

# Western Gateway

Sub-national Transport Body



# Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan 2024-2050



Sustainable growth  
and economy



Decarbonisation  
and Air Quality



Access to services  
and opportunities



Facilitating strategic  
north-south movement



Movement of Goods

# 1. Western Gateway Region

The Western Gateway region stretches from Gloucestershire down to Bournemouth, incorporating extensive rural areas dotted with small villages and market towns; vibrant urban conurbations; beaches, coasts, and lively seaside towns; World Heritage Sites of Bath and Stonehenge; and beautiful, nature-rich National Landscapes.

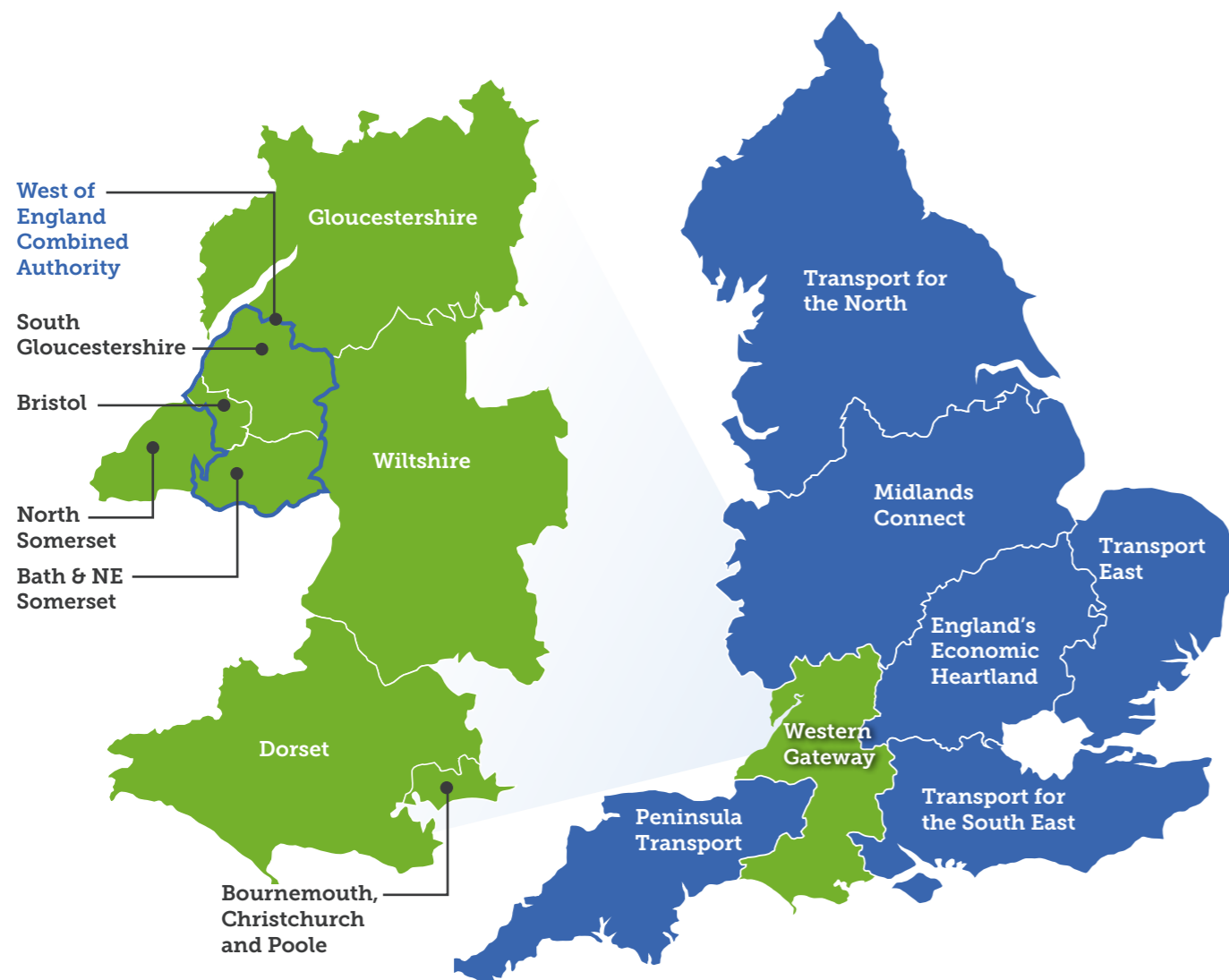
Our region is home to 3 million people and provides 1.6 million jobs – both of these are growing fast. Many parts of our region are thriving economically, with world-class industries and tourist attractions. The importance

of our region also extends beyond its boundaries: We are home to four important sea ports (Bristol, Portland, Poole and Sharpness) and two international airports (Bristol and Bournemouth) and form the gateway to south west England and south Wales.

For our region to continue to thrive, we must respond to the demands and opportunities of our ambition. Growth in housing and employment increases transport demand, exacerbating weaknesses in our existing connectivity and increasing the challenges of reducing transport emissions, protecting our special historic

and natural landscapes and maintaining air quality in our settlements. While many parts of our region are flourishing, poor connectivity prevents those benefits from spreading equally throughout the region, leaving some areas behind.

Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is twice as high in some better connected, urban Authorities than it is in more rural parts of the region, where it can be a challenge to provide viable, affordable, sustainable transport options that also meet seasonal peaks in demand.



## Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (STB)

The Western Gateway is one of seven sub-national transport bodies in England. We work with our nine constituent local authorities to take a strategic overview of transport, helping to champion and protect the region, prioritise strategic transport interventions, take on the big challenges and work cooperatively beyond local boundaries to speak with a “single voice” on regional transport issues. We work closely with other STBs, particularly Peninsula Transport, as well as National Highways, Network Rail and transport authorities in Wales.

