model is being used to determine a solution to the disconnection of the Langport and Somerton area communities which has resulted in significant travel distances to reach regional centres and the wider economy. This poor connectivity has had adverse effects in terms of relatively low productivity levels, increasing highway congestion and air pollution, dependency on the motor car, constrained social mobility and reduced access to education and employment, particularly for those reliant on public transport.

2.2.6. A range of options are assessed to address the need for improved connectivity to the rail network. These alternative solutions include improving the highway network to provide congestion relief and quicker journey times, improving the local bus network to provide greater connectivity to regional centres, an active mode alternative based on cycling and walking improvements and a rail alternative proposing a new railway station between Taunton and Castle Cary/Westbury in the Langport-Somerton corridor. All the alternatives were assessed with regard to reconnecting local communities, restoring lost transport connectivity, regenerating the local economy and contribution to decarbonisation of transport.

2.2.7. The Langport/Somerton transport corridor, in particular, has experienced a loss of sustainable transport connectivity to regional and national centres and beyond since the railway station closures in the 1960's when Somerton, Langport East and Langport West stations were closed on the Reading to Taunton line. This section of the Reading to Taunton line is now one of the longest sections, 43.5km, of mainline railway in the country without intermediate railway stations, leaving

[1] HM Treasury (2020) The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation.
[2] Department for Transport (January 2013) The Transport Business Cases.

communities in South Somerset disconnected from the regional centres and the national railway network.

2.2.8. The RYR Ideas Fund offers timely investment to support forecast local housing and employment growth, addressing already high levels of unreliability and slow journey times on the highway network before they further worsen and supports social inclusion and more equal access to essential services by enhancing mobility options. In particular, the RYR fund is supportive of rail service connectivity improvements which increase economic prosperity and social mobility for rural communities.

2.2.9. This SOC will address the following at a high-level as is proportionate for this stage of the business case, as follows:

- Identification of the issues for transport connectivity in the Langport-Somerton area;
- An assessment of business needs and service gaps and the constraints being imposed on the Langport-Somerton area by the lack of transport connectivity;
- SMART objectives for a transport connectivity solution which reconnect the local communities;
- An option assessment evaluating alternative options based on a multi-criteria analysis to select a preferred option;
- Development of the economic appraisal for the preferred option(s); and
- Development of all five business cases.

2.2.10. The five dimensions of the business case are developed in line with the DfT business case guidance in place at the time of undertaking the SOC.

3

STRATEGIC CASE

3 STRATEGIC CASE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. Since the closure of the railway stations at Langport and Somerton in the 1960s travel options within the area have been provided by the private car, bus services and taxi services. This has resulted in poor transport connectivity to regional employment centres and healthcare and educational facilities. The necessity to travel by car has resulted in increasing traffic congestion on the area's road network and longer journey times, and has contributed to congestion, increased carbon emissions and lower air quality.

3.1.2. Current national, regional and local policies emphasise the need for provision of sustainable transport options supporting sustainable economic and housing growth, local place-making, development of thriving communities and provide a strong policy direction for net zero carbon by 2050, supported by a decarbonising transport strategy that seeks multi-modal decarbonisation.

3.2 ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

3.2.1. Langport Transport Group and Somerset County Council are the lead promoter and lead stakeholder partner respectively. These organisations are leading a steering group including the Department for Transport, South Somerset District Council, Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Great Western Railway and Network Rail.

3.2.2. The strategic priority for the Langport Transport Group is to improve sustainable transport connectivity for the Langport-Somerton area. Somerset County Council also supports improved sustainable transport connectivity as a strategic fit with the County Council's strategic priorities for developing rural communities. Local strategic priorities for South Somerset District Council include promoting sustainable transport as part of an overall strategic aim of reducing carbon emissions from transport. South Somerset District Council's Annual Action Plan includes themes and areas of focus to "Initiate and support actions and infrastructure to encourage a shift to low carbon transport options including walking, cycling and electric mobility."[3]

3.2.3. At national policy level connecting communities with the rail network is aligned with supporting sustainable development growth, provision of infrastructure to support local communities, development of sustainable transport, reduction of carbon emissions and mitigation of the effects of climate change, encouraging social inclusion and reducing inequality in access to transport services.

3.2.4. The national Levelling Up agenda, recently set out in the 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom' White Paper, is reflected in the aim to restore lost connectivity in the Langport-Somerton corridor linking local communities to a hierarchy of regional urban centres such as Taunton, Exeter and Bristol. There is also the potential for commuting opportunities by rail to London if the rail network had a new station in the Langport-Somerton area. There is also a good opportunity to capture the economic benefits of a movement of small and medium enterprises out of London to well-connected rural areas such as this Langport-Somerton. The nearby station at Bruton is seeing considerable economic activity due to good connectivity via interchanging between rail services with London. Restoring transport connectivity will offer a transformation in residents and workers mobility options

[3] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/4832/annual-action-plan-2021_22-v2.pdf.

to regional employment and service centres such as Taunton and Exeter and beyond. The current need to travel by car to access employment and services needs to be considered with respect to the detriment car use imposes on the road network. Increased car travel and traffic congestion has consequent impacts on economic growth and pollution levels. For residents with limited or no access to a car this dis-connectivity is increased with often indirect bus routes compounded by reliability issues due to road congestion.

3.3 BUSINESS NEEDS AND SERVICE GAPS

The need for intervention to restore lost connectivity is set out below with respect to key business needs affecting the Langport-Somerton area. These needs are as follows:

- Need for better sustainable transport connectivity;
- Need for sustainable economic growth;
- Need to reduce carbon emissions in support of South Somerset District's target for carbon net zero by 2030, and government policies for carbon net zero by 2050;
- Need to support place-making, social inclusion and quality of life.

Need for Better Sustainable Transport Connections

3.3.1. Around 53,000 people living within 10 kilometres of Langport and Somerton. Figure 3-1 shows the extent of the resident population within approximately 10 kilometres of Langport and Somerton to cover the area with poor sustainable transport connectivity. The largest settlements within 10 kilometres of the towns are shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 - Largest settlements within 10 kilometres of Langport and Somerton

Town/Parish	Population (Nomis BUA, 2020)
Street	13,839
Glastonbury	8,818
Martock	4,338
Somerton	4,565
Langport / Huish Episcopi	3,452
Ilchester	2,112
Curry Rivel	1,810
Kingsbury Episcopi	728
Yeovilton*	1,226
Ashcott	858
Total	41,746

- Yeovilton population is at parish level.

3.3.2. There is a need for better sustainable transport connections between the Langport/Somerton area and regional and national centres. The principal transport connectivity is provided by road-based transport. The road network (A370, A372, A303, A359 and B3153) provides connections to Taunton, Bridgwater, Westbury and Yeovil and provide onwards access to national centres via the strategic road network. Bus services provide the main alternative transport modes for residents and others without access to a car. The railway network in the Langport-Somerton area is a 43.5km section of double track railway between Taunton and Castle Cary forming a part of the Reading to Taunton line. There is no railway station serving the Langport/Somerton area.

3.3.3. Since the 1960s, it has been necessary for anyone wishing to travel by rail in the corridor to travel by other modes to either Taunton or Castle Cary to access the West of England mainline, Taunton to Reading (Berks and Hants) train services. Alternatively, travellers wishing to use rail services need to travel by car, bus or taxi to Yeovil for the West of England Line train services. The strategic transport network in South Somerset is shown in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-1 – Population Within 10 Kilometres of Langport and Somerton

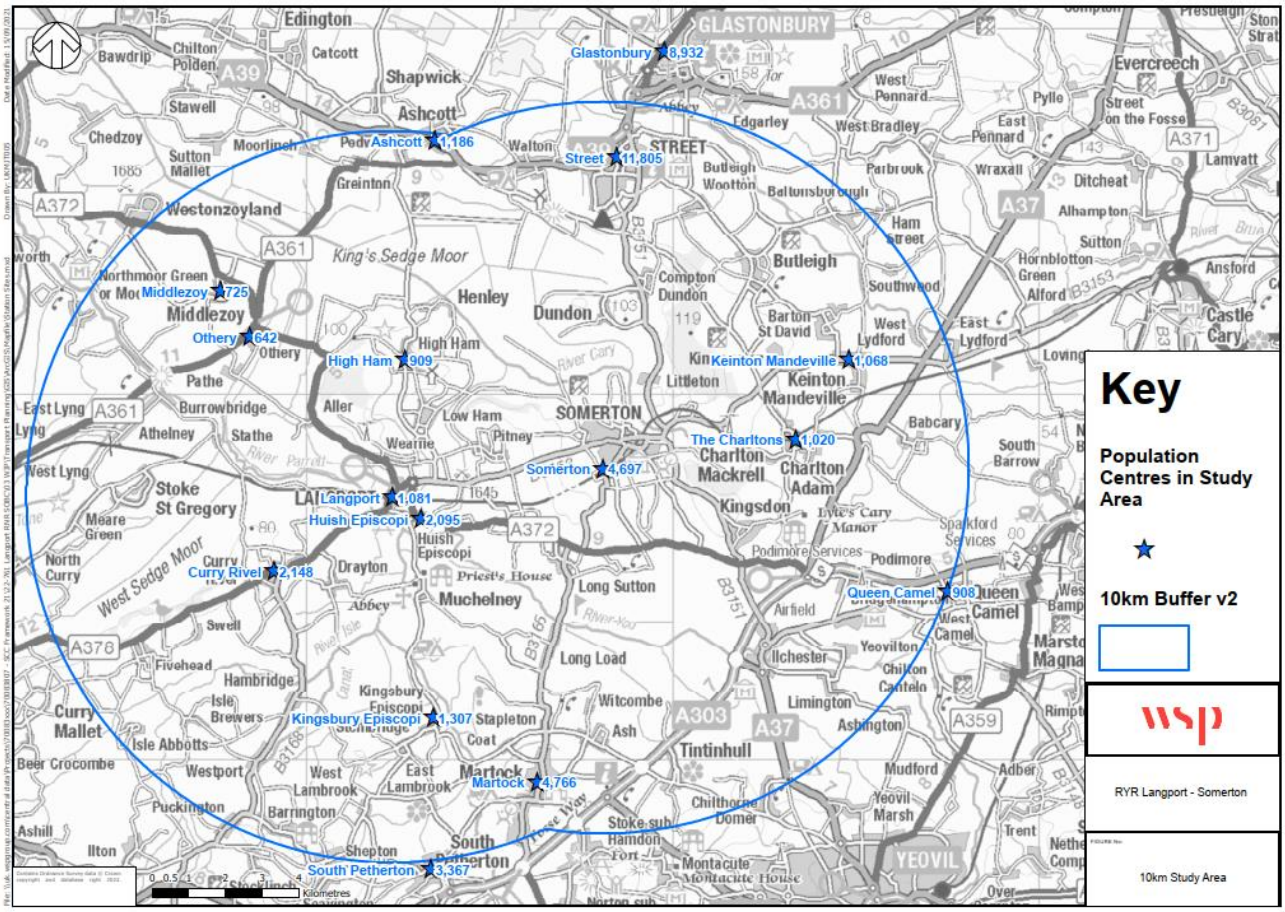
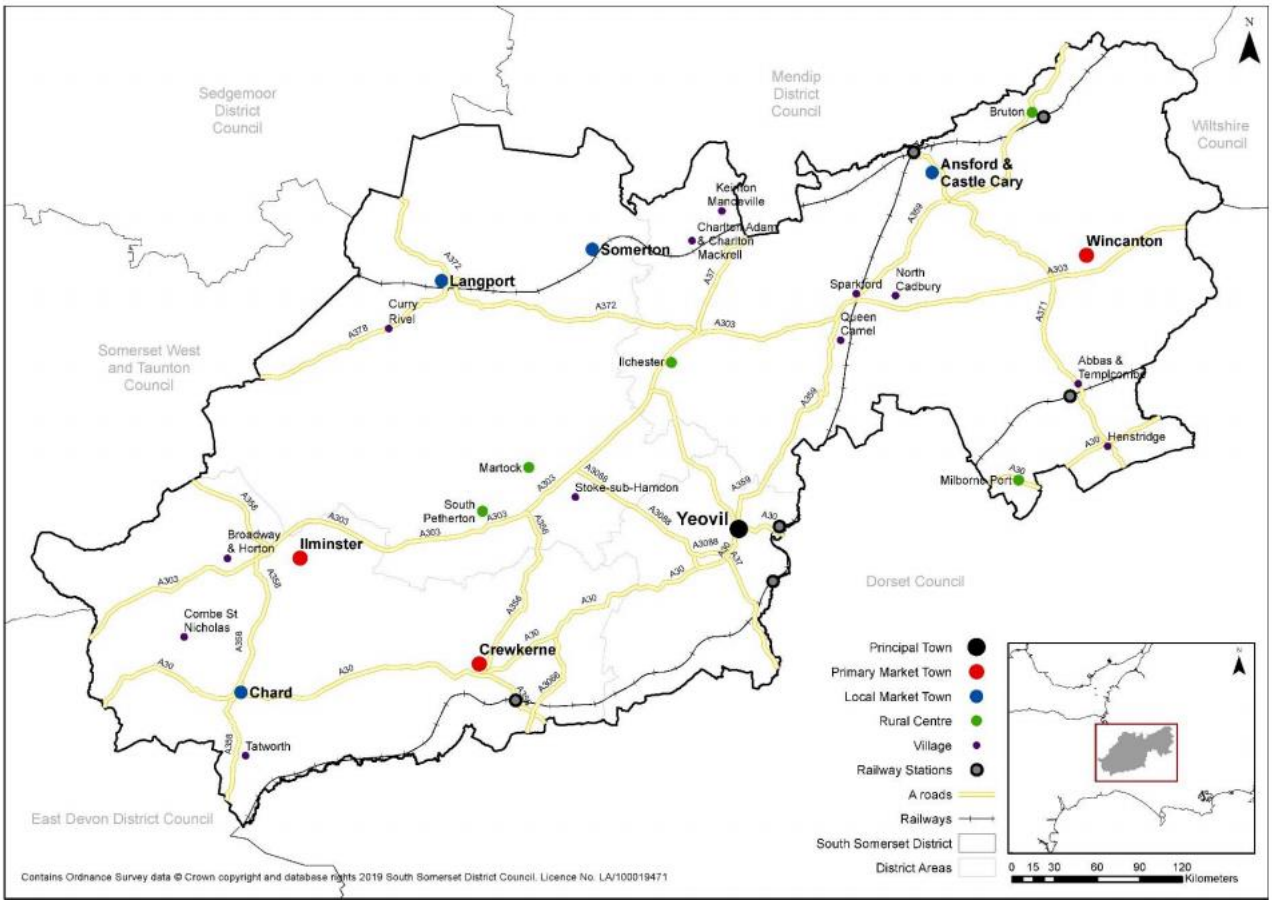


Figure 3-2 – Strategic Transport Network in South Somerset



Source: SSDC Local Plan Review Preferred Options 2016-2036

Rail Usage in South Somerset

3.3.4. Station entry and exit figures have been obtained from the Office of Road and Rail for stations likely to be the access points to the national rail network for residents of Langport-Somerton.

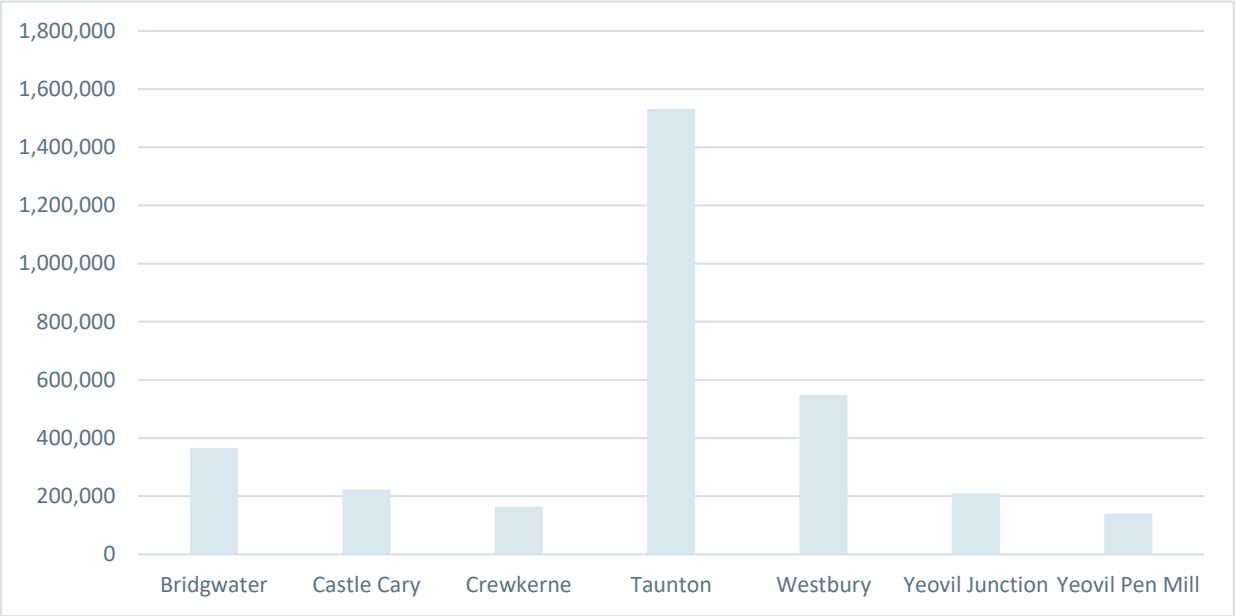
3.3.5.

3.3.6.

3.3.7.

3.3.8. Figure 3-3 shows the total station entries and exits for these stations for 2018-2019, prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. Each year runs from 1 April to 31 March. As can be seen Taunton is much the largest station in terms of patronage. Taunton also has a significant proportion of interchange passengers.

Figure 3-3 - Somerset Stations – Total Station Entries & Exits 2018-2019



Source: ORR

Connectivity to the National Rail Network for Residents and Visitors

Car Connectivity

3.3.9. Travellers with access to private transport and wishing to use the Reading to Taunton Line from Langport will need to drive over 24 kilometres to Taunton or over 25 kilometres to Castle Cary. For Somerton travellers using private transport to connect with the national rail network the Reading to Taunton Line the car journey is a distance of over 17 kilometres to Castle Cary and over 30 kilometres to Taunton. If travelling in peak hour conditions this can result in car journeys of at least 35 minutes. For some journeys' travellers may be inclined to drive the whole journey. This low level of connectivity to the rail network is a constraint on regenerating the local economy. To access the rail network car journey times to Taunton on the A378 are between 25-35 minutes from Langport and between 30-50 minutes from Somerton depending on the time of travel. To access the rail network car journey times to Castle Cary travelling via the B3153 are between 25-35 minutes from Langport and between 20-25 minutes from Somerton depending on the time of day. Yeovil is a similar distance for residents of Langport with a car journey time of between 25 and 40 minutes. Somerton is located closer to Yeovil, therefore car journey times are shorter ranging between 20 and 35 minutes. The range of travel times highlights the variability due to the impact of peak hour

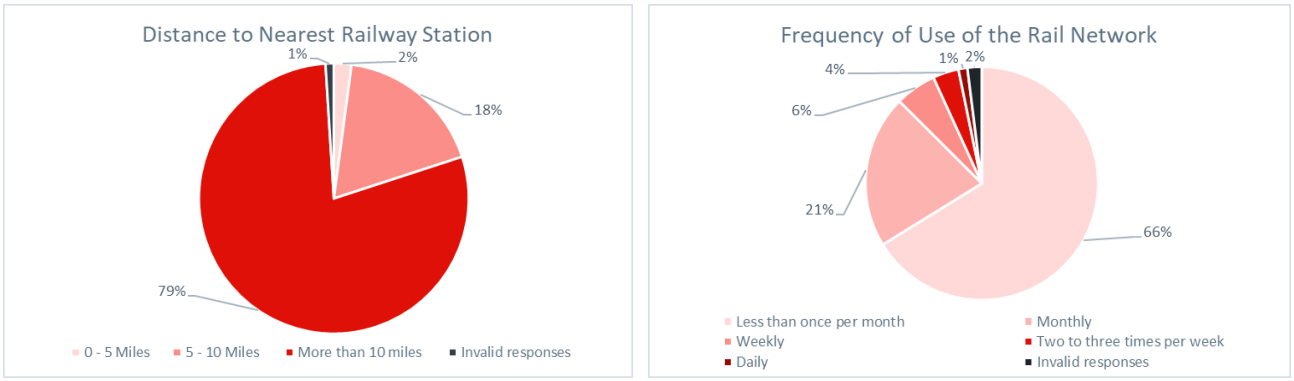
traffic congestion, particularly at the interchange with the A378 and A358 at Thornfalcon and congestion pinchpoints between Henlade, the M5 interchange and the proposed dualling of the A358 between Junction 25 of the M5 and Southfields roundabout on the A303.

3.3.10. Taunton and Castle Cary are also the nearest access points to the national rail network towards Exeter and London for residents of Street and Glastonbury. Travellers from these settlements will need to travel 40 to 45 minutes to Taunton and 30 to 35 minutes to Castle Cary. Therefore, access to the Reading to Taunton Line rail network is currently poor. This impacts the local economies of the towns making longer distance trips by rail less attractive constraining economic growth. In many cases such is the poor connectivity with the national rail network, use of rail for onward journeys may not be attractive once a travel time of 30-45 minutes is needed to reach a railway station. In such circumstances travellers are likely to choose to complete their entire journey by car.

3.3.11. For those who need to travel, but are without access to a car, the situation is worse with a choice between often indirect and infrequent bus services or taxi services limiting access to essential services and employment opportunities. Poor connectivity to the national rail network lessens opportunities for these residents and is detrimental to their social mobility and well-being.

3.3.12. An online survey to assess residents' attitudes to plans for improved connectivity to the rail network indicated that from 800 responses, the majority (80%) of respondents were over 10 miles (16 kilometres) from their nearest railway station which is also reflected in most respondents using rail infrequently (Figure 3-4).

Figure 3-4 - New Langport-Somerton Railway Station Survey 2021: Respondents Accessibility to Rail Station and Frequency of Use of the Rail Network



Source: Online attitudinal survey of residents on a new railway station at Langport-Somerton, 2021

Bus Service Connectivity

3.3.13. Local public transport services have poor connectivity with regional centres and the national rail network. First Group bus services connect Langport and Somerton with Taunton and Yeovil (town centres). There is no direct bus service between Langport and Somerton and Castle Cary, nor is there a direct service to the stations at Yeovil Pen Mill or Yeovil Junction.

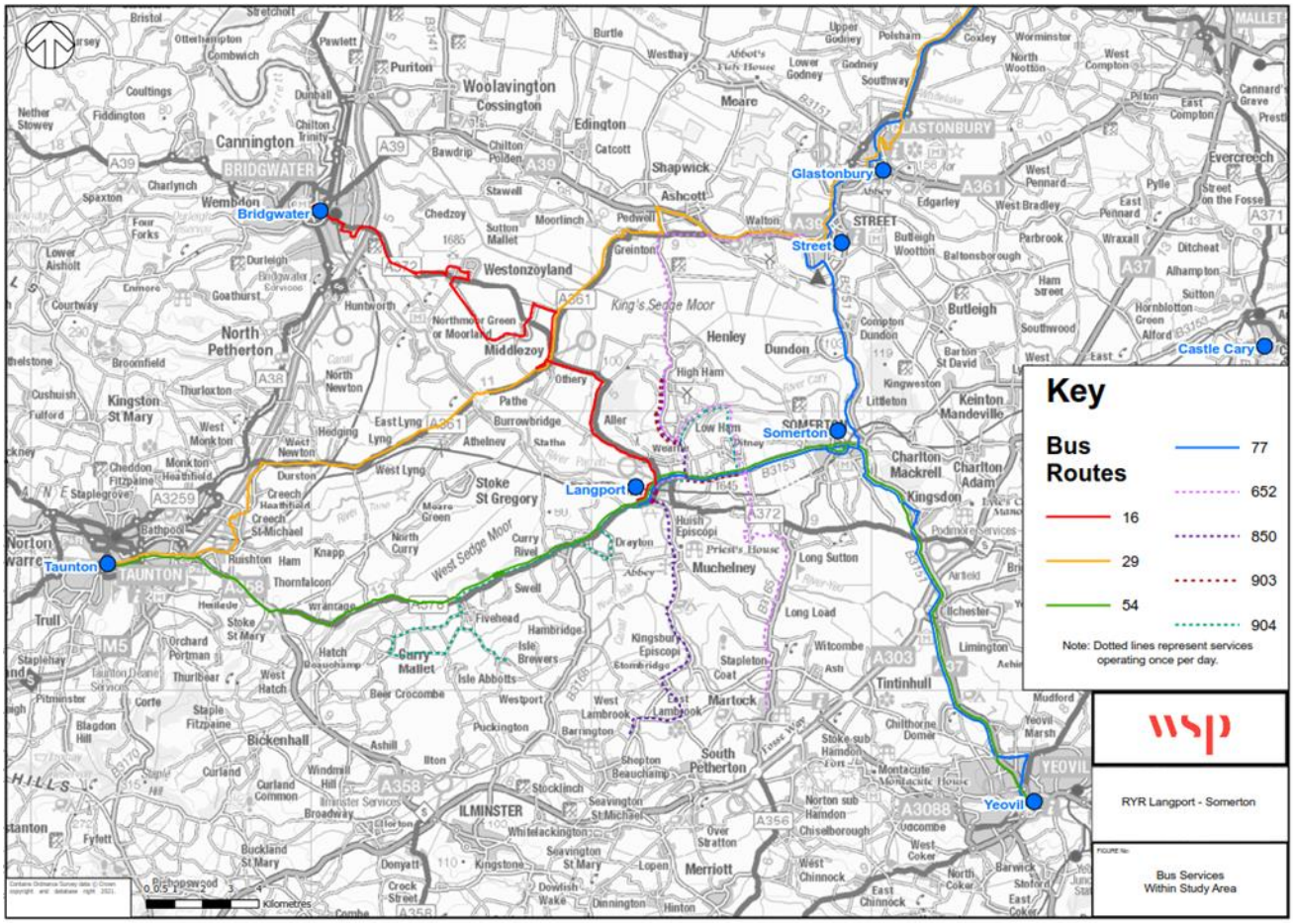
3.3.14. Travelling by public transport between Langport and Taunton is a journey of 51 minutes and between Somerton and Taunton a journey of 62 minutes. These journey times will not be significantly affected even with a BSIP objective of a 5% reduction in journey times across the county. Multi-modal passengers using these bus services as one leg of a trip will not be directly

connected to Taunton railway station. Interchange to the national rail network requires a walk of over 15 minutes (from the Parade) to reach the station. The journey times are far longer than by car, but more significantly, bus service frequency is poor. Service 54 operating between Taunton and Yeovil operates every 90 minutes. As this bus service offers the principal east to west public transport link along the rail corridor, the poor quality of bus services impacts negatively on social mobility for those dependent on public transport.

3.3.15. In addition to the infrequent and lengthy (sometimes unavailable) connections to rail stations from Langport and Somerton by bus, the bus timetable also makes bus travel unattractive. The bus timetable limits journey to work opportunities for commuters working regular hours, shift workers and people reliant on public transport to access essential services in education or healthcare. Bus timetable constraints are reflected in the types of bus users. A high proportion of bus network users in Somerset are concessionary bus pass holders, rather than commuters and other peak time travellers.

3.3.16. Figure 3-5 shows the existing local bus network.

Figure 3-5 - Langport-Somerton Area Existing Bus Network



3.3.17. Somerton has an additional bus service opportunity connecting with the national rail network at Yeovil. Service 77 operating between Yeovil, Glastonbury and Wells provides some additional public

transport options, however, the timetable is irregular and does not operate early morning or evenings limiting the service's usefulness for commuters, shift workers and travel on essential business (education, hospital visits etc). Travelling on service 77 between Somerton and Yeovil is 35 minutes and between Langport and Yeovil is 50 minutes including interchange time.

3.3.18. As there is no direct rail connectivity by bus between Langport and Somerton and Castle Cary, travellers wishing to access the rail network at Castle Cary from these towns will need to interchange. The shortest journey times are an hour and 17 minutes requiring an interchange at Yeovil between service 54 or service 77 and service 1 operated by South West Coaches which calls at Castle Cary on the way to Shepton Mallet. Alternative routes take longer, up to an hour and 47 minutes, with interchange between infrequent bus services.

3.3.19. Poor public transport connectivity impacts adversely on Street and Glastonbury which are also not on the rail network. There is no public transport link with Castle Cary. Taunton can only be reached by interchanging at Somerton between service 77 and service 54. Additionally, service 77 operates infrequently and has limited hours of operation. Rail connectivity is poor.

3.3.20. Public transport users experience longer journey times to Taunton and Castle Cary of up to 50 minutes and an hour and 47 minutes respectively. Bus services are infrequent and operate daytime services only reflecting a high level of concessionary bus pass holders using the network in Somerset, rather than commuters and other peak time journeys. In addition, an interchange between bus services and travel via an indirect route is required to reach Castle Cary. This poor connectivity with the national rail network reduces the use of rail services for all travellers in the Langport-Somerton transport corridor whether they be residents and commuters or visitors.

3.3.21. The Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) refers to a proposed core bus network that ensures key locations such as railway stations are served by public transport. The Somerset BSIP sets out policies and a delivery plan to improve bus services, however, this is dependent on funding availability from Somerset County Council and the DfT. Even with secured funding, the scope for integration of bus services with rail services to provide sustainable transport regional connectivity for local residents of Langport and Somerton is still constrained by the need to meet other priorities for the bus network including connecting villages with the Local Market Towns. Also, providing bus connectivity with the national rail network will be subject to variability in travel times as a result of increasing traffic congestion, particularly towards Taunton, with increased uncertainty for passengers in making train connections.

Need for Sustainable Economic Growth

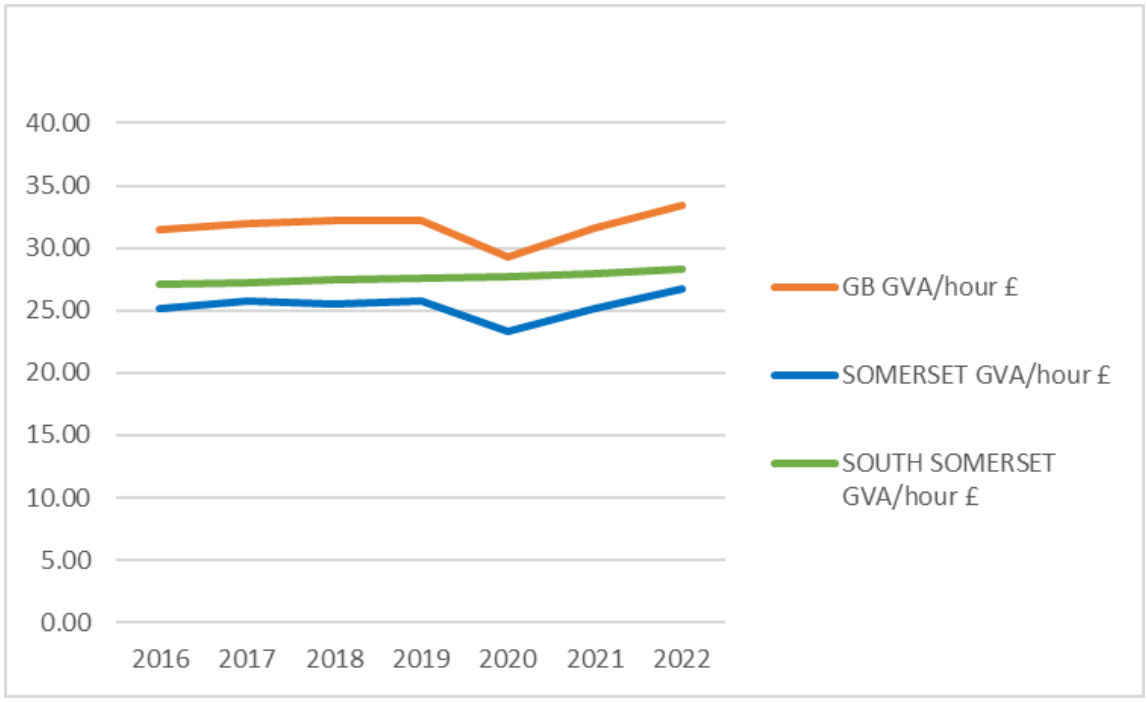
3.3.22. The Langport-Somerton rail corridor is situated in South Somerset District Council. Both Langport and Somerton are classified as Local Market Towns within the District's Local Plan hierarchy of settlements. This designation refers to the key functions of these communities to provide a strong employment, retail and community role for residents. To fulfil these functions improved transport connectivity is essential. The poor transport connectivity for the communities in the Langport-Somerton area (extending to Street and Glastonbury) is likely to impede the Local Plan's ambitions for the market towns in the future. Local economic growth is linked to a balanced economy reflected in national policies for Levelling-Up and Building Back Better.

3.3.23. The local economy of South Somerset is focussed on the following key sectors: manufacturing, retailing, agriculture, food and drink and tourism. Manufacturing remains important to South Somerset despite a national move towards a more service-based economy. This is exemplified by

the presence of ABP Food Group meat processing factory located to the south-east of Langport in Huish Episcopi. ABP Food Group is by far the largest employer in Langport-Somerton.

3.3.24. A growing area of the economy with large potential for contributing to the Levelling-Up agenda is the tourism sector (accommodation and food services). Figure 3-6 shows Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour indicating that in 2018, the latest recorded data for South Somerset was above the average GVA for Somerset. In part, this will reflect the impact of the aviation sector at Yeovil on the South Somerset GVA per hour. Trend data for GVA per hour between 2018 and 2022 shows the likely post- Covid-19 pandemic recovery which is forecast to be lower in South Somerset compared to Somerset and Great Britain. This shows the potential longer-term need to diversify the local economy.

Figure 3-6 - GVA Per Hour South Somerset, Somerset and GB



Source: AMORE (Advanced Modelling of Regional Economies) is a bespoke database and econometric model purchased by the HotSW LEP and top tier authorities, including Somerset County Council

3.3.25. A challenge for the area, as with many rural economies in the UK, is to address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and plan for the longer-term growth in the local rural economy, a key part of which is the improvement of sustainable transport and most importantly connectivity with the national rail network. This connectivity with the national rail network is a key requirement for the development of the tourism and visitor sector. Many visitors from large conurbations are unlikely to be in car owning households using rail services to the closest rail stations to the Langport-Somerton area and who will then be dependent on the bus or taxi to visit the historic market towns and surrounding areas of outstanding scenic beauty.

