



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Council welcomes Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study

Wiltshire Council has welcomed the publication of Network Rail's Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study, which sets out the basis of strategic rail planning in the county in the future.

The Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study, led by Network Rail and local partners, looks at how rail services can support the county's growing population and economy. It suggests improvements to rail connectivity within Wiltshire and to key regional hubs to connect the county to the rest of the country.

It highlights that the current rail system lacks frequent and direct services, especially in north-south routes, and needs better links to hubs such as Oxford and Birmingham.

Its key recommendations look to increase services, grow passenger numbers and build new stations, including:

- Enhance local services, especially on the TransWilts route (via Melksham), to improve connectivity within Wiltshire.
- Build new stations at Devizes and Corsham to support population growth and increase rail usage.
- Develop new direct rail services between Wiltshire and key hubs.
- Upgrade track and signalling infrastructure, such as in Westbury and Melksham, to accommodate more services and improve connections at Westbury.

Cllr Tamara Reay, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "We welcome this wide-ranging Network Rail report, which looks to improve connectivity and transport links in Wiltshire and beyond. It follows the business cases developed by Wiltshire Council under the previous government's Restoring your Railway scheme.

“It also supports our county’s sustainable economic and population growth, helping the county to expand sustainably, while also improving regional connectivity, and boosting both passenger numbers and freight use of the railways.

“However, there is a still a long way to go before the objectives of this study can be realised, and Network Rail will now begin detailed analysis of the proposals before taking forward business cases to progress these projects.

“Ensuring we have well-connected communities is a key part of our Business Plan, and a growing Wiltshire rail network will help us to deliver on this. Rail is also a key part of our forthcoming Local Transport Plan, which looks to provide genuine travel choices while also reducing carbon emissions.

“We will continue to work with both Network Rail and other partners to take these projects forward and will keep lobbying Government to invest in rail improvements throughout Wiltshire.”

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