COVENTRY – NUNEATON RAIL UPGRADE

MAJOR SCHEME BUSINESS CASE

1.0 Introduction and Scheme Description
1.1 Introduction

Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council and Centro are bidding for funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) for upgrading the existing railway line between Coventry and Nuneaton. This document provides the evidence and justification for the scheme and has been developed in accordance with the Department for Transport’s guidance for Local Authorities seeking Government funding for major transport schemes. Figure 1.1 shows the location of the scheme in a national context.

This document sets out the policy framework and transport challenges that provide the context for the development of the scheme for which funding is sought, through the five following aspects, set out in the guidance, Strategic, Value for Money, Delivery, Commercial and Financial Cases; and in addition an Event Crowd Safety Review.

The need for enhanced transport links between the north of the corridor and Coventry and the developing employment areas immediately to the south has been recognised for some time and have been identified in several local, regional and national plans, details of these can be found in the Strategic Case, Section 2.0. This case also appraises the different options considered and finally how the preferred option was chosen.

Figure 1.1 – National context of the scheme
Importantly this links with, and supports, the proposed major development surrounding Coventry station, the Friargate development including the new Coventry station entrance. This is supported by the RFA through the Connecting Coventry major scheme business case submission.

The Value for Money Case, Section 3.0, demonstrates the benefits and disbenefits of the scheme against its estimated costs, presented in the Financial Case. The economic appraisal of the Coventry – Nuneaton Rail Line Upgrade has been undertaken in accordance with the Department for Transport's Appraisal Guidance (WebTAG) including the rail appraisal guidance. The approach and methodology was influenced by the scheme objectives and anticipated impacts and the available data and models.

The Financial Case, Section 6.0, also illustrates that the promoting authorities are able to meet its own contribution and the third party funding is confirmed.

The Delivery Case demonstrates how the delivery of the scheme will be managed, to time and budget, and monitored. It also details that the three partners have agreed that Coventry City Council will lead and manage the preparation and submission of the bid. As part of this process, the partners are all members of a Programme Board, shown on the governance structure, Appendix 4.1, chaired by Coventry City Council.

The Commercial Case, Section 5.0, demonstrates a sound procurement strategy detailing how Network Rail and other rail industry partners propose to be involved, and also what has been procured (commissioned) to date.

In addition to the five prescribed cases we have undertaken an Event Crowd Safety Review, Appendix 1.2, which reviews handling event crowds travelling to and from the Coventry (Ricoh) Arena by rail and also provides a commentary on potential safety issues and mitigations, along the whole route, to support this Programme Entry Submission to DfT.

The Event Crowd Safety Review was developed with input from the key stakeholders:

- British Transport Police
- West Midlands Police
- Safety Advisory Group
- Virgin
- London Midland
- Arena Coventry Limited (ACL).

The results from this consultation can be found in Appendix 1.3. The event management review, shows that existing plans can be adapted to accommodate scheme proposals safely.
1.2 Overview of Corridor

The Coventry to Nuneaton corridor lies partly within the city of Coventry and partly in Warwickshire, this is illustrated below in Figure 1.2. The northern area includes the principal settlements of Nuneaton and Bedworth which are located on the Warwickshire Coalfield and have been traditionally associated with industries which have over the last 20 years experienced significant industrial decline and consequently suffer high levels of unemployment, low income levels, and several areas of multiple deprivation.

![Figure 1.2 Regional context of the scheme](image)

The corridor has been identified as a designated regeneration zone with a growing population, and plans for major new housing development. In contrast areas to the south of Coventry and the city itself have been highly successful in attracting development, even to the extent of currently enjoying a job surplus in their employment market. The Scheme will improve the connectivity from north Warwickshire, which is deprived to employment opportunities in South of Coventry.
The proposed scheme involves increasing the service frequency and therefore increasing the accessibility to the public transport network, through the new stations. The new stations are proposed at Coventry Arena to serve the district centre situated within the retail park adjacent to the Arena, known locally as Arena Park and north Coventry.