3.3.26. As vibrant and economically prosperous market towns Langport and Somerton will be a focal point for short-term economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and longer-term sustainable economic growth. National and regional planning objectives identify provision of sustainable

transport infrastructure and services as essential for the delivery of economic growth. An objective of transport policies for South Somerset is to provide better strategic connectivity and accessibility to non-car passenger transport services (bus and rail) supporting economic activity and new employment opportunities, enhancing productivity and encouraging inward investment. The South Somerset Economic Development Strategy[4] produced in 2019, has in Priority Theme 2, a Primary Action to support delivery of committed road and rail infrastructure projects. Milestones include working with Network Rail and rail operators to encourage/lobby for investment in upgrading the rail infrastructure and the services from and through South Somerset District.

3.3.27. The South Somerset Economic Development Needs Assessment 2020 highlights that the district has seen slow population growth in recent years, below that of comparator areas (Somerset, Heart of the South West LEP area and Great Britain). This limited growth is primarily fuelled by increases in the population of 65 years old and above. The working age population has been falling, which is the opposite of the trend seen in comparator areas.

3.3.28. Economic data indicates that South Somerset, in general, is a relatively prosperous district evident from the AMORE data. However, the local Langport-Somerton economy has not experienced any real growth in jobs in recent years. This is reflected in the numbers of residents commuting to work elsewhere. The 2018 Census data showed that 60% of Somerton residents work outside the town. The issue of productivity across the region is recognised and The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has highlighted build back better aims of increasing productivity in the South West which lags behind the rest of the country.

3.3.29. The UK Competitiveness Index (UKCI) ranks local authority areas according to the, 'development and sustainability of businesses and the economic welfare of individuals. The UKCI assesses the extent to which the local economy can attract companies with stable or rising market share in their activities whilst maintaining stable or increasing standards for residents. The UKCI 2019 rankings show South Somerset ranked 252 out of 379 of all local authorities in the UK.[5] This indicates that there is a clear need to consider initiatives to increase local productivity.

3.3.30. A means of increasing productivity is to reduce travel times. As the Langport-Somerton area economy is not connected directly to the national rail network, lengthy journeys of at least 25-30 minutes by car to access the rail network at Taunton or Castle Cary create additional unproductive travel time. This productivity impact is greater still for public transport users with the minimum journey time being 40-50 minutes and for some journeys considerably longer.

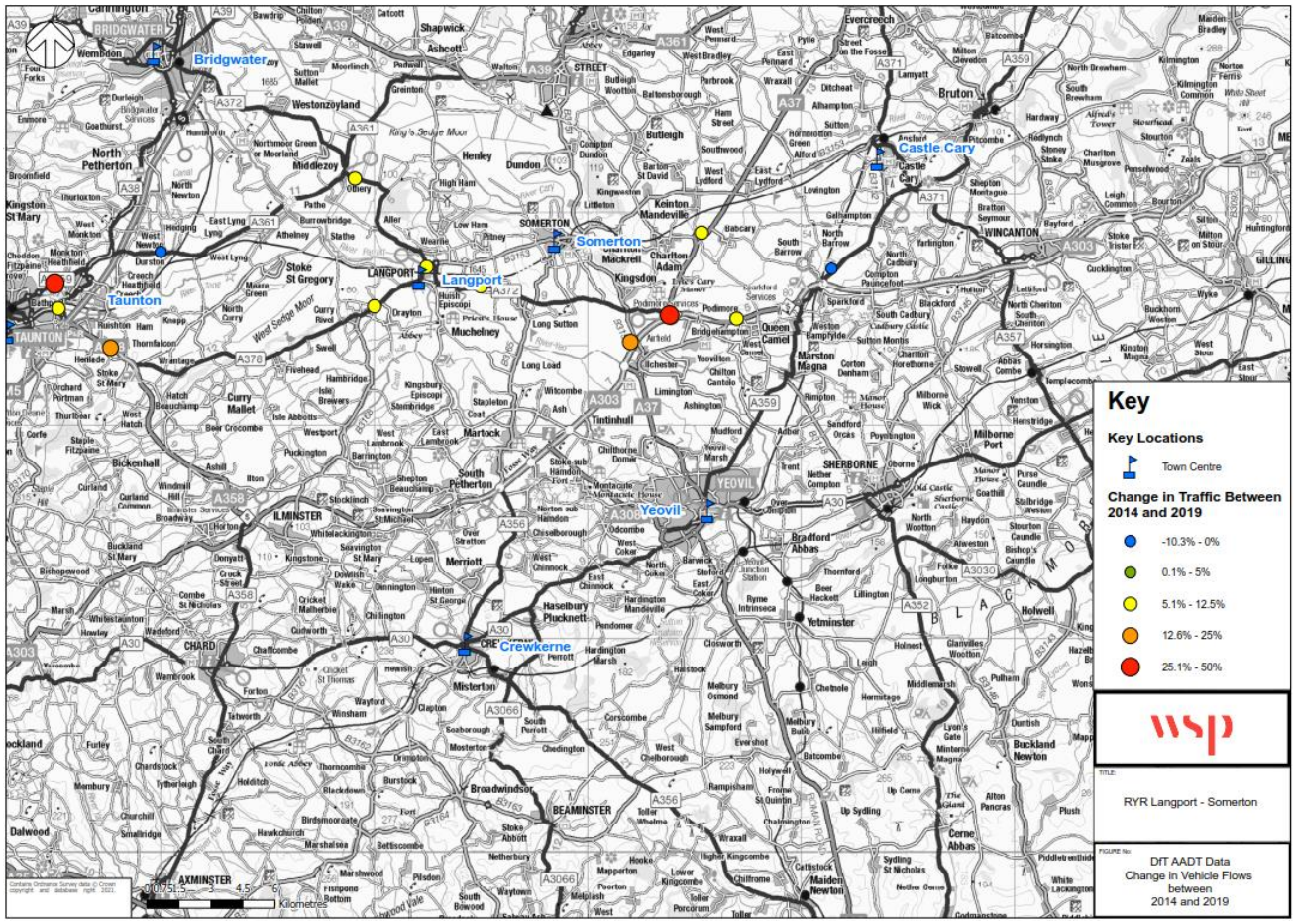
3.3.31. All roads between Langport & Somerton and the wider region have experienced increases in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) traffic flow between 2014 and 2019, particularly on the A3259 approaching Taunton from the northeast and the A303 east of Langport and Somerton. There has also been a marked increase in traffic levels on the A358 approaching Taunton from the south east and the A303 south of Somerton. Figure 3-7 shows increases in AADT highlighting the locations with greatest increase in traffic growth. Around Taunton and to the south of Somerton on the main east-west road route (A303/A372) there have been increases in traffic exceeding the national average increase in traffic on A-roads of 14% between 2014 and 2019. All traffic count sites in the Langport-Somerton area show increases in traffic which are much higher than nationally for Local

[4] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/2057/eds_february-2019-prand int.pdf.
[5] South Somerset District Council Economic Development Needs – Final Report, October 2021.

Authority Managed A-roads. Over the period 2014 to 2019 period national traffic growth rates averaged 2% per annum.

3.3.32. Forecasts of traffic growth on the approaches to Taunton highlight the potential for delays resulting from increased traffic levels on the A358. [6] Figure 3-8 shows forecast traffic increases up to 2041. The A303/A30/A358 Corridor Feasibility Study forecast that these traffic levels would trigger road capacity issues which in turn will increase travel unreliability, particularly for existing public bus services.

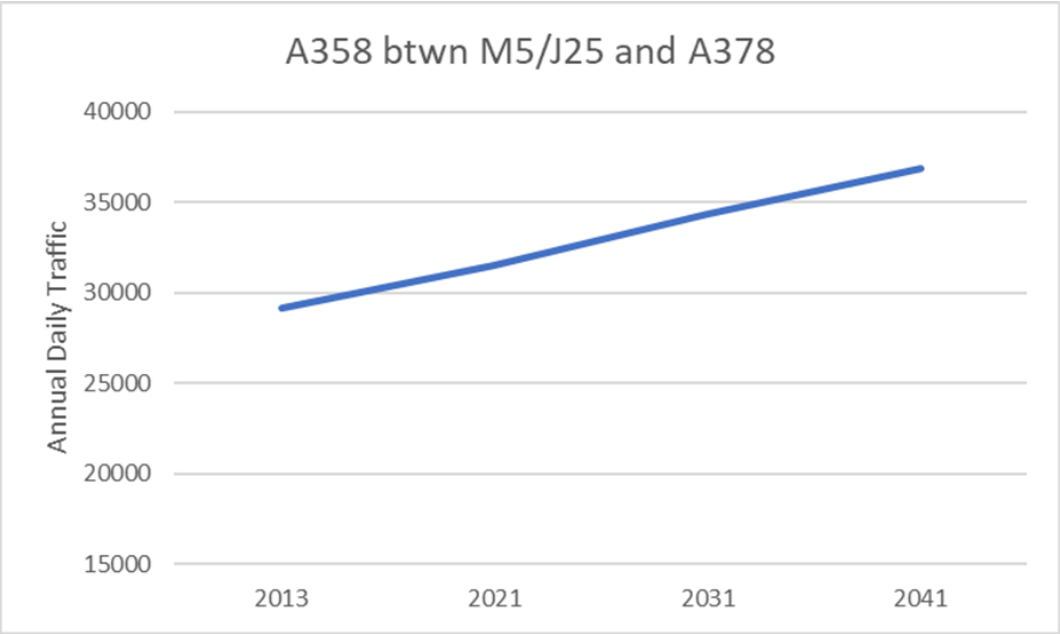
Figure 3-7 - Change in Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) 2014 - 2019



Source: Highways England

[6] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410454/a303-stage-1-report.pdf.

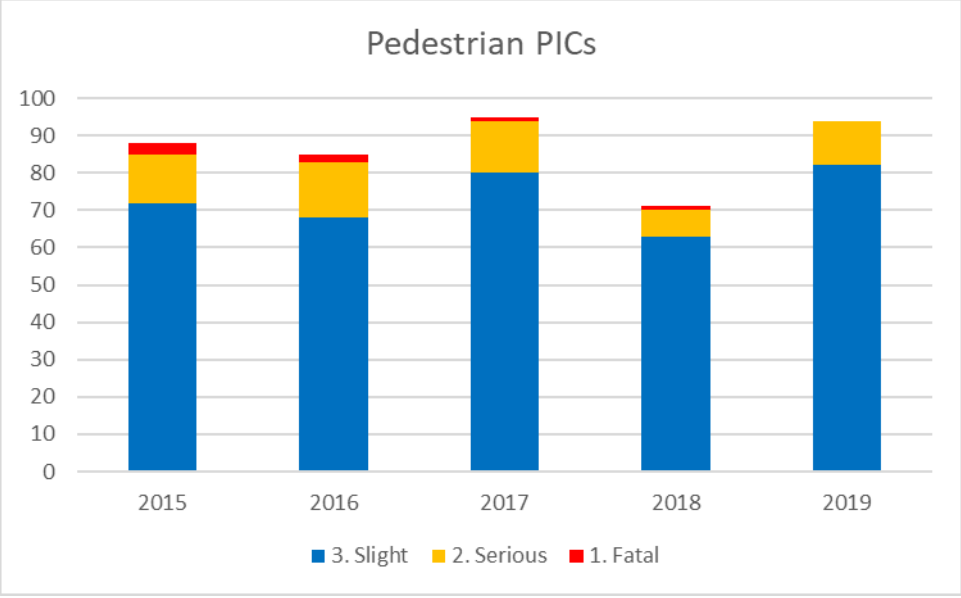
Figure 3-8 - A358 ADT Traffic Volumes Forecast



Source: A303/A30/A358 Corridor Feasibility Study, Stage 1 Report, 2015

3.3.1. Figure 3-9 sets out the trend in Personal Injury Collisions (PICs) between 2015 and 2019. As can be observed, PIC occurrences have been relatively stable year-on-year, though there has been a slight decline in the proportion of Serious and Fatal incidents.

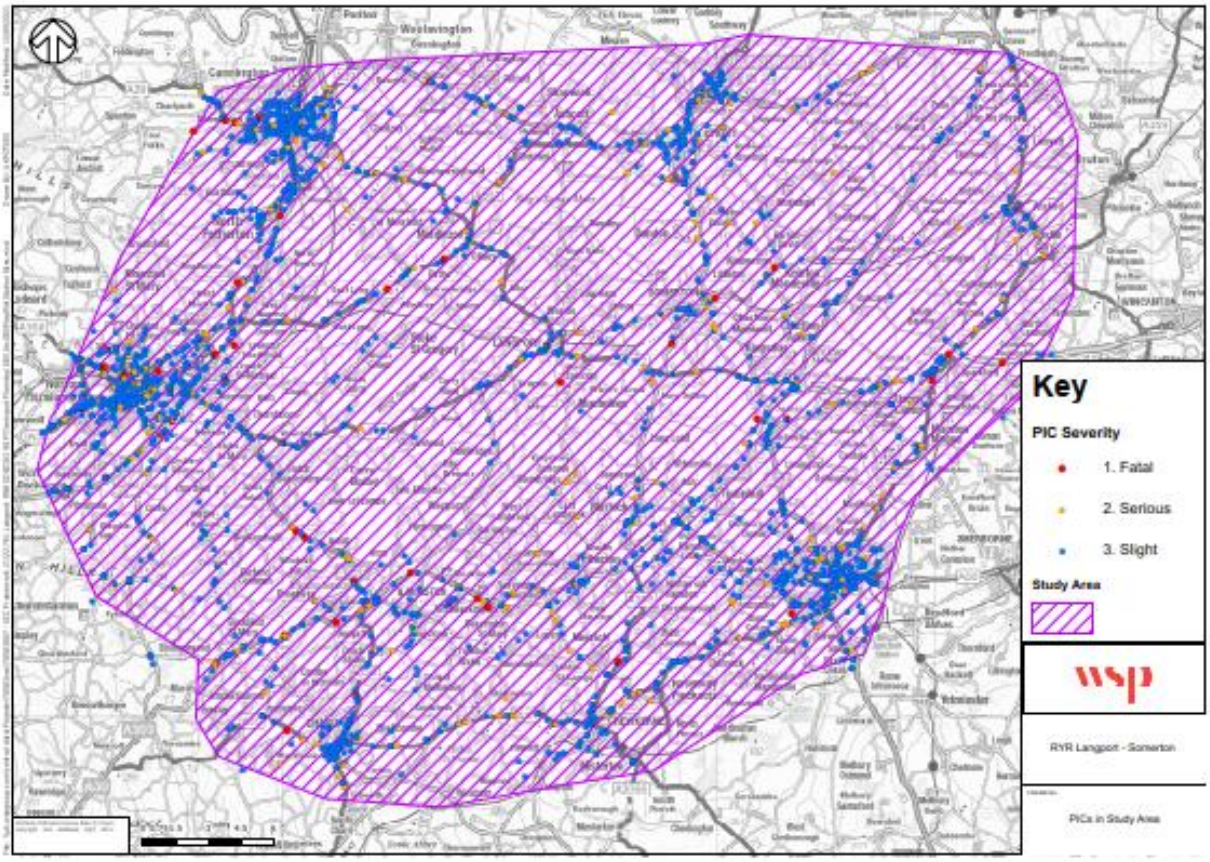
Figure 3-9 - Pedestrian PICs



3.3.2. This raises two challenges with increasing road traffic levels, firstly, to maintain the trend towards reducing serious and fatal PIC occurrences and, secondly, to deliver a long-term reduction in the overall number of PICs.

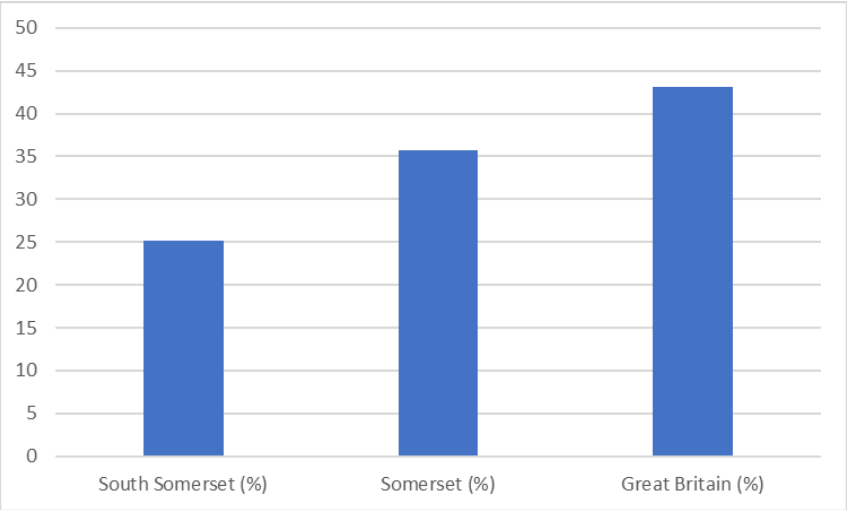
3.3.3. Figure 3-10 shows the distribution of PICs which have occurred in the study area between 2015 and 2019 with a concentration of PICs in and around the west of Somerton, as well as on the links between Langport & Somerton.

Figure 3-10 - PICs in Langport & Somerton Area



3.3.4. Access to education is another constraint on the growth of the local economy. Figure 3-11 shows the attainment of NVQ4 educational levels. South Somerset has a considerably lower percentage (25%) of economically active people qualified to NVQ4 compared to Somerset and nationally.

Figure 3-11 - Attainment of NVQ4 Educational Level and Above

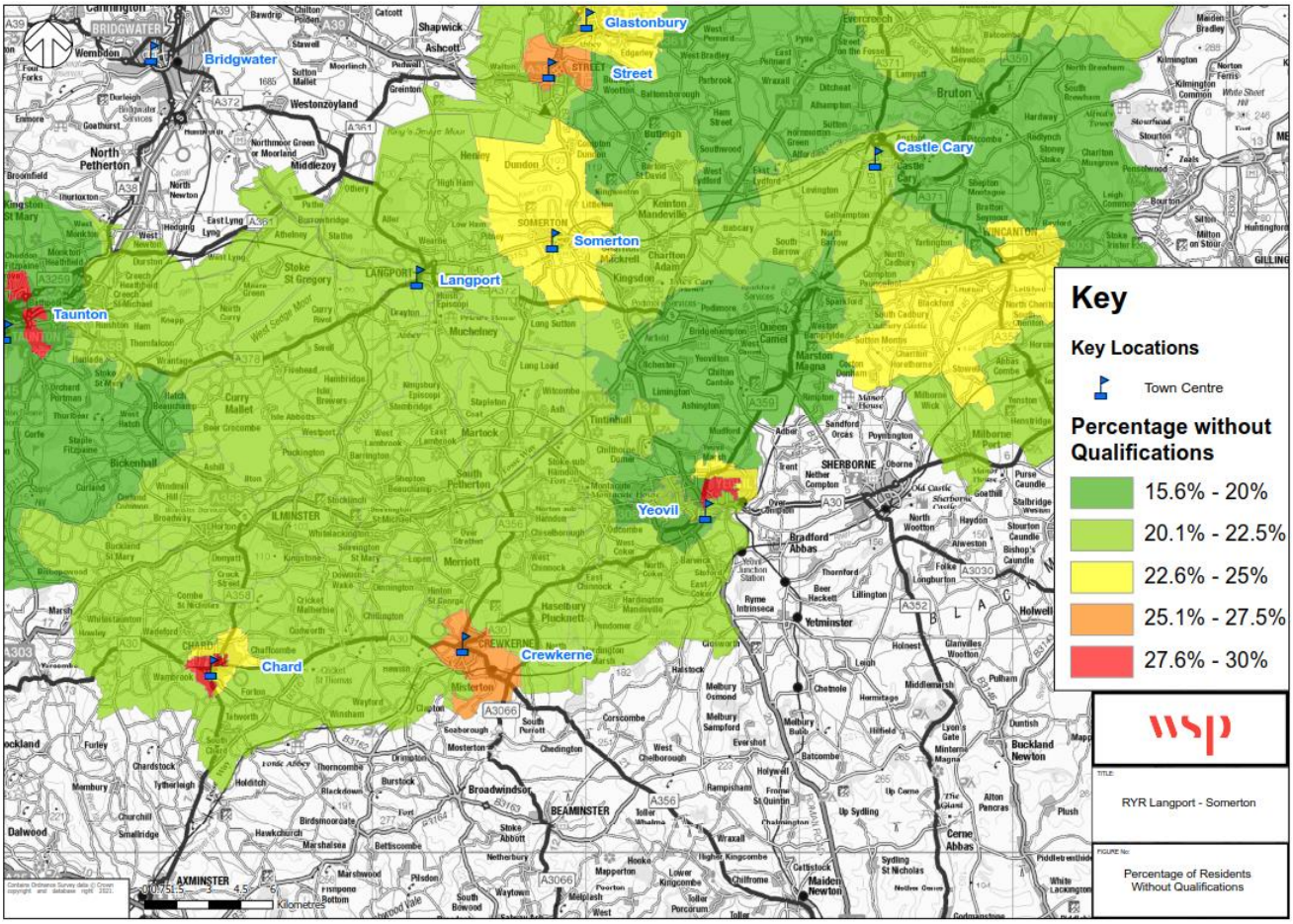


Source:NOMIS

3.3.5. The Index of Multiple Deprivation indicates that in the Somerton area 22-25% of residents attain no educational qualifications. In this respect Somerton stands out from the surrounding rural areas (Figure 3-12). The Somerton LSOA covering the main urban area of the town shows Somerton is within the top 40% most deprived LSOAs in the country when ranked on education, skills and training.[7]

[7] http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#

Figure 3-12 - Percentage Residents without Qualifications



3.3.6. To access higher education many local residents must travel. As many of these people are young and unlikely to have access to a car this is a constraint on access to education opportunities. There is a need to improvement sustainable transport to support these residents' access to education. Bus services are infrequent and often indirect acting as a barrier. Somerset County Council BSIP data shows that current bus provision may restrict learning opportunities in other parts of the county unless access to a private vehicle is available. The lack of transport, travel times and unreliability were found to be the largest barrier to fulltime education access for rural areas of the county (Rurality and Young People Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2015).

3.3.7. Economic growth will be based on greater diversification of the local economy. The tourism sector is set to become a significant part of the post-Covid19 recovery trajectory for the local economy. Oxford Economics forecasts a recovery post-Covid19 in the accommodation and food business in South Somerset of around 1,400 jobs by 2025[8]. Langport-Somerset is an area with high tourist potential which is constrained by the difficulty of accessing the area other than by car.

3.3.8. The Somerset Levels and Moors is an area internationally designated for its birdlife and important wetland, in addition to being a scenic area of natural beauty. Together with the historic market towns

[8] South Somerset District Council Economic Development Needs – Final Report, October 2021.

of Langport and Somerton, including Lytes Cary Manor National Trust to the south of Somerton, the area offers an opportunity to develop tourism.

3.3.9. However, the poor connectivity with the national rail network constrains development of tourism. This applies particularly for longer distance visitors unfamiliar with the limited local bus options. There is a need to provide better connectivity with the national rail network, particularly for those with no access to a car. Potentially, many visitors, often non-car owning, will be enthusiastic recreational cyclists who would be attracted by the River Parrett Trail, South Somerset Cycle Route and other national cycling routes (Sustrans – National Cycling Route 339).

Need to reduce the transport sector's carbon emission levels

3.3.10. There is a need for the transport sector to reduce carbon emission to meet the target requirements set out in the Environment Plan and Climate Change Act. Specific details of the transport sector contribution to carbon reduction are set out in key national and local policy documents. The DfT's Transport Decarbonisation Plan sets out objectives and strategies for the transport sector to reduce carbon emissions to meet the targets for net zero carbon emission by 2040. Somerset County Council has declared a climate emergency with a focus on reducing the transport sector's contribution of 46% of total carbon emissions in the county. Also, South Somerset District Council has recognised a climate and ecological emergency and has published an Environment Strategy that sets priority outcomes for achieving carbon neutrality including decreasing reliance on the car and facilitating non-motor vehicle modes of transport.[9] As one of the measures to employ to reduce carbon emission generated by transport to meet the net zero targets, there is a need to offer people a choice of sustainable transport.

3.3.11. Census travel to work data shows that the main out-commuting by car is to employment in Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil. Somerton commuters travel via Langport to Taunton resulting in increased traffic levels on the A378 and A358. Langport itself generates substantial outward commuting to Taunton, Somerton and Yeovil representing together nearly 60% of journey to work trips. As well as the commuting traffic there are also car trips connecting to the national rail network. Car is used to travel the lengthy distances to use the park and ride facilities at the nearest railway stations to board train services to longer distance destinations such as London and Bristol for travel in the course of work or leisure.

Support Place-making, Social Inclusion and Quality of Life Needs

3.3.12. Langport and Somerton are growing communities with new housing developments being developed. Insights into socio-demographic characteristics of residents in the Langport-Somerton area is available from Experian Mosaic consumer research. The Mosaic data provides a classification of consumer groups. The main categories of consumer group present within the Langport-Somerton are Rural Reality and Country Living are defined below:

[9] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/2690/environment-strategy-document-3-final.pdf.

Group	Definition
City Prosperity	High status city dwellers living in central locations, pursuing careers with high rewards
Prestige Positions	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles
Country Living	Well off owners in rural locations enjoying the benefits of country life
Rural Reality	Householders living in inexpensive homes in village communities
Senior Security	Elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement
Suburban Stability	Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range houses
Domestic Success	Thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers
Aspiring Homemakers	Younger households settling down in housing priced within their means
Family Basics	Families with limited resources who have budget to make ends meet
Transient Renters	Single people privately renting low cost homes for the short term
Municipal Challenge	Urban renters of social housing facing an array of challenges
Vintage Value	Elderly people reliant on support to meet financial or practical needs
Modest Traditions	Mature homeowners of value homes enjoying stable lifestyles
Urban Cohesion	Residents of settled urban communities with a strong sense of identity
Rental Hubs	Educated young people privately renting in urban neighbourhoods

3.3.13. The dominant role of these consumer groups in the Langport-Somerton area is shown in Figure 3-13 and Figure 3-14.

Figure 3-13 - Mosaic-Experian Consumer Groups in Langport Area

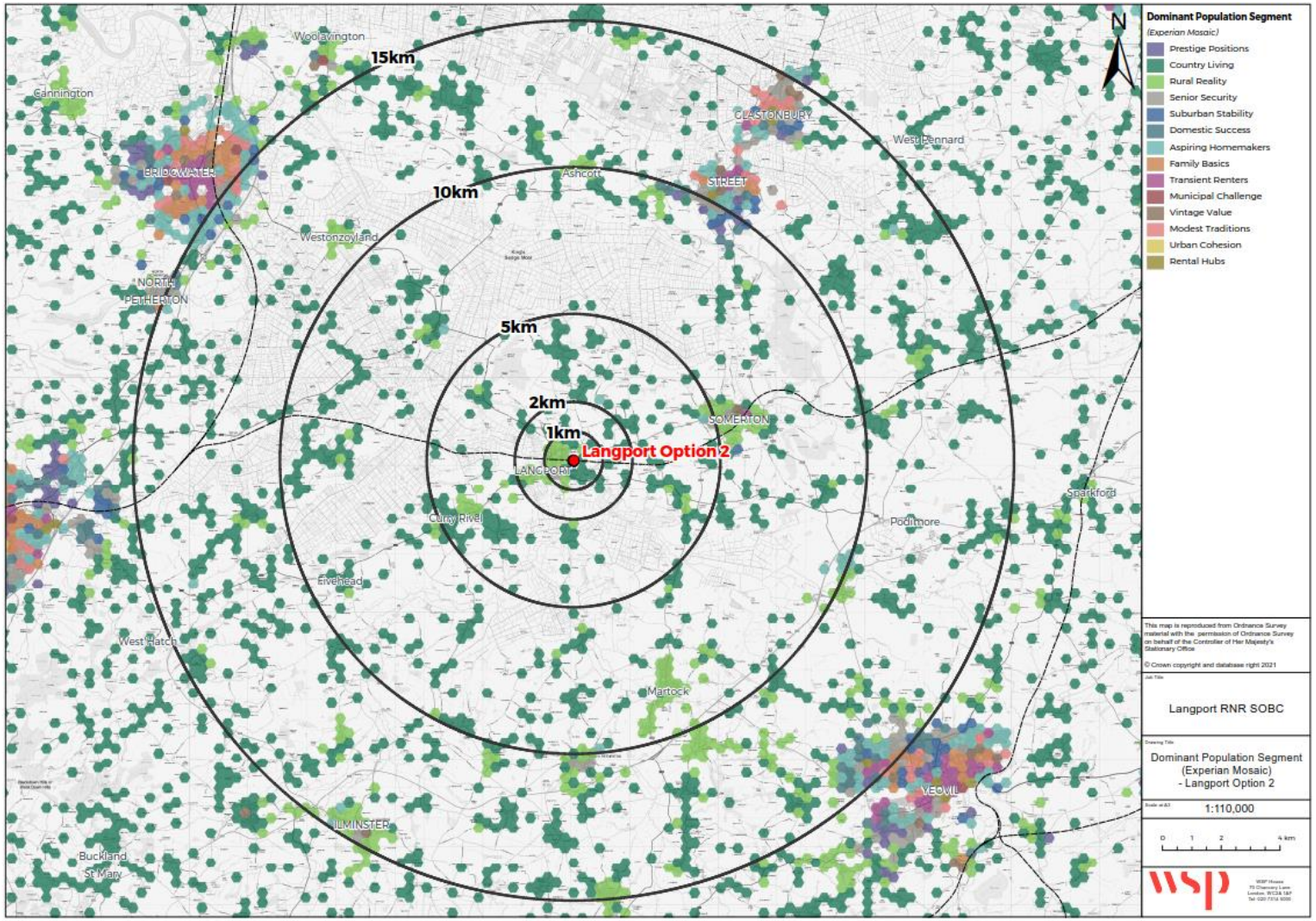
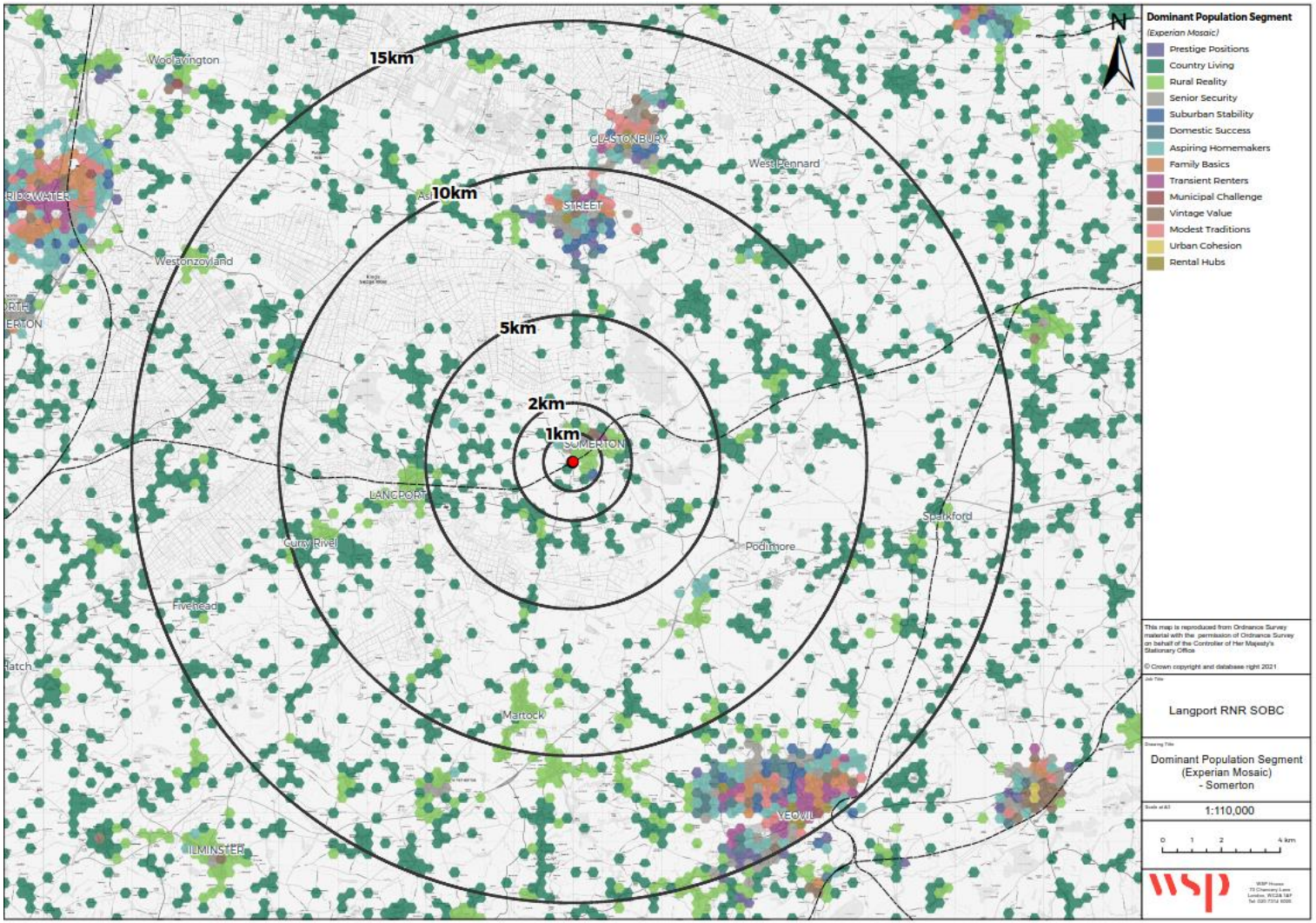


Figure 3-14 - Mosaic-Experian Consumer Groups in Somerton Area



3.3.14. ‘Rural Reality’ are are generally likely to be dependent on private transport and will need to spend a proportion of their income on private transport to ensure accessibility to work/leisure including access to the countryside. Some are also unlikely to have a car available and will rely on public transport for mobility. The ‘Country Living’ consumer group is increasingly dominant away from the core communities suggesting that the population here are more likely to travel by car. However, this consumer group is likely to include a significant proportion of retired people.

3.3.15. An analysis of population growth in the Langport-Somerton area shows a trend towards a greater number of more elderly residents. Across the Langport-Somerton area 30-40% of the population is over 60 years old. This is shown in Figure 3-15 using 2011 Census data. The proportion of older residents has been increasing over time as in-migration occurs from elsewhere in the country. The South Somerset Local Housing Needs Assessment states that the net growth in population over the period 2020-2040 will be predominantly in the 65 years and older age categories.[10]

3.3.16.

3.3.17.

3.3.18.