### Nine Authorities within the Western Gateway:

-  • Bath and North East Somerset
-  • Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
-  • Bristol
-  • Dorset
-  • Gloucestershire
-  • North Somerset
-  • South Gloucestershire
-  • West of England Combined Authority
-  • Wiltshire



“Welcome to the Strategic Transport Plan for the Western Gateway region. This document sets out our plans for a future transport provision that can best support our communities and businesses, enabling our economy and environment to thrive.

It is a shared vision, complementing the work of our local authorities and partners including National Highways and Network Rail, to speak with one voice on the Western Gateway’s strategic transport needs for the next 25 years.



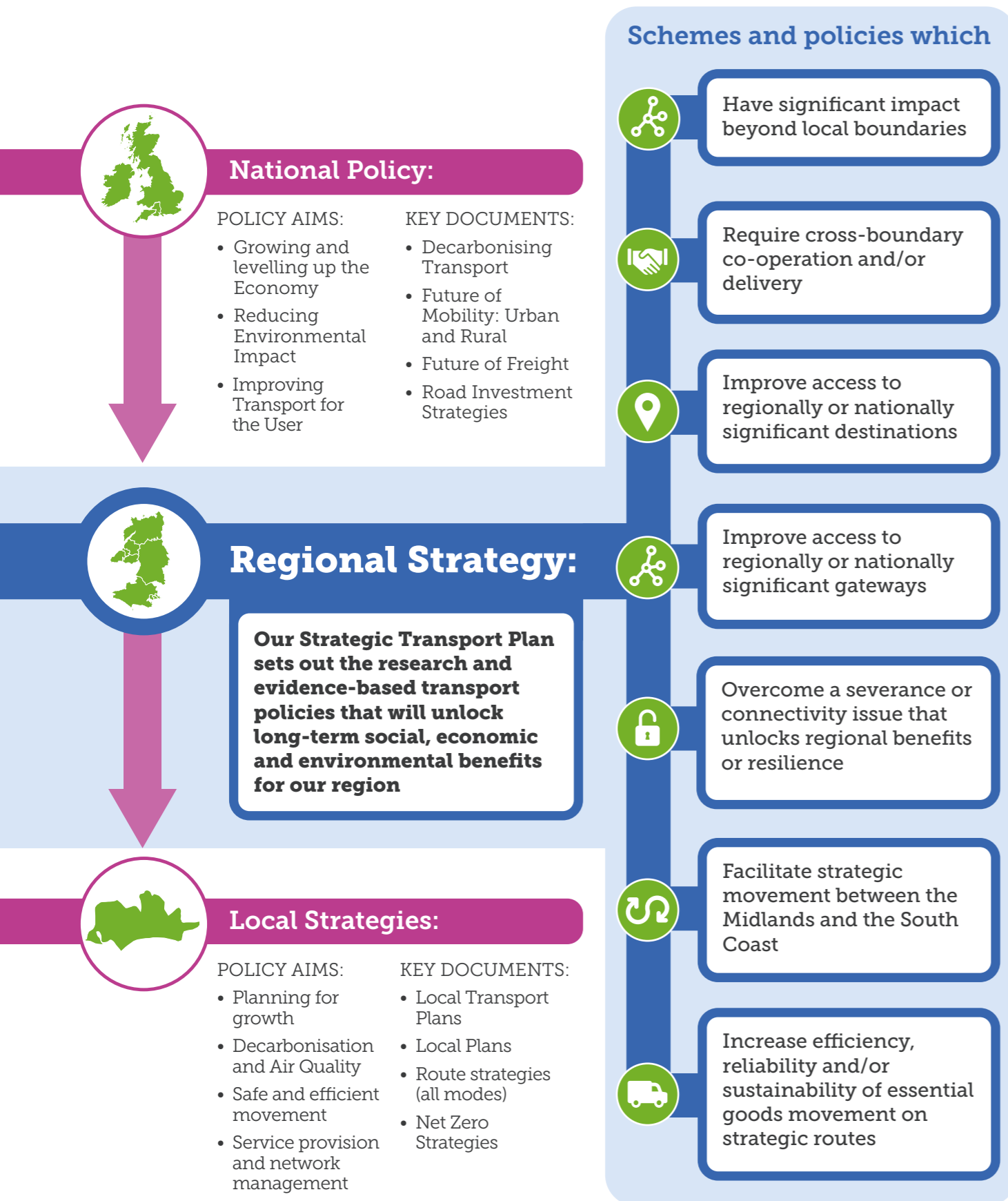
On behalf of all our stakeholders who are working with us, we are pleased to present this strategy. Together we are planning for a future that looks beyond local boundaries to develop transport solutions that will benefit everyone who lives, works and travels through the Western Gateway.”

**Cllr Caroline Thomas (STP Project Executive) and Cllr Don Alexander (Chair of Western Gateway STB)**

Our Vision for the Western Gateway is for:

**“A resilient transport network that works for everyone and is fit for the future, helping people and businesses throughout the Western Gateway to thrive while protecting our environment.”**

## 2. The Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan



Western Gateway's Strategic Transport Plan (STP) provides a link between national policy and local strategy. It interprets national policy for a regional context to guide future transport investment and provide a supporting context for our nine local authorities in producing their Local Transport Plans. The STP is aligned with plans produced by National Highways and Network Rail. It focuses on strategic issues relevant to the region as a whole, based on seven criteria (see graphic to the left) that will also be used in the appraisal of options for the subsequent Strategic Investment Plan.

The Plan will also deliver on the Government's three key transport aims:

**Reducing Environmental Impact**

**Growing and levelling up the Economy**

**Improving Transport for the User**

Considering the three Department for Transport aims in the light of the Western Gateway context and evidence base, we have identified significant regional issues and challenges. These have then been grouped under five Key Themes.



**Following the STP, we will develop a Strategic Investment Plan to identify and evaluate specific interventions to deliver our policies and strategic objectives.**

### 3. The journey so far – research, engagement and evidence base

To produce our Strategic Transport Plan we have drawn on a wealth of information, evidence and recommendations from recent studies (including joint work with Peninsula Transport) and that of our key stakeholders and consultees to shape our understanding of the challenges and opportunities in our region and begin to develop solutions to meet them.

