

Next Steps for Heathrow Link Unveiled

Submitted by: C8 Consulting

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- £500m Government Funding Pledged for Heathrow Rail Link by Government

Berkshire, 7th November 2012 - The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) is pleased to announce that following a meeting attended by representatives from Network Rail, Heathrow Airport, TVB LEP and Slough Borough Council, more details were revealed about the next steps for the Western Rail Access to Heathrow delivery project.

Network Rail has confirmed that a GRIP 3 study will commence at the end of 2012 once a project lead is in place. This will provide a detailed business case and lead to final option selection. It was also confirmed that funding sufficient to cover development studies (GRIP 3 – 5) and work to secure consents has been allocated within CP5 (2014-2019).

Ruth Bagley, WRAtH lead for TVB LEP commented: "We have made good progress in highlighting the need for Western Rail, culminating in the positive Government announcement of support in July. Our main priority now is to get the project delivered as quickly as possible, and we were pleased to be able to discuss this with Network Rail.

"Businesses in the Thames Valley want better connections to Heathrow so the region can compete with Europe and further afield, and for this reason timely delivery is important. The Thames Valley must work to retain the businesses it has, as well as attract new investment.

"The Government clearly shares our commitment to improving rail access to Heathrow, and we have secured agreement to establish a Stakeholder Steering Group to monitor progress, and offer assistance where we can."

In July The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, then Secretary of State for Transport announced that funding was being provided for "a new rail line from the Great Western Main Line near Slough to Heathrow" "subject to a business case and conclusion of agreements with the aviation industry". Days later the project was also included in the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) covering 2014-2019, a prerequisite for the delivery of a new rail project. In September newly appointed Secretary of State for Transport, The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP reiterated support for the project.

The project, known as Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH), has been sponsored by the TVB LEP and offers numerous benefits to businesses from as far as South Wales and the South West, all the way to the Thames Valley itself. Before now, Heathrow has only had rail access in the London direction, but the new plans will allow the airport to connect with 12 million more people direct.

-ENDS-

About Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and WRAtH

The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP is a business led body, working to maintain the status of the sub region

as the engine of the UK economy. It comprises of key leaders across the business, education, voluntary and community sector and six unitary authority areas of: Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham. The LEP's priorities are improving infrastructure, for example, the Western Rail Access to Heathrow (WRAtH) programme; access to superfast broadband and finance; and ensuring a work-ready population through the development of skills and education opportunities.

For more details on Thames Valley Berkshire LEP please visit the website <http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk>. Organisations interested in bidding for Growing Places Funds should contact Tim Smith on 07500 870172 or email tim.smith@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk. You can download a full briefing and FAQs document on Growing Places Funds via the website. Visit the WRAtH website at <http://wrath.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/>. Or follow WRAtH on twitter: @HeathrowByRail

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