3.3.19. Figure 3-16 shows the long-term trend in population composition between 2001 and 2019 indicating that South Somerset has an ageing population higher than the national average and less young people than the national average. An increase in the proportion of older people is a trend which has been developing over time as more people choose to retire in South Somerset.

3.3.20. Focussing on Langport /Huish Episcopi, 24% of residents are 65 or older (compared to 20% average in South Somerset District, and 19% nationally), which could have potential longer-term implications for health care needs and the type of housing provision that is required to meet the needs of the town. Figure 3-17 shows the population split by age group and the cumulative total highlighting the ageing demographic trend.

3.3.21. An older population is likely to be less attracted to travelling longer distances to access the rail network at Taunton or Castle Cary. These residents will increasingly be reliant on public transport to provide connectivity with the national rail network to access to a range of services in the health and services sectors.

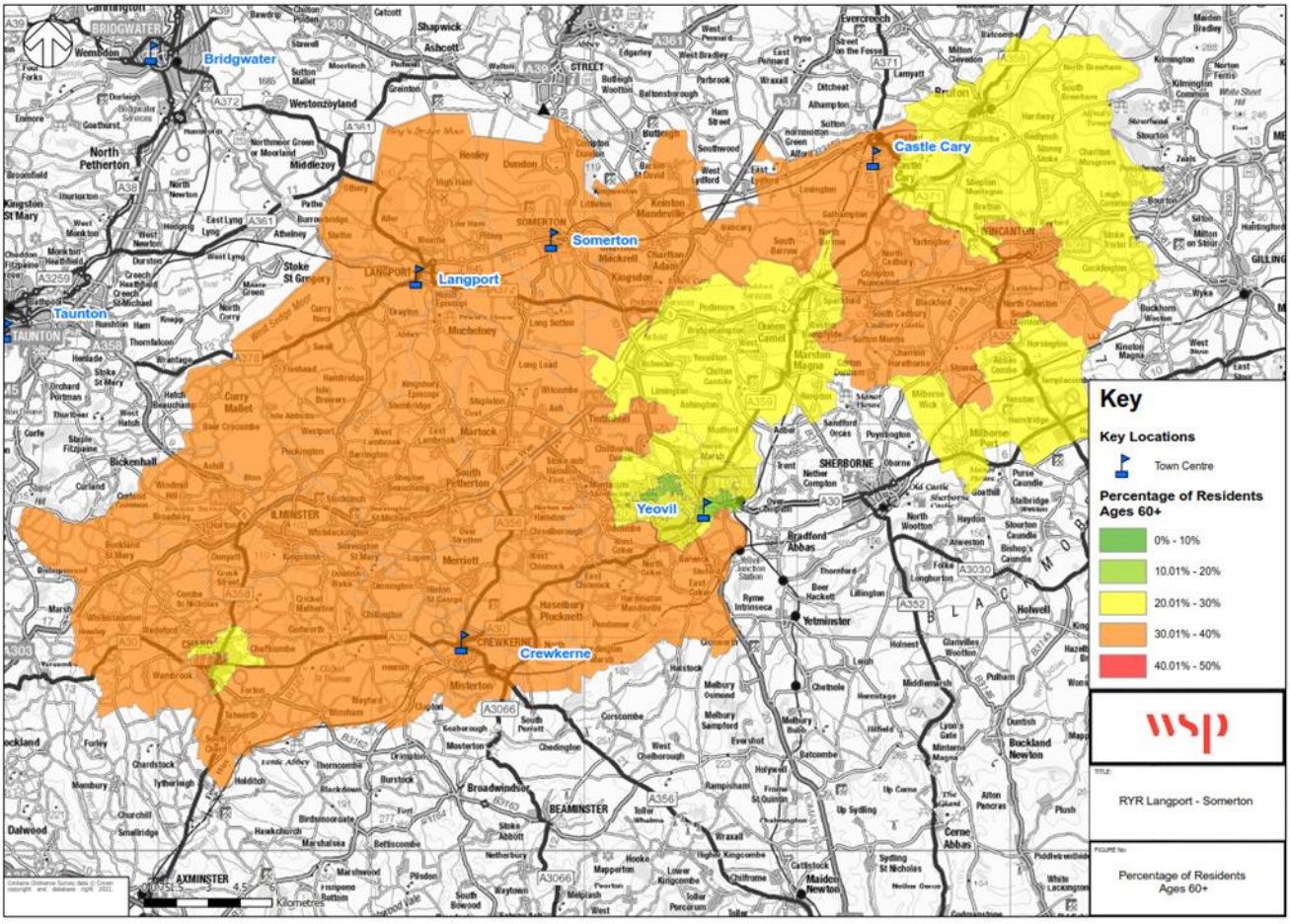
3.3.22. Sustainable transport options are constrained for the younger people living within the potential catchment area of the Langport-Somerton station. As has been shown existing public bus services

[10] 2021-south-somerset-lhna.pdf (southsomerset.gov.uk).

connectivity and frequency results in poor access to the services and amenities in the regional centres. Figure 3-18 shows that the proportion of students in the Langport-Somerton area is greater than other areas of South Somerset District, although relatively small at around 3% of the population. The small proportion of students is likely to reflect the limited transport options available for non-car owning people.

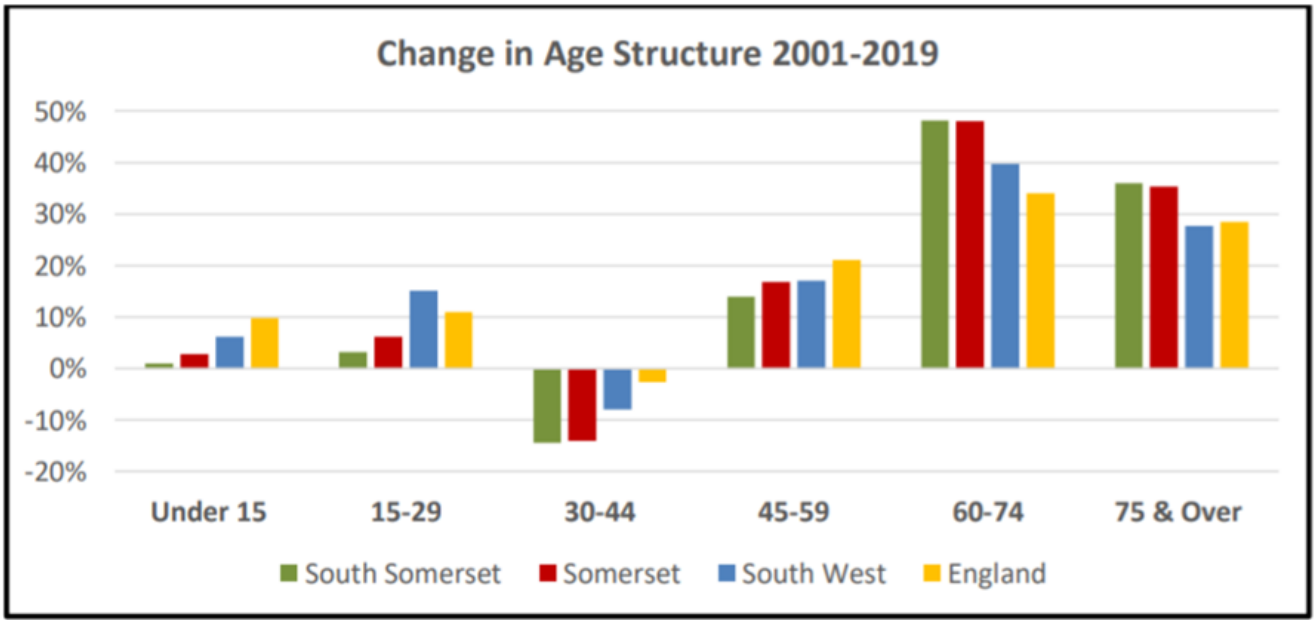
3.3.23. Whilst 10-20% of the total South Somerset population live in non-car owning households, it is the younger age group who are much more likely to be reliant on public transport or taxis for their access to transport. Cycling for regular travel is only an option for a very few, given the distances and lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure. With less young people acquiring a drivers' licence the dependence on good public transport links will increase. Without these public transport links the quality of life will be diminished which in turn will be reflected in migration away to larger urban centres. This would conflict with the district and county aims to develop sustainable and vibrant local communities.

Figure 3-15 - South Somerset District, Residents Aged Over 60



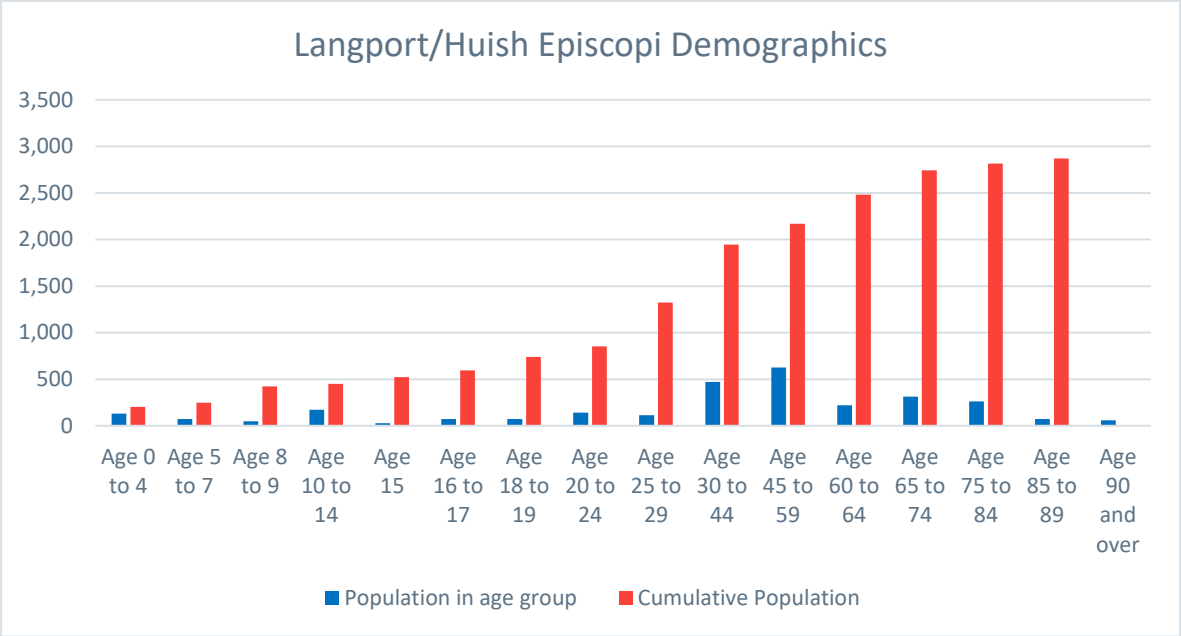
Source: NOMIS, Census 2011

Figure 3-16 - Change in Age Structure 2001-2019



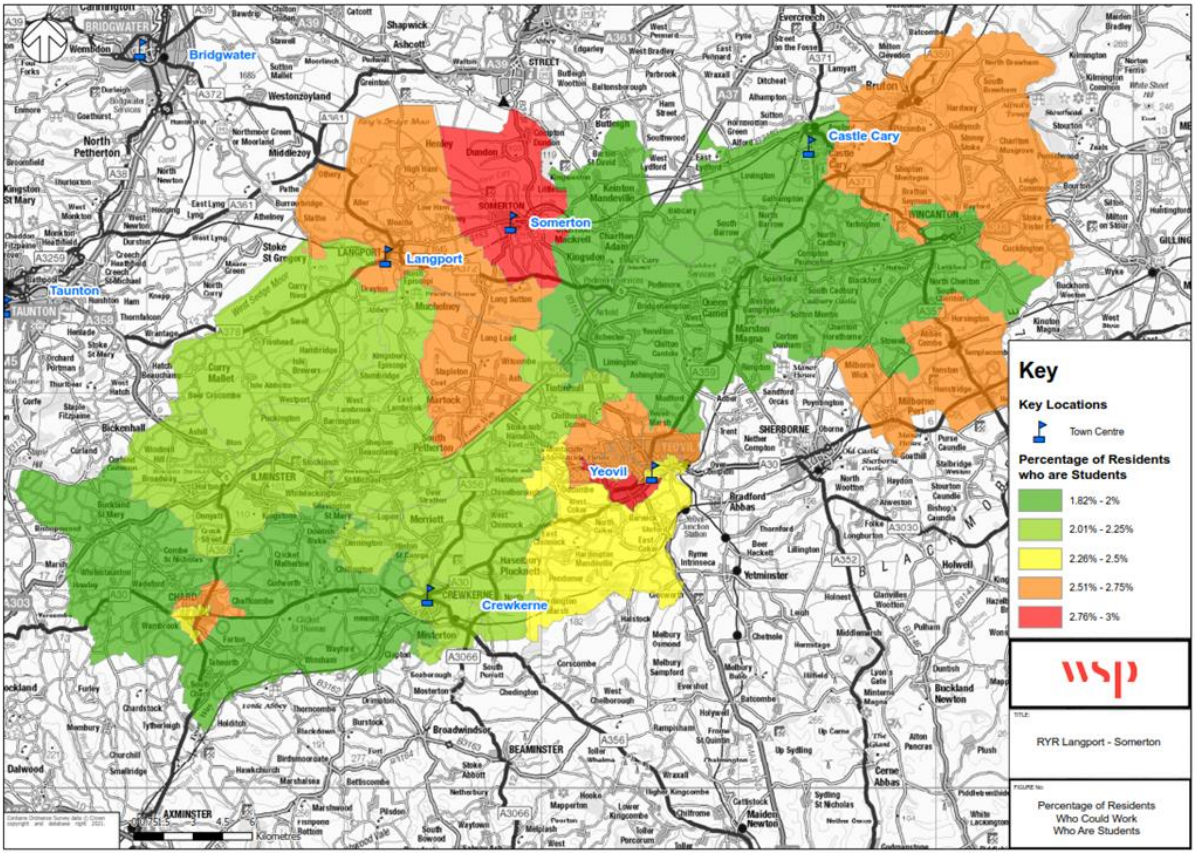
Source: South Somerset Authority Monitoring Report, 2021

Figure 3-17 - Langport/Huish Episcopi Demographics



Source: 2011 Census

Figure 3-18 - Percentage of Residents Who Are Students



Source: 2011 Census

3.4 PROBLEMS IDENTIFICATION

3.4.1. Regeneration of the local economic growth, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic will be adversely affected by the quality of local transport connectivity for residents of the Langport-Somerton area to regional centres and strategic connectivity to the wider south-west region. The current travel option is the private car for many people wishing to travel to the regional centres and connect to the rail network (and via rail reach the wider regional and national economies). Journeys can be over 30km by rural roads to the regional centres such as Taunton which also offer strategic transport connectivity with the national rail network. Traffic levels on the road network are forecast to increase with increased car trips causing road capacity issues at key locations further increasing journey times. Local economic productivity levels will decline further, a concern raised by the Heat of the South West LEP. This is a further constraint on economic growth in an area of Somerset with relatively low economic productivity compared to the national economy. Critically, there will be a mismatch with the national, regional and local transport policy objectives of increasing sustainable transport connectivity and reducing carbon emissions. Transport is one of the largest emitters of carbon emissions in the district with 42% of South Somerset carbon emissions emanating from transport, compared with 33% from domestic activities and 25% from industrial activities. Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council have declared a Climate Emergency and have identified sustainable transport development to be a key policy measure to reduce carbon emissions of the transport sector as part of a raft of carbon zero policies aligned with central government targets for net zero carbon emission by 2050. South Somerset District Council aims to reduce carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2030.

3.4.2. Without a sustainable connection to regional centres and quality strategic connectivity to the national rail network, Langport-Somerton residents, but also residents from the hinterland rural settlements, will need to use public transport to access essential services (education, healthcare etc). The travel options available are either the use of taxis or the local bus services connecting to Taunton, and Yeovil. As there is no public bus service to Castle Cary, taxi will be the only option for those travellers without access to a car wishing to travel on rail services calling at Castle Cary. Taunton and Yeovil are more accessible, but bus journeys are infrequent, largely restricted to daytime hours and in some cases require an interchange. The Somerset BSIP proposes a significant enhancement in the local bus network and access to bus services, particularly frequency improvements. Nevertheless, the full benefits of the BSIP network enhancement will not be fully realised without secure funding. Bus passengers, existing and new, will experience continuing inequality in access to transport services including connectivity with rail for travel to the wider South West region and beyond, affecting their quality of life. For younger residents of the Langport/Somerton area this will result in out-migration to have access to higher education and social amenities offered by regional centres. Another vulnerable group will be older residents who may be reluctant to use a car for longer journeys even when one is available.

3.5 SMART SPENDING OBJECTIVES

3.5.1. The SMART spending objectives are shaped by the policy context and the identified problems that the intervention is seeking to address described above, and therefore establish the basis for the development of the intervention. Ultimately, they will be used to evaluate the success of the outturn scheme and are therefore set with respect to the DfT guidance on SMART objectives.

3.5.2. In line with DfT guidance, a hierarchy of objectives has been established:

- **Strategic ambitions** (Impacts) – which the intervention contributes to
- **Scheme (Intermediate) objectives** (Outcomes) – which the intervention needs to deliver for the strategic ambitions to be realised
- **Operational objectives** (Outputs) – desirable outputs to achieve the intermediate objectives.

The strategic ambitions support the policy aims set out in Section 1.2 to improve connectivity to services and amenities, reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, reduce road congestion, support economic growth and improve the transport experience of users. sets out the policy aims and strategic ambitions.

Table 3-2 - Policy Aims and Strategic Ambitions

Key Documents Referenced	Policy Aims	Strategic Ambitions
National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 (revised in July 2021) Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline, 2018 Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth, 2021 Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, 2021 Decarbonising Transport: A Better Greener Britain, 2021 Restoring Your Railways Fund, 2021 Heart of the South West Build Back Better, Productivity Strategy & Local Industrial Strategy	Support sustainable employment and housing growth at regionally significant locations to deliver on rebalancing the economy (Levelling-Up) through improved sustainable transport options	Support economic growth and sustainable development by improving public transport connectivity and accessibility
Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline, 2018 Peninsula Rail Taskforce Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy, 2020 South Somerset Environment Strategy 2019 Somerset Future Transport Plan 2011-2026	To develop sustainable transport modes which contribute to mitigating the impact of climate change and facilitate the delivery of carbon net zero by 2050 (or earlier date)	To reduce carbon emissions through reduced road traffic and congestion and improve air quality
Draft Somerset County Council Rail Passenger Strategy, 2021 National Bus Strategy, 2021 Somerset County Council Schedule of Transport Policies, 2011 Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan, 2021	To provide improved public transport integration to improve the quality of life and reduce social isolation for rural communities	Social cohesiveness supported by enhancing public transport connectivity through linked public transport and active modes
South Somerset Local Plan 2018-2026 South Somerset Local Plan Review 2016-2036, Preferred Options	To offer alternative transport choices which provide enhanced accessibility to improved sustainable transport options To provide a health enhancing environment, promoting walking, cycling and non-car-based transport and access to leisure opportunities.	Social cohesiveness, well-being and strengthened communities

3.5.3. The strategic ambitions covering economic growth, inclusiveness and social well-being are in turn captured in scheme and operational objectives for interventions to restore sustainable transport connectivity in the Langport-Somerton corridor.

3.5.4. Table 3-3 sets out the translation of the strategic ambitions into scheme objectives, operational objectives and measures of success.

Table 3-3 - Scheme, Operational Objectives and Measures of Success

Strategic Ambitions	Scheme Objectives	Operational Objectives	Measures of Success
Enable economic growth by…	Supporting sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic and longer-term growth	Support sustainable integrated public transport connectivity between residents and employment and residents and education and healthcare	Labour market catchment populations Public transport demand
		Support inward investment across sectors of the economy, including growth of the local tourist industry with enhanced connectivity to national and regional centres	Public transport demand
		Mitigate the impacts of local highway congestion	Highway journey times
Benefit the environment by…	Supporting decarbonisation of the transport network	Support mode shift from the private car to public transport reducing carbon emissions Achieve net zero emissions from operations	Highway-kilometres CO2 Emissions
Improve social well-being by…	Improve health, well-being and Quality of Life	Enhance mobility options, particularly for non-car available travellers to address local social inequality and rural isolation Provide accessible public transport services which link to bus, walking and cycling connections To provide a generic district-wide modal shift to reduce single car occupancy and the need to travel, or encourage the use of more sustainable travel.	Population catchment for public transport services & other sustainable transport Non-car ownership households' catchment for public transport & other sustainable transport
	Ensuring a safe environment in which to travel	Provide safe and convenient public transport services	Public transport accidents and incidents
		Encourage modal shift to safer modes	Public transport and highway accidents and incidents

3.6 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF INVESTMENT OPTIONS

3.6.1. The option selection process has been applied to ensure a systematic and robust approach is undertaken to identify the preferred option(s) for further scheme development. The approach uses a multi-criteria assessment framework (MCAF) based on the guiding principles of:

- Proportionality, in addressing the scope of criteria identified in HMT and DfT guidance without exhaustively considering every potential impact
- Proportionality, in recognising the extent of option development and the level of information available to base assessments on
- Providing a comparative assessment of options
- Identifying the trade-offs between options
- Clearly setting out the assessment findings.

3.6.2. The MCAF provides a proportionate and staged sifting process to enable decision makers to effectively and efficiently reduce the number of options under consideration and in doing so identify those that are most likely to meet the requirements for the scheme. The MCAF addresses three themes: suitability, acceptability and feasibility.

3.6.3. Each assessment theme provides a gateway at which options can proceed to the next assessment theme or be parked if they are assessed to have 'critical failures', namely are inconsistent with the strategic objectives and priorities for the scheme or cause large adverse economic, social or environmental impacts or are unrealistic to implement.

3.6.4. The nature of the options considered at each assessment stage evolves through the process building on the previous stage, as illustrated in Figure 3-19.

Figure 3-19 - MCAF Themes and Stages

The options, assessment approach and assessment findings are described below.

3.6.5. The Options Assessment Report (Appendix B) provides details of the longlist of options considered to solve the identified needs set out earlier in this chapter. The longlist of options is shown in Table 3-4 which were assessed using a Multi-Criteria Assessment (MCAF).

Table 3-4 - Longlist of Proposed Options

Scenario	Description (Service)	Description (Infrastructure)
Reference Case	Baseline 2019 transport network with Langport-Somerton connected to the rail network at Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil. Assumes the existing road network and bus services	As existing – no new stations between Taunton and Castle Cary
Rail Option	Service Options: 1) New train service operating an hourly service between Westbury and Taunton. This new train service would call at Langport/Somerton, Castle Cary, Bruton and Frome. 2) Existing semi-fast train services call at the new station Also note that there are potential additional benefit opportunities such as the GO-OP open access planned service between Taunton and Swindon calling at the new Langport-Somerton station	New station in the Langport & Somerton area and highway access arrangements
Road Option	Improvements to the Strategic and Local Road Networks to improve travel times by road and reduce congestion.	Upgrades to the SRN e.g. A303 and A358 to reduce journey times and enhanced economic connectivity. National Highways are due to submit a Development Consent Order in summer 2022 to dual the A358 between A303 and M5/J25. Improvements to capacity on the A378 and A372/A37 corridor at and on the approaches to Taunton.
Bus Option	Enhancements to bus links between Langport/Somerton and Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil to provide links to existing rail services. These services would be aligned to connect with rail timetables. Baseline 2019 bus timetable serving Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil improved to offer regular hourly service on Service 54 and 77. Offer improved bus/rail interchange re-routeing buses to station entrances. Explore and implement innovative transport technology solutions (including Digital Demand Responsive Transport) to make rural transport more accessible and affordable.[11]	Bus infrastructure upgrades at existing stations Additional services/vehicles to enhance frequencies

[11] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/4050/action-plan-2021_22.pdf.

Scenario	Description (Service)	Description (Infrastructure)
Active Travel & Future Mobility Option	Baseline 2019 transport network with the Langport-Somerton area connected to the rail network at Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil.	Provision of and enhancements to cycle links between Langport/Somerton and Taunton, Castle Cary and Yeovil. Future Mobility interventions such as e-scooters and e-bikes. Car-sharing and car-pooling schemes.

3.6.6. Investment in a highway alternative with improved road infrastructure will address some of the regional connectivity issues for those with car access and reduce road congestion.

3.6.7. However, increasing road capacity will not meet the specific business case objectives of the transport connectivity scheme for the Langport-Somerton area which are focused on decarbonisation and better access to public transport for those without access to a car. A widespread local road network building programme would be needed to provide a significant improvement in accessibility by road to the various destinations necessary to achieve economic growth. There are also challenges regarding increased travel times resulting in increased carbon emissions and land-take. Also, policy at national, regional and local levels strongly supports sustainable transport options. Finally, investment in a highways' alternative would also not address the transport needs of those without car access.

3.6.8. The active mode alternative would seek to support growing interest locally in cycling and encourage further mode shift towards active travel, helping to meet environmental and public health goals. Key elements considered by this option were new cycle routes connecting the communities in the area building on the existing cycle network. However, whilst offering improved active mode provision for local travel, longer-distance strategic connectivity offered by improved connections to the rail network would not be affected by improved cycling provision. Furthermore, this option would not address the wider challenges of most residents' low accessibility to higher education facilities located in Taunton and Yeovil and further field. Cycling would also be less appropriate for meeting the travel needs of an ageing population. The active mode option would also not provide for an enhancement in sustainable transport accessibility to services and employment in the regional centres needed to retain younger residents who would otherwise consider migrating elsewhere. However, the active mode alternative could be integrated with the rail option to enhance active/sustainable travel.

3.6.9. The bus alternative investment in a package of service improvements proposed for this option would represent a significant improvement in restoring local connectivity and some improvement in strategic connectivity (better interchange connections with the national rail network). A key factor in encouraging a shift to sustainable transport use is the journey time by the mode.

3.6.10. The recently published BSIP forms the basis for the assessment of bus journey times. Key BSIP bus network changes which are reflected in the bus alternative are the following:

- Service 54 from Taunton to Yeovil via Langport and Somerton is withdrawn and replaced by an increased frequency on service 77 between Somerton and Yeovil; and
- A new Taunton-Langport-Somerton-Castle Cary service is introduced offering interchange opportunities with service 77 at Somerton.

3.6.11. Using the BSIP proposals, a bus alternative offering reasonable improvement in the bus quality of service with better connections to the regional centres and better integration between bus and rail services was developed. The specification of the bus alternative is considered proportionate with respect to investment in the intervention, particularly as three out of four services currently operated require SCC financial support. The bus alternative specification is, as follows:

- Hourly services on all bus corridors, with a primary focus on service 54 and service 16 connecting Langport and Somerton with Taunton and Bridgwater respectively.
- Service re-timetabling to deliver a maximum of ten minutes interchange time between bus services and between bus and rail services.
- Provision of a new bus service connecting Langport and Somerton to Castle Cary railway station
- Smart card ticketing and improved stop/interchange facilities as set out in the Somerset Future Transport Plan

3.6.12. The rail alternative will provide a significant enhancement in provision of sustainable transport connectivity. Journey times to the regional centres are quicker and more reliable when compared to bus services. For trips beyond the regional centres to the wider south-west region and beyond the rail alternative offers direct connectivity. The rail alternative provides for a community railway station integrated with access modes (bus, walking and cycling). Rail will attract greater ridership compared to bus given its more attractive level of service including mode shift from car which will reduce transport carbon emissions. Rail connectivity to the regional centres will also contribute to greater social inclusion providing more accessible sustainable transport services for education, healthcare and other services which will be of increasing importance for residents without access to a car (both younger residents for education and older residents less likely to use a car.

3.6.13. Each of the alternatives was assessed with respect to the scheme objectives as follows:

- Supporting sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic and longer- term growth
- Reducing the environmental impacts of the transport network
- Improve health, well-being and quality of life
- Ensuring a safe environment in which to travel

The option assessment report provides the detailed evaluation of each alternative. A summary of key elements of the assessment is provided below.

Supporting sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic and longer- term growth

3.6.14. The alternatives were assessed with respect to the contribution to Levelling Up and creating a more balanced local economy. Each was assessed with regard to the likely contribution to productivity benefits achieved by restoring connectivity to regional centres and the rail network. The Active Travel Option contributes least to improving productivity. Whilst creating more sustainable transport, the proportion of residents likely to cycle lengthy distances would be small and the contribution to productivity improvements through greater connectivity to regional centres and the national rail network would be very limited. A comparison of morning peak hour end-to-end journey times for travel to regional destinations from Langport and Somerton is shown in Figure 3-20 and Figure 3-21 below.

3.6.15. For Taunton and Castle Cary the travel options are car and bus and rail services. For Bridgwater, Exeter and Bristol the travel options also include car park and ride and use of train services.

Figure 3-20 – AM Peak Hour Journey Time from Langport

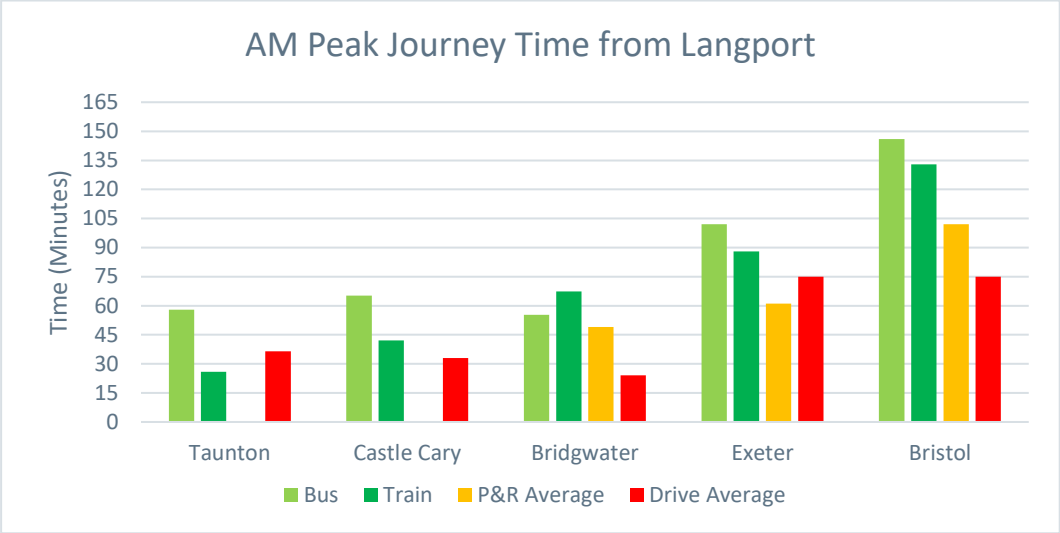


Figure 3-21 - AM Peak Hour Journey Time from Somerton

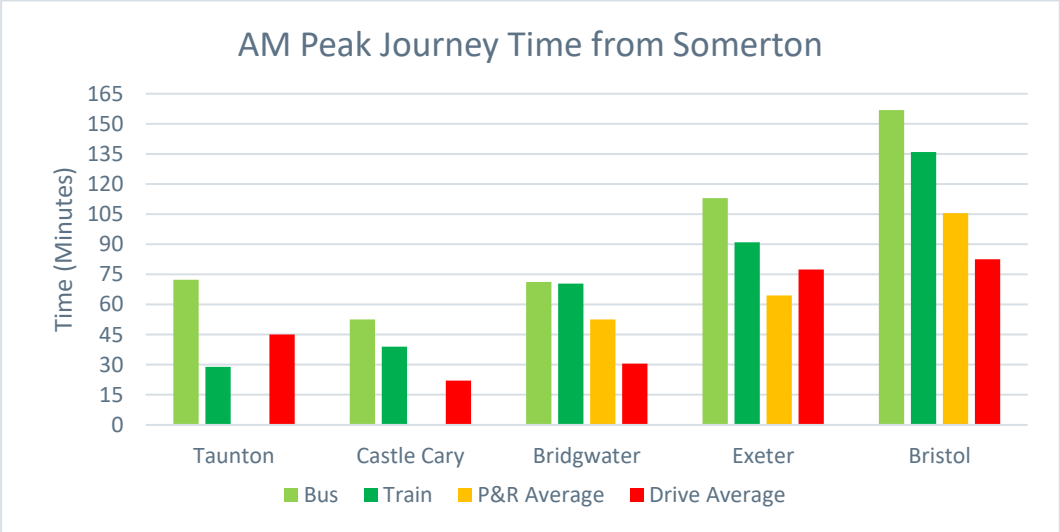


Figure 3-22 and Figure 3-23 show a comparison of generalised cost (journey time plus cost of travel (fuel, fares, car parking). This also shows that rail offers a better sustainable transport solution than bus.