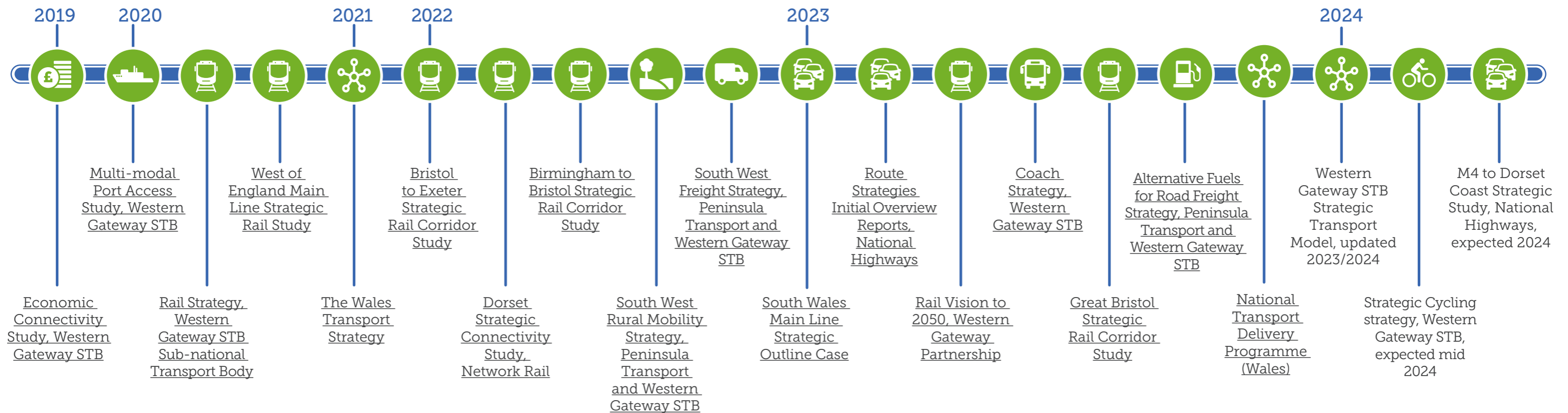
Our stakeholder groups include:

- STP Project Board
- Western Gateway Programme team
- Elected Members (local authorities)
- Senior Officers Group
- Transport Officers Group (local authorities)
- Transport and Business Forum
- Freight forum
- DfT

**This Plan builds on our Short Term Strategic Transport Plan (2020-25) and is informed by responses to our Making the Right Choices Issues and Options consultation in 2023. Workshops and consultations with stakeholders from local authorities, industry, operators and providers have also shaped the development of the Plan.**



Photo credit: Pewsey Vale, Wiltshire



The key outputs and recommendations from these studies are indicated in the map overleaf. These will be further assessed as part of our ongoing work on the STP and the subsequent Strategic Investment Plan.