At Bermuda Park to serve housing employment locations, George Elliot Hospital and south Nuneaton. To enable the frequency to be increased a bay platform will be created at Coventry station and to provide capacity throughout the line the platforms at Bedworth station will be lengthened. A half hourly service will be operated, illustrated in Figure 1.3 below.
The rail route between Coventry and Nuneaton is a 10 mile double track line, that has recently been resignalled and much of the track re-laid. There are freight terminals at Murco Petroleum (Bedworth) and Prologis Park (near Coventry Arena). The route is used by regular container trains running between the West Coast Main Line and the South Coast ports. There is a current line speed restriction on the route of 45mph, although the updated signalling has the capability of handling 60mph. As part of the on-going development of the scheme we will work with Network Rail to understand the practicality of increasing this line speed to 60mph in order to deliver improved journey times.

The scheme design and development has passed Network Rail GRIP 3 stage and GRIP 4 detail design is ongoing, the plans completed as part of the Network Rail GRIP 3 study show the chosen site for each location and can be found in Appendix 1.1 the scheme includes the following:

**Coventry Station**
A new six car bay platform is to be provided on the north side of Coventry Station to the west of the Warwick Road overbridge and linked with Platform 1. This would be accessed by creating a new route through Coventry North Yard involving upgrading track and signalling. This would deliver a route into the new bay platform completely independent of the existing West Coast Main Line for the Coventry – Nuneaton service, but would retain the flexibility for these services to use the main station platforms if required, and for the strategic north – south rail freight to operate.

**Coventry Arena Station**
A new station, with six car platforms, will be constructed at a location directly adjacent to the existing Coventry Arena. The station will be designed with wider than standard platforms to cater for event traffic and access between the platforms will be via an existing pedestrian underpass. The station will be unstaffed, but provided with passenger shelters, CCTV, real time information and ticket machines.

A new facing crossover would also be provided to the south of the station to allow services from Coventry to terminate in the southbound platform at the station. This would allow a shuttle service between Coventry and Coventry Arena to be provided and carry a higher number of passengers during major events.

**Bedworth Station**
The existing unstaffed station at Bedworth is to have its existing two car platforms extended so it can accommodate three car trains.

**Bermuda Park Station**
A new station, with three car platforms, will be constructed close to the Bermuda Business Park between Bedworth and Nuneaton together with car parking facilities for around 30 cars. An existing underbridge will be used for access between the platforms. The station will be unstaffed, but provided with passenger shelters, CCTV, real time information and ticket machines.

**Nuneaton Station**
No works are planned at Nuneaton station. Coventry - Nuneaton services would use Platform 1 adjacent to the main entrance and booking hall.

**Enhanced Service**
The current rail service on the line is operated by London Midland at an approximately hourly frequency. There is a proposal to operate the current service with 2-car Class 150 units instead of the single car Class 153 currently deployed. The proposed new service would double the frequency to a half-hourly pattern on weekdays and Saturdays. No change is currently planned to the Sunday service.
For events at Coventry Arena, a shuttle service between Coventry and Coventry Arena stations will be provided, with up to 6-car services operating at a half-hourly frequency to supplement the base half-hourly service (which could also be strengthened to operate with 3-car trains).

The existing timetable for the service is broadly hourly on weekdays and Saturdays, with a gap in the mid morning.

The timetable assumptions for the Preferred Scheme were taken from the results of the timetable modelling (using RailSYS) undertaken for Centro in September 2009. The proposed half-hourly timetable takes account of the interaction with rail freight services on the line.
1.4 Other Appraised Options

Two other options were appraised against the preferred scheme,

The 'Next Best' option included all of the infrastructure works of the preferred option but assumed the existing rail service timetable, through preliminary appraisal a BCR of 2.1 has been indicated.

The 'Low Cost Alternative' excluded the bay platform works at Coventry and assumed the existing timetable and has a BCR of 1.4.

The Preferred scheme, with a BCR of 3.5, provides significant value for money over the other options appraised.