Figure 3-22 - AM Peak Hour Generalised Cost from Langport

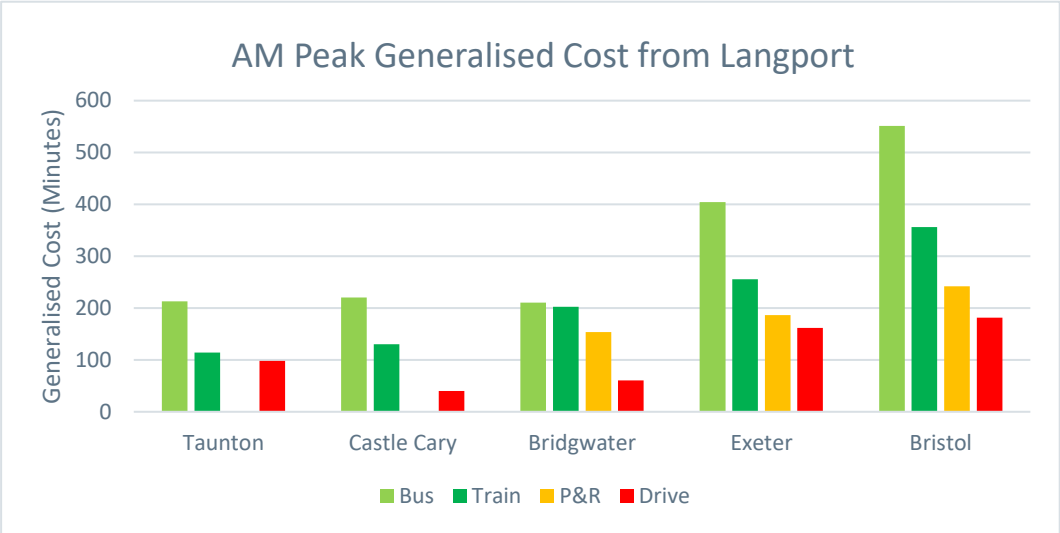
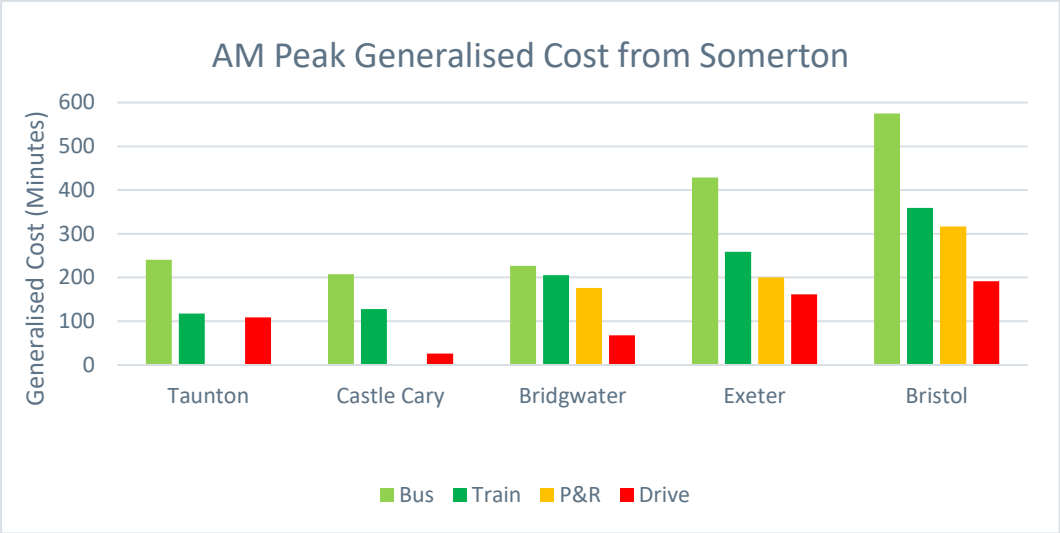


Figure 3-23 - AM Peak Hour Generalised Cost from Somerton



3.6.16. Journey times by bus are significantly greater than by rail to the key regional rail hubs of Taunton and Castle Cary. The private car has the shortest journey time in the majority of instances, with a key exception being on trips between Langport and Somerton and Taunton where the rail alternative provides considerable journey time savings. A key disadvantage of the highway alternative is journey time unreliability caused by traffic congestion. Additionally, the private car, which would be the primary benefactor of the highway option, has considerable carbon emission disbenefits.

3.6.17. The journey time comparison for the public transport modes shows that the rail option provides considerably shorter journey times than bus for trips to regional centres, acting as destinations for essential social and economic services including employment opportunities and connectivity with the national rail network. Trips to/from Langport and Somerton station sites to the key employment / rail interchange centres of Taunton and Castle Cary shows that the rail option also provides a shorter journey time than the car alternative.

3.6.18. Bus journey time savings are less than rail as bus addresses multiple service priorities including coverage of dispersed rural communities which reduces the scope for providing of more direct connectivity to the regional centres and the regional rail network. Furthermore, rail journey times are also reliable and not subject to travel uncertainty due to road congestion. Forecasts of increasing levels of traffic on the local road network will only increase this journey time unreliability. Bus journey time unreliability affects commuters particularly. Thus, regeneration of the local economy and contributing to levelling up is less likely to supported by the bus alternative as a means of improving connectivity to regional centres and railway stations for access to employment, healthcare and education facilities. The bus alternative will though offer improved bus services, particularly for those travellers with limited transport options available. However, the potential to unlock economic and social welfare benefits are far less than for a rail option which by restoring lost sustainable transport connectivity to regional centres and the national rail network will contribute more to regeneration and levelling-up. The appeal of having a new accessible rail station is evident from the rail survey which found 84% of respondents would likely use a Langport-Somerton railway station.

3.6.19. The rail alternative is considered the best option for delivering sustainable public transport connectivity. Reduced journey times offered by the rail alternative will enhance public transport connectivity to regional centres. Quicker journey times offered by the rail alternative will encourage greater modal shift from car. The bus alternative identified a range of service improvements increasing service frequency and offering additional network connectivity, however, bus service improvements in the area in isolation will not offer the journey time savings by public transport needed to act as a catalyst for supporting economic growth, social inclusion and reduced carbon emissions that restored railway connectivity will offer. However, bus services will have a role as a supporting mode, integrating with rail, and building on the bus network initiatives set out in the recently published Bus Service Improvement Plan for Somerset.

Reducing the Environmental Impacts of the Transport Network

3.6.20. The highway alternative is the least likely of the alternatives to provide environmental benefits. Car travel generates far more emissions per user than any of the other modes being considered. Transport sustainability would also be diminished over time by the return of traffic through induced travel. Additionally, providing additional highway capacity would require additional land take.

3.6.21. A bus alternative is also unlikely to provide a significant contribution to carbon reduction in line with sustainable transport policies and the requirement for the transport sector to accelerate measures to reduce carbon emissions reference in policy such as the Climate Emergency declaration by Somerset County Council. A bus alternative is unlikely to generate the demand that a rail alternative could generate given longer, less reliable journey times, and greater difficulty in producing mode shift from car users. Consequently, reduction in kilometres travelled and hence carbon emissions will be significantly less for a bus alternative compared to rail alternative.

3.6.22. For a similar reason, the active travel option is only likely to provide minor benefits to the environment, unless the active modes are aligned with the rail alternative with the provision of active travel opportunities to the new railway station. Whilst increased walking and cycling will reduce emissions few new trips will be generated for cycling as a means of restoring connections between Langport-Somerton and the nearest rail stations.

3.6.23. The rail alternative supports sustainable transport connectivity to the national rail network as does the bus alternative, but as the assessment for the bus alternative has shown the connectivity to the

rail network provide by a direct rail connection is likely to attract more passenger demand as the quality of service will be higher (quicker journey times and high reliability for interchanging at Taunton and Castle Cary). The rail connection will also encourage reduced use of the car as travellers switch to using the park and ride at the closer new station in preference to using other station park and ride facilities reducing vehicle mileage and carbon emissions.

Improve Health, Well-Being and Quality of Life

3.6.24. The highway alternative is the least likely to deliver improvements to health, well-being and quality of life. Providing a highway solution to the need for connectivity to the rail network will result in continuing and potentially higher levels of traffic on the road network as car is used to travel to the nearest rail stations.

3.6.25. The active travel alternative is very well aligned with this objective due to the investment in walking and cycling measures increasing the use of those modes. However, in terms of offering an improvement in health, well-being and quality of life for connections to the national rail network the active travel alternative will offer very limited contribution as few travellers are likely to switch mode to travel long distances to the nearest railway stations.

3.6.26. The rail alternative will encourage a modal shift away from the private car for connectivity to the national rail network. A reduction in car trips from mode shift will lead to healthier lifestyles as travellers switch to cycling or walking to access the rail network at a new local station.

The bus alternative will deliver some mode shift. However, the attractiveness of bus alternative as connection to the national rail network is constrained by service quality and reliability (road congestion).

Ensuring a safe environment In which to travel

3.6.27. The bus and rail alternatives both provide a strong fit with the objective of ensuring a safe environment in which to travel. These alternatives will encourage a mode shift to sustainable transport modes reducing the number of vehicles on the road (and thus the likelihood of Personal Injury Collisions (PICs) and the lower incidence of accidents compared to the highway and active mode alternatives.

3.6.28. The highway alternative is likely to deliver some limited safety improvements for road users, with improved junction design and capacity reducing the likelihood of PICs occurring. However, in the medium term traffic growth will minimise these benefits.

3.6.29. The active travel alternative is likely to deliver safety benefits for users on the local corridors where investments are made, however, this option is unlikely to deliver much modal shift in terms of enhancing connectivity to the national rail network.

Overall Assessment of Options (Alternatives)

3.6.30. Each alternative option's fit with objectives was scored between 1 (Weak Fit) and 3 (Strong Fit). As can be seen in Table 3-5, the rail alternative scores highest across all the scheme objectives due to its capacity to provide a strong alternative to the car, delivers the greatest improvement in sustainable transport connectivity, encourages mode shift and delivers healthy lifestyles.

3.6.31. The rail alternative scores highest as it is best aligned with the scheme objectives due to its ability to provide a strong alternative to the car, delivering the greatest increase to accessibility and providing

the safest method of inter-urban travel, as well as encouraging mode shift and improving the environment through reduced road traffic carbon emissions.

Table 3-5 - Long List Option Sifting

Scheme Objective	Rail Option	Road-based Option	Bus-Only Option	Active & FM Option
Supporting sustainable economic recovery post-pandemic and longer-term growth	3	1	2	1
Reducing the environmental impacts of the transport network	3	1	2	2
Improve health, well-being and Quality of Life	3	1	2	3
Ensuring a safe environment in which to travel	3	2	3	2
TOTAL	12	5	9	8
RANK	1	4	2	3

Rail Options: Station Site Selection

3.6.32. A Station Site Feasibility Assessment study has been carried out and is included in Appendix C of this business case document. The study assessed four sites and provided a recommendation for the preferred locations. The sites identified are:

- Langport (Option 1);
- Langport (Option 2);
- Tengore Lane; and
- Somerton.

3.6.33. Details of these sites and the feasibility study findings are set out in Appendix C. The main criteria for the track alignment assessment were relating to compliance to Network Rail and Group Standards for platform locations. Compliance was also needed with the project requirement for a 115m long platform. The environmental assessment of the station site options is presented in Appendix L.

3.6.34. The findings from the Station Site Feasibility Assessment were used in the short-listing of rail options described in the Option Assessment Report in Appendix B.

3.7 SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

3.7.1. The scope of the scheme is, as follows:

- Rail improvements incorporating a new station only (with train service provided by others) or a new rail package (new station and new train service)

- A new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area which includes station infrastructure and highway access arrangements
- Provision of interchange facilities for bus services, cyclists and other non-motorised users of the station to provide a interchange hub
- A service option for a new train service operating between Taunton and Westbury calling at a new Langport/Somerton railway station. Service operates hourly over a 16-hour day
- Alternative service options for a new train service to be provided by others or the introduction of a stop at Langport-Somerton for existing semi-fast services

3.7.2. At this SOC stage the main constraints identified are:

- Affordability of the new railway station in terms of securing capital funding for all the works and facilities to provide an integrated transport interchange;
- Train service. The station service options are that the scheme assumes that the train service will be provided as a package of rail improvements. In this scenario, it is assumed that this train service will provide an hourly service operating over a 16-hour day. Alternative scenarios for a train service at the station are also considered. Existing GWR semi-fast train services operating on the line could call at the station, and GO-OP, an open access operator also has plans to operate a train service with at least 6 journeys a day, and as many as 9 journeys a day each way between Taunton and Swindon including calling at the new Langport-Somerton station. Finally , there is a scenario where the new train service is assumed to operated by others;
- Stakeholder and bus operator agreement and implementation of a bus strategy for providing the bus service connections for the new rail station to maximise its interchange potential; and
- Integration of the local train service with current longer-distance rail services at Taunton, Castle Cary and Westbury to optimize the passenger benefits of the new station

3.8 STRATEGIC BENEFITS

3.8.1. The Langport-Somerton new railway station scheme will provide a range of benefits within the framework of SMART spending objectives set out in Section 2.6.

Strategic Benefits of a Local Railway Station

3.8.2. The new station scheme serving Langport-Somerton will support transport and planning policy goals encouraging the use of sustainable transport alternatives and reduction in carbon emissions.

3.8.3. The intervention will deliver a step change in direct access to rail services for the communities in the Langport-Somerton area including the sizeable settlements of Street and Glastonbury. A step change in access to rail can have a transformative impact on local economies as seen with the opening last of year of a new station at Horden in County Durham. The area around Horden has similarities to Langport-Somerton in terms of relatively low productivity and problems of social inclusion and Durham County Council views improvements in rail connectivity as central to attracting new investment and levelling up the local economy. [12]

12 https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s133603/Economic%20Recovery%20and%20Prosperity%202-%20Levelling%20Up%20for%20County%20Durham_%20c.pdf

3.8.4. Enhanced access to the rail network will deliver economic productivity benefits arising from better connectivity to the surrounding region and beyond. This will support economic development aims to address long-term issues of relatively low productivity and economic rebalancing set out in the government's Levelling-Up agenda. Train journey times from Langport/Somerton to Castle Cary will be around 10-13 minutes travel time and Taunton 16-19 minutes representing large time savings compared to existing travel times by car or public transport. Typical car journey times from Langport and Somerton to Taunton are respectively 25-35 minutes and 30-50 minutes depending on the time of day. The train service also provides onward connections, such as to Exeter and Bristol. Equally, the improved rail connectivity will enable local businesses to reach a wider potential labour force.

3.8.5. Whilst Langport-Somerton is considered a prosperous area as indicated by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, there is a sizeable minority, particularly of the younger and older demographics who have less access to a car and are reliant on public transport. Delivery of the Langport-Somerton station will offer these residents an alternative to public bus services which have frequent stops and are subject to road traffic conditions and journey time unreliability.

3.8.6. Enhanced rail access will support the local economy by delivering more visitors with additional leisure expenditure on accommodation and food. Travelling by rail is far easier for visitors who are unfamiliar with local bus services and the issue of timings to connect with train services.

3.8.7. The attitudinal survey to a proposed new railway station at Langport-Somerton shows that people's use of the proposed railway station will comprise not only a significant commuting element (40%), but also an intent to use the station for leisure and visiting friends and families and education, as shown in Figure 3-24.

3.8.8. This supports the need for improved public transport to regional centres where a greater range of services, amenities and venues is available. This potential usage of the new railway station indicates that a direct rail service will act as a catalyst to increase the 0-3% travel-to-work rail mode share reported in the 2011 Census.

3.8.9. The new rail station survey shows 10% of respondents would use the new rail service to access education. Given this is the total across all age groups, this is likely to underestimate the potential impact the Langport-Somerton rail station will have in improving access to education. Introduction of the new station at Langport-Somerton will afford far improved access to educational institutions for students without access to cars. The train service calling at Langport-Somerton will provide easy access to Taunton and Exeter in one direction and Bristol and London in the other.

3.8.10. To further address the need for carbon emission reduction, the station will offer EV charging points to promote the use of electric vehicles. Charging of EVs in the station car park can take place as passengers are using the rail service.

Figure 3-24 - New Langport-Somerton Railway Station Survey 2021, Stated Trip Purpose of Respondents

Source: Online attitudinal survey of residents on a new railway station at Langport-Somerton, 2021

Step Change in Accessibility with Local Railway Station

3.8.11. The Langport-Somerton station will provide a step change in accessibility to the rail network and reduce the need to travel by car as the rail network is brought closer to residents. A proposed hourly rail service connecting the Langport and Somerton area with the wider rail network at Taunton and Westbury will encourage shorter access trips by car reducing travel time on the road network and reduce the need to travel by car at all for residents within walking or cycling distance of the station. An alternative train service option such as introducing a stop at Langport-Somerton for semi-fast services could also increase the attractiveness of the station for travellers towards London thereby further increasing the accessibility benefits of the new station.

3.8.12. To illustrate the potential impact on non-motorised accessibility, the proposed Somerton station site is within 20 minutes' walk of the majority of the town, encompassing several dense housing estates and the town centre (Figure 3-25). The Somerton station supports considerable cycle accessibility, with much of the town being within 15 minutes cycling time, including the proposed Local Plan Review allocations (Figure 3-26). The broad coverage also could support people using the station as a starting point for leisure rides, as well as placing the villages of Pitney and Kingsdon within 20 minutes travel time.

Figure 3-25 - Somerton Site - Walking Accessibility

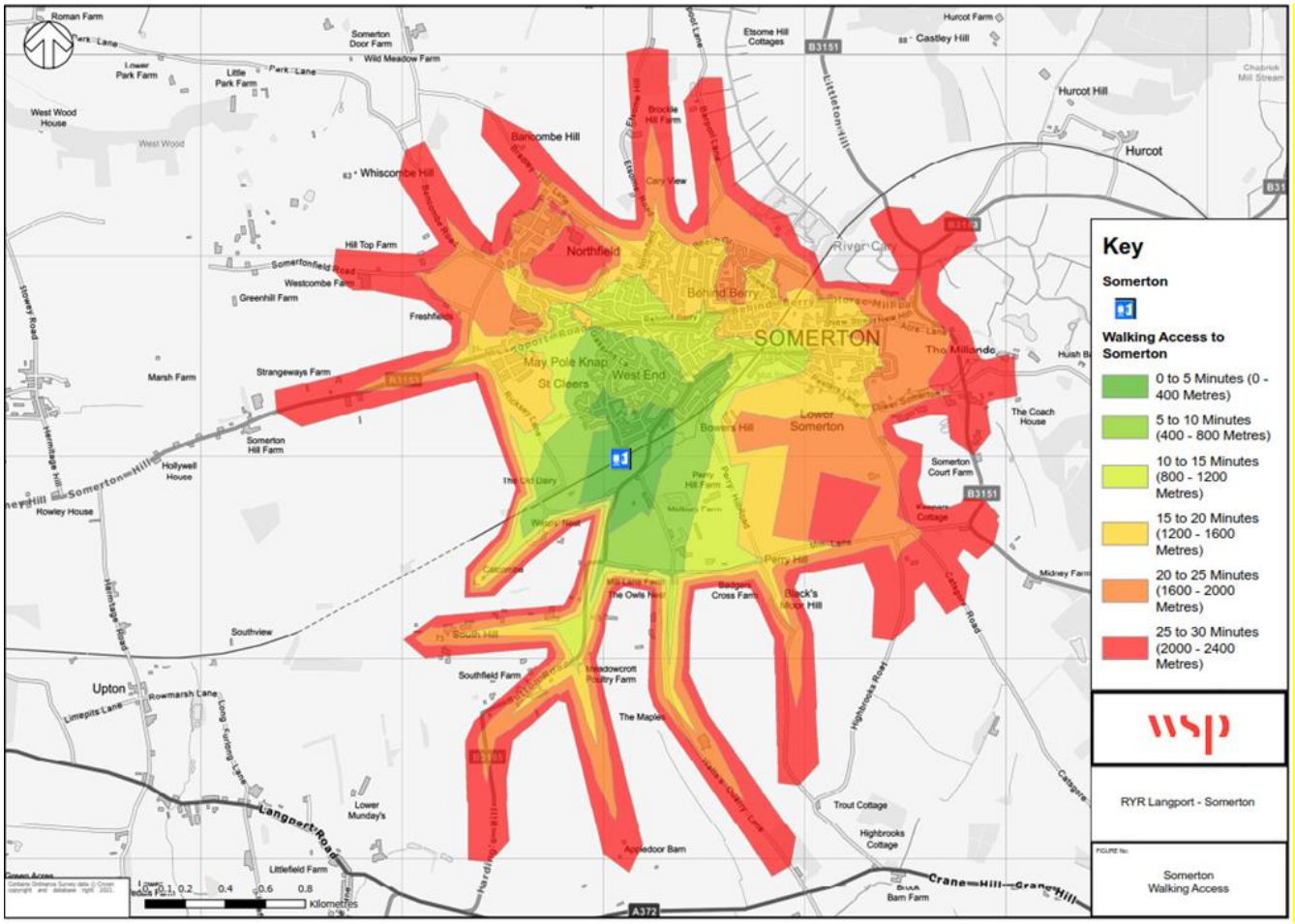
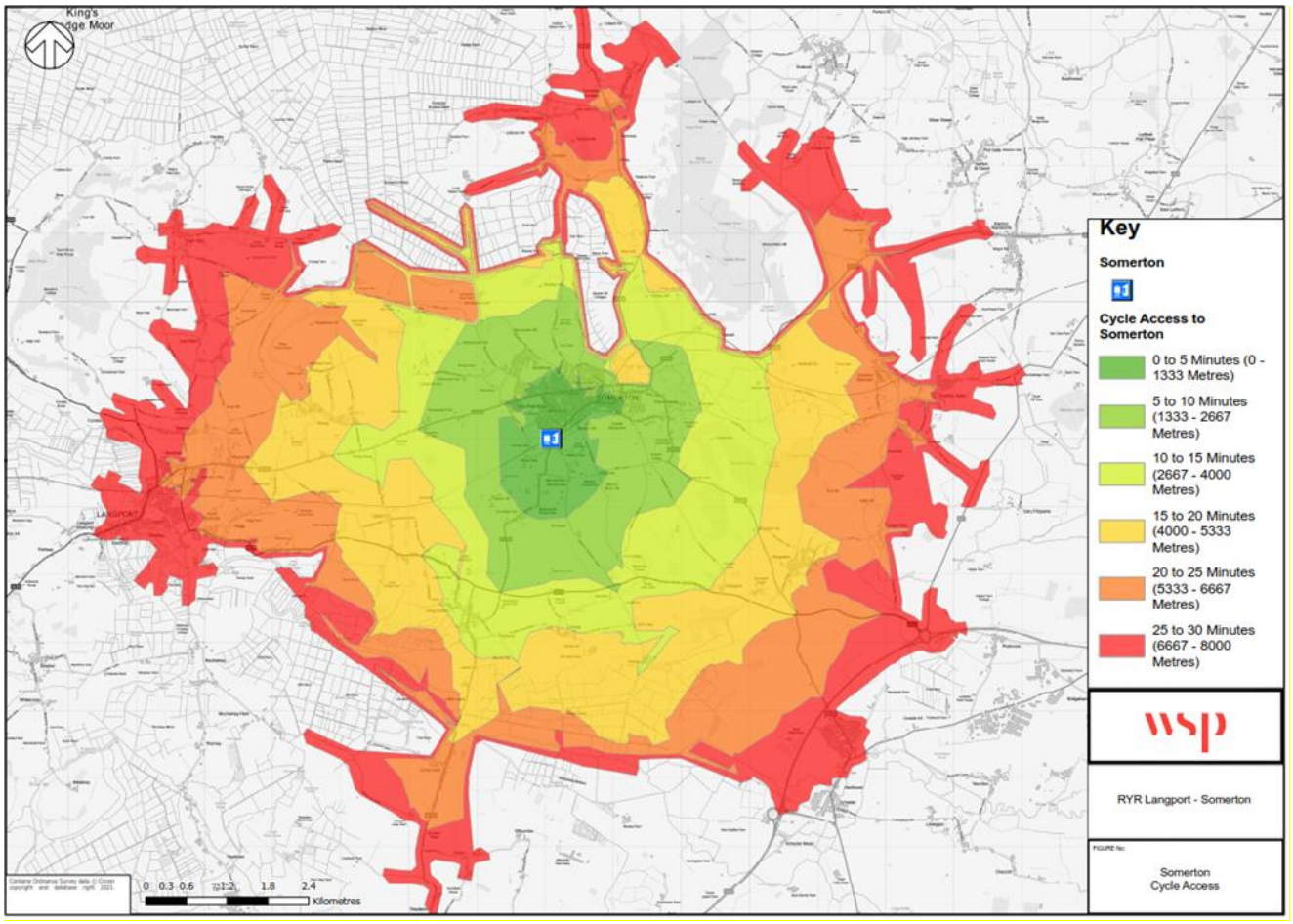


Figure 3-26 - Somerton Site - Cycling Accessibility



3.8.13. By providing the new station at Langport-Somerton, travellers will no longer have to travel up to 30 kilometres to access the rail network. The distance travelled saved will be significant for many current users of the railway network in the Langport-Somerton corridor. shows distances to the nearest railway station for key settlements anticipated to fall within the catchment area of the new station.

Table 3-6 - Road Distance Travelled Saved by New Langport-Somerton Station

Access Trip to Rail	Previously Used Station km	To Somerton km	Distance Saved km
Somerton-Castle Cary	18	0	18
Somerton-Taunton	30	0	30
Street/Glastonbury-Castle Cary	25	15	10

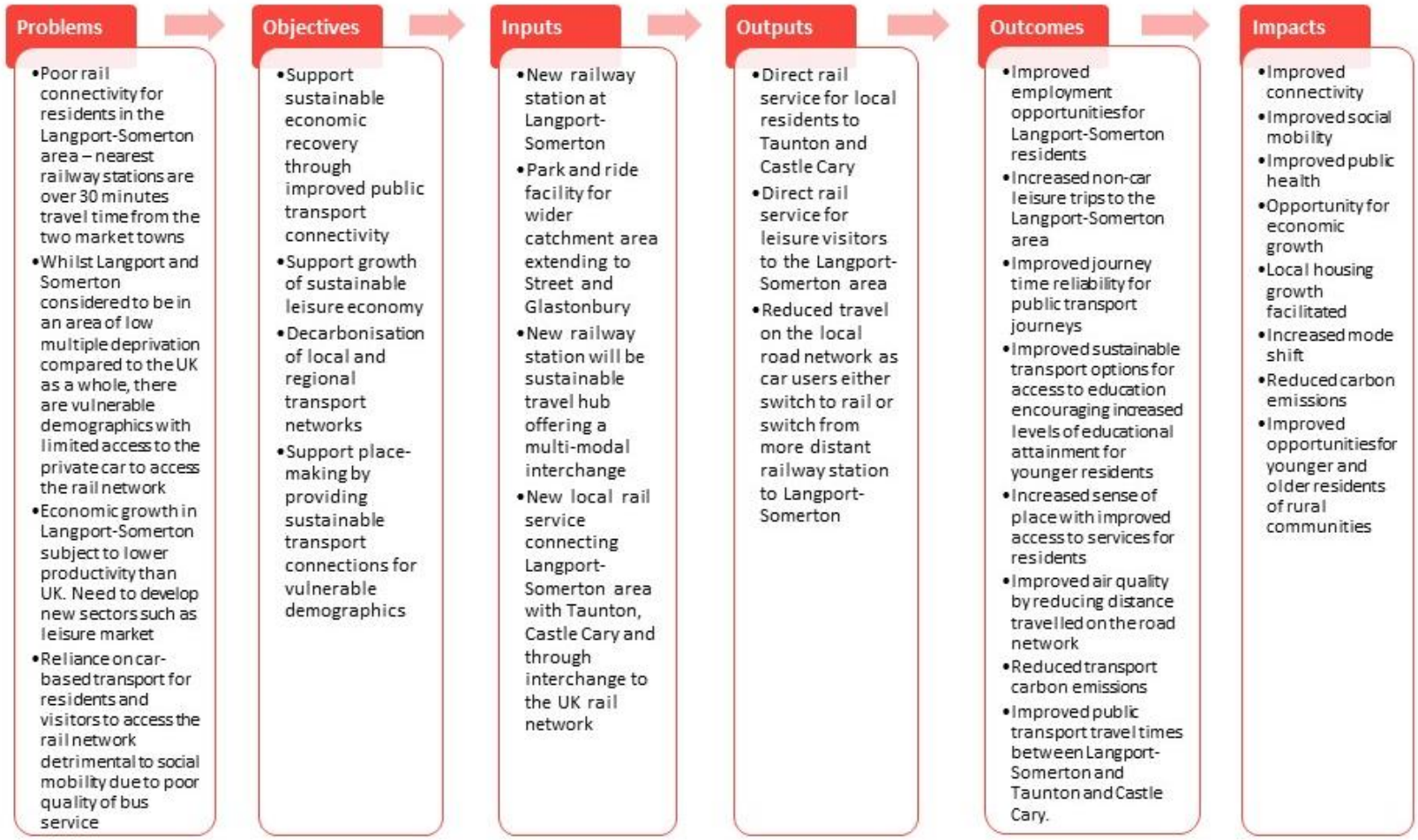
3.8.14. The Langport-Somerton station will provide a local community station offering either direct access by walking, public transport connections or short car journeys to the station to access rail services. As set out in Section 2.3 there are 53,000 residents within 10 kilometres of Langport and Somerton who would benefit from having the community station.

3.8.15. These benefits (outcomes) are set out within the context of a theory of change flow chart showing the causal links in the schemed development process. Strategic scheme objectives were identified, which support the policy aims to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality through reduction in road traffic, supports economic growth and improves the sense of place-making by offering better sustainable transport options, particularly for more vulnerable and less affluent members of the community.

THEORY OF CHANGE

3.8.16. A theory of change has been identified providing a description of how the new railway station investment package (inputs) will produce outputs which generate the strategic benefit outcomes and impacts (Figure 3-27).

Figure 3-27 - Theory of Change



3.9 BUSINESS STRATEGY

3.9.1. The business strategy for the proposed railway station and new train service in the Langport-Somerton area is a strategic fit with national, regional and local strategies, plans and policies' to address wider strategies outside of development plans which aim to support economic growth (recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic), reconnecting lost communities to rail, regeneration of local economies promote sustainable forms of transport, reduce carbon emissions resulting from travel, support the development of connected inclusive communities and strengthen the sense of place essential for a vibrant thriving community life.

3.9.2. A collaborative group of stakeholders has worked on the proposal for a new railway station in the Langport to Somerton area in recent years. This RYR funding bid is supported by sub-national organisations, local authorities, rail industry stakeholders including Network Rail, Great Western Railway (GWR) and GO-OP along with local business groups. Letters of support are provided in Appendix A.

Covid-19 Impacts

3.9.3. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on passenger numbers across the rail network with a significant decrease in usage from March 2020, although passenger numbers are now recovering. The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic has significantly impacted economic activity which has affected travel behaviour and demand. Whilst a return to pre-pandemic rail demand levels is difficult to predict at this stage, assumptions on the likely future demand based on recovery scenarios have been used to inform this business case, with an economic case sensitivity test based on the DfT's assessment of long-term demand impacts.

3.9.4. GWR have undertaken their own analysis of the more localised impacts of Covid on their network and the likelihood of recovery. Survey analysis undertaken by GWR suggests that recovery in Devon and Somerset could be much sooner than forecast for the wider network through a combination of fewer home workers and greater proportion of leisure trips.

3.9.5. Figure 3-28 and Figure 3-29 show a comparison of 2019 and 2021 boardings at Taunton and Castle Cary stations which shows that demand has returned to pre-Covid levels demand. This boardings data demonstrates that the potential for growth in rail demand is strong in the Devon and Somerset area.

Figure 3-28 - Taunton Station Boardings 2019 & 2021

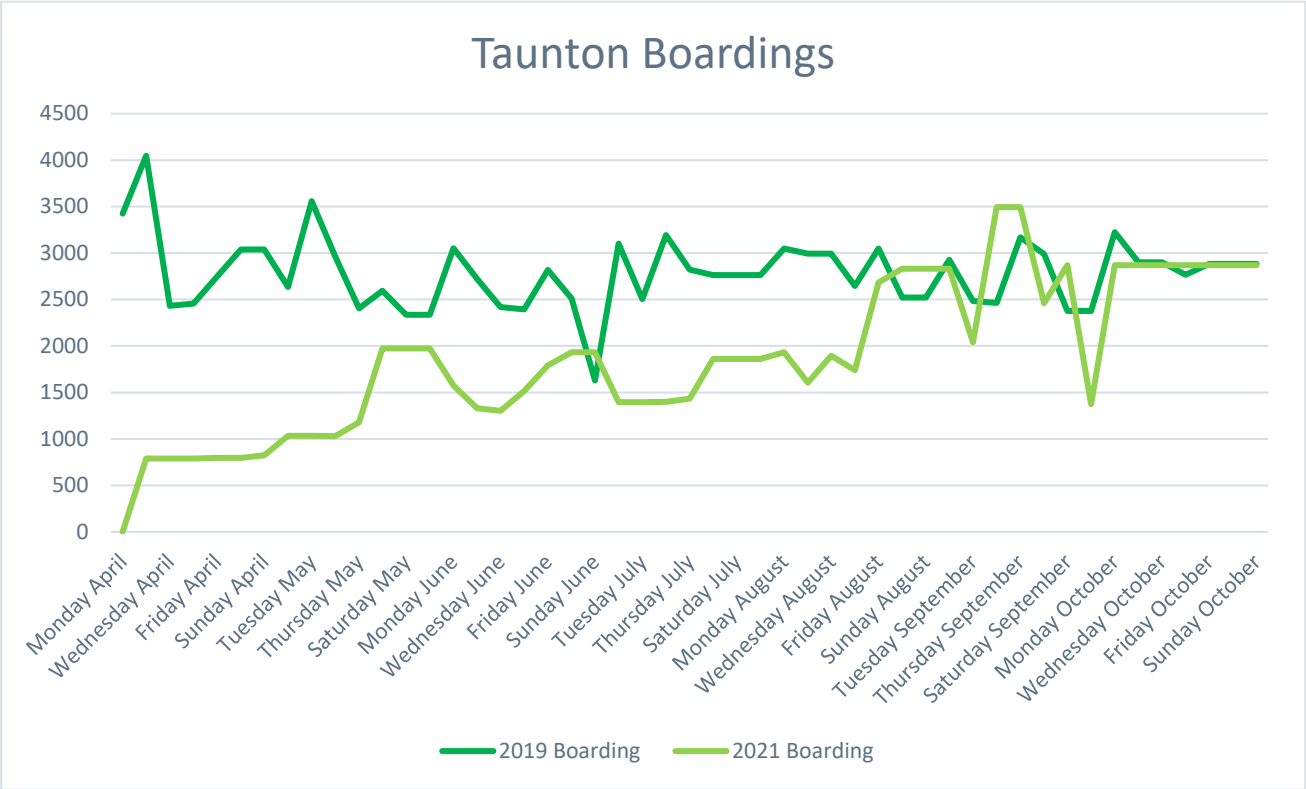
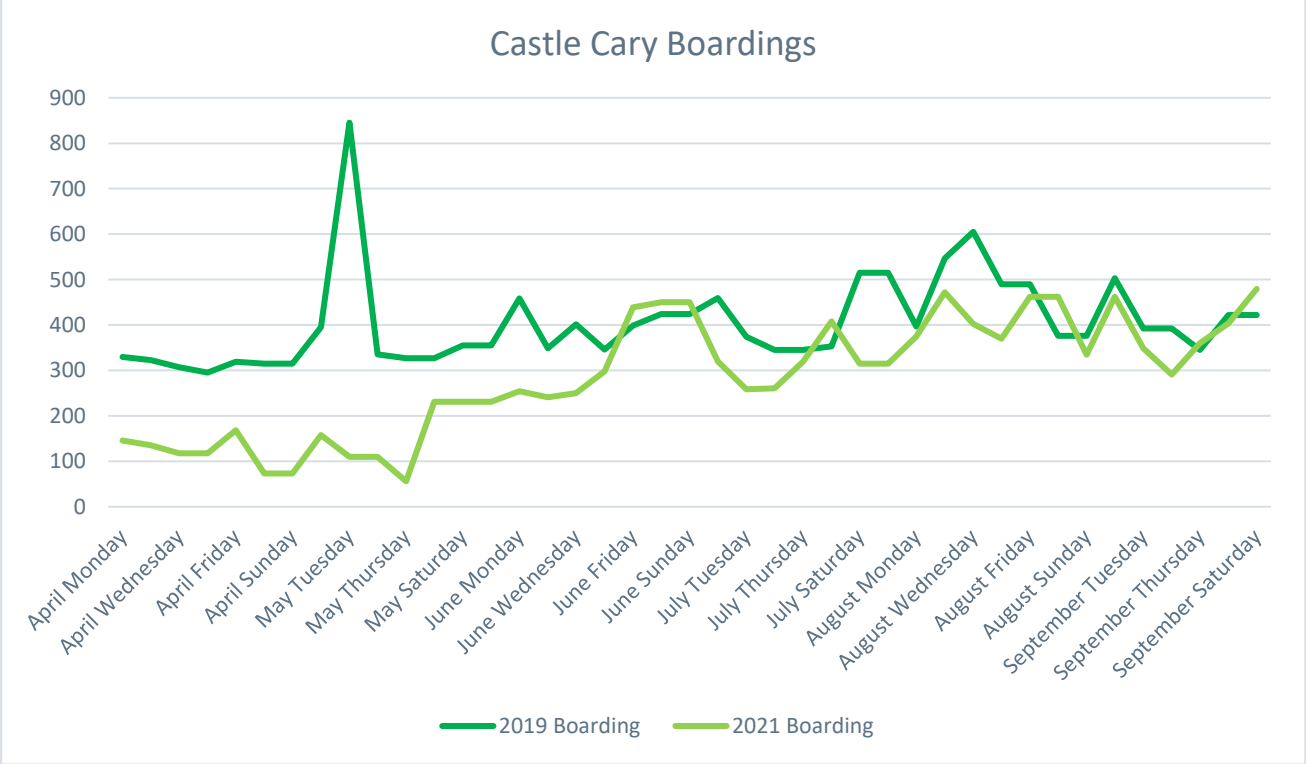


Figure 3-29 - Castle Cary Boardings 2019 & 2021



National Planning Alignment

3.9.6. The new railway station scheme is aligned with a raft of national planning, infrastructure, environmental and transport policies.

Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper (2022)

3.9.7. The 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom' White Paper was published by the Government in February 2022. The White Paper sets out twelve missions for the Levelling Up of the UK. These missions include:

- Raising pay, employment and productivity across the UK;
- To invest in research and development to stimulate productivity growth outside the South East of England;
- Improving public transport connectivity across the country;
- Increasing the number of people completing high quality skills training, particularly in the lowest skilled areas of the country;
- Narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy between highest and lowest areas;
- Improving well-being in every area of the UK;
- Raising peoples' satisfaction with town centres and engagement in local culture and community across the UK;
- Other missions cover providing increased property ownership and improved homes for people, nationwide gigabit-capable broadband, reducing crime and offering regional devolution opportunities.

3.9.8. The Langport-Somerton area railway station scheme will contribute to these missions supporting the restoration of public transport connectivity enabling improved productivity, training and education opportunities, access to healthcare, improving well-being and building on the sense of place for communities.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

3.9.9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[13] supports the goal of promoting sustainable development and has three key objectives, as follows:

- "An economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- A social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet current and future generations and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places , with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- An environment objective – to protect and enhance our nature, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently,

[13] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf.

minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

3.9.10. The Langport-Somerton area railway station scheme will contribute to each of these objectives. The NPPF has specific goals for promoting sustainable transport including opportunities to promote public transport in support of the provision of thriving, prosperous communities. The communities of Langport and Somerton are experiencing a growing population and the creation of new employment opportunities to support the future prosperity of the area. The new rail station will support this economic growth by enhancing local connections to the regional rail network and onward by interchange to national destinations. Economic productivity will increase as commuter trips or travel in the course of business trips will no longer experience the extended journey times to access the rail network.

3.9.11. The new station scheme is aligned with the social objective as the improved access to the rail network will encourage residents to continue to live locally and contribute to the local communities by offering public transport alternatives to the car for access to essential healthcare and educational services in Taunton and beyond. Somerset County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan includes significant rail integration improvements linked to access, social well-being and social mobility. The County Council's Climate Emergency Strategy – linked to long term sustainability of public transport – will need a mixed approach due to dispersed communities. The 'Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy' addresses the impacts of difficult transport access on education, employment and business opportunities. Better transport connections will enable businesses and communities to thrive.

3.9.12. The Langport-Somerton area station scheme is very well-aligned with the environmental objective as the station will result in more residents choosing sustainable public transport that provides an effective alternative to other modes including private car. Longer trips by car will be reduced as travellers opt for either using the train entirely for their journey or reduce the road-based element of their trip by travelling to the Langport-Somerton station in preference over other regional stations. The station will result in a net reduction in car-kilometres travelled as the park and ride facility will encourage use of the Langport-Somerton station in place of other more distant stations such as Castle Cary, Taunton, Bridgwater and Yeovil. Finally, the insertion of a station on what is currently one of the longest sections of railway in the country without a station will help to level-up the poor access to a railway station in this part of Somerset compared to the rest of the country.

National Infrastructure Strategy (2020)

3.9.13. The National Infrastructure Strategy, published in November 2020 by the Treasury, sets out the government's plans to deliver significant improvements to infrastructure across transport, digital, energy and utility networks. The objectives of the strategy are to boost growth and productivity, meet net zero emissions targets by 2050, support private investment and accelerate and improved delivery.

3.9.14. In particular, the strategy sets out a range of significant improvements to the rail network across the UK, particularly outside London and the South East. The Restoring Your Railways and New Stations Funds are identified for additional and continued funding, with the Langport-Somerton station specifically listed for feasibility funding for rail infrastructure connecting regions in the National Infrastructure Strategy document.

Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)

3.9.15. The Build Back Better plan sets out the government's plans to support growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation, and to pursue growth that levels up every part of the UK, enables the transition to net zero, and supports the vision for Global Britain. It is based around the following core pillars of growth:

- Infrastructure: Stimulate short-term economic activity and drive long-term productivity, connect people to opportunity via the UK-wide Levelling Up Fund, and help achieve carbon net zero by providing £12 billion of funding for projects;
- Skills: Support productivity growth through high-quality skills and training; and
- Innovation: Support and incentivise the development of the creative ideas and technologies that will shape the UK's future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.

3.9.16. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme is very aligned with these objectives as the new station will offer enhanced sustainable transport connectivity which will improve business links and productivity and contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions as travel is either made entirely by rail or a leg of a journey is now undertaken by rail.

Planning for the Future: White Paper (2020)

3.9.17. This White Paper published by MHCLG provides a vision for the future of the planning system. The consultation on the White Paper will inform the Planning Bill mentioned in the Queen's Speech May 2021. Specifically, the White Paper states that in identifying land for inclusion in Growth areas or the densities of development appropriate in different locations, 'the opportunity to maximise walking, cycling and public transport opportunities will be an important consideration.' The Langport-Somerton station scheme will improve access to quality public transport opportunities with rail access via the station to the national rail network without travelling some distance to an existing station. For residents there is also the opportunity to walk and cycle as access modes to the new station.

UK 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) and Climate Change Act Amendments (2019)

3.9.18. The UK 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government policy to help the natural world to regain good health. The Plan sets out polices to address climate change and champions sustainable development. The transport sector accounts for 40% of the UK's final energy use. The Environment Plan sets out policies to mitigate transport's environmental impacts through the development of mobility services, moving to zero emission vehicles plans for transitioning to zero carbon emission transport, and encouragement of new modes of transport.

3.9.19. The Climate Change Act was amended in 2019 through secondary legislation which included a move to reach net zero emissions by 2050 instead of an 80% reduction as targeted in the 2008 Act. Considering the Climate Emergency, policies are looking at ways to decarbonise transport services. Various policies seek to reduce private car use, and shift behaviour to more sustainable modes. New transport alternatives will align with climate policies and offer a more sustainable mode than the private car.

3.9.20. As a new station, the Langport-Somerton scheme will align with the climate policies enabling residents and travellers for a large catchment area of South Somerset District and into Mendip District to have improved access sustainable public transport, encouraging zero emission mobility services and reducing the need to travel by car.

Transport Investment Strategy (2017)

3.9.21. The government's Transport Investment Strategy (TIS) sets out how the transport sector will enable delivery of the UK government's Industrial Strategy. It explains how recent progress, as a result of investment, will be built on and how responses will be realistic and pragmatic towards today's challenges.

3.9.22. The strategy sets out the following objectives:

- Create a more reliable, less congested and better-connected transport network;
- Build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities;
- Enhance the country's global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

3.9.23. The Langport-Somerton new rail station is very well aligned with the Transport Investment Strategy as the new rail service calling at the station will encourage greater use of rail and public transport offering a better-connected public transport network serving both local, regional and national trip-making for residents and visitors to the Langport and Somerton area. By introducing the new train service car users will no longer have to drive to Taunton, Bridgwater, Yeovil or Castle Cary to access the rail network. Road journeys will be reduced resulting in less congestion and enhanced productivity through shorter road access times to connect with the rail network. This will also address a local need for greater transport options other than the car for travel for existing residents and future residents of planned new housing and an alternative more sustainable means of accessing employment.

DfT Strategic Vision for Rail (2017)

3.9.24. In November 2017, in parallel with the Control Period 6 (CP6) determination and investment programme, DfT published the document 'Connecting People: A strategic vision for Rail'. The vision sets out 5 key areas for improvement which will lead to a railway that will better meet the needs of its passengers. The Strategic Vision sets out a need to rebalance the economy and create new homes supported by, 'new links between places, spurring development and economic growth.' The Plan also states the need to include proposals to restore lost capacity' and sets out a commitment to improve accessibility to the rail network and offer new connections.

3.9.25. The Langport-Somerton rail scheme is aligned with the Strategic Vision as the restoration of a passenger station on this section of the Reading to Taunton Line will provide a more accessible local station which will once again provide access to the national rail network for the rural catchment area for the northern area of South Somerset District and southern Mendip District. In restoring a local train service between Castle Cary and Taunton additional capacity will be available for passengers.

Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (2021)

3.9.26. The William-Shapps Plan for Rail sets out a plan for investment in the future of the railway network with the establishment of Great Britain Railways to own and operate the infrastructure and services. The new organisation will prioritise levelling-up, housing, the environment and regeneration. Five-year settlement plans will be produced for the funding across rail services and infrastructure. The

plan is to level up rail services across the country to the standards in the capital. Investment will be prioritised in areas which have seen less expenditure in the past. Railway stations will also become increasingly hubs for local bus services with full passenger information and integrated ticketing to create seamless travel. In response to the change in travel behaviour as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the Plan supports plans to develop the leisure market and attract more passengers to the rail network.

'Railways may no longer be able to rely so much on the commuter market. As the country emerges from the pandemic the railways must become much better at meeting passenger needs to avoid a society dependent on the car.'

3.9.27. The Langport-Somerton station scheme is aligned with the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail as the station will enhance connectivity by sustainable transport, helping to reduce carbon emissions and supporting economic growth in the local area. Since the 1960s residents of the communities in the corridor were required to travel to Taunton, Bridgwater, Castle Cary or Yeovil to access the rail network. The restoration of a rail station in this corridor will offer an opportunity to develop a local sustainable transport hub with onward bus connections and storage facilities for cyclists. The station will include Street and Glastonbury within the catchment area offering both park and ride for residents and visitors to these towns as well as integrated rail and bus services for leisure visitors to the Somerset Levels and Glastonbury.

Decarbonising Transport: A Better Greener Britain (2021)

3.9.28. The Department for Transport's Transport Decarbonisation Plan elevates the decarbonisation of the transport system to the forefront of the United Kingdom's plan to be Net Zero Carbon by 2050. Transport emissions are now the largest contributor to the UK's carbon footprint. A net zero railway is to be delivered by 2050. Investment will be made in the railway network to attract new passengers and encourage mode shift from road to rail. In 2019, rail accounted for 1.4% of carbon emissions compared to 55.4% for cars and taxis. Reducing road vehicle emissions and noise pollution will transform communities, support Levelling-Up and reinvent the streetscape.

3.9.29. The Priority 1 objective of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan is:

'Accelerating modal shift to public transport and active modes: Public transport and active modes will be the natural first choice for our daily activities. We will have a cohesive, widely available net zero public transport network designed for the passenger.'

The Plan also states that rail travel will be made easier, simpler and better integrated including through improved journey connectivity with walking, cycling and other services in order to encourage a shift to cleaner less carbon emitting travel. Stations will become mobility hubs within local and regional transport networks.

The Langport-Somerton new station scheme will be closely aligned with the Transport Decarbonisation Plan as it will enhance the quality of sustainable transport reducing dependency on the car.

Restoring Your Railways Fund (2021)

3.9.30. In February 2020, HM Government announced a new 'Restoring Your Railway' Fund, in recognition of the importance of better connectivity driving local economic growth, reconnecting communities, regeneration of communities and restoring lost connectivity as a result of railway closures. This follows the success of recent rail re-openings such as the Borders Railway in Scotland. MPs, local

councils, and community groups were invited to proposed how they could use funding to reinstate axed local services and restore closed stations with a view to connecting-up communities and facilitating sustainable travel. A fund of £500m has been committed to the development of schemes under three themes:

- Ideas Fund – for early-stage concepts to be investigated to see if there is a business case to proceed onto the Rail National Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) for restoring lost rail connections to communities.
- Accelerating Existing Proposals – for existing schemes that already have demonstrated a business case and require financial support for more detailed design.
- New and Restored Stations – applications are invited for a share of a £20m pot for New (or re-opened) stations.

3.9.31. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme has already been successful in its Ideas Fund application for funding for transport and economic studies and to create an initial business case.

Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (2018)

3.9.32. The DfT's Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP)[14] sets out key priorities for network enhancements, as follows:

- Keep people and goods moving smoothly and safely
- Offering more: new and better journeys and opportunities for the future
- Delivering the benefits from committed programmes and projects already underway
- Changing the way the rail sector works for the better.

3.9.33. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme is very well aligned with the RNEP, with particular reference to the creation of new and better journeys and opportunities. The scheme will provide much improved access to the rail network for thousands of residents in the Langport-Somerton corridor enhancing connectivity by sustainable transport and opening-up better access to jobs and key services such as healthcare and higher education. The enhanced connectivity will enhance productivity with improved journey times making passenger transport smoother and safer.

National Bus Strategy (2021)

3.9.34. The DfT's National Bus Strategy promotes improved bus service connectivity with strengthening of services and development of transport interchanges. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) guidance identifies a need for the improvement of bus routes serving rural communities. Transport interchanges are considered with buses timed to connect with trains. Transport hubs based on a centrally located railway station are considered an effective way of improving connectivity in rural areas building a hub-and-spoke service pattern with services operating in the same window to facilitate connections.

3.9.35. The BSIP guidance states that in holiday destinations and scenic areas more needs to be carried out to promote buses to visitors. This is of relevance to the new station scheme as it is located in the Somerset Levels and Moors, a tourist attraction of national importance. The BSIP guidance stresses

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline.

that there is a need to promote buses to visitors with improved services, easily accessible travel information, park and ride sites and special tickets.

3.9.36. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme aligns with the National Bus Strategy as the station will form a transport hub bringing together sustainable transport modes to offer an integrated transport service. The Somerset County Council Bus Strategy 2018-2026 sets as an objective improving accessibility to services by 'enabling informed transport choices and linking transport options for easier multi-mode journeys'. The recently published BSIP for Somerset is aligned with the Council's Bus Strategy.

Infrastructure Providers and Operators

Network Rail

3.9.37. Network Rail as the rail infrastructure provider has the role of running a safe, reliable and efficient railway serving customers and the community. As the owner, operator and developer of Britain's railway Network Rail is critical to the efficient movement of people and goods by rail nation-wide to support the country's prosperity. Its developer role is crucial in Network Rail's support of railway infrastructure development proposals including those proposals submitted for government funding under Levelling-Up and RYR. These programmes aim to re-balance the economy generating economic recovery in the areas of the country whose local economies have been badly affected by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.9.38. Network Rail has had a key role in delivering new rail infrastructure which can transform communities. A recent example is Network Rail's role in helping to construct the Borders Railway which offered people in the Scottish Borders access to a rail service for the first time in 50 years. Reopening of the railway resulted in an increase in tourism trade and supported economic regeneration of the region's towns including new residents taking advantage of the region's more affordable housing to commute to Edinburgh.

3.9.39. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme is potentially very similar to new station schemes such as the new station at Horden in County Durham, in terms of the restoration of rail links reflecting the new opportunities to support economic development and housing growth. Tourism trade is also a source of potential benefit for the Langport-Somerton corridor with the attraction of the historic settlements, Somerset Levels and Moors and by connected public transport, Street (Clarks Shopping Village) and Glastonbury.

Great Western Railway

3.9.40. Great Western Railway (GWR) is the current operator of passenger rail services on the Reading to Taunton line. GWR is a member of the new rail station promoter, Langport Transport Group, steering group. The operator supports the new rail station as it will improve rail connectivity for the area encouraging new users to use its rail services from the local communities in Langport-Somerton and surrounding hinterland which will form the catchment area for the new station.

GO-OP Rail

3.9.41. GO-OP Rail is in discussions with the Office of Road and Rail planning to operate an open access rail passenger service between Taunton and Westbury/Swindon offering new rail connectivity across Somerset and Wiltshire for rail users. GO-OP Rail supports the opening of a new rail station in the Langport/Somerton area which will connect directly into the planned rail service. The operator has plans to commence to connect by rail 'poorly served locations in Wiltshire and Somerset'. Train

paths have been identified and discussed with Network Rail. GO-OP rail is strongly supportive of the Langport Transport Group plans for opening a new station in the Langport/Somerton area. Thus, the new station is closely aligned with the operator's plans for its new regional rail service connecting communities currently poorly served by rail.

Regional Planning Alignment

Bristol to Exeter Strategic Study (2021)

3.9.42. The Bristol to Exeter rail corridor strategic study was developed by Network Rail in collaboration with partner organisations and stakeholders including Western Gateway and Peninsula Transport sub-national transport bodies. The study addressed the issue of how to develop the rail network to support sustainable economic and housing growth between Bristol and Exeter. The study recommendations include strengthening inter-regional connectivity by providing additional longer distance journey opportunities to London and the south-west peninsula on the Westbury to Taunton route.

3.9.43. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme will be a strategic fit with this recommendation as the new station will provide improved access to the rail network for a large rural catchment area which through connections at Taunton and Westbury will be able to benefit from the strengthening of inter-regional connectivity.

West of England Line Study Continuous Modular Strategic Plan (2020)

3.9.44. Network Rail has developed the Continuous Modular Strategic Plan (CMSP) for the West of England Line between London Waterloo and Exeter St Davids.[15] This will set out investment choices for the London to West Country corridor, devised through a collaborative consultation approach. The study considered network constraints, capacity, onward connectivity, market demand, freight, resilience and stakeholder priorities. The study highlighted the need for providing capacity relief. Strategies are presented to address the issue of crowding on some services. By offering a new service calling at the Langport-Somerton station with its park and ride facility, some longer distance passengers may switch from the West of England line alleviating some crowding on the busiest route sections.

Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (STB) Rail Strategy

3.9.45. The Western Gateway STB Rail Strategy has been developed by 5 local authorities to promote increased use of rail.[16] The Rail Strategy has an objective of increasing the proportion of the population living within a 15-minute drive, walk or cycle ride of a railway station. The proposed railway station will contribute significantly towards this goal as a park and ride facility will be provided offering a shorter car access journey to rail than is the current position and encouraging mode shift for travellers currently using car for their entire trip. With travellers choosing to use rail, the switch from car will contribute to workers productivity and decarbonisation of transport.

3.9.46. The Western Gateway STB Rail Strategy also has an objective for rail to provide sustainable travel options for housing and jobs growth across the Western Gateway. The Langport-Somerton railway station is aligned with this objective as it will represent a step change in sustainable travel options for residents and visitors in this area, encouraging use of rail and other public transport to access

[15] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/West-of-England-Study-Continuous-Modular-Strategic-Planning.pdf.
[16] Western-Gateway-Rail-Strategy-Final-Published-Report-Brochure.pdf (ndm-server.co.uk).

the railway station. A Langport-Somerton railway station and introduction of a new stopping train service between Taunton and Westbury will transform sustainable transport connectivity, enabling residents to commute by train to Taunton and Castle Cary and beyond.

Heart of the South-West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

3.9.47. The Heart of the South-West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) is responsible for working across the public and private sectors to support economic growth in Devon and Somerset.

3.9.48. The HotSW (LEP) has published the document 'Build Back Better' which offers a roadmap for economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.[9] This roadmap highlights that urban, rural and coastal communities will recovery at different rates and over different timescales. In terms of better transport connectivity, rail network improvements to enhance the resilience of rail lines and strategic connectivity are supported by HotSW (LEP).

3.9.49. The HoTSW (LEP) has also published a Productivity Strategy (2018) supporting the strengthening the capacity, resilience and usability of rail links to connect places and opportunities improving both intra and inter-regional connectivity.[17]

3.9.50. The HoTSW (LEP) Local Industrial Strategy (2019) has a strategic objective to future-proof infrastructure to support long term prosperity and clean growth.[18] Transport systems are to be future-proofed, 'to create fast, resilient and clean networks'. Carbon emissions from transport need to be reduced supported by sustainable transport strategies. The Industrial Strategy states that distance from markets and journey times has a negative impact on the South-West's economy.

3.9.51. The Langport-Somerton area station is aligned with the Build Back Better, Productivity Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy as the scheme will offer new rail connectivity to a wide catchment area, reducing travel time to access the rail network. The scheme served by a new stopping train service will offer greatly improved connections to Taunton, Castle Cary and Westbury generating productivity benefits and opportunities to reach a larger employment market. Local businesses will have access to a wider labour pool stimulating business growth. The new station scheme will reduce the need for car use contributing to the government's net carbon zero target.

The Peninsula Transport Board

3.9.52. The Peninsula Transport Board (PTB) is a new partnership created to transform transport and boost economic growth across the far South West. The Sub-National Transport Body is made up of Cornwall Council, Devon County Council, Plymouth Council, Somerset County Council and Torbay Council. The board also involves both the Heart of the South West and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnerships, alongside Highways England, Homes England and Network Rail.

3.9.53. The PTB produced an Economic Connectivity Study in July 2020[19] and is the first step in development of a Peninsula Strategic Transport Strategy. The study examined the region's economic geography and the role of transport in enabling intra-regional, inter-regional and international connections. The study identified five trends expected to impact on the ways people

[17] HeartoftheSouthWestProductivityStrategy.pdf (heartofswlep.co.uk).
[18] Hear (heartofswlep.co.uk).
[19] Peninsula-Transport-ECS-Summary-Report-Final-090720.pdf (peninsulatransport.org.uk).

connect and travel in the Peninsula: decarbonisation, flexible lifestyles, the world of work, digitalisation and urbanisation.

3.9.54. The study predicted the population of the Peninsula is forecast to grow by around 12.5% between 2016 and 2040. The impact of a growing population is likely to be the dominant force driving transport demand. Rising incomes and decreasing private costs of transport could also increase trip rates and compound the observed growth in transport demand. The critical challenge is therefore to ensure that the future social costs of transport demand, including CO2 emissions, are reduced while enabling high productivity and high-quality lifestyles. The study also highlighted existing regional differences within the South-West which disadvantaged some areas would need to be addressed to provide better connectivity.

3.9.55. The PTB has developed a high-level Vision and Goals for the future of transport in the South West Peninsula.[20] A key objective relates to network connectivity:

'Transport connections are vital for much of our activity and so our vision is for an enhanced transport system: more efficient, resilient and cleaner'.

3.9.56. Consultation is currently ongoing for Regional Transport Strategy due to be published in 2022. The strategy will have a number of studies feeding into it, including a Rail Strategy. This is expected to reinforce and support the importance of rail set out by the Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF), identifying a range of rail service and network improvements focusing upon resilience, accessibility, local connectivity and decarbonisation.

3.9.57. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme is aligned with the Economic Connectivity Study and Transport Strategy as the scheme will provide better connectivity to the rail network for the local communities within the catchment area, driving improved economic productivity. Improved accessibility to rail will offer a strong sustainable transport alternative to the existing need to travel 30 minutes or so by car to a rail station. Reduced length of road trips will result in reduced carbon emissions. Quality of life will be enhanced for residents' as air quality is improved, transport congestion decreases and reliance on the car for travel will be reduced.

Peninsula Rail Taskforce

3.9.58. In 2013, the Peninsula Rail Taskforce which includes Somerset County Council as a stakeholder was set up and has published, Closing the Gap: South-West Peninsula Strategic Rail Blueprint, 2016[13] seeing out the Taskforce's plans for investment in the South-West rail network. Following extensive research and engagement with the rail industry a vision for the longer-term investment in the enhancement of rail in the South-West has been developed producing an estimated £8.4 billion of benefits towards reducing an increasing gap between the South-West and the rest of the UK.

3.9.59. The blueprint defines the Taskforce's ambition for a modern 21st century railway supported by three enhancement priorities:

- Resilience and reliability
- Reduced journey time and improved connectivity
- Capacity and comfort

[20] https://www.peninsulatransport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Peninsula-TS-Vision-008-2.pdf.

3.9.60. The Plan stresses the importance of the passenger and the quality of service offered to promote healthy, inclusive and vibrant communities. Stations should be designed as accessible gateways to public transport facilities.

3.9.61. Another key report produced by the PRTF is the 'On Track 20 Year Interim Report (2015)[21] which provides a 20-year rail investment strategy. Network connectivity is highlighted as a key issue, and particularly connections between the South-West Peninsula and London. The report states that relative compared with other parts of the country, the South-West Peninsula, although closer to London, has longer journey times to the capital. There is a direct negative impact on productivity and GVA. Regional connectivity, it is emphasised, is not only represented by a reduction in journey times, but also in the ease of interchange which can be minimised with timed connections.

3.9.62. The new station scheme will address this key issue by offering the opportunity for more efficient non-stop intercity services between London and the farthest parts of the South-West, especially Devon and Cornwall. The improved access to the rail network in the Langport-Somerton area which will be further strengthened by the PRTF objective of line speed improvements on the line reducing overall journey times, particularly to London. Residents of the Langport-Somerton area will benefit additionally from these improvements further strengthening rail as an alternative to the car. This will also have a positive impact on productivity and local GVA, particularly with the minimisation of interchange time.

LOCAL PLANNING ALIGNMENT

Somerset County Council

3.9.63. Somerset County Council (Somerset CC) is the Local Transport Authority and Highway Authority. In addition, Somerset CC is the Education Authority and Local Flood Authority and provides social care and other statutory functions supported by transport services.

Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy Documents (2020)

3.9.64. Somerset's Councils have produced a climate emergency strategy. The transport sector is a major contributor to carbon emissions. Latest carbon emission data for the county shows the transport sector accounting for 46% of carbon emissions. A need for greater investment in public transport to improve the quality and size of the public transport network across Somerset.

Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (2020) which encourages stakeholders to install EV charging points including at railway stations. The strategy nodes that railway stations are ideal for EV charging as stations will encourage frequent visits by longer staying travellers.

3.9.65. The Langport-Somerton station scheme will be very well aligned with the county's climate strategy by offering improved accessibility to the rail network by reducing car journey times to access the rail network. Service quality will be ensured by with the new station offering a new hourly rail service connecting with the wider rail network at Taunton and Westbury. EV charging points will be installed at the station which will encourage EV access. Charging of EVs will be convenient as charging will take place as passengers are using the rail service, particularly for longer distance trips.

[21] prtf-report-document-final.pdf (wordpress.com).

Somerset Future Transport Plan 2011-2026 (2011)

3.9.66. Somerset County Council has produced a Future Transport Plan for the county which sets out the overarching strategic priorities for transport. The strategy aims to encourage more people to travel by train through partnership with the rail industry. The County Council supports better services, facilities and integration and improvements in how people see train travel.

3.9.67. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme will provide better access to rail services for an extensive catchment area centred on Langport and Somerton. People will not be required to travel long distances to nearest railway stations. The station vision is for a mobility hub which offers station facilities including cycle storage, EV charging, e-bike recharging and a bus interchange with direct access from the bus to the station. A car park will be provided to encourage existing car users to shift to rail for the main leg of their journeys. EV charging points will provide further encouragement to drivers to use the station supporting government policy for the switch to EVs.

Schedule of Transport Policies (2011)

3.9.68. The Somerset County Council Schedule of Transport Policies has as a goal to encourage local communities to meet their transport needs. Community and partnership involvement is considered essential for delivery of transport for local communities. Sustainable living is to be supported which includes', seeking opportunities through transport to reduce carbon emissions and strengthen our ability to adapt to climate change'. Sustainable transport choices are to be supported by improving infrastructure and facilities to help in reducing carbon emissions. The Schedules of Transport Policies has a goal of improved integration of bus and rail modes both in facilities and timetable coordination. The rail strategy aims to attract more users of rail services and improve the service between key locations for people and businesses. This aim is set out in policy SUS 7 Rail. The County Council will seek to make maximum use of the existing rail network by encouraging services, new connections and better access for all travellers. Collaboration with other rail industry stakeholders to seek new solutions and promote integration with Somerset's policies to help integrate rail with the wider Somerset transport network.

3.9.69. The Langport- Somerton new station scheme is well aligned with the aims of the Schedules of Transport. The scheme is being developed in partnership with the local community group, Langport Transport Group, and has the strong support of local businesses. In 2012, Langport Parish Council launched a consultation which identified the provision of a new station in the Langport-Somerton area as one of two top priorities for the town. The new station will encourage sustainable living by providing a new rail connection for communities in a large catchment area without access to a local rail station. The scheme will encourage residents to use rail services offering improved connectivity to Taunton, Castle Cary and beyond towards Exeter and London. Lengthy trips by car to access the rail network will be avoided. The park and ride facility will enhance the station's role as a strategic access to the rail network. The impact of offering a better sustainable travel choice will be reflected in a reduction in car travel as long journeys to the nearest existing stations are reduced will contribute to lowering carbon emissions. The scheme will offer an opportunity to collaborate with the bus operators to ensure that onward travel connections by sustainable transport make the overall public transport trip attractive for those without access to a car.

Draft Somerset County Rail Passenger Strategy 2019-2050 (2021)

3.9.70. The Vision for the County Rail Passenger Strategy is:

"an integrated, modern and sustainable rail network that supports local economy society and environment by connecting people and communities."

3.9.71. The County Council's draft Rail Passenger Strategy overall aim is:

"to facilitate people to people connections for social, economic or well-being reasons."

3.9.72. This strategy will remove dis-connectivity and create a sense of place.

3.9.73. Aims include increasing the attraction of rail as a travel mode connecting local communities to local stations and rail services and fully integrating with other modes of sustainable transport (bus, walking and cycling). Improved connectivity by rail will improve access to education, employment and skills. Climate change and the aim to reduce transport carbon emissions will be supported by providing a sustainable and accessible network.

3.9.74. The Strategy highlights the growth in rail demand in the County in recent years, and the potential for further growth in rail demand going forwards, particularly in the role of rail in supporting local communities.

Railway station usage in Somerset 2017/18

Station name	LA	Owner	Entries & Exits	Interchanges	% change 5 years	% change 10 years
Bruton	South Somerset	GWR	41,364		38%	123%
Frome	Mendip	GWR	190,848	162	25%	93%
Crewkerne	South Somerset	SWT	165,210		34%	68%
Bridgwater	Sedgemoor	GWR	346,450		21%	49%
Highbridge & Burnham	Sedgemoor	GWR	207,186		29%	44%
Taunton	Taunton Deane	GWR	1,460,750	91,558	13%	36%
Yeovil Pen Mill	South Somerset	GWR	136,834	5,738	6%	31%
Templecombe	South Somerset	SWT	114,168		7%	16%
Castle Cary	South Somerset	GWR	251,974	39,349	8%	11%
Yeovil Junction	South Somerset	SWT	223,710	6,070	13%	7%
Total			**3,138,494**	**142,877**	**16%**	**36%**

Source: Draft Somerset County Rail Passenger Strategy 2019-2050 (2021)

3.9.75. The Strategy is closely aligned with the Peninsula Transport, and the Peninsula Rail Taskforce, the Rail Delivery Group Partnership Plan for the West and Network Rail Strategic Business Planning. The rail strategy includes the objective of seeking to, "expand the local networks that feed in from the communities where we can demonstrate a latent demand". The strategy states that there will need to be a balance between the needs of long-distance passengers and "the potential restrictions imposed by slower and more frequently stopping services on the same lines."

3.9.76. Langport-Somerton new station scheme is very well aligned with the draft Rail Passenger Strategy. The strategy supports the new station as it will improve local connectivity and offer a community railway station for regional and national travel in the Langport-Somerton area. The County Council has facilitated talks between the local community and the rail industry. This proposal for the reopening of a new station in the Langport-Somerton area includes a new local rail service serving the new station. An initial timetabling exercise has shown that a local stopping service can be operated. Further details are in Appendix E.

Somerset Bus Strategy 2018-2026

3.9.77. The Somerset Bus Strategy sets out the bus strategy elements of the passenger transport strategy.[22] The aim is to develop services and provide infrastructure that meet the bus services needs of residents, employees and visitors. The strategy provides an outline strategy for future service delivery. A key element of the delivery of the plan will be to improve integration of public transport and active mode networks identifying a need 'to promote joined up interoperable services to link workers and tourists to town centres'. The Langport-Somerton new railway station scheme is aligned very well with this aim as the station will be designed as a local mobility hub offering improved public transport options enabling increased usage of public transport for regional journeys and through interchange to the national rail network. The station will have direct bus access improving public transport connectivity benefitting the local employment market and opening-up new opportunities for public transport to connect people with jobs in Taunton and other regional centres along the rail corridor. Visitors will also benefit from potentially more direct public transport access by rail and bus to local attractions in the Somerset Levels and Glastonbury.

Somerset County Council, Bus Service Improvement Plan (2021)

3.9.78. The County Council has developed a Bus Service Improvement Plan[23] (BSIP) setting out the strategic objectives for the future development of the bus network in Somerset. The aims and objectives of the BSIP will be implemented through an Enhanced Partnership. The BSIP focuses on overarching objectives of transport decarbonisation, a more extensive bus network, more frequent bus services, reduced cost of travel, improved coordination, and an easily accessible, reliable and comfortable network with improved facilities. The BSIP states that connections to rail station will a primary focus for internal and cross-boundary bus services.

3.9.79. For the Langport-Somerton area the BSIP overarching objectives are developed into a series of interventions to enhance the bus network and services. The BSIP recognises that bus is currently an unattractive mode due to the limited network, hours of operation and fare levels. BSIP analysis shows that private car usage is benefits from relatively low car parking charges. Consequently, the car is a more cost effective and accessible means of transport for those who have a car available.