# Outputs and recommendations from Western Gateway studies

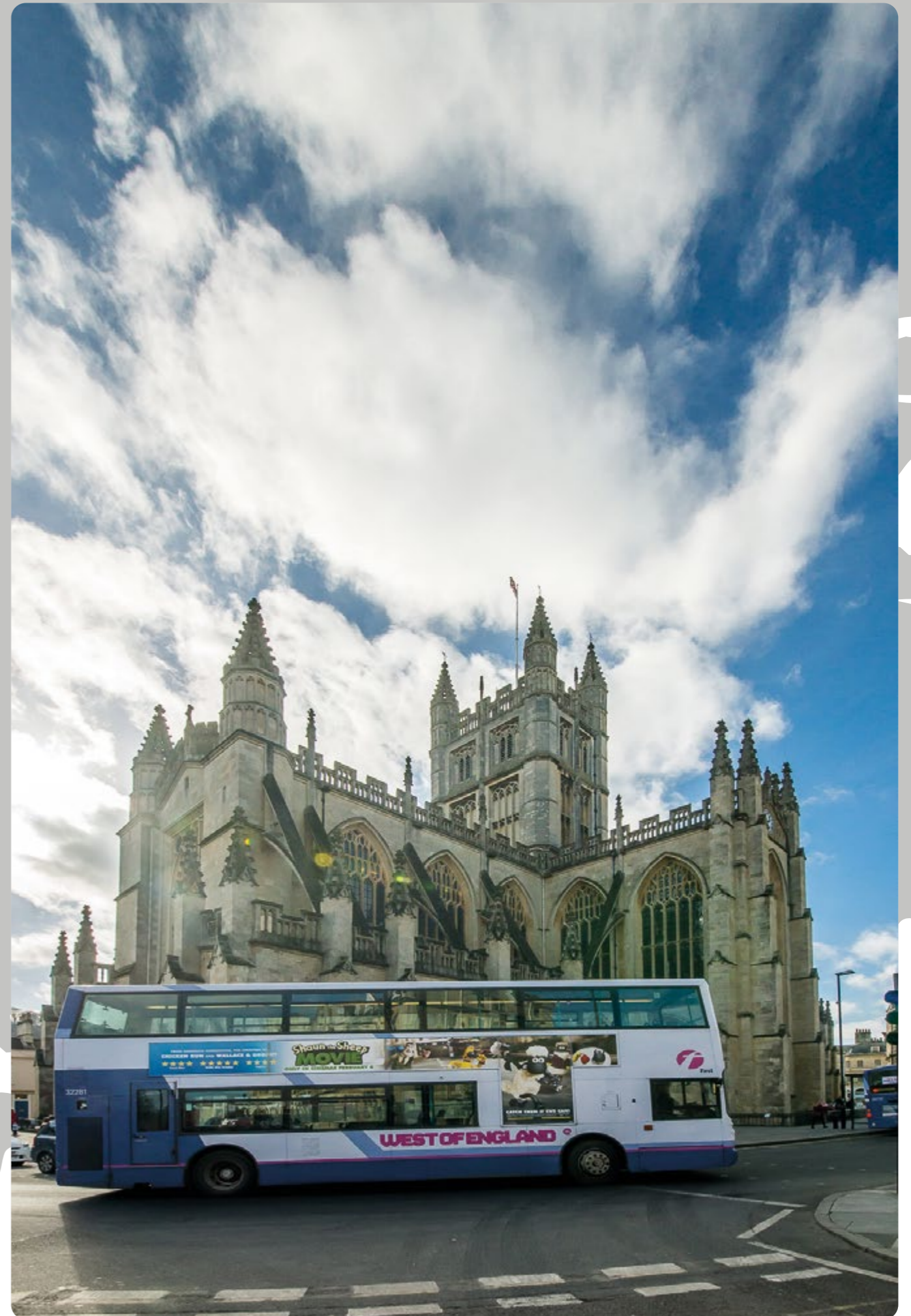


Photo credit: Bath

# 4. Issues and Challenges

Western Gateway’s studies, and those of our partners, have identified a number of key issues and challenges for regional connectivity, economic opportunity and place-making that set the direction for this STP. These are described in relation to the three national aims on the following page.

Overarching all of these is the need to identify solutions that are affordable, equitable, inclusive and safe for all users.

The adjacent map illustrates the current context for these challenges and opportunities<sup>1</sup>:

**Key road and rail corridors**

**Ports, airports and rail hubs**

**Air Quality Management areas<sup>1</sup>**

**Planned residential sites (100 homes+)<sup>2</sup>**



Photo credit: Gloucestershire

<sup>1</sup> DEFRA <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps/>

<sup>2</sup> Residential development sites (100+ homes) allocated in Local Plans from 2019-2050, correct at January 2024. Includes sites that may have been wholly/partially delivered.

<sup>3</sup> Roads with identified issues/challenges – see page 6

## Current and planned transport and development context for Western Gateway, 2019-2050<sup>2</sup>



# Issues and Challenges in Western Gateway (in relation to National Aims and emerging Key Themes)

## Reducing Environmental Impact

### Decarbonisation:

National target of reducing regional transport carbon emissions from 6,250kt CO2e in 2019 to net zero by 2050, with particular challenge in our rural areas (home to a quarter of our population).<sup>1</sup>

### Air quality:

Air Quality Management Areas declared in 18 settlements, typically due to nitrogen dioxide and/or particulates from large diesel vehicles. Ageing diesel trains on majority of Western Gateway network. Effects of new Clean Air Zones in Bath and Bristol on regional travel patterns.<sup>2</sup>

### Traffic growth:

Potential forecast increase in regional vehicle traffic of 25%, but with potential for up to 17% of vehicle kms to shift to sustainable modes.<sup>3</sup>

## Growing and levelling up the Economy

### Development and Housing growth:

Accommodating planned strategic housing and employment growth. Understanding and managing implications for regional travel networks and connectivity.

### Economic inequality:

Wide variation in per capita GDP across the region, exacerbated by connectivity gaps, especially north to south. Potential benefits to the south coast of improvements identified as 1,400 new jobs, £20bn income, £342M additional GDP.<sup>6</sup>

### Freight:

Movement of essential goods, particularly from ports on the south coast to regional distribution centres in the Midlands. Potential to shift freight from road to rail and coastal shipping. HGVs on inappropriate routes. Lack of facilities for drivers and re-fuelling of low emission goods vehicles.

### Journey time reliability:

Unreliable journey times on sections of the A35, A36, A46, A303, A31, A37, A350 and M32 and lack of resilience and reliability on rail routes with stretches of single track, particularly Exeter-London Waterloo, Swindon-Salisbury and Bristol-Weymouth.<sup>5</sup>

### Seasonal tourism economy:

Seasonal tourism economy: Delivering viable transport solutions that meet both year-round demand and accommodate seasonal uplifts of 20-35% in key tourist areas (mostly rural/coastal) such as North Somerset, Dorset and the Cotswolds. Poor public transport access to Bristol Airport and lack of resilience on road connections, in context of forthcoming expansion.<sup>4</sup>

## Improving Transport for the User

### Rural mobility:

A quarter of people in Western Gateway live in rural areas. Lack of active travel infrastructure, public transport provision and high cost of services contribute to high car dependency, with 87% of rural journeys in the South West made by car. Around half of these trips could be shifted to sustainable modes. Private vehicles likely to remain essential in the medium term.<sup>7</sup>

### Severance and connectivity for sustainable modes:

Gaps, constraints and discontinuity in network and service provision that inhibit regional use of active travel and public transport. Includes public transport links between urban and rural areas and rail connections to Wales via the Severn Tunnel, at the intersection of the London-Wales and Bristol – Birmingham lines (Westerleigh Junction) and on the Heart of Wessex line.<sup>8</sup>

### End-to-end journey planning:

Journeys using a mixture of transport types are difficult to plan, purchase and undertake with ease and confidence. Active travel and waiting infrastructure to support first and last journey connections often unsuitable.

### Safety:

Locally elevated (but within UK average) numbers of people killed or seriously injured on sections of the M5 (J9-10 and 14-15) and M4 (J16-17). Road Safety ratings (iRAP) poor on single-carriageway sections of the A46, A36, A31, A35, A303, A40 and A30. Collisions on high-speed rural roads associated with more severe injuries, particularly to cyclists and motorcyclists. Remote rural bus stops and train stations offer unsafe/unattractive waiting conditions for vulnerable travellers.<sup>9</sup>

### Digital service provision:

Lack of phone/internet connectivity or lack of online service provision, particularly in rural areas, that prevents use of digital services and increases need to travel.

