

Cirencester Community Railway

Extended Scheme and Project

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<u>Contents:</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 THE CASE FOR A RAIL LINK	3
1.1 Social Benefits	3
1.2 Environmental Benefits	3
1.3 Enabling Infrastructure for Employment and Housing	3
1.4 Value for Money	3
1.5 Easing Congestion	4
1.6 Auspicious Timing	4
1.7 Influence and Status	4
2 THE PROPOSED SOLUTION	5
2.1 Objectives of the Project	5
2.2 Overview Strategy	5
3 THE ROUTE IN DETAIL	6
3.1 The Platform at Kemble	6
3.2 Leaving Kemble	6
3.3 Crossing the A429 - Clayfurlong Bridge	6
3.4 Following the Original Route	7
3.5 Approaching the RAU	8
3.6 The University Station	8
3.7 Crossing the Tetbury Road	8
3.8 Crossing the RAU	9
3.9 Crossing the Stroud Road	9
3.10 Descending Tetbury Road Hill	10
3.11 Approaching Town Halt	10
3.12 Location of Town Halt	10
4 IMPLEMENTATION	11
4.1 Tracks	11
4.2 Rolling Stock	11
4.3 Tasks	12
5 POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS	13
6 CHALLENGES	13
6.1 Land Ownership	13
6.2 Safety Management	13
6.3 Operation of the Transport Services	13
6.4 Kemble Station Car Park	13
6.5 University Station Car Park	14
6.6 Security	14
6.7 Underground Services	14
6.8 Ticketing	14
6.9 Changes to Bus Routes	14
6.10 Combined Use of Route	14
7 PLANNING ISSUES	14
8 FUNDING	15
8.1 Government Sources	15
8.2 Strategic Fit with Government Policies	15
8.3 Housing Development	15
9 NEXT STEPS	15
9.1 Discussions with Landowners	15
9.2 Discussions with Local Government	15
9.3 Rail Authorities	16
9.4 Feasibility Study	16
9.5 Budgetary Costings	16
9.6 Formation of Public Association	16
10 LOVE LANE EXTENSION	16
10.1 Route Details	16
10.2 Benefits	17
10.3 Challenges	17
11 TETBURY EXTENSION	17
12 DOCUMENT VERSION CHANGES	17

1 THE CASE FOR A RAIL LINK

The thriving market town of Cirencester used to have two separate railway lines and three stations. Now its nearest station is Kemble. The Beeching Report resulted in the closure of the last line between Cirencester and Kemble in the 60s.

The impact of this loss on the population of Cirencester is huge.

The number of people using Kemble station is a clear demonstration of the need for a more convenient and reliable form of public transport between the town and the main rail network. This Project will help to alleviate the car parking at Kemble Station and greatly reduce traffic congestion on the roads around Cirencester. It will enable people to commute to work in both Cirencester and Swindon, and will encourage residential construction in Cirencester by increasing house values throughout the town.

1.1 Social Benefits

The provision of regular public transport linking the town with the main rail network will reduce the dependence on cars. A large proportion of the passengers through Kemble are London commuters, so they and all other regular travellers will be able to reduce the number of cars they own, and the distances they travel by car.

An increasing proportion of people, especially in the younger age group, prefer not to own cars. This is partly due to the ever-increasing cost of fuel, insurance and maintenance. Similarly, an increasing population of more elderly people are living beyond the age where driving is a cost-effective (and safe) option. In all, a large market of potential users of public transport is opening up, and if reliable services are made available this trend will be encouraged.

The train will include provision for transportation of bicycles to increase the catchment areas at both ends of its route.

1.2 Environmental Benefits

It is now becoming irrefutable that the effects of transportation by car is a significant contributor to climate change, and we, through our choices and our local governments, must move swiftly to reduce the CO2 we produce and energy we use. This means cutting the journey we do by car as much and as quickly as possible.

The proposed VLR vehicle is the most environmentally positive transportation technology currently available for the task, and as the engineering improvements develop this platform offers a route to remain at the forefront of sustainability.

By taking part in the development process, we even support and encourage the research into new technologies in the UK, helping to move the world towards a sustainable future.

1.3 Enabling Infrastructure for Employment and Housing

This Project lies on the south-west side of Cirencester, within easy reach of the main employment area at Love Lane. It will also pass very close to the area proposed for a major housing development, and should add significant value to the houses in that area, as well as all residential and business properties throughout Cirencester.

In addition, it will offer enormous benefits to the Royal Agricultural University by giving convenient access for visitors, staff and students, many of whom come from overseas and do not have cars. This will underscore the RAU's plans for growth, which will strengthen Cirencester's economy and standing as a place of learning, research and business development. The Vice-Chancellor of the RAU has written to express its enthusiastic support for the Project.

The convenient location also allows it to link to the Growth Hub at the RAU Triangle Research Centre, which will become fully active in 2018.

Note that if the branch to Chesterton Halt is retained as an optional route, this will reach very close to the edge of the Love lane estate. It may even be possible in due course to extend the branch as a tram into the centre of the estate.

1.4 Value for Money

The benefit to the town of Cirencester, its businesses and tourism, its inhabitants and workforce is immediately clear. At present business visitors often arrive at Kemble and have to wait for a taxi or be collected – time-consuming and embarrassing for a business.

To be able to advertise in London as a convenient day-trip or over-night stop for foreign tourists should make a huge difference to the town's hotels, coffee shops and Corinium Museum. The benefits will spread to many of the specialist shops and particularly to the Craft Market. Many visitors will also be encouraged to use Cirencester as a base for exploring the Cotswolds on short excursions or week-long stays; this creates an opportunity to market the beauty and charm of the region and exploit the Capital of the Cotswolds.

Evaluation exercises and modelling by Gloucestershire County Council have shown that upgrading Kemble station and improving its status as a transport hub will provide a benefit to the local economy in the region of £28 million. However, this evaluation did not include the VLR Project or the hugely improved accessibility it will provide.

We also believe that the modern elegance of the Very Light Rail