3.9.80. The BSIP proposals for Somerton aim to challenge the current car dependency. The town is to be developed as a mobility hub with multiple bus routes offering interchange opportunities to broaden network coverage. First Mile/Last Mile access by cycling or walking is to be encouraged. Part of Somerton's role as a mobility hub will be as a focus of a daytime Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) network. Two buses are planned to operate a DRT network covering 80km2

[22] https://docs.somerset.gov.uk/wl/?id=VklnseTUULR0ANIqNRMhJDutbbtfVD4g.
[23] https://somersetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/SCCPublic/Transport/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FSCCPublic%2FTransport%2FSomerset%20Bus%20Back%20Better%5FFINAL%20291021%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FSCCPublic%2FTransport&p=true.

zone. The DRT will unlock sustainable travel for a socio-demographic segment of the population not currently well-served by public transport, namely shift workers, and young people wishing to avail themselves of evening opportunities. Furthermore, the DDRT will provide a flexible transport service addressing social isolation. As well as DDRT there will be a network of fixed feeder bus services which will connect into a hub-and-spoke network encompassing routes 29,54,55,75,77 and 376.

3.9.81. Langport will also benefit from the BSIP proposals as it will be a part of the DDRT network focussed on Somerton.

Somerset Active Travel Strategy

3.9.82. The aim of the active travel strategy is to offer Somerset's population better access to active travel by improving active travel options by making active travel easier to access and use.[24] A key goal is improving access by active modes to the public transport network. The strategy aims to address issues of social exclusion for residents and visitors without access to a car. The strategy states that encouraging active travel modes 'particularly cycling and links to public transport will 'broaden journey horizons and potentially provide access to a wide variety of services.'

3.9.83. The Langport-Somerton new rail station scheme will greatly improve active mode access to the rail network for the local communities of Langport and Somerton. The current need to travel to Taunton or Castle Cary makes use of active modes infeasible for the overwhelming majority of the local population. As such the new rail station is well-aligned with the active travel policy aims.

South Somerset District Council

3.9.84. The development plan for South Somerset is set out in the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028. South Somerset District Council (SDCC) is the local planning authority for the area covered by the new station scheme.

South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

3.9.85. In the adopted South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028 Langport and Somerton are defined as Local Market Towns.[25] As rural market towns the key functions of these communities is to provide a strong employment, retail and community role for residents. Within the settlement strategy of South Somerset as Local Market Towns Langport and Somerton fulfil a role between Yeovil, the principal urban settlement and Rural Settlements. Planning policy is to provide for locally significant housing and employment in these settlements to 'develop and support mixed sustainable communities'.

3.9.86. This role is set out in Policy SS1 Settlement Strategy with Langport/Huish Episcopi and Somerton identified as Local Market Towns which are aligned with three key criteria which are to:

- Have an existing concentration of business and employment with potential for expansion;
- Have shopping, cultural, faith, educational, health and public services; and
- Have sustainable transport potential.

3.9.87. Policy SS3 Delivering New Employment Land states that the Local Plan will assist in the delivery of 5.07 hectares of additional employment land in Somerton and 3.67 hectares of additional employment land in Langport beyond existing commitments. The aim is to provide choice and more

[24] https://docs.somerset.gov.uk/wl/?id=iSDbc1L8cBWh6v961HOPNBjBUtOt6mc7.
[25] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/1250/j-plan_pol-web-site-2018-1-local-plan-local-plan-2006-2028-south_somerset_local_plan_2006-2028_adoption_version_march_2015.pdf.

self-containment of jobs within the communities. The total number of jobs to be encouraged is 284 jobs in Langport and 307 jobs in Somerton over the period of the Local Plan.

3.9.88. The Local Plan states that there is a balance between jobs and workers, however, 60% of Langport workers commute to Yeovil, Taunton and Somerton. Similarly, 60% of Somerton commuters commute elsewhere mostly to Mendip District and Yeovil.

3.9.89. Policy LMT2 states that the Direction of Growth in Langport Huish Episcopi for new housing and employment will be to the north, east and south-east of the town. In Somerton, Policy LMT3 states that the Direction of Growth of new housing and employment developments will be to the west of the town.

3.9.90. The new station scheme will align with the Local Plan spatial strategy for both Langport and Somerton. By offering a sustainable transport potential, the station will support economic growth by providing sustainable transport for existing and new residents to connect with regional and national train services at Taunton and Westbury.

South Somerset Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Preferred Options Consultation

3.9.91. The Local Plan Review 2016-2036 has been through two consultation stages is working towards Publication and takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework and the evidence base produced to support the Plan process.[26] Key issues for the review are the growing local population with increasing proportion of older residents, and a need for provision of new housing including affordable housing. Other important issues are maintaining access to services and rural connectivity. The Vision for 2036 includes the aim of 'sustainable low carbon towns with enhanced infrastructure of all types and improved public transport links'.

3.9.92. A strategic objective is to promote sustainable transport. Specific policy guidance supports improving accessibility by sustainable modes of transport (Policy SS5 Infrastructure Delivery). There is also a general District wide mode shift policy for new housing developments which includes providing good travel information, encouraging electric car use, incentivising sustainable travel, encouraging cycling and walking, home working, public transport, travel planning and timely provision of all these measures at the start of developing sites (Policy TA1 Low Carbon Travel and Policy TA2 Rail Facilities).

3.9.93. The Adopted Local Plan (2015) maps for Somerton and Langport shown in Figure 3-30 and Figure 3-31 indicating the Direction of Growth. These are the development plan for the two Local Market Towns.

3.9.94. Housing growth at Langport is set out in Policies LH1 and LH2. A total of 351 housing units is planned for development during the Plan period up to 2036 (Figure 3-32). Of this total 171 units are committed or built. The remaining 180 units (with 29% affordable housing) is addressed by Policies LH1 and LH2. The latest position is that LH1 has been developed and LH2 has had an application submitted for 100 homes. Employment growth is planned of 1.3 hectares of development land (Policy SS3). The Local Plan Review timeframe has been adjusted to reflect an amended timetable.

3.9.95. Housing growth of 574 housing units at Somerton is planned for development during the Plan period up to 2036 (Figure 3-33). Of this total, 434 units are committed or built. The remaining 140 units

[26] South Somerset Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Preferred Options Consultation (Regulation 18) - South Somerset District Council Consultations (inconsult.uk).

(with 29% affordable housing) is addressed by Policy SM1. Employment growth is planned for two sites accounting for 4 hectares of development land (Policies SM2 and SM3).

3.9.96. The Langport-Somerton new railway station scheme will provide very good alignment with the South Somerset Local Plan Review as the new passenger rail infrastructure and train service will support the growth in housing and employment in the two communities providing a step change in public transport provision supporting the policy aims of achieving a mode shift for new housing developments. A local station will promote active modes with cycling and walking offering easy access to the rail station for residents. Improved public transport provides a sustainable transport alternative to the car for residents, particularly older residents without access to a car, for access to essential healthcare and social services in Taunton. With respect to the vision for low carbon towns, the rail station will reduce carbon emissions and encourage local use of the railway for travel both regionally and nationally either for the entire journey or by reducing the car leg by substituting the closer Langport-Somerton station for other more distant regional railway stations.

Figure 3-30 - Adopted Local Plan - Somerton

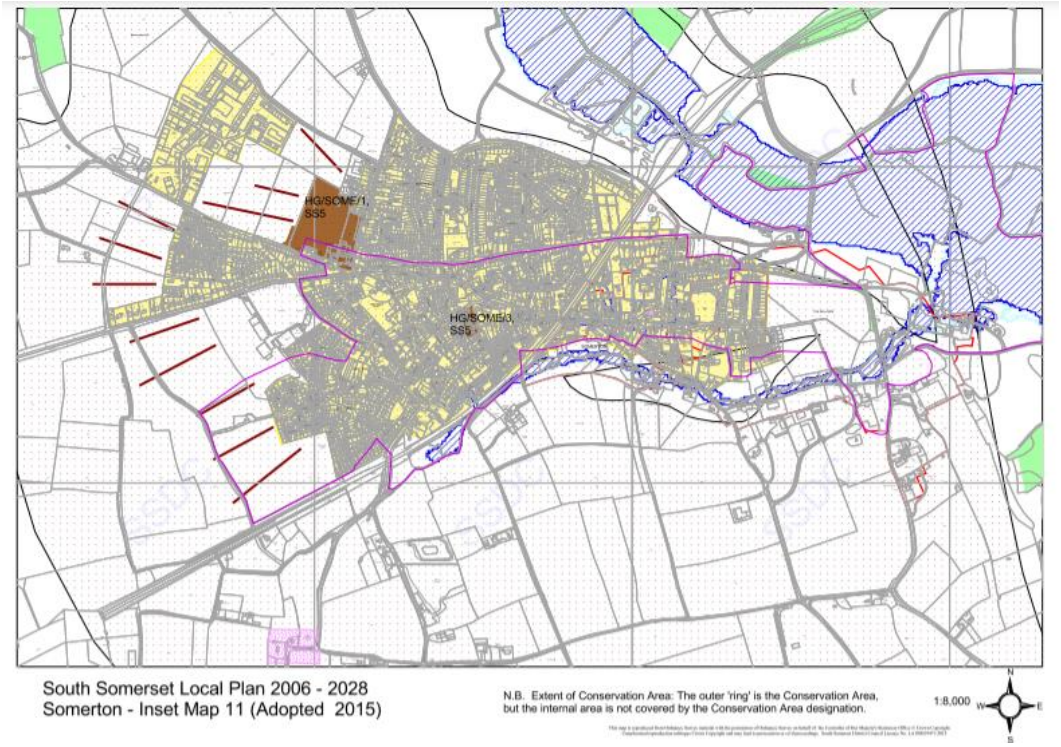


Figure 3-31 - Adopted Local Plan - Langport

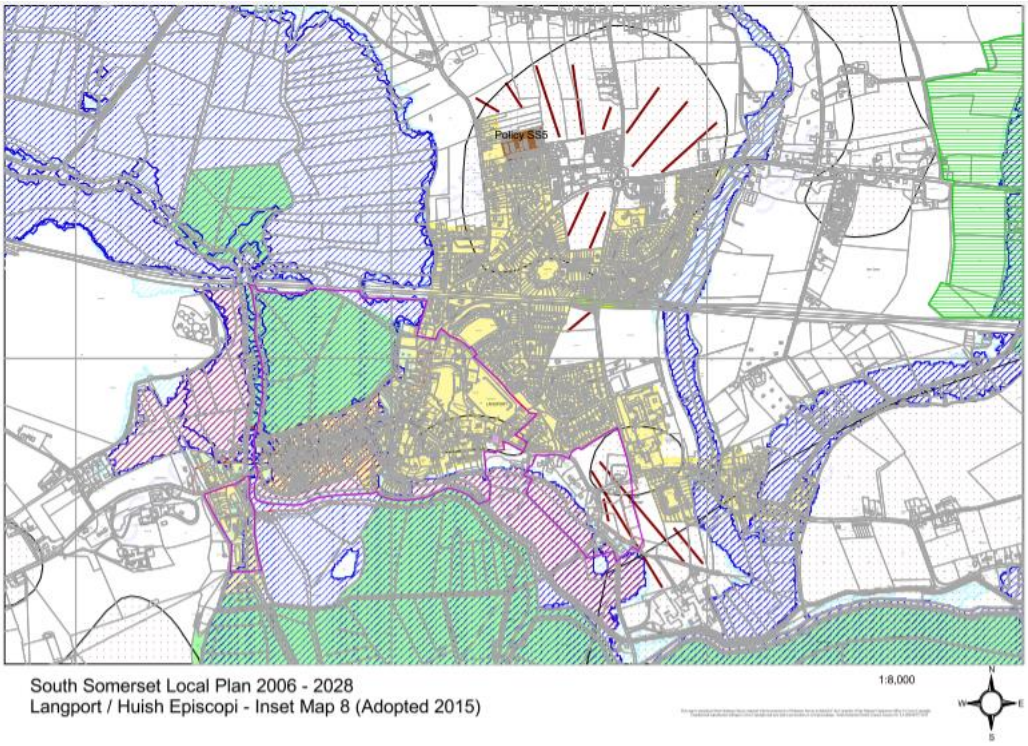
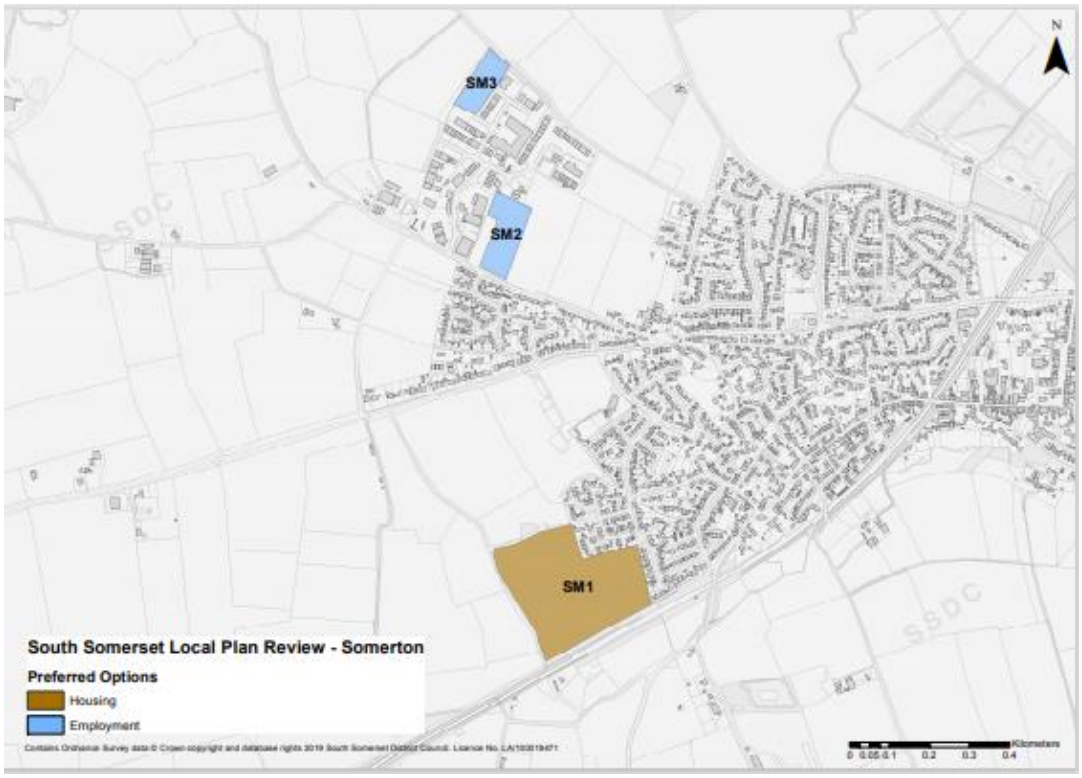


Figure 3-32 - South Somerset Local Plan Review – Preferred Option Housing Developments in Langport & Huish Episcopi

Figure 3-33 - South Somerset Local Plan Review: Preferred Option Housing Developments in Somerton



Langport and Huish Episcopi Parish Plan 2020

3.9.97. The Parish Plan sets out a plan for Langport to be, 'the Heart of the Levels - a thriving, clean and revitalised market town and surrounding villages'. The aim is, 'to increase prosperity in Langport and its hinterland and to improve the quality of life of its citizens'. Huish Episcopi parish was designated as a Neighbourhood Area on 16th December 2021. This is to enable the parish council to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan[27] .

3.10 INTERDEPENDENCIES

Strategic Priorities

3.10.1. The Langport-Somerton new railway station scheme on the Reading to Taunton line will be an addition to the national rail network. The provision of a new station on this line is aligned with the strategic portfolio requirement to improve access to rail services in rural communities. The new station will best meet the needs of the community through integration with other transport modes, particularly public transport and active modes. The National Bus Strategy requirement for local authorities and bus operators to set up Enhanced Partnerships will offer an opportunity to integrate bus and rail services. Rail and bus are interdependent in realising the full potential of the station to act as a local mobility hub.

[27] https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/5238/notification-letter-of-designation.pdf

3.10.2. The Langport-Somerton station will also have an interdependency with Somerset County Council's Active Travel Strategy which aims is to offer Somerset's improved active travel options by making active travel easier to access and use. A key goal is improving access by active modes to the public transport network. Integrating Langport-Somerton station with improved active mode access will be important in achieving the ambition for the station as a mobility hub.

Programmes

3.10.3. The Langport-Somerton new station scheme is linked to rail strategy development in the South West of England. The Peninsula Rail 20 Year Strategy – Closing the Gap: South-West Peninsula Strategic Rail Blueprint and the Western Gateway STB Rail Strategy have as aims the improvement of access to rail and enhancing rail connectivity. The programme of enhancement across the South-West will be beneficial to Langport-Somerton in terms of offering a better overall level of service on the rail network encouraging greater use of the station. The new station will also offer additional access to and connectivity for the rail network in the South-West, particularly as the station will serve to address a gap in the rail network which has existed since station were closed at Langport and Somerton in the 1960s.

3.11 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS AND REQUIREMENTS

3.11.1. The Langport Transport Group (LTG) and Somerset County Council (SCC) are the lead promoter and lead stakeholder partner respectively for this Restore Your Railways (RYR) Ideas Fund funding bid to the Department for Transport (DfT). The scheme has the full support of the local Member of Parliament, David Warburton, MP who facilitated the main stakeholders coming together in 2016 to advance the case for the proposed new station.

3.11.2. The Langport Transport Group is leading the scheme development. Somerset County Council is the collaborative partner and lead stakeholder partner. A scheme steering group represents the views and requirements of other stakeholders. The main members of the steering group include the Department for Transport, South Somerset District Council, Network Rail, GWR, and Heart of the South West Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and DfT

3.11.3. Langport Transport Group is a community group promoting the development of a new railway station at Langport-Somerton. The LTG submitted a successful application to the DfT for funding for a feasibility study and development of a Strategic Outline Case for a new Langport-Somerton railway station.

3.11.4. Somerset County Council is the lead stakeholder partner for the scheme. The County identified a new station at Langport-Somerton in the draft Passenger Rail Strategy (2021). This is the latest of a number of county planning strategies identifying a need for a new rail station at this location.

3.11.5. South Somerset District Council is the local planning authority for the Langport-Somerton area and will encourage, promote and protect the development of land for passenger rail facilities where there is robust evidence in support of developing infrastructure to widen transport choice. The District has provided local planning and economic forecasts to support the development of the business case for the Langport-Somerton station scheme.

3.11.6. Network Rail as the rail infrastructure provider has the role of running a safe, reliable and efficient railway serving customers and the community. Its developer role is crucial in Network Rail's support of railway infrastructure development proposals including those proposals submitted for government funding under RYR. Network Rail is providing technical inputs and reviews, particularly with respect

to timetabling for trains services calling at the new Langport-Somerton station, GRIP/PACE delivery procedures and project management of the scheme delivery.

3.11.7. Great Western Railway (GWR) is the current operator of passenger rail services on the Reading to Taunton line. GWR supports the new rail station scheme package as it will improve rail connectivity for the area encouraging new users to use rail services by the local community in the Langport-Somerton area. GWR has provided the scheme with the MOIRA demand forecasting model, station car park utilisation and rail recovery passenger data.

3.11.8. Heart of the South West LEP has supported the development of a station at Langport-Somerton in policy documents including Build Back Better (the South-West LEPs strategy for post-Covid 19 economic recovery), the Productivity Strategy and the Local Industrial Strategy, all supportive of a rail network offering improved connectivity throughout the South West. The LEP has provided economic indicators showing the need for the new station to support the local economy.

4

ECONOMIC CASE

4 ECONOMIC CASE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. This chapter considers the economic case for the proposed new rail station in the Langport-Somerton area. The economic case explores the long-list and short-list of options that have been considered in the shortlisting process and assesses the high-level value for money of the proposed scheme using cost-benefit analysis across a 60-year appraisal period.

4.1.2. The Options Assessment Report (OAR) for the Langport/Somerton new railway station, which is appended to this SOC, identifies the existing and future transport challenges in the region to set out a range of evidence to support the case for intervention. The report also presents and assesses the options to improve connectivity in the area through the new stations. It goes on to summarise the assessment of a long list of options considered for the station proposals and follows this with a further short list of assessed options.

4.1.3. Throughout the development of the project to date, a robust option identification, sifting and appraisal approach has been followed. The full approach is described in the OAR, which is appended in Appendix B.

4.2 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.2.1. A Long List of options was developed and assessed using a qualitative multi-criteria framework. This assessment indicated that a rail option scored highest and was then shortlisted for further assessment. Four potential station sites were identified for the location of the new railway station to be served by either a new local stopping train service or existing GWR semi-fast services. A multi-criteria appraisal of these four station sites produced two preferred locations, Langport 2 and Somerton. Details of the optioneering process are provided in Appendix B, Option Assessment Report (OAR).

4.2.2. Table 4-1 below summarises the catchment population and demand forecast results for the four different station sites, and Table 4-2 shows ORR 2018/2019 demand data for existing nearby stations for comparison. Full details on the demand forecasting methodology can be found in Section 4.4 and in Appendix D. It should be noted that these station catchments are not the same as the catchment shown in Figure 3-1 – that catchment was indicating poor connectivity in the general Langport-Somerton area, whereas these station catchments are specific to each station option and specify the area where the station would be the nearest available rail station. The tables show that Langport Option 2 and Somerton had the two highest demand forecasts, which was due to them covering larger nearby populations than the other options. They also show that a new station at Langport or Somerton would attract a greater number of passengers than nearby existing stations such as Castle Cary, Bruton and Frome on the Reading to Taunton line; and Crewkerne, Sherborne and Templecombe on the West of England Main Line.

Table 4-1 – Catchment populations and annual demand forecast results

New station options	Station catchment population*				Annual demand forecast
	<2km	2-10km	>10km	Total	
Langport Option 1	4,057	24,684	19,095	47,836	229,500
Langport Option 2	4,030	26,129	18,775	48,934	235,400
Tengore Lane	954	34,773	15,462	51,189	196,600
Somerton	5,311	34,897	11,375	51,583	258,600

** Population is based on both 2018/19 Experian Mosaic adult (15+) population data and expected population from planned residential developments in the area. Station catchments are based on straight line distances to nearest station.*

Table 4-2 – Existing station demand comparisons

Nearby existing stations	ORR 2018/2019 Annual demand
Castle Cary	222,500
Bruton	42,800
Frome	201,300
Crewkerne	164,300
Sherborne	210,200
Templecombe	108,200
Gillingham	378,000

4.3 SCENARIOS FOR ECONOMIC APPRAISAL

4.3.1. Following the analysis undertaken in the Option Assessment Report and outlined above an economic appraisal was carried out for the two shortlisted rail options, Langport Option 2 and Somerton. Three scenarios were considered for both options:

- **Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served By New Taunton-Westbury Service**: The scheme contains the new station only. It is assumed that a new Taunton to Westbury service would be introduced by others as part of a separate scheme, and form part of the Do Minimum. This service would run via Langport-Somerton, Castle Cary, Bruton and Frome, and would run hourly from 0600 to 2200 in both directions (for a total of 17 services each way per day).
- **Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service**: The scheme is a package of the new station and the new hourly Taunton to Westbury service (as described in scenario 1). This represents a 'worst-case' scenario where this scheme takes on the full cost of introducing a new train service.

- **Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served By GWR Semi-Fast Service**: The scheme contains the new station only, and the station is served by existing GWR semi-fast train services which run approximately every two hours and travel two-way between London Paddington and either Plymouth, Paignton or Exeter St. David's.

4.3.2. Scenario 3 would require additional signal spacing works to allow the westbound semi-fast services to stop at Langport-Somerton without conflicting with the following fast services. These works have not been costed at this stage.

4.3.3. It should also be noted that GO-OP, a community rail operator, also has plans for a rail service between Taunton and Swindon operating hourly. This proposed service could potentially stop at a new Langport-Somerton station. Train paths have been identified and discussed with Network Rail. GO-OP rail is strongly supportive of the Langport Transport Group plans for opening a new station in the Langport/Somerton area. Thus, the new station is closely aligned with the operator's plans for its new regional rail service connecting communities currently poorly served by rail.

4.4 BENEFITS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

4.4.1. The appraisal consists of a number of economic benefits that have been assessed and reported below. As a result of the proposed new station, additional journeys will be undertaken on the rail network, leading to additional revenue for the rail operators. In addition, it will lead to journey time savings for abstracted users and new-to-rail users, and the new train service will lead to journey time savings for existing station users. Furthermore, a number of car journeys will be removed from the road network as some of these new rail journeys will be as a result of individuals switching from using a car for travel. This will lead to a series of marginal externality cost savings that relate to the monetised social cost that impacts the environment, the government, road traffic and health, all of which is captured in the list below:

- Congestion;
- Infrastructure (cost savings due to less road maintenance being required);
- Accidents;
- Local Air Quality;
- Greenhouse Gases; and
- Indirect Taxation (disbenefit).

ECONOMIC APPRAISAL APPROACH

4.4.2. The economic appraisal for the new station was completed according to SOC requirements, using the following approach:

1. Calculate the demand for the new station using a Trip Rate Model;
2. Use the demand results from the Trip Rate Model to calculate 'New User' benefits, including applying an appropriate revenue figure to each journey;
3. Calculate de-congestion benefits and other monetised benefits using the Marginal External Costs (MEC) method detailed in TAG Unit A5-4 for new-to-rail and abstracted trips;

4. Calculate journey time and revenue benefits for users at existing stations by modelling the new train service in MOIRA;
5. Apply exogenous background rail growth to revenue benefits in line with TAG Unit A5-3 guidance using forecasts obtained from the DfT;
6. Develop the infrastructure costs and operating costs associated with each scenario;
7. Calculate Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR's) for each Do Something scenario and complete the Appraisal Summary Tables; and
8. Perform sensitivity tests relating to assumptions surrounding post-COVID impacts and fares.

4.4.3. The demand forecasting included the use of a trip rate model to assess the impact of the proposed new station. The comparison of the reference case and the two station scenarios provided results for demand changes as a result of the scheme, plus the revenue impact for the rail industry. In line with TAG guidance the revenue impact will reduce the net cost to the public finances Present Value Costs (PVC) rather than be included in the Present Value Benefits (PVB) and has been included in the Public Accounts (PA) Table (Appendix G).

4.4.4. Demand forecasting for the new station was undertaken using WSP's established trip rate model, which has been used on new line and station studies on a number of projects in the past, adapted to the specific requirements of this project. The general framework for the forecasting of passenger demand is provided by the Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH), the use of which is recommended by DfT's TAG Unit M4[28]. With specific regard to new stations, PDFH presents three options[29]; one of which is the use of trip rate models. Trip rate modelling is an industry-accepted approach for the forecasting of passenger demand. Trip rate models have been used extensively to inform investment decisions in new rail infrastructure since the privatisation of the rail network. A review of 27 station business cases in the 1999-2010 period found that all but four were based on trip rate model forecasts[30]. These forecasts were also reviewed ex-post and were found to be accurate in modelling future passenger demand when compared to observed station entry and exit statistics collected annually by the Office of Road and Rail.

4.4.5. After deriving calibrated steady-state demand using the trip rate model, demand figures were extracted into a spreadsheet-based economic appraisal model to understand the impact of general change in population and economic activity on future trail demand. Changes in demand during the scheme's appraisal period were forecast using a range of exogenous factors and associated elasticity assumptions, in line with the demand forecasting approach outlined in TAG Unit A5.4 Rail Appraisal. The key factors and assumptions are presented in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3 - Demand growth factors and elasticities included in the appraisal

Driver	Average annual growth	Elasticity	Comment
GVA per capita growth	1.32%	1.00	To capture the impact of general economic growth on rail demand.

[28] Department for Transport (2019) - TAG Unit M4 Forecasting and Uncertainty, Section 8.
[29] Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook v6.0 Section B9.3 New Stations and Services.
[30] Steer Davies Gleave (2010) -- Station Usage and Demand Forecasts for Newly Opened Railway Lines and Stations.

			Source: TAG Databook (July 2021) and PDFH 6.0 elasticity
Fare growth	1.00%	-0.97	To estimate the demand suppressing impact of fare rises in the appraisal period. Source: TAG Databook (July 2021) and PDFH 6.0 elasticity

4.4.6. The outputs of the benefits assessment provide the inputs for the economic appraisal of the impacts for:

- Demand
- Revenue
- Marginal external costs

4.4.7. A qualitative approach has been applied for the assessment of other impacts, as presented in the Appraisal Summary Tables.

Trip Rate Modelling

4.4.8. A trip rate model was used to provide an estimation of the potential demand from the new station at Langport / Somerton. This is an industry recognised methodology for a high-level forecast for demand at a proposed new station.

4.4.9. The demand forecast includes demand originating from existing local housing and new demand associated with new housing and employment developments within the catchment of the proposed station sites. Appendix D includes further information on the methodology and assumptions used.

Abstraction

4.4.10. The trip rate model operates at a high-level and considers the distance to the nearest stations in calculating abstraction of demand. The nearest stations to the location of the new station are at Bridgwater, Castle Cary and Yeovil Pen Mill. It is expected that some of the new station demand will include individuals who have transferred from existing stations – this is known as abstraction. More detail on the calculation of abstracted demand can be found in Appendix D.

4.4.11. The demand forecast is comprised of trips generated from existing housing and new residential developments. The South Somerset District Council Emerging Local Plan Review gives the quantum of housing developments to be built across Langport, Somerton, Martock and Ilchester over the Local Plan period as being 1,462 dwellings. In addition, 924 dwellings are expected to be built in Street and Glastonbury according to the Mendip Local Plan. The new housing demand from each site was assigned to the trip rate model.

Table 4-4 - South Somerset and Street/Glastonbury New Housing Development Assumptions

Period	Total Dwellings
2021 - 2036	2,386

4.4.12. Key assumptions relating to the growth applied to the new station demand forecast over the 60-year appraisal period are presented in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5 - New station demand forecasting assumptions

Demand forecasting input	Assumption
Scheme opening year	2025/2026
Steady-state demand	**Year 1:** Steady-state demand assuming no new housing ▪ Assumes the opening of the new station but excludes the impact of additional demand generated by new housing developments in the vicinity of the station **Year 2-10:** Growth in line with compound growth rate derived from trip rate modelling ▪ Growth rate is the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between the following two scenarios presented in the trip rate model: • station demand with no additional impact from housing • station demand assuming all homes near the station are built and occupied CAGR has been derived based on an 11-year growth-to-maturity period and equals 1.23% per annum between 2025/26 and 2035/36
Demand forecast	**Year 11-60:** Growth in line with PDFH and TAG demand forecasting principles Average annual demand growth is 0.12% (including the impact of fare increases)
Journey purpose/ticket type splits	Standard TAG Databook technical inputs (July 2021 issue) Selected flow category: *Outside South East 25 to 100 miles*

Revenue Impacts

4.4.13. The potential operator revenue generated by the stations is estimated based on ticket sales for all 'new to rail' trips for both the new station and existing stations, where the 'new to rail' trips for existing stations are derived from a MOIRA analysis of adding the new train service.

4.4.14. Revenue estimates do not include fares revenue related to abstracted trips as it is assumed that this revenue will be offset by an equivalent loss of revenue at the other stations. Similarly, whilst there may be a slight difference in fare to travel via one of the new stations, it is assumed that any additional revenue gained from passengers making a slightly longer rail journey via the new station would be offset by a similar loss in revenue from those which eventually have a shorter journey.

4.4.15. Incremental revenues of the new station have been appraised based on rail demand forecasting outlined above. Scenarios 1 and 2, used an average yield of £11.29 (2019 prices) to reflect likely travel patterns to/from the new station. This yield was derived from MOIRA from the average yield of all the calibration stations used for the trip rate model (excluding those which were not serviced by GWR and excluding Castle Cary, which had significantly higher yields due to long distance service patterns). The assumed fare has been adjusted for inflation in future years.

4.4.16. As a comparison, the average yield for the nearby Bruton station was £11.01. The top five destinations from Bruton are Bristol, Bath, London, Frome, and Yeovil. Though the main destinations from Langport-Somerton are more likely to be Taunton and Westbury, it is expected that Langport-Somerton passengers will travel further afield to places like Bristol or London and therefore an average yield similar to that of Bruton is considered reasonable.

4.4.17. For scenario 3, the average yield was uplifted from scenarios 1 and 2 based on the assumption that the station travel patterns would be more like that of Castle Cary (i.e. a higher proportion of London trips with correspondingly higher yields). The average yield used was £26.00.

4.4.18. In scenario 2, the additional revenues from existing stations have been appraised based on a MOIRA analysis of the increased demand due to the new train service and the average yield of these new trips, which was calculated to be £9.36. In scenarios 1 and 3 the reduction in revenues from existing stations have been appraised based on MOIRA analysis of the decreased demand due to slightly longer journey times for the existing train services and the average yield of those trips, which was calculated to be £9.36 and £27.87 respectively.

4.4.19. Revenue forecasts include a nominal increase in line with RPI (TAG Databook July 2021 issue). The scheme's revenue impact and the monetised journey time savings have been re-based to 2010 present value prices using GDP deflator values and discounting assumptions from TAG Databook (July 2021 issue).

Journey time impacts

4.4.20. The new station is expected to lead to journey time savings for abstracted users and new-to-rail users as they would not have to travel as far to access the rail network. However, these journey time savings have not been monetised as there are many possible origins and destinations for trips using the new station and carrying out a full analysis of the demand and journey times for each origin-destination pair is not required at this stage.

4.4.21. In scenario 2, the journey time benefits for passengers at the existing stations, where the addition of a new train service would improve service frequency for several destinations, have been monetised using MOIRA. In scenarios 1 and 3 the journey time disbenefits for passengers at existing stations due to the addition of a new stop to services have been similarly monetised.

Covid-19 Adjustment

4.4.22. The impact of temporary demand reduction following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant adjustments to long-term demand forecasts has been included. The scheme's economic impact and underlying assumptions (e.g. forecasted demand and revenues) calculated using post-Covid growth rates have been adjusted using factors derived from version 16 of the DfT's Rail demand forecasting during Covid guidance dated June 2021. The "Medium" Covid sensitivity scenario has been assumed in each scenario for economic appraisal as per DfT's Covid-19 guidance (version 16) dated June 2021:

- Medium demand: low impact on GDP and employment, 26% reduction in commuting and business travel compared to pre-Covid figures, 25% reduction in leisure travel; *total long-run impact (as percentage of pre-Covid demand): 82% (GWR, for post-Covid GDP and employment forecast)*

Marginal External Costs

4.4.23. The scheme is expected to encourage a modal shift to rail and some of these travellers will have previously travelled by car and reduce the mileage necessary to travel to the closest station. Using TAG approved diversion factors, car occupancy and an average trip distance by user type, it is possible to calculate the number of car kilometres removed from the road network as a result of the scheme. The benefits of this in terms of decongestion, accidents, local air quality, greenhouse gases, infrastructure and indirect taxation can all be monetised using the values in the TAG Databook table A5.4.2.