### Climate change adaptation and network resilience:

Vulnerability of the road and rail networks to future weather events, including in the upper Severn area (fluvial flooding), Somerset Levels (coastal/fluvial flooding), Salisbury environs (groundwater flooding), along the south coast at Poole and Weymouth (tidal flooding), Swindon-Bristol Parkway (pluvial flooding) and crossings of the Severn (wind, pluvial flooding).<sup>10</sup>

## Overarching Principles:

### Accessibility

### Equity

### Affordability

### Safety



Sustainable growth and economy



Decarbonisation and Air Quality



Access to services and opportunities



Facilitating strategic north-south movement



Movement of Goods

<sup>1</sup> UK Local Authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics

<sup>2</sup> DEFRA

<sup>3</sup> Opportunity to Shift Modes: Peninsula and Western Gateway; RTP22 forecast for South West

<sup>4</sup> EV Strategy, Review of Multi-Modal Access to Ports and Airports

<sup>5</sup> National Highways Travel Time Reporting Tool, West of England Line Strategic Study

<sup>6</sup> North-South Connectivity: Economic Study

<sup>7</sup> South West Rural mobility strategy

<sup>8</sup> Bristol – Birmingham rail Study Dorset Connectivity Study

<sup>9</sup> National Highways Route Strategies, RoSPA Rural Road Safety factsheet

<sup>10</sup> Network Rail Weather resilience plans, Government Flood Risk online tool



# Theme 1: Sustainable growth and economy



## Theme objectives:

- Support and inform planned strategic housing and employment growth
- Maximise opportunities to reduce growth of private motor vehicle travel and manage impacts on the regional transport networks and communities
- Support the economy to thrive and level up across the whole region, particularly where prosperity is constrained by poor connectivity
- Facilitate visitor access to our key tourism areas, managing the impacts of seasonal peaks in travel demand
- Maintain and improve sustainable access for goods and people to national and international gateways, including ports, airports and rail hubs

## Policies:

**S1.** We will support our local authorities in planning for new housing and employment developments and placemaking, providing a regional Transport Model to forecast the wider impacts of cumulative development and identify capacity constraints

**S2.** Through the Strategic Investment Plan, we will identify interventions for significant development sites with an emphasis on providing sustainable travel from the outset and achieving net zero carbon growth.

**S3.** We will work with our Local Transport and Planning authorities to align spatial and transport planning and deliver improvements in transport and digital connectivity to reduce the distances people need to travel to access essential services.

**S4.** Where evidence and local policy supports the introduction of additional measures to manage vehicle traffic and support a shift to sustainable modes, we will work with Local Authorities to ensure a cross-boundary and joined up approach is taken.

**S5.** We will work with National Highways, local councils and other partners to manage unavoidable traffic on the road network.

**S6.** We will work with our local authorities and key stakeholders to manage seasonal peaks in travel demand, including provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points, enhanced and new regional rail, bus and coach services and improvements to the Strategic and Major Road Networks.

**S7.** We will investigate and support proposals to improve journey time reliability for all users, mindful of the links between journey time reliability, safety and productivity.

**S8.** We will work with local and national partners, including other STBs, to improve access to ports and airports for both goods and passengers to/from destinations throughout the UK.

**S9.** With reference to the forthcoming expansion of Bristol Airport and associated facilities, we will work with key stakeholders to improve public transport connections to the Airport from across the region and beyond, maximising the opportunities offered by the forthcoming public transport interchange (opening 2025) to support sustainable growth in passenger numbers, enable a shift to sustainable modes and bring connectivity benefits to the wider area.<sup>11</sup>



Photo credit: National Highways. Avonmouth, Bristol

**“Supporting sustainable housing and employment growth by improving connectivity to enable all parts of our region to flourish.”**

## Signposts for future work:

- Spatial development and planning – develop regional guidance as part of our Regional Centre of Excellence
- Maintain a regional Transport Model to forecast future transport demand and impacts
- Map regional transport constraints and severance (on all modes of transport) and identify high level options for improvement
- Develop Health, Physical Activity and Social Value evaluation guidance/tool as part of the Regional Centre of Excellence
- Review and, if necessary, update our Multi-Modal Access to Ports and Airports study and assess regional impacts and opportunities linked to the expansion of Bristol Airport and enhanced activity of sea ports.

<sup>11</sup> Review of Multi-Modal Access to Ports and Airports





## Theme 2: Decarbonisation and Air Quality

### Theme Objectives:

- Reduce annual regional transport carbon emissions from 6,250kt CO<sub>2</sub>e (2019) to net zero by 2050
- Support our Local Authorities to achieve their own decarbonisation objectives
- Achieve a target shift of 17% of current vehicle kms to sustainable modes<sup>12</sup>
- Deliver the infrastructure necessary to enable private, public and freight vehicles to shift to low carbon fuels
- Improve air quality, particularly in the 18 settlements identified Air Quality Management Areas

### Policies:

**D1.** Western Gateway will work with others to decarbonise transport by 2050 in line with national objectives. We will support Local Authorities with more stretching targets to achieve their objectives. We will provide a Carbon Assessment Playbook to enable Local Authorities to consistently evaluate the carbon impacts of proposed policies and interventions across the region.

**D2.** We will seek opportunities to limit and manage the growth of road vehicle traffic. We will provide regional data and modelling as part of our Regional Centre of Excellence approach to support Local Transport and Planning Authorities to ensure new strategic site allocations are sustainably located and well connected by sustainable transport modes (see also policy S1), that digital services and connectivity are available to reduce the need to travel (see also policy A3) and that all opportunities are taken to maximise the availability and attractiveness of sustainable alternatives to facilitate a shift to those modes.

**D3.** We will work with Local Transport and Planning Authorities to identify sites and provide infrastructure for re-fuelling zero emission freight vehicles. See also Policy G6 below.

**D4.** We will work with Local Authorities, private providers and community organisations in the region to provide 55,000 - 75,000 new public charge points for private electric vehicles by 2035 to meet future demand. Almost half of these will need to be installed by public authorities, mostly in rural areas.