4.4.24. The benefits were calculated for new-to-rail users in scenarios 1 and 2 using the average rail journey distance of 78.2 kilometres. This was based on the average journey distance of all the calibration stations used for the trip rate model (excluding those which were not serviced by GWR and excluding Castle Cary, which had much longer distance service patterns compared to other stations in the area). As a specific comparison, the average journey distance for the nearby Bruton station was 75.6 kilometres.

4.4.25. For scenario 3, the average rail journey distance was uplifted from scenarios 1 and 2 based on the assumption that the station travel patterns would be more like that of Castle Cary (i.e. a higher proportion of London trips with correspondingly higher journey distances). The average distance used was 145 kilometres.

4.4.26. The MEC benefits/disbenefits were calculated for users at existing stations using the total change in passenger miles output from MOIRA.

Summary of revenue and MEC assumptions

4.4.27. Table **4-6** below summarises the key assumptions used to calculate revenue and MEC benefits in each scenario, as described earlier in this section.

Table 4-6 **- Assumptions for revenue and MEC benefit calculations**

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Station	New station at either Langport or Somerton	New station at either Langport or Somerton	New station at either Langport or Somerton
Train Service	No new service included in scheme. Assumes there is an Taunton-Westbury service in the Do Minimum that stops at new station.	Scheme package includes new Taunton-Westbury service.	No new service included in scheme. Existing GWR semi-fast service stops at new station.
Service Frequency	Hourly	Hourly	Two-hourly
New-to-rail passengers at new station			
Average Yield (£, 2019)	£11.29	£11.29	£26.00
Average Rail Journey Distance (miles)	48.6	48.6	90.0

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Passengers at existing stations			
Effect of scheme	Scheme adds a stop to a Do Minimum service, which causes journey time disbenefits for existing passengers.	Scheme introduces a new service, which improves journey time benefits for existing passengers.	Scheme adds a stop to an existing service, which causes journey time disbenefits for existing passengers.
Change in existing passenger demand	Decrease	Increase	Decrease
Average Yield (£, 2019)	£9.36	£9.36	£27.87
Change in total passenger miles	Decrease	Increase	Decrease

Sensitivity Testing

4.4.28. Uncertainties have been addressed through sensitivity testing of key assumptions. These sensitivity tests have been carried out on the 'worst-case' scenario 2 as this scenario, by including a new train service as part of the scheme package, makes the fewest assumptions about the provision of a train service. It is expected that the relative changes in benefits shown by the tests would equally apply to scenarios 1 and 3.

4.4.29. The scheme's robustness to a 25% reduction in average yield – £8.47 in 2021 prices following the adjustment – for new demand was tested in order to model a scenario where uncertainties exist around the future fare structure and the future composition of journeys (in terms of journey purpose and distances).

4.4.30. Further sensitivity analysis was carried out to assess the impact of temporary demand reduction following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant adjustments to long-term demand forecasts. Two Covid-related sensitivity scenarios were modelled:

- **High demand:** no impact to GDP and employment, low impact on commuting and business travel, no permanent impact on leisure travel; *total long-run impact (as percentage of pre-Covid demand): 98% (GWR, for post-Covid GDP and employment forecast)*
- **Low demand:** substantial impact on GDP and employment, 47% reduction in commuting and business travel, 50% reduction in leisure travel; *total long-run impact (as percentage of pre-Covid demand): 67% (GWR, for post-Covid GDP and employment forecast)*

4.4.31. The results of the sensitivity tests are presented later and inform the scheme's value for money position.

4.5 COST ASSESSMENT

CAPITAL COSTS

4.5.1. The derivation of capital and operating costs are discussed in Chapter 5. The mid-level estimate of the capital costs has been used for the economic appraisal. The capital costs and the assumed cost profile for each of the schemes in 2021 prices are shown in Table 4-7. Scenario 3 would have an additional cost due to the signal spacing works required to allow the westbound semi-fast services to stop at Langport-Somerton without conflicting with the following fast services. These works have not been costed at this stage.

Table 4-7 - Capital Costs excluding risk & inflation (£000s, 2021 prices)

Option	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Langport Option 2	578	1,304	3,818	13,220	317	19,237
Somerton	328	644	2,514	9,206	231	12,922

OPERATING, MAINTENANCE AND RENEWAL COSTS

4.5.2. The annual operating and maintenance costs for the new station and a new Taunton-Westbury train service in 2021 prices are shown in Table 4-8. These are assumed to occur every year in the 60 year appraisal period from 2025 to 2084. The train service operating costs only apply to scenario 2.

Table 4-8 - Operating, Maintenance and Renewal Costs (£, 2021 prices)

Item	Annual Cost (£)
Station costs	
Long Term Access Charge (LTAC)	72,000
Station operating costs	45,500
Train service	
Mileage (Fuel/materials/variable track access charge)	966,000
Lease costs	1,151,000
Train crew costs	2,091,000
Total operating costs	**4,325,500**

INFLATION AND OPTIMISM BIAS

4.5.3. The costs have been adjusted for the economic appraisal in accordance with guidance in TAG Unit A1.2 Scheme Costs. Both capital costs and operating costs have been inflated in line with RPI.

4.5.4. Optimism Bias of 56% has been applied to the station construction costs, which is the value recommended in TAG for conventional rail projects. For the operating costs a 41% optimism bias allowance has been applied to reflect uncertainty at this stage of scheme development in line with DfT guidance.

4.5.5. Costs have been re-based to 2010 prices using GDP deflator values from Tag Data Book and discounted to 2010 using TAG discount factors. The costs have then been converted from the factor cost to the market price unit of account using the indirect tax correction factor from the TAG Data Book.

4.6 ECONOMIC APPRAISAL RESULTS

4.6.1. The demand forecasting outlined in Appendix D demonstrated the total demand for the new stations using Experian's Mosaic dataset for 2018/2019 population estimates. Therefore, the demand in this section is presented in 2018/2019 levels. Table 4-9 shows the demand in the opening year 2025 and in the future year 2036 when all currently planned housing construction in the vicinity is completed, and excludes demand lags, exogenous growth and Covid-19 adjustments. Demand is shown for both an hourly service (for scenarios 1 and 2) and the two-hourly service (for scenario 3). Both station options have similar total demand, though the Somerton station demand is slightly higher due to the larger population covered by its' catchment area. The annual demand for a two-hourly service is about 46% of the demand for an hourly service.

Table 4-9 - Annual Demand Forecasting Impacts from the Trip Rate Modelling (2018/2019 demand levels)

Hourly service	Langport Option 2		Somerton	
Annual Demand	Opening Year 2025	Future Year 2036	Opening Year 2025	Future Year 2036
Total demand	205,112	235,408	218,443	258,583
New-to-rail Demand	120,420	143,888	127,920	160,016
Abstracted Demand	84,692	91,520	90,523	98,567

Two-hourly service	Langport Option 2		Somerton	
Annual Demand	Opening Year 2025	Future Year 2036	Opening Year 2025	Future Year 2036
Total demand	94,706	108,695	100,861	119,395
New-to-rail Demand	55,601	66,437	59,064	73,884
Abstracted Demand	39,105	42,258	41,797	45,511

4.6.2. The outputs of the benefits assessment have been converted into a Present Value Benefit for a 60-year appraisal period, based on the standard parameters provided in TAG and the scheme assumptions presented in Table 4-10.

Table 4-10 - Economic Appraisal Parameters and Assumptions

Criteria	Assumption	Source
Opening Year	2025/2026	WSP
Base Year	2010	DfT Base Year
Appraisal Years	60 years of benefits	HMT's Green Book
Value of Time (2010)	Rail users – Business: 10.02 £/hr Rail users – Commute: 9.95 £/hr Rail users – Other: 4.54 £/hr	TAG unit A1.3.1, July 2021
Marginal External Costs (MECs)	Values based on South West road type proportions (excluding motorways)	TAG unit A5.4, July 2021
Journey purpose split	Rail users – Business: 11.19% Rail users – Commute: 26.27% Rail users – Other: 62.55%	TAG unit A5.3.2, July 2021
Benefits growth	Value of time growth	TAG Annual Parameters, July 2021
Revenue growth	RPI +1% (deflated by GDP deflator)	TAG unit A5.3.1, July 2021
Build-up rate	60% in year 1, increasing by 10% every year up to 100% in year 5	Assumed for demand on the existing network and demand at new stations, following scheme opening
Demand growth	0.30%	Average growth per annum in the 60-year appraisal period Demand growth capped 20 years from appraisal year (TAG Unit A5-3)
Discount Rate	3.5% 0-30 years 3.0% 31-75 years	HMT's Green Book
Market Price adjustment	19%	TAG unit A1.3.1, July 2021

4.6.3. Table 4-11 sets out the initial monetised impact of the scheme and the results of the sensitivity analysis. Benefits comprise the scheme's travel time impact resulting from the construction of Langport-Somerton station, revenue from rail tickets, and marginal external cost benefits from the reduction in car-kilometres driven. There will also be an impact on tax due to the reduction in car-kilometres driven and therefore lower fuel consumption, and from the transfer of spending from taxable goods to public transport fares.

Table 4-11 - Monetised scheme impact (£000s, 2010 prices and values, market prices)*

Scenario	PVB			PVC	
	Journey time benefits (existing rail passengers plus decongestion MECs)	Marginal External Costs (excl. decongestion and infrastructure)	Indirect Tax Adjustment	Revenue Benefits	Marginal External Costs (Infrastructure)
Langport Option 2					
Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	5,671	1,769	-5,409	-28,211	-69
Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	15,169	2,175	-6,568	-34,151	-85
Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service	-2,220	487	-5,038	-28,878	-19
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 1: Lower yield	15,169	2,175	-5,377	-27,094	-85
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 2: High Covid demand	19,540	3,011	-7,995	-40,785	-118
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 3: Low Covid demand	11,317	1,483	-5,210	-27,617	-58

Scenario	PVB			PVC	
	Journey time benefits (existing rail passengers plus decongestion MECs)	Marginal External Costs (excl. decongestion and infrastructure)	Indirect Tax Adjustment	Revenue Benefits	Marginal External Costs (Infrastructure)
Somerton					
Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	6,098	1,892	-5,956	-31,204	-74
Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	15,596	2,299	-7,115	-37,144	-90
Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service	-1,866	589	-5,610	-32,061	-23
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 1: Lower yield	15,596	2,299	-5,798	-29,338	-90
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 2: High Covid demand	20,149	3,187	-8,658	-44,359	-124
Scenario 2 - Sensitivity 3: Low Covid demand	11,596	1,564	-5,646	-30,037	-61

** Revenue benefits and infrastructure MECs are presented as negative values as they offset the scheme's Present Value Costs in the Public Accounts reporting table. The scheme's Indirect Tax Adjustment will reduce total benefits (PVB) included in the Analysis of Monetised Costs and Benefits reporting table.*

4.7 VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT

4.7.1. The TEE, PA and AMCB tables are provided in Appendix G. Table 4-12 summarises the value for money (VfM) results for the main scenarios. The PVB includes MEC benefits (excluding infrastructure), indirect tax impacts and journey time benefits to passengers at existing stations. The PVC includes construction costs, operating costs, revenue benefits and infrastructure MEC benefits. The Net Present Value (NPV) is equal to the PVB minus the PVC. It should be noted that the BCRs for scenarios with negative PVCs are not intuitive, and so for these scenarios the NPV is the more informative and interpretable metric. DfT's 'Value for Money: Supplementary Guidance on Categories' indicates the VfM categories for these scenarios.

Table 4-12 - Value for money assessment

	Langport Option 2			Somerton		
	Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service	Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service
PVB (£000, 2010 PV)	2,031	10,776	-6,771	2,034	10,780	-6,887
PVC (£000, 2010 PV)	-6,845	89,882	-7,462	-15,958	80,769	-16,764
NPV (£000, 2010 PV)	8,876	-79,105	691	17,993	-69,989	9,878
BCR	-0.30*	0.12	0.91*	-0.13*	0.13	0.41*
VfM	Very High (And Financially Positive)	Poor	Economically Efficient Cost Saving	Very High (And Financially Positive)	Poor	Economically Efficient Cost Saving

** Due to the negative PVCs, these BCRs are not intuitive. The NPVs are more informative for these scenarios.*

4.7.2. Scenario 1 (New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service) has a negative PVC and PVB and NPV which are both positive. The VfM category is considered to be 'Very High (And Financially Positive)' for both station options. The revenue and MEC benefits from new-to-rail passengers would be larger than the station building and operating costs, the loss of tax income, and the disbenefits to passengers on the Do Minimum Taunton-Westbury train service. The Somerton option performs better than Langport Option 2, with an NPV of £18.0m as opposed to £8.9m – this is mainly due to the lower construction costs for the Somerton station, as well as the slightly larger passenger demand and revenue. The reason that Somerton has a lower PVB than Langport Option 2 is because the higher revenue (included as a negative cost in the PVC) has a corresponding indirect tax impact, which is included as a negative benefit in the PVB in line with TAG guidance.

4.7.3. In scenario 2 (Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service), the PVBs are higher than in scenario 1 because the scheme takes on the full journey time and MEC benefits of the new Taunton-Westbury service. However, the revenues returned by the scheme do not offset the cost to the Broad Transport Budget from the station construction costs and train operating costs, resulting in a positive PVC. As there is a positive PVC and PVB and the NPV is negative, both station options provide Poor Value for Money. The lower cost of the Somerton scheme means that it has a higher NPV than Langport Option 2 and therefore is the better performing option.

4.7.4. In scenario 3, there is a negative PVC due to the new-to-rail passenger revenue, but the large journey time disbenefits for existing passengers to a negative PVB. For both station options there is a positive NPV, so the VfM category is Economically Efficient Cost Saving. For the same reasons as

the other scenarios, the NPV is better for Somerton (£9.9m) than for Langport Option 2 (£0.7m). It should be noted that the PVB does not include journey time savings for new-to-rail passengers (see paragraph 4.4.20).

4.7.5. Table 4-13 shows the results of the sensitivity testing. The results for scenario 2 are also shown for comparison.

Table 4-13 - Value for money assessment – Sensitivity Testing

	Langport Option 2			
	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	**Sensitivity 1: Lower yield**	**Sensitivity 2: High Covid demand**	**Sensitivity 3: Low Covid demand**
PVB (£000, 2010 PV)	10,776	11,967	14,556	7,590
PVC (£000, 2010 PV)	89,882	96,939	83,216	96,443
NPV (£000, 2010 PV)	-79,105	-84,972	-68,659	-88,853
BCR	0.12	0.12	0.17	0.08
VfM	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor

	Somerton			
	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	**Sensitivity 1: Lower yield**	**Sensitivity 2: High Covid demand**	**Sensitivity 3: Low Covid demand**
PVB (£000, 2010 PV)	10,780	12,097	14,678	7,514
PVC (£000, 2010 PV)	80,769	88,574	73,519	87,904
NPV (£000, 2010 PV)	-69,989	-76,477	-58,841	-80,390
BCR	0.13	0.14	0.20	0.09
VfM	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor

4.7.6. In the low yield scenario, the reduction in revenue benefits leads to an increase in PVC and a smaller increase in PVB (due to the lower indirect tax impacts). This ends up marginally increasing the BCR, but the worse NPVs make it clear that this scenario is still worse than scenario 2. The high Covid demand scenario simply increases the revenue and journey time and MEC benefits of each station option further, with no change to their VfM categories. In the low Covid demand scenario the revenue and journey time and MEC benefits are reduced for each station option, with no change to VfM categories.

4.7.7. Scenarios 1 and 3 show that the scheme would have considerably lower operating costs if the new station is served by a train service that is either existing or introduced by others separately. The 'Do Minimum Taunton-Westbury service' scenarios show Very High (And Financially Positive) Value for Money, and the 'existing GWR semi-fast train service' scenarios show Economically Efficient Cost Savings.

4.7.8. Though these scenarios assumed that either an hourly Taunton-Westbury service would be in place in the Do Minimum or that existing semi-fast services would stop at the new station, there are other possibilities that have not been evaluated at this stage. Such an option is the GO-OP train service proposals (which would include stopping at a new Langport-Somerton station). If the planned Go-OP service were implemented this would in effect provide a new local train service between Taunton and Westbury in which case the costs of the new train service between Taunton and Westbury attributed to a new station at Langport-Somerton would be much reduced improving the scheme's value for money. GO-OP have indicated that the initial service offer would be at least 6 services a day each way calling at Langport/Somerton, possibly increasing to 9 services a day each way. GO-OP's aspiration is to commence the new service in early 2023. The operator also envisages a range of interchange opportunities at Taunton, Castle Cary, Westbury and Swindon offering opportunities for Langport/Somerton rail users to travel onwards to London, Reading, Exeter, Bristol, Dorchester, Yeovil, Weymouth, Bath and destination in Wales.

4.7.9. Scenario 2, where the new station and new train service are both included in the scheme package, shows Poor Value for Money mainly due to the combined cost of the station and train service package. In particular, the train service accounts for about 87% of the total construction and operating costs over the 60-year appraisal period. However, these economic results should be considered alongside the strategic benefits of this rail intervention, which would address lost connectivity and support economic development in the Langport-Somerton area.

4.7.10. Although this 'worst-case' analysis takes account of the benefits of the train service package to the existing stations between Taunton and Westbury, and benefits to the wider national rail network due to the increased connectivity and service frequency, it does not take account of all possible knock-on benefits a new hourly train service could have on other services. It could allow for faster Intercity services between London and the South West by them not having to stop at Castle Cary, and there could be potential savings on the existing Bristol to Weymouth services through, for example, turning trains back at Westbury or Castle Cary.

4.7.11. Appraisal Summary Tables (ASTs) for the Langport Option 2 and Somerton main scenarios are included on the following pages. The full ASTs are provided in Appendix G.

Langport Option 2 Scenario 1 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have slight negative impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a stop on the Do Minimum train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 164,427
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore a qualitative assessment is provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 68,593
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the site.	N/A	£ 132,106
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as the scheme would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 494,205
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location.There are residential areas in close proximately as well as the River Parrett which runs close to the site. A Ramsar site is within the schemes study area. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is east of the A378 Somerton Road Underbridge. A high number of residential dwellings are situated directly north and west of the station site, and north and west of the proposed carpark site. The proposed car park site lies on agricultural land.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	The scheme has no listed builidng or similar protected sites at or in close proximity to the proposed station site; there are some within 1km of the study area. The Hanging Chapel and a medieval gateway at 'The Hill' is a scheduled monument within the study area. There is also a conservation area in close proximity.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area. Part of the scheme study area sits in a Special Protection Area (SSSI) - Langport Railway Cutting SSSI, approx 230m west of the proposed station, which is protected for its geological importance.	Slight Adverse	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain River Parett. Flood zones 2 and 3.	Slight Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have slight negative impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a stop on the Do Minimum train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 5,506,304
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	Moderate Beneficial	£ 1,073,999
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	-£ 6,844,827
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 5,408,677

Langport Option 2 Scenario 2 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have positive impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a new hourly train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 4,924,421
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore a qualitative assessment is provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 84,362
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the site.	N/A	£ 162,747
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as the scheme would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 607,332
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location.There are residential areas in close proximately as well as the River Parrett which runs close to the site. A Ramsar site is within the schemes study area. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is east of the A378 Somerton Road Underbridge. A high number of residential dwellings are situated directly north and west of the station site, and north and west of the proposed carpark site. The proposed car park site lies on agricultural land.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	The scheme has no listed builidng or similar protected sites at or in close proximity to the proposed station site; there are some within 1km of the study area. The Hanging Chapel and a medieval gateway at 'The Hill' is a scheduled monument within the study area. There is also a conservation area in close proximity.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area. Part of the scheme study area sits in a Special Protection Area (SSSI) - Langport Railway Cutting SSSI, approx 230m west of the proposed station, which is protected for its geological importance.	Slight Adverse	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain River Parett. Flood zones 2 and 3.	Slight Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have positive impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a new hourly train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 10,244,479
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	Moderate Beneficial	£ 1,320,899
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	£ 89,881,858
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 6,567,837

Langport Option 2 Scenario 3 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have negative impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a stop on the GWR semi-fast train services.	N/A	-£ 453,039
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore a qualitative assessment is provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 18,865
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the site.	N/A	£ 35,856
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as the scheme would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 136,777
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location.There are residential areas in close proximately as well as the River Parrett which runs close to the site. A Ramsar site is within the schemes study area. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is east of the A378 Somerton Road Underbridge. A high number of residential dwellings are situated directly north and west of the station site, and north and west of the proposed carpark site. The proposed car park site lies on agricultural land.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	The scheme has no listed builidng or similar protected sites at or in close proximity to the proposed station site; there are some within 1km of the study area. The Hanging Chapel and a medieval gateway at 'The Hill' is a scheduled monument within the study area. There is also a conservation area in close proximity.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area. Part of the scheme study area sits in a Special Protection Area (SSSI) - Langport Railway Cutting SSSI, approx 230m west of the proposed station, which is protected for its geological importance.	Slight Adverse	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain River Parett. Flood zones 2 and 3.	Slight Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have negative impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a stop on the GWR semi-fast services.	N/A	-£ 1,766,943
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	Moderate Beneficial	£ 295,374
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	-£ 7,462,246
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 5,037,694

Somerton Scenario 1 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have slight negative impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a stop on the Do Minimum train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 186,986
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore qualitative assessment has been provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 73,371
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact on air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) being Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the proposed site.	N/A	£ 141,198
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 528,932
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location. Surrounding land is mostly rural agricultural fields and hedgerows. There are residential areas within close proximity to the scheme. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is situated southwest of Somerton. There are a high number of residential dwellings north and northeast of the site, and an industrial yard southwest of the site along Ricksey Lane. Agricultural land lies to the north and south of the site.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	There are no listed builidngs or protected sites at or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station site. There are some listed buildings within 1km of the study area.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area.	Neutral	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain of Mill Stream, Flood Zone 1.	Slightly Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have slight negative impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a stop on the Do Minimum train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 5,910,658
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation policy.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	N/A	£ 1,148,809
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	-£ 15,958,135
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 5,955,524

Somerton Scenario 2 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have positive impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a new hourly train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 4,946,980
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore qualitative assessment has been provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 89,140
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact on air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) being Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the proposed site.	N/A	£ 171,839
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 642,059
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location. Surrounding land is mostly rural agricultural fields and hedgerows. There are residential areas within close proximity to the scheme. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is situated southwest of Somerton. There are a high number of residential dwellings north and northeast of the site, and an industrial yard southwest of the site along Ricksey Lane. Agricultural land lies to the north and south of the site.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	There are no listed builidngs or protected sites at or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station site. There are some listed buildings within 1km of the study area.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area.	Neutral	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain of Mill Stream, Flood Zone 1.	Slightly Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have positive impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a new hourly train service between Taunton and Westbury.	N/A	£ 10,648,832
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation policy.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	N/A	£ 1,395,708
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	£ 80,768,550
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 7,114,684

Somerton Scenario 3 AST

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Economy	Business users & transport providers	The scheme is expected to facilitate mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal external benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have negative impacts on existing rail users from the addition of a stop on the GWR semi-fast train services.	N/A	-£ 434,336
	Reliability impact on Business users	The schemes would improve journey time reliability through the introduction of a new hourly train service serving Langport-Somerton. Business users will have a reliable means of connecting to regional economic centres and beyond by rail across the country. Alongside this the reduction in car use associated with the modal shift of existing business users from car to rail should help to improve journey times for other road users unable to use the new stations.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Regeneration	Scheme regeneration impacts have not been considered at this stage therefore qualitative assessment has been provided. The new railway station will restore lost connectivity between the Langport-Somerton communities and region and national centres of economic activity unlocking potential for economic regeneration and levelling up. Access to employment will become easier and local employers will have access to a larger labour market.	Not assessed	-
	Wider Impacts	Wider impacts have not been assessed at this stage of the scheme assessment and therefore a qualitative score has not been provided. It is likely that with the introduction of the new stations it could generate some transformative changes across the Langport-Somerton area of south Somerset with better access to labour supply and jobs. Wider impacts will be considered at the next stage of the scheme appraisal.	Not assessed	-
Environmental	Noise	The scheme is expected to a slight reduction in overall noise levels in the area as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on noise at / close to the station. There are no Noise Important Areas (NIAs) close to the proposed station location.	N/A	£ 22,830
	Air Quality	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact on air quality as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail. The nearest Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) being Yeovil AQMA which is greater than 10km to the southeast from the proposed site.	N/A	£ 43,415
	Greenhouse gases	The scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact to greenhouse gas emissions as it would encourage a modal shift from car to rail.	N/A	£ 165,553
	Landscape	There are no National Parks or Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) close to the scheme location. Surrounding land is mostly rural agricultural fields and hedgerows. There are residential areas within close proximity to the scheme. The rail line is already in place; a new station is likely to be visible in the immediate vicinity.	Slight Adverse	-
	Townscape	The scheme is situated southwest of Somerton. There are a high number of residential dwellings north and northeast of the site, and an industrial yard southwest of the site along Ricksey Lane. Agricultural land lies to the north and south of the site.	Slight Adverse	-
	Historic Environment	There are no listed builidngs or protected sites at or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station site. There are some listed buildings within 1km of the study area.	Neutral	-
	Biodiversity	The scheme is not within an area of Priority Habitat Inventory. However some 'main habitats' are present within 2km of study area.	Neutral	-
	Water Environment	The scheme does not have Groundwater Source Protection Zones but sits within the floodplain of Mill Stream, Flood Zone 1.	Slightly Adverse	-

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment	
			Qualitative	Monetary £(NPV)
Social	Commuting and Other users	The scheme is expected to cause a degree of mode shift from car to rail and therefore may have a marginal benefit to the highway network in terms of reduced delay and congestion. The scheme is also expected to have negative impacts on existing rail commuters from the addition of a stop on the GWR semi-fast services.	N/A	-£ 1,431,699
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	The schemes would significantly improve journey time reliability for trips from the Langport-Somerton area to the key regional centre, Taunton and beyond through improved connectivity to the rail network to Exeter, Bristol and London. There is also a reduction in car usage as existing rail users switch from longer distance rail stations to Langport-Somerton will reduce carbon emissions contributing to the decarbonisation policy.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Physical activity	A new rail station at Langport-Somerton will be a transport hub providing local connectivity by sustainable access mode to the community. Cycling storage facilities will be provided to encourage cycling as an access mode and contribute towards healthier lifystyles. The physical activity impacts will be quantified and monetised at OBC stage.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Journey quality	Journey quality will be enhanced providing local acces to rail service significantly enhancing residents (and visitors) connectivity by sustainable modes of transport. The rail station will be a transport hub offering an integrated timetable with bus services serving the station, cycle storage facilities, a station car park and EV charging points along with passenger information and seating.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Accidents	The scheme is not expected to have a direct impact to accidents, however, any shift from car to rail may generate a marginal external benefit due to reduced vehicle mileage in the highway network. The scheme may impact on local accidents due to increased highway movements and pedestrian/cycle activity around the station site. This will be considered in more detail at the OBC stage once local access arangements have been fully defined.	N/A	£ 357,451
	Security	The new stations would include security features such as CCTV, lighting, fences, landscaping and emergency phones providing a safe environment for users.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Access to services	The introduction of the new Langport-Somerton station will improve access to key services located in regional centres (Taunton, Westbury and further beyond in Exter, Bristol and London) particularly for members of the community without access to a car. Access to services will be signficantly enhanced for demographics such as older residents and students for access to healthcare and further and higher education.	Moderate Beneficial	-
	Affordability	Personal affordability impacts will be assessed as part of the distributional Impacts appraisal at the OBC stage. However, it is anticipated that the provision of a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area will provide an affordable and value for money travel option for local residents and visitors.	Slight Beneficial	-
	Severance	It is unlikely that the introduction of the station will have an impact on severance. However, this will be assessed in more detail in the OBC.	Neutral	-
	Option and non-use values	The scheme is likely to be beneficial in terms of option and non-use value. It is likely that local residents will value the station even if they use the station infrequently, as an additional option to travel by rail is available if required, for example a second member of a single car owning household member wishing to travel to healthcare facilities in Taunton. This is an important aspect of the scheme and will be assessed in more detail at the OBC stage.	Slight Beneficial	-
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Cost of funding the station has been appraised using a bespoke cost tool along with the assessment of the revenue impacts of the scheme using the outputs of the trip rate model. The present value of costs is the capital costs and operational and maintenance costs minus the revenue impact and infrastructure savings derived from the MECs calculations.	N/A	-£ 16,764,338
	Indirect Tax Revenues	The scheme is expected to have a negative impact on tax revenues due to the shift from car to rail and the increase in expenditure on rail tickets.	N/A	£ 5,609,843

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FINANCIAL CASE

5 FINANCIAL CASE

5.1 FORECAST SCHEME CAPITAL COSTS

5.1.1. A high-level capital cost estimate has been undertaken by quantity surveyors at WSP. These costs are for the Do Something scheme station and highway access infrastructure. The costs breakdown is for a Category F station.

5.1.2. The Langport 2 (East) station option total cost is estimated at £23.5 million. The station capital cost is £12.1 million with the highways access and car parking works accounting for £11.3 million. The Somerton station option total cost is £15.8 million. The station capital cost is £12.9 million with the highways access and car parking accounting for £2.8 million. These cost estimates representing a mid range high-level cost are used in the economic appraisal described in Chapter 4. These costs estimates together with lower and upper cost ranges are set out in Table 5-1 and Table 5-2.

5.1.3. As can be see the station construction costs and enabling rail infrastructure are similar for the two station options. The main difference lies with the highways access and car parking. Langport Option 2 (East) will require additional works to construct a highway access to the A372 across land to the west of the site. The Somerton station site will only require a junction and short section of access road from the B3165 Sutton Road. Full details of the high-level cost estimations for each station option are set out in Appendix J.

5.1.4. The costs include 15% risk/contingency and 6% inflation.

5.1.5. The scheme cost estimates include two 115m long platforms, pedestrian footbridge and lifts, car parking, EV charging, E-scooter charging, platform construction, lighting and cycle racks (secure cycle parking), bus shelter, highway access arrangements along with operational facilities including CCTV, ticket machines, information screens and help points. Both options include a 100-space station car park.

5.1.6. Scenario 3 would have an additional cost due to the signal spacing works required to allow the westbound semi-fast services to stop at Langport-Somerton without conflicting with the following fast services. These works have not been costed at this stage.

Table 5-1 - Langport 2 (East) Site Scheme Capital Costs (2021 Prices)

Cost Item	Cost (£millions)
Station Construction Costs & Enabling Rail Infrastructure	12,195
Highways Access & Car Parking	11,256
Total	23,451
Level of confidence optimism bias - 50%	11,726
Level of confidence optimism bias + 50%	35,177

Table 5-2 - Somerton Site Scheme Capital Costs (2021 Prices)

Cost Item	Cost (£millions)
Station Construction Costs & Enabling Rail Infrastructure	12,917
Highways Access & Car Parking	2,836
Total	15,753
Level of confidence optimism bias - 50%	7,877
Level of confidence optimism bias + 50%	23,630

5.1.7. The cost assessment includes construction and non-construction-based elements. In order to account for the real cost of the scheme, inflation has been added to the base cost estimates (in current prices) to uplift them to prices in the year that they are spent. Given the variance between construction inflation and general inflation, the Financial Case cost appraisal has been undertaken by applying the appropriate type of inflation to the various elements of the base cost estimates. A value of 6% inflation was used for future inflation pertaining to construction elements and current general inflation (Consumer Price index – CPI) has been used for non-construction elements.

5.1.8. A Quantified Risk Analysis (QRA) has not been undertaken at this stage and is proportionate to the stage of project development in line with TAG Unit A5.3 – Rail Appraisal. The risk and optimism bias adjusted cost estimate is accounted for at this stage by applying optimism bias to the base costs (excluding QRA). However, as the scheme moves through the development stages a QRA will be completed. A high-level risk contribution has been applied to the financial costs of the scheme. This has been done to ensure the additional uncertainties of the scheme costs at this stage of the project life cycle in the Financial Case are accounted for and the affordability analysis of the scheme is robust.

5.2 OPERATING COSTS

5.2.1. Scenario 1 and Scenario 3 assume that operating cost associated with the train service are provided by others.

5.2.2. Scenario 2, the rail scheme package, includes the provision of a new station at Langport-Somerton and a new train service shuttle between Taunton and Westbury calling at the new station at Langport-Somerton. All charges are in 2021/22 prices.

5.2.3. The estimates provided are high level to provide an initial indication of operating costs. Decisions on many elements of design and project development will impact these costs. Further refinement and updating will be undertaken at each business case stage.

STATION OPERATING COSTS

Long Term Access Charge

5.2.4. A Long Term Access Charge (LTAC) is payable by the train operator to Network Rail for long term repair and renewal of the new station. A CP6 value of £72,497 per annum has been used for the new Langport-Somerton station. This value is based on the current LTAC at Tiverton Parkway.

Station Call Fuel Cost

5.2.5. The fuel cost of calling trains in the base timetable has been excluded as it is assumed that all trains calling at the station will be formed of the new shuttle service, which is costed separately.

General operations and maintenance:

5.2.6. For Marsh Barton GWR has provided a general assumption of £30,000 per annum to cover operations and maintenance including utility bills, cleaning, ticket resupply and reactive maintenance. A ballpark £10,000 per annum assumption is added for lifts giving a total for general operations and maintenance of £40,000 per annum for the new station.

5.2.7. In addition, there is an APCOA charge - GWR's current APCOA charge is £55 per space per annum for car park maintenance/management and any business rates that apply. The new station is assumed to have 100 space station car park which represents an APCOA charge of £5,500 per annum.

NEW TRAIN SERVICE OPERATING COSTS

5.2.8. GWR has provided a high-level estimate of operating costs for a new train service between Taunton and Westbury. This operating cost is for an hourly train service in each direction operating over a 16-hour day. Scenario 2 has used this operating cost estimate.

5.2.9. The operating costs estimate has utilised updated assumptions on mileage and staff cost rates from the WECA Bristol Area Service Improvements package. Class 16x rolling stock costs have been used as proxy for the unit type deployed on the new train service workings in the future. The overall operating cost is £4,208,000 per annum. Mileage account for £966,000 (which covers fuel/materials/VTAC[31]), £1,151,000 is lease costs and £2,091,000 is train crew costs.