**D5.** We will support local management of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) while seeking to understand the regional impacts and opportunities of vehicle restriction measures such as Clean Air Zones.

**D6.** We will support Network Rail and partners in the rail industry to phase out diesel-only trains on the network by 2040 (or sooner) to meet government targets, in line with our Rail Strategy.



Photo credit: Portishead, North Somerset

**“Delivering the changes needed to reduce emissions from transport and achieve net zero carbon.”**

### Signposts for future work:

- Electric Vehicle Strategy (with Peninsula Transport)
- Grid capacity work with the Delivery Network Operators and key site operators
- Bio-diversity and protection of the natural environment – identify requirements for the Strategic Investment Plan and checklist for the Strategic Transport Plan
- Evaluate impacts of Clean Air Zones on regional travel patterns
- ‘Travelling Less’ – review approaches to pricing, reallocation of road space, parking policy and provision and produce a strategy with recommendations for the local authorities. Share through Regional Centre of Excellence.
- Behaviour change – research opportunities and approaches to support people and businesses to make choices that reduce the impacts of their personal travel. Share through Regional Centre of Excellence.
- Monitor evolving central government guidance and policies on decarbonisation and interpret for regional context
- Assess evolving industry and government opportunities around decarbonising aviation and shipping
- Review emerging decarbonisation technologies and evaluate their opportunities for the region

<sup>12</sup> Opportunity to Shift Modes study



## Theme 3: Access to services and opportunities

### Theme objectives:

- Level up access to social, educational and economic opportunities in all areas - particularly those currently constrained by poor connectivity - reducing isolation, exclusion and inequality
- Work towards essential goods and services being accessible within 30 minutes, without the need to drive. This will include improving digital connectivity and digital or mobile service delivery as well as transport solutions
- Maintain and improve access to important regional and national destinations through our strategic transport networks
- Aim for half of rural car journeys to be shifted to sustainable modes.<sup>15</sup>
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and improve safety and perceptions of safety on public and active transport
- Improve access to and safety on all modes of transport for vulnerable and disabled travellers

### Policies:

**A1.** We will undertake research, seek opportunities and conduct pilot studies to improve connectivity in rural areas and make rural transport services more affordable for both users and providers.

**A2.** We will work with partners as part of our Regional Centre of Excellence approach to facilitate the delivery of active and public transport infrastructure and services that cross local boundaries.

**A3.** We will work to identify areas of “double deprivation” in the region, i.e. areas with both poor digital and poor transport connectivity that inhibit access to services, and work to identify solutions.

**A4.** We will work with Network Rail, Transport for Wales and other partners to deliver on priority outputs from our Rail Strategy and the Western Gateway Partnership Rail Vision to 2050.

**A5.** We will work with Network Rail and GWR to complete Business Case assessments for service enhancements on the Heart of Wessex Line and the Bristol to Oxford line and take forward

recommendations from Network Rail’s strategic studies including Dorset (Dorset Metro), Wiltshire, West of England Line, Bristol to Exeter and Birmingham, Greater Bristol, Gravity Park to Bristol Port and Salisbury, Wareham and Bournemouth stations.

**A6.** We will work with coach operators and Local Authorities via our South West Coach Forum to enhance the role of coach in the regional transport offer, take forward the interventions identified in our 2023 Coach Strategy and establish the feasibility of new strategic coach routes. We will work with Bristol Airport and other partners to maximise coach connection opportunities offered by the forthcoming public transport interchange.

**A7.** We will further develop our Cycling Strategy to identify a strategic cycling network for the region, then work with local partners and Active Travel England to seek opportunities to deliver new infrastructure.

**A8.** We will work with National Highways to shape and deliver regional priorities as part of current and future Road Investment Strategies including M4 to Dorset Coast and Stonehenge, and existing schemes including A417, A303,



Photo credit: Bristol Airport

M5 Junction 9 and Strategic Road Network Urban Areas (Bristol). We will also support Local Authorities to identify and deliver appropriate schemes on the Major Road Network and prepare for future funding opportunities. These schemes should also provide improvements for walking, wheeling, and public transport.

**A9.** We will support Local Authorities, Network Rail and National Highways in efforts to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the road and rail networks.

**A10.** We will seek opportunities to improve passenger accessibility and safety on all modes of transport and at interchanges by contributing to Station Improvement Plans, BSIPs and similar proposals.

**A11.** We will work with partners and businesses as part of our Regional Centre of Excellence approach to identify and investigate emerging technologies which benefit travel and journey planning. These will include multi-modal integrated ticketing, tools to support Mobility as a Service, shared movement of people and parcels and information provision systems that allow travellers to effectively plan and adapt journeys.

### Signpost for future work:

- Interchange – produce guidance to assist the local authorities, Network Rail, train and bus/coach operators and National Highways to provide high quality interchanges and transport hubs. Share through Regional Centre of Excellence.
- Buses – draw on work by other STBs to help integrate and coordinate Bus Service Improvement Plans across the region
- Digital Service Provision and connectivity – produce a digital strategy drawing on work by Peninsula Transport, West of England Combined Authority and other STBs
- Mass transit – review regional opportunities arising from work by West of England Combined Authority and Gloucestershire County Council
- Rural planning guidance – work with LPAs to develop guidelines around rural development, connectivity and local service provision/support. Share through Regional Centre of Excellence
- Review Network Rail’s Network Resilience Strategy to forecast and manage the impact of climate change on regional rail infrastructure

**“Enabling access to services and opportunities for everyone while reducing the need to drive.”**

<sup>15</sup> Opportunity to Shift Modes study



## Theme 4: Facilitating strategic north-south movement



### Theme Objectives:

- Improve north-south rail and road links between the Midlands and South Coast to deliver social and economic benefits and level up southern parts of the region
- Improve journey time reliability
- Increase service frequency, reduce journey times and facilitate interchanges by rail to increase patronage and rail freight opportunities

### Policies:

**NS1.** We will work with National Highways to assess and deliver appropriate recommendations from the M4 to Dorset Strategic Study. Recognising the Study is to be published during 2024, we will undertake additional work to understand its requirements.