5.2.10. It should also be noted that the operating cost estimates change significantly depending on the scenario. Significant operating costs will be incurred for Scenario 2 as it represents a package of a new station and new train service offering a completely new, bespoke hourly stopping service. These train operating costs could be avoided should a train service be provided by others whether it be a new Taunton to Westbury service, as represented by Scenario 1, or stopping existing GWR semi-fast services at the new station, as assessed for Scenario 3. There would be no requirement for additional train crews or new rolling stock.

5.2.11. A further option would be a train service proposal such as that proposed by GO-OP which would operate at least 6 journeys a day, and potentially operate up to 9 trains a day each way with a range of interchanging opportunities at other stations on the line.

[31] Variable track access charge

5.3 FUNDING STRATEGY

5.3.1. The Funding Strategy will be jointly developed with DfT. In particular, this will need to focus on the operational funding strategy in order to ensure that the proposed new services are feasible to operate.

5.3.2. Options for the non DfT contribution will be sought toward the required funding including the potential for exploring developer contributions and other grants/infrastructure funding are also being considered subject to eligibility. At this stage in the project there is still some uncertainty as to the final blend of funding within the package. The steering group is actively working to gain greater clarity over funding opportunities in terms and source and timing of availability. Funding Spend/Profile

5.3.3. An indicative spend profile is presented in Table 4-3 and Table 4-4 below. This is based on the high-level programme presented in the Management Case.

Table 5-3 - Do Something' Spending Profile – Langport 2 (East) £2021 Prices, £millions

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Station Construction Costs & Enabling Rail Infrastructure	367	827	2,420	8,380	201	12,195
Highways Access & Car Parking	338	763	2,234	7,736	185	11,256
Total	705	1,590	4,654	16,116	386	23,451

Table 5-4 - Do Something' Spending Profile – Somerton £2021 Prices, £millions

Year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Station Construction Costs & Enabling Rail Infrastructure	328	644	2,513	9,202	231	12,917
Highways Access & Car Parking	72	141	552	2,020	51	2,836
Total	400	785	3,064	11,222	281	15,753

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COMMERCIAL CASE

6 COMMERCIAL CASE

6.1 MARKET APPETITE

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

6.1.1. The nature of this work is within the day-to-day realm of the Transport / Engineering consultancy and Rail Contractor skillsets. Therefore, it is anticipated that market appetite will be high for the future stages of project delivery.

As set out in the Procurement Strategy below, it is anticipated that once the scheme reaches GRIP Stage 4 / RNEP Decision to Design, the infrastructure aspects of the scheme will be passed to Network Rail for delivery. This is classed as a 'contestable service' and as such, Network Rail's ability and appetite to deliver within required timescales would be reviewed at that time.

SERVICES

6.1.2. Two delivery options are assessed in this business case; Scenarios 1 and 3 assume that the new station would be served by a train service operated by others separately from the scheme. Scenario 2 assumes the scheme would include the new station and a new train service.

6.1.3. A key part of these delivery options is the appetite of Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to run a new train service shuttle on the line between Taunton and Westbury or to adjust long distance semi-fast services to call at the new station. As described in the Management Case, stakeholder liaison has been undertaken with GWR, a project stakeholder represented on the project Steering Group. GO-OP has also been supportive throughout the process and has carried out timetabling for at least six services a day which Network Rail has approved.

6.1.4. WSP has reviewed the timetabling for an hourly service and has identified potential train paths allowing an approximately hourly service over the day to be delivered. This timetabling assessment assumed as a worst case that Class 150 vehicles would be deployed. A collaborative and co-development approach has also been adopted with DfT.

ROLLING STOCK

6.1.5. The delivery of the new stations and associated stopping services will require rolling stock. Class 16x rolling stock is assumed to be deployed for the service.

6.2 ANTICIPATED DEMAND

6.2.1. The Economic Case sets out the anticipated passenger demand of this scheme based on:

- New rail users using rail for the first time to travel from Langport-Somerton to destinations on the rail network. These users of rail will represent current car users who switch to rail for the first leg of their journey, current users of public transport access modes switching from bus services or are new public transport travellers altogether (likely to use active modes to access the rail station)
- New users of rail generated by the allocated housing and employment in the Langport-Somerton area
- New users attracted to rail by the improved proximity the new station offers, particularly for access by walking, cycling or interchange with bus services.

- Existing users of the rail network who will be able to access the rail network locally instead of travelling to Taunton or Castle Cary, and possibly Bridgwater and Yeovil.

6.2.2. Achieving the level of passenger demand representative of these different user of the rail station will be dependent on the availability of an hourly service, and wider considerations, including facilitating access to the station, integrated timetabling, fare pricing, publicity and promotion and realising changes in travel behaviour.

6.3 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

6.3.1. Beyond submission and approval of the SOC, key services required for the next stages of business case development will include:

- Consultant and project management services to progress the scheme through the GRIP/PACE stages, including design and appraisal;
- Network Rail support covering sponsorship, operational planning and engineering assurance of designs;
- Network Rail and rail operator planning for the introduction of the new shuttle train service between Taunton and Westbury. A Passenger Service Contract will need to be agreed;
- Further analysis by Network Rail and the rail operator into stopping existing semi-fast services as an alternative option to a new hourly train service;
- Operational planning and revenue forecasting which will have passed from TOCs to Great British Railways by April 2024 and will form a part of Passenger Service Contracts under Great British Railways; and
- Wider regulatory considerations.

6.3.2. It is likely that there will be several more procurement stages to facilitate the design and delivery of the new station. The Steering Group is currently considering options for the procurement of consultancy services for the delivery of GRIP3 and Outline Business Case (OBC).

6.3.3. The preferred option at this stage, would be to continue to procure services locally through to Outline Business Case/RNEP Decision to Design stage. The contracted engineer would take on the Construction Design and Management duties (CDM) and undertake the Principal Designer role through to GRIP3 or PACE1 stage.

6.3.4. Beyond PACE 1, it is preferable that Network Rail is requested to act as the Delivery Agent, (either at the beginning or the end of PACE ES4), but Network Rail's role as Delivery Agent should be no later than the end of PACE ES4 Network Rail has agreed this seems a pragmatic approach. This is the approach taken on other RYR schemes and has been supported by DfT.

6.3.5. Adopting this approach has significant advantages for the Client Group including:

- Greater efficiency and coordination of scheme delivery with the Discharge of CDM Principal Designer duties to Network Rail;
- Access to Network Rail's Design and Contractor Frameworks where all suppliers have undertaken competency checks within the rail environment;
- Knowledgeable Sponsor and Project Manager for securing regulatory approvals in an efficient manner, alongside wider project delivery requirements.

6.3.6. Regardless of whether (and when) Network Rail is appointed as Delivery Agent, defined as a contestable service, there are other non-contestable services that Network Rail is obliged to provide, and the client group must pay for. These non-contestable services include arranging and supervising lineside access (including booking possessions) and design assurance.

6.4 ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER INVESTMENTS

6.4.1. This new station scheme is only one of a number of investments being planned for delivery in the South West of England. The business case for any one of the schemes as stand-alone is weaker than being considered as part of a wider programme of works. We have assumed delivery of the infrastructure interventions set out in Table 6-1 being brought forward as separate projects (noting the varying stages of development of listed schemes).

Table 6-1 - Parallel and Interdependent Investments

Scheme	Dependency	Stage of Development
National Bus Strategy/Somerset BSIP	Improved bus services as rail access mode providing integrated services with rail	BSIP submitted to DfT
Somerset County Council Active Travel Strategy	Improved provision for active modes will facilitate use as an access mode for rail services at the new station	In development. Focusing on data/evidence collection and community engagement, which will inform the strategy.
Wellington and Cullompton Stations	Will improve overall rail network connectivity in the South West	Outline business case is being developed

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MANAGEMENT CASE

7 MANAGEMENT CASE

7.1 GOVERNANCE, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1.1. This scheme is being jointly promoted by Somerset County Council and Langport Transport Group. The scheme is supported by the DfT, Heart of the South West LEP, South Somerset District Council, Network Rail and GWR, as well as local MP David Warburton, the Member of Parliament for Somerset and Frome. To date, the scheme has been governed by a client Steering Group comprising DfT, SCC, SSDC, LTG, NR and GWR. The Steering Group is chaired by Philip Edge of the Langport Transport Group. GO-OP has also attended Langport Transport Group meetings.

7.2 PROJECT DELIVERY

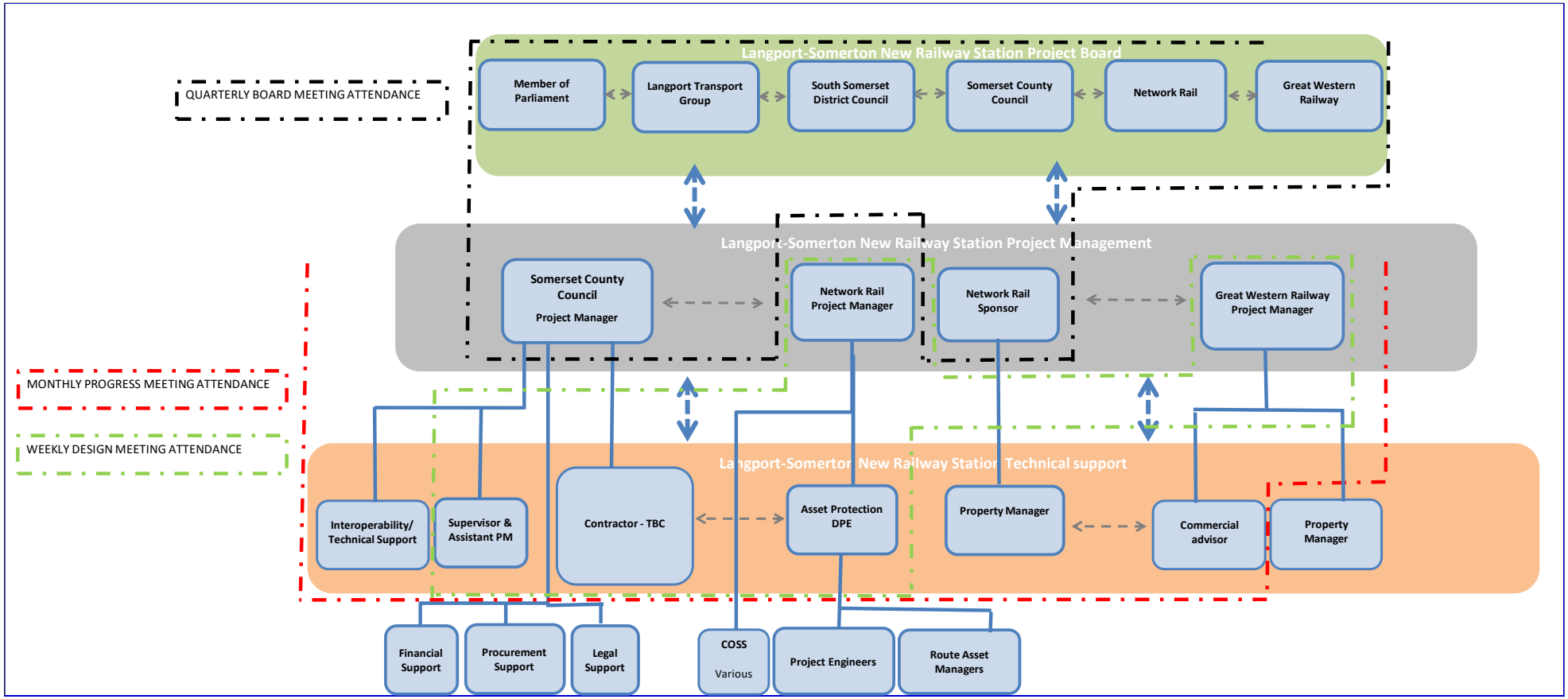
7.2.1. The indicative framework for project delivery is shown in Figure 7-1. The main stakeholders will be represented on the Project Board. The Project Management team will be led by Somerset County Council (single unitary authority for Somerset from 1 April 2023), Network Rail and GWR. There will be a range of Technical Support including a contractor.

7.2.2. For project delivery the Client organisation will need to enter into a Commercial Agreement with Network Rail for the provision of agreed services. For PACE 1, this is likely to be a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) that will enable consultants to undertake site surveys and obtain formal feedback on design proposals. If Network Rail is the Delivery Agent for Design & Build stages, an Implementation Agreement would be employed while a Development Services Agreement may also be required dependent on the stage of the scheme Network Rail became Delivery Agent. Network Rail would then procure consultant and contractor services as required through Network Rail procurement Frameworks.

7.2.3. Depending on the extent of Highway and Public Realm works (i.e., non-rail related works), it might be an option to split the scheme delivery into 2 separate Design & Build contracts at the end of PACE ES4. This would enable efficient delivery of the non-rail related works by a contractor procured by Somerset County Council as the Local Transport Authority.

7.2.4. If the scheme delivery into 2 separate Design & Build contracts at the end of PACE ES4 is adopted access is gained to the Gen 3-3 Framework. Contractors on the Gen 3-3 framework include a range of national contractors with experience of delivering major infrastructure projects. This framework uses the NEC(3) Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) for all work.

Figure 7-1 - Project Delivery Structure



7.3 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

7.3.1. Although it is too early in the development of the project for a detailed programme to be produced, Table 7-1 below provides an overview of the likely steps, milestones and timescales for delivery of the project. A more detailed programme is provided at Appendix H. The programme assumes that consultancy services are procured up to completion of GRIP3 / Decision to Design, and then engage with Network Rail to undertake design, obtain 'Decision to Deliver' and then implement the scheme.

Table 7-1 - Indicative Delivery Programme

Activity	Likely Duration	Milestone Date(s)
Submission of SOC ***(RNEP Decision to Develop)***		February 2022
Procurement of professional consultants to progress PACE 1	6 weeks	April 2022
Development of Outline Design (PACE 1), Operational Strategy and OBC ***(RNEP Decision to Design)***	6 months	May 2022 (NSF4 bid) November 2022 (PACE 1 / RNEP Decision to Design)
Engagement with Network Rail and procurement of Design Consultant for PACE ES4	2 months	January 2023
Single Option Design approval	6 months	July 2023
Statutory and Regulatory Approval Submissions (Planning, Network Change and others)	2 months	September 2023
Consultation period for Statutory and Regulatory process	5 months	February 2024
Development of FBC ***(RNEP Decision to Deliver)***	3 months	May 2024
Approval of FBC ***(RNEP Decision to Deliver)***	4 months	October 2024
/PACE ES4 to Stage 4 Brief Prep	1 month	November 2024
PACE ES5 Detailed Design	6 months	May 2025
Start on Site	1 month	June 2025
Construction Period – New Stations	11 months	May 2026
Testing, Commissioning and Driver Training	1 month	June 2026

New train service / service stopping at the station commence		By June 2026

7.4 COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

7.4.1. The main stakeholders identified will form the main membership of the Project Board, ensuring accountability of the Project Steering Group, and ensuring the vision for the Langport/Somerton rail station remains centre stage as the business case is developed.

7.4.2. A comprehensive Stakeholder Management Plan will be developed to set out how local businesses and residents can be kept fully engaged as the project progresses.

7.4.3. A full Stakeholder Management and Communications Plan will be developed following submission of the SOC. This will seek to:

- Keep stakeholders informed of the processes, proposals and constraints and prepare people for forthcoming works / initiatives;
- Ensure stakeholder input and suggestions are evaluated and, where appropriate, incorporated; and
- Ensure that the experience of local people and stakeholders with respect to the proposals is in line with their expectations.

7.4.4. This Marketing and Communications plan will be produced with an informative and accessible website at its heart to promote engagement of the community with the new rail station.[32].

Notice of works

7.4.5. All requirements for the advanced notice of works will be led by the contractor. The contractor will be required to identify all the communication activities necessary to support a proposed start of works date and ongoing construction milestones.

7.5 RISKS, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

7.5.1. A qualitative risk register is provided at Appendix I. Table 7-2 below is an extract from this risk register of the risks currently rated as 'high risk' to the successful delivery of the project.

Table 7-2 - Risk Register Extract Showing High Risks Impacts

Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Proposed Mitigation
Match funding availability - reduced levels of funding available to Lead Authorities	High	Possible	Explore match funding opportunities as early as possible and ensure appropriate processes are in place to secure funding and local support

[32] https://dartmoorline.com/.

Risk Description	Impact	Probability	Proposed Mitigation
Match funding availability - timescales do not match RYR requirements	High	Possible	Explore match funding opportunities as early as possible and investigate any interim opportunities to overcome any timing mismatch.
Overall funding for the scheme (Capital and/or operating) is not secured/available causing delay or cancellation	High	Possible	Regular communications and liaison with NR and DfT to ensure funding stream status is known throughout
Mobility Hub' concept not fully realised within RYR bid with limited bus integration	High	Possible	Explore further funding opportunities to ensure full 'vision' of station as mobility hub can be realised
Construction costs exceed forecasts significantly due to unforeseen issues	High	Possible	Sufficient Optimism Bias applied to allow for cost changes and studies/reports to reduce unknowns and risks
Ecology and the removal of vegetation, results in complex issues, licenses and additional time and cost	High	Possible	Early engagement with the local planning authority to agree planning strategy and programme
Delay in new train service implementation as a result of agreement over operating the train service & introduction of TOC service contracts	High	Possible	Business planning within the rail industry including TOC service contracts facilitated by rail industry partners
Cost Guide uncertainty. No formal estimate can be provided until completion of GRIP 3/PACE 1.	High	Possible	Apply appropriate levels of Optimism Bias and contingency to ensure cost appraisal is fit for purpose in line with TAG Unit A1.2

7.6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

7.6.1. Langport Transport Group (LTG) has met monthly since 2014. Throughout development of this scheme to date, LTG has been actively engaging stakeholders. Table 7-3 below summarises all stakeholder engagement sessions that have been undertaken, their intended purpose, and how the outcomes have informed development of the project to date. A list of the Langport Transport Alliance and Langport Transport Group members is included in Appendix K.

7.6.2. Details are provided of the meetings that have taken place since 2016 where plans for the Langport-Somerton new station have been established and developed.

7.6.3. The proposal for a new station at Langport-Somerton is included in the policies and strategies for rail development in Somerset produced by the local authority stakeholders Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council. Additionally, the rail industry stakeholders, Network Rail and GWR have been closely engaged with the new station scheme since 2016.

7.6.4. A full programme of engagement and consultation will be devised during the development of the GRIP3 stage to ensure all key stakeholders, and the public, are consulted and appraised of the proposed schemes. This will specifically include engagement with relevant local landowners.

Table 7-3 - Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

Meeting Date	Stakeholder Event	Attendees	Engagement Objective	Impact of Outcomes
July - December 2021	Steering Group Meetings held monthly	Langport Transport Group, Somerset County Council, Heart of the South West LEP, Network Rail, Great Western Railway	Update on SOC preparation	Continued engagement of the Stakeholders.
July 2021	Steering Group	Langport Transport Group, Somerset County Council, Heart of the South West LEP, Network Rail, Great Western Railway	Start of SOC Preparation	Continued engagement of the Stakeholders.
May 2021	South Somerset District Council	Langport Transport Group	Area North Committee Meeting of SSDC	Awarded grant towards feasibility study
January-April 2021	Council meetings including Langport, Somerton, Curry Rivel, Street, Huish Episcopi	Langport Transport Group	Engagement of local councils	Continued engagement of the local parish councils
January 2021	Langport Town Council Meeting	Langport Transport Group	Funding of feasibility study	Funding contribution towards feasibility study
October 2016	Meeting at South Somerset District Council Offices	David Warburton, MP, South Somerset District Council, Langport Transport Group, Langport Area Business Group, Somerset County Council	Engagement of local organisations and funding opportunities (New Station Fund)	SSDC very much in favour of the station. SSC agreed to take lead role on coordination of new station bid
October 2016	Meeting with David Warburton, MP	Somerset County Council, Heart of the South West LEP, Network Rail, Great Western Railway	To engage with the key stakeholders for the proposed new station at Langport-Somerton.	Positive engagement and support of the stakeholders. Confirmation of feasibility of a new station

7.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7.7.1. Monitoring and evaluation of benefits is required to establish the extent to which the scheme meets the objectives and the forecast benefits described in the Economic Case of this SOC. To be fully effective, plans for monitoring and evaluation should form part of the early development of the scheme's business case and also be a continuous process within the project. The HM Treasury Magenta Book provides the following definition of Monitoring and Evaluation[33]:

- Monitoring – seeks to check progress against planned targets and can be defined as the formal reporting and evidencing that spend and outputs are successfully delivered, and milestones met; and
- Evaluation – is the assessment of the initiative's effectiveness and efficiency during and after implementation. It seeks to measure the causal effect of the scheme on planned outcomes and impacts and assessing whether the anticipated benefits have been realised, how this was achieved, or if not, why not.

7.7.2. In March 2013, the DfT published a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, setting out a framework for enhancing the generation of good quality monitoring and evaluation evidence, which would provide greater accountability and a stronger evidence base for future decision making and communication activities. The strategy outlines that good quality monitoring and evaluation evidence is important for helping make and communicate decisions about where best to target public spending, demonstrating the value for money and benefits which are generated by investment in transport, and learning about how to effectively design and deliver policies, programmes and communications.

7.7.3. The DfT has published a document entitled, 'Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Local Authority Major Schemes' (2012), designed to make the process as consistent and proportionate as possible. It also aimed to be complementary with the devolution of decision making. The document sets out three levels of monitoring and evaluation:

- Standard monitoring;
- Enhanced monitoring; and
- Fuller evaluation.

7.7.4. Fuller monitoring is required for schemes which demonstrate the following:

- Scale – includes schemes which are expected to cost more than £50m.
- Scheme nature – includes schemes which are expected to cost more than £10m and the nature of the scheme is considered to be at least one of the following:
  - innovative;
  - have an adjusted benefit cost ratio of less than 2; and/ or,
  - have potential risks or sensitivities (particularly in the form of local opposition) which may affect scheme delivery and benefits realisation.
- Key evidence gaps - includes schemes which are expected to cost more than £10m and will generate evidence to inform key evidence gaps, either about the effectiveness of public transport initiatives or scheme outcomes on dependent development.

[33] The Magenta Book, HM Treasury (2011).

7.7.5. The Langport/Somerton railway station meets the second criteria, and as it is a new station can also provide some key evidence gaps for rural station development schemes.

SCHEME EVALUATION

7.7.6. Before and after scheme delivery monitoring will be undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of schemes against stated objectives.

7.7.7. The Monitoring and Evaluation programme will consist of the following stages:

- **Stage 1 - Pre-Construction Baseline**: This will draw upon data currently available, with any gaps identified in Q2 2022 to ensure a complete baseline.
- **Stage 2 - One Year Post Opening Process Evaluation**: This will be Q3/Q4 2026
- **Stage 3 - Five Year Post Opening Impact Evaluation**: This will be Q3/Q4 2031

7.7.8. Traffic and cycle count data will be collected and collated, and journey time data evaluated. Existing traffic count data if available as well as updated survey data will be used to establish the baseline for the scheme prior to its construction. Monitoring (data collection) will also take place at regular intervals before and after the scheme has opened at one year and five years after opening. This will allow a full before and after comparison to be made and allow judgment of whether the scheme has met its objectives.

TYPE OF EVALUATION

7.7.9. The type of evaluation method proposed to evaluate the scheme will be an 'outcome evaluation'. Outcome evaluations compare the existing situation, i.e., before the interventions have been introduced, against the situation with the interventions in place. Any observed changes (in the metrics outlined below) are assumed to be the result of the intervention.

DATA REQUIREMENTS

7.7.10. The metrics proposed for the Langport/Somerton railway station and associated data collection requirements and frequency of data collection are shown in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4 - Data requirements and frequency of data collection

Metric	Frequency	Data
INPUTS		
Outturn Costs	Post Opening	Financial monitoring of project
Funding Breakdown	Post Opening	Financial monitoring of project
Stakeholder Management	Pre- and Post-opening	Stakeholder Management Plan
Risk Management	During Delivery	Risk Register Monitoring & Risk Workshops

Metric	Frequency	Data
Project Delivery	Pre- and Post-Opening	Project Monitoring against Delivery Plan
Additional Resources	During Delivery	Resource Monitoring and Project Diary
OUTPUTS		
Delivered schemes	Post Opening	Full description of implemented scheme outputs including design changes post funding approval with reasons for such changes, post scheme as built drawings of works completed
OUTCOMES		
Travel Demand - Rail	Post Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Rail Patronage figures – ORR & TOCs (GWR and others)
Travel Demand – Car Park	Post Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Car Park Ticket Sales and Occupancy Surveys
Journey Times/Reliability	Post Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Train punctuality data
Student Travel Patterns	Pre- and Post-Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Student Travel Survey and Rail Ticket Sales Data
Travel Catchment of Station Users	Post Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Annual Station Survey
Traffic Levels	Pre- and Post-Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Annual ATCs and DfT Congestion Statistics
IMPACTS		
Carbon Emissions	Pre- and Post-Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	Traffic counts, speed surveys and air quality monitoring if available
Economic Growth Rate	Pre- and Post-Construction, Years 1 and 5 post opening	GVA Headline figures for South Somerset District Council

7

CONCLUSIONS

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1. This SOC presents the investment case for a proposed new railway station scheme in the Langport-Somerton area. Scenarios have been evaluated for a new railway station and alternative new train service scenarios setting out the business case for each of these scenarios. The business case has been developed in line with DfT's 'Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund Strategic Outline Case Guidance', which aligns with HM Treasury's Green Book and DfT's Transport Business Cases guidance.

8.1.2. A proportionate approach has been applied in this SOC, focused on presenting an assessment of transport solutions to address the Langport and Somerton communities' disconnection from regional centres and reliance on the car for many trips resulting in highway congestion, increasing air pollution, constrained social mobility and constrained access to education and employment.

8.1.3. The Five Cases business case model has been used to determine a solution to the disconnection of the Langport and Somerton area communities. This disconnection has resulted in significant travel distances to reach regional centres and the wider economy. This poor connectivity has had adverse effects in terms of relatively low productivity levels, increasing highway congestion and air pollution, dependency on the motor car, constrained social mobility and reduced access to education and employment, particularly for those reliant on public transport.

8.1.4. The need for intervention to restore lost connectivity is set out below with respect to key business needs affecting the Langport-Somerton area. These needs are as follows:

- Need for better sustainable transport connectivity;
- Need for sustainable economic growth;
- Need to reduce carbon emissions in support of South Somerset District's target for carbon net zero by 2030, and government policies for carbon net zero by 2050;

8.1.5. To address these needs a long list of highway, active mode, bus and rail investment options was developed and assessed using a qualitative multi-criteria framework with regard to the following scheme objectives:

- Supporting sustainable economic recovery post pandemic and supporting longer term growth;
- Reducing the environmental impacts of the transport network;
- Improving health, well-being and quality of life
- Ensuring a safe environment in which to travel

8.1.6. The rail alternative scored highest as this investment option is best aligned with the scheme objectives due to its ability to provide a strong alternative to the car, delivering the greatest increase in sustainable transport accessibility and connectivity to regional centres and the wider region and providing the safest method of inter-urban travel, as well as encouraging mode shift and improving the environment through reduced road traffic carbon emissions.

8.1.7. The business strategy for the proposed railway station in the Langport-Somerton area is a strategic fit with national, regional and local strategies, plans and policies' to address wider strategies outside of development plans which aim to support economic growth (recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic), reconnecting lost communities to rail, regeneration of local economies promote sustainable forms of transport, reduce carbon emissions resulting from travel, support the

development of connected inclusive communities and strengthen the sense of place essential for a vibrant thriving community life.

8.1.8. To determine the preferred location for a new railway station in the Langport-Somerton area a station site feasibility assessment was carried out. Langport Option 2 and Somerton station options were shortlisted.

8.1.9. An economic appraisal was carried out for the two shortlisted rail station options, Langport Option 2 (East) and Somerton. The Langport 2 (East) site would attract 235,400 passengers per year, whilst the Somerton site would attract 258,600 passengers per year (2018/19 demand levels). The latter attracts more demand as the catchment area includes more population. Both stations attract similar if not more passenger demand than comparable stations in the area.

8.1.10. A high-level estimate of capital and operating costs has been prepared, as is appropriate, for this stage of the business case. Langport 2 capital costs are £23.5m whilst Somerton capital costs are £15.8m (including contingency and inflation). Langport 2 capital costs are higher in large part due to the greater cost of the provision of highway access arrangements (Union Drove bridge and road widening) and a station car park. Annual station operating costs and train service operating costs were assessed as £4.3million for both options. This assumes that the train service is included as part of the new station scheme.

An economic appraisal was carried out for a 60-year appraisal period, based on the standard parameters provided in TAG.

8.1.11.

8.1.12.

8.1.13. Table **8-1** summarises the value for money results for the scenarios evaluated for Langport 2 and Somerton for three scenarios each of which provides an alternative delivery option for a train service serving the new station providing the strategic improvement in sustainable transport connectivity for the Langport-Somerton area. Scenarios 1 and 2 assume a train service between Taunton and Westbury, however, this could be extended to offer more journey opportunities widening the appeal of the station to residents. Scenario 3 assessed introducing a Langport-Somerton station stop for the semi-fast train services.

Table 8-1 - Value for Money Assessment

	Langport Option 2			Somerton		
	Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service	Scenario 1: New Station Only, Served by Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 2: Package of New Station and New Taunton-Westbury Service	Scenario 3: New Station Only, Served by GWR Semi-fast Service
PVB (£000, 2010 PV)	2,031	10,776	-6,771	2,034	10,780	-6,887
PVC (£000, 2010 PV)	-6,845	89,882	-7,462	-15,958	80,769	-16,764
NPV (£000, 2010 PV)	8,876	-79,105	691	17,993	-69,989	9,878
BCR	-0.30*	0.12	0.91*	-0.13*	0.13	0.41*
VfM	Very High (And Financially Positive)	Poor	Economically Efficient Cost Saving	Very High (And Financially Positive)	Poor	Economically Efficient Cost Saving

8.1.14. Scenario 1 which assumes a new station only with an existing train service provided by others stopping at the station and shows that the scheme would result in a VfM category of 'Very High (And Financially Positive)' for both the Langport and Somerton options. Train operating costs are borne by the train operator of the existing train service. This scenario potentially offers the best value for money of the three scenarios tested.

8.1.15. Scenario 2 representing a rail package of a new station and new train service produces revenue benefits provided by the scheme, however, these revenue benefits do not offset the cost to the Broad Transport Budget. These costs include £4m a year of train operating costs. A positive PVC and PVB and a negative NPV shows that both Langport and Somerton station locations produce a 'Poor Value for Money' result. The lower capital cost of the Somerton scheme means that it has a higher NPV than Langport Option 2 and therefore is the better performing of the two station options.

8.1.16. Scenario 3, an option stopping existing semi-fast services would potentially present better value for money. There would be no requirement for additional train crews or new rolling stock. Stopping these additional semi-fast services would provide the Langport-Somerton communities with better

access to their railway. This provides a 'Economically Efficient Cost Saving' value for money category for the Langport option and an 'Economically Efficient Cost Saving' value for money category for Somerton.

8.1.17. The consideration of alternative train service delivery options has shown that the economic case improves if the Langport/Somerton station is served by a train service provided by others as part of a wider rail network improvement in the region. The stopping of semi-fast train services at Langport/Somerton also offers an alternative approach to serving the station. The planned GO-OP service would also provide an additional new train service between Westbury and Taunton, improving the scheme's value for money.

8.1.18. The Financial Case considered the costs for the construction of this project, which have also been an input to the Economic Case. Given the stage of business case development high-level indicative costs estimates were produced for the delivery of the scheme. The capital cost for the shortlisted options to take forward to the next stage of the business case are £23.45 million for Langport 2 and £15.75 million for Somerton. Given the early stage of business case development these costs sit within lower and upper bound optimism bias of 50%.

8.1.19. The Commercial Case sets out the commercial viability of the new railway station scheme, setting out the procurement strategy which will be used to engage with the market. The approach to risk management; commercial timescales, as well as how the capability and technical expertise of the team delivering the project will be secured are described.

8.1.20. The Management Case provides the delivery framework for the new railway station scheme describing how rail industry partners will manage this project to achieve successful delivery of the next stage of development through to the implementation of the design. The Management Case sets out the proposed stakeholder engagement, risks to the programme, scheme dependencies, delivery approach, the monitoring and evaluation plan and approach to adherence with industry governance, including Network Rail and DfT processes. All rail industry partners and stakeholders have collaborated in the preparation of this SOC with a strong commitment to deliver the scheme providing a sound basis for the governance of scheme delivery going forward.

8.1.21. In summary, the strategic case has set out a strong justification for the investment in the rail intervention based on the significant contribution of the rail option in meeting the scheme objectives of addressing the need to restore lost connectivity in the area, supporting economic development, social inclusion and delivering on the decarbonisation of transport agenda. The station demand forecasts show that a new Langport/Somerton station will attract a level of patronage, which is comparable to other neighbouring stations on the rail network. The strategic case is strong for both Langport and Somerton station options with both sites strongly supporting the scheme objectives, and given the similar economic appraisal results, both Langport Option 2 and Somerton rail options are recommended to be taken forward to the next stage of the business case for the scheme.

Appendix A

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Appendix B

OPTION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Appendix C

STATION SITE FEASIBILITY REPORT

Appendix D

STATION DEMAND FORECASTING TECHNICAL NOTE

Appendix E

TIMETABLE STUDY REPORT

Appendix F

RAIL BENEFITS ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL NOTE

Appendix G

AST, AMCB, TEE AND PA TABLES

Appendix G.1

APPRAISAL SUMMARY TABLES

Appendix G.2

LANGPORT SCENARIO 1

Appendix G.3

LANGPORT SCENARIO 2

Appendix G.4

LANGPORT SCENARIO 3

Appendix G.5

SOMERTON SCENARIO 1

Appendix G.6

SOMERTON SCENARIO 2

Appendix G.7

SOMERTON SCENARIO 3

Appendix G.8

LANGPORT LOW YIELD

Appendix G.9

LANGPORT COVID HIGH

Appendix G.10

LANGPORT COVID LOW

Appendix G.11

SOMERTON LOW YIELD

Appendix G.12

SOMERTON COVID HIGH

Appendix G.13

SOMERTON COVID LOW

Appendix H

INDICATIVE DELIVERY PROGRAMME

Appendix I

QUALITY RISK REGISTER

Appendix J

CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES

Appendix K

LANGPORT TRANSPORT ALLIANCE AND LANGPORT FEASIBILITY STUDY STEERING GROUP MEMBERS

Appendix L

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