**NS2.** We will support National Highways and local partners to improve road safety ratings on the A36 and A30 and increase journey time reliability on the A36, A46, A303, A350 and A31.

**NS3.** We will support proposals for the enhancement of passenger services on the Heart of Wessex Line between Westbury and Weymouth. We will continue to work with Network Rail, train operators and the local authorities to bring these forward.

**NS4.** We will continue to explore options with Network Rail and the train operating companies on improved services for the West of England Line and connections at Yeovil and Westbury from the Heart of Wessex Line.

**NS5.** We will work with Network Rail to progress feasibility work on improvements to Westerleigh Junction. This is key to enabling north-south rail movements and transfer to east-west lines to Wales and London, for both passengers and freight.

**NS6.** We will work with Network Rail, the Western Gateway Partnership and other key stakeholders to make the case for the electrification of the Bristol-Birmingham route

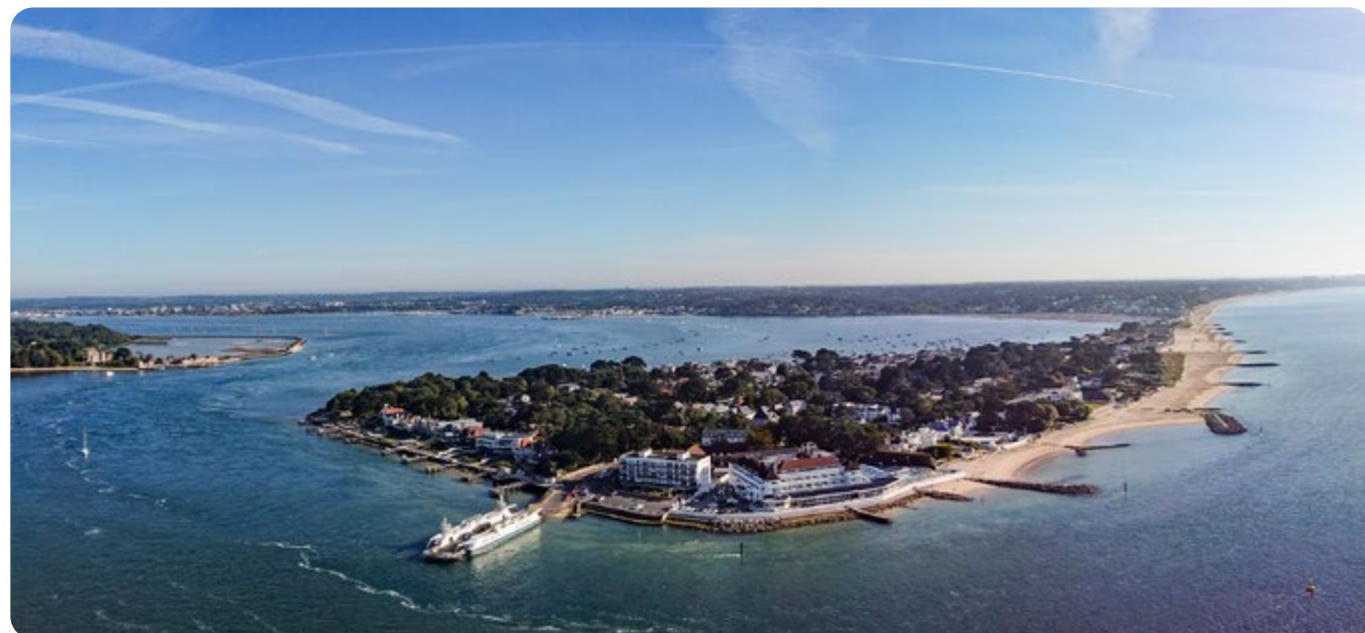


Photo credit: Poole Harbour



Photo credit: A303 Stonehenge

**“Improving transport links from north to south to ensure prosperity and opportunity for all.”**

### Signposts for future work:

- M4 to Dorset Coast Strategic Study – review of opportunities and approach
- National Highways road safety strategy
- Cycling Strategy – identify opportunities to improve north-south cycling routes



## Theme 5: Movement of Goods



### Theme Objectives:

- Increase the capacity and access to the network for rail freight services, allowing existing and new markets to facilitate a shift from road to rail transport for freight.
- Increase market for coastal shipping to support a shift away from road freight
- Maintain or improve connectivity to ports, rail hubs and airports
- Improve journey time reliability for freight movements on strategic road routes, particularly from South Coast – Midlands, reducing HGV running on unsuitable local routes

### Policies:

**G1.** We will work with partners to deliver the agreed set of 46 freight interventions identified in the South West Freight Strategy.

**G2.** We will support measures to move more road freight and express parcels by rail. We aim to deliver three to four intermodal terminals in the South West (including the Peninsula Transport region).

**G3.** We will work with partners to progress potential rail freight routes identified in the Western Gateway Rail Strategy, including a) Totton (Southampton) to Salisbury, Westbury and Swindon, b) Frome to Westbury and c) Reading and Westbury to Bath and Bristol, as well as opportunities to d) reactivate Hamworthy branch line, e) create passing loops on the Bristol – Gloucester line and f) deliver loading gauge enhancements to increase capacity

**G4.** We will help our local authorities to safeguard rail freight sites by developing Supplementary Planning Guidance under our Regional Centre of Excellence.

**G5.** We will support the development and expansion of new sectors, such as aggregates, liquid bulk animal feed and agriculture, at our ports to increase opportunities for coastal shipping of these products rather than road transportation. We will work with our ports to manage the increase in localised freight movements that may arise and on an awareness campaign to promote coastal shipping opportunities.

**G6.** We will support the road haulage sector in its energy transition to low/zero emission fuels. We will work with Local Authorities and National Highways to deliver a network of hydrogen refuelling and electric vehicle charging stations identified in our Alternative Fuels for Freight strategy.

**G7.** We will work with National Highways, Local Transport and Planning Authorities to identify sites for improved facilities for drivers on strategic routes.

**G8.** We will work with National Highways and with local authorities on their road and route study schemes for Heavy Goods Vehicles and support infrastructure improvements and investment, where suitable, to enhance operational efficiency.

**G9.** We will continue to promote the use of load and vehicle matching exchange to reduce empty running and reduce emissions.

**G10.** In partnership with Peninsula Transport, we will continue to host the South West Freight Forum, bringing together our local authorities, Network Rail, National Highways, freight operators, industry bodies, ports and airports to address the challenges, opportunities and priorities for freight in the South West over the next 30 years.



Photo credit: Westerleigh depot, South Gloucestershire

**“Easing freight movements on our strategic routes and supporting a shift to rail, coastal shipping and alternative fuels.”**

### Signposts for future work:

- Refresh the South West Freight Strategy to reflect changes in the freight sector and include new and emerging technologies
- Explore the potential for new Consolidation hubs across the region.

## 6. Factors for success

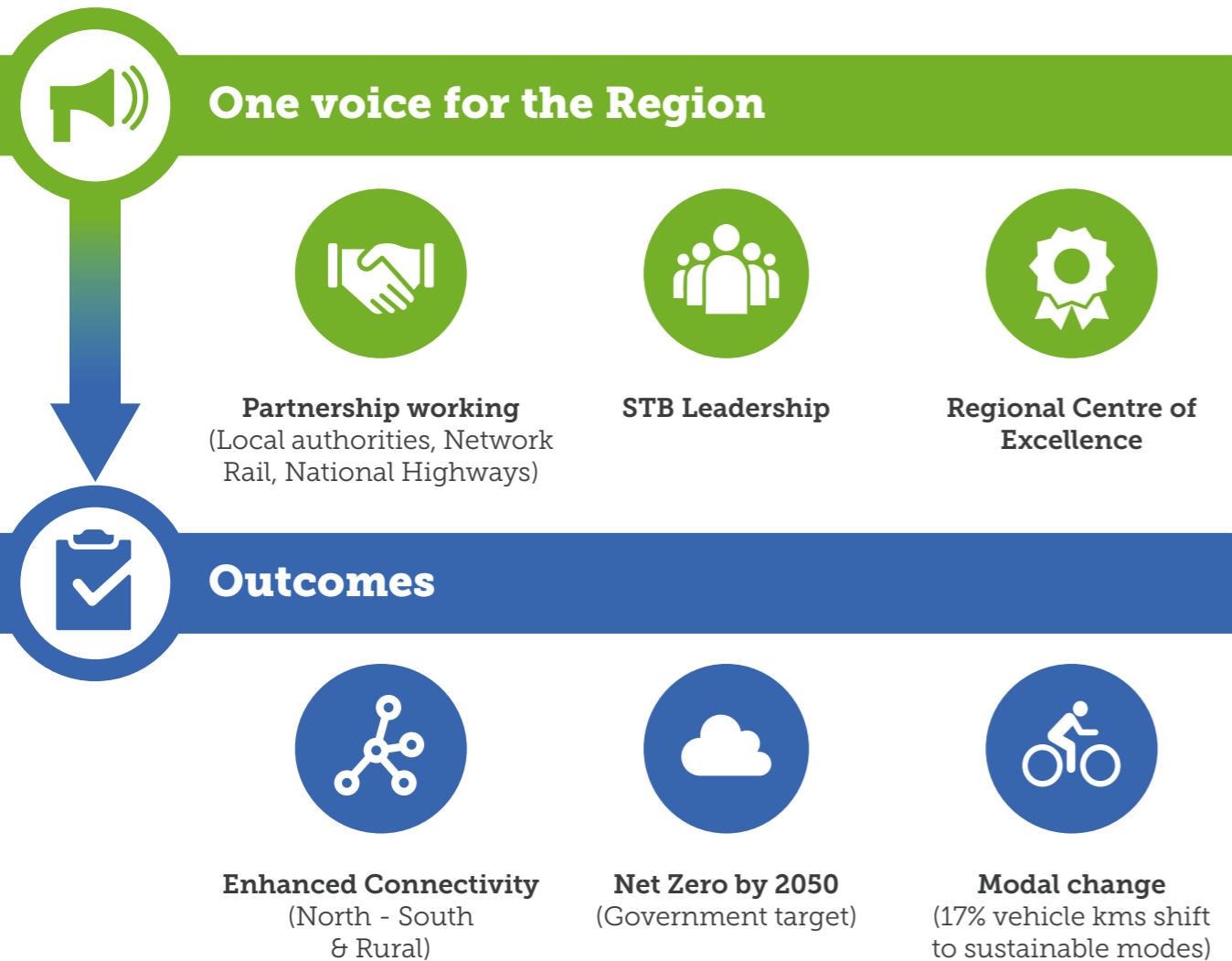


Photo credit: Poole

## 7. Next steps

We will produce a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to set out our priorities for transport interventions across the Western Gateway region. We will focus on the regional benefits and impact these interventions will bring. A draft Strategic Investment Plan will be produced for consultation in late 2024/25.

The Strategic Transport Plan will provide the policy background and guide for which interventions to include. Our numerous studies and evidence bases also provide recommendations for schemes and interventions, which will also be assessed for inclusion in the SIP.



Thank you for reading our Strategic Transport Plan. Please do contact us at [WesternGatewaySTB@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:WesternGatewaySTB@westofengland-ca.gov.uk) if you have any questions or comments.

This Strategic Transport Plan will be kept under review and updated as required. Updates can be found on our website at [Strategic Transport Plan - Western gateway \(westerngatewaystb.org.uk\)](http://StrategicTransportPlan-Westerngateway.westerngatewaystb.org.uk), where you can also sign up to receive our monthly newsletter.

Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body  
February 2024

Photo credit: Sandbanks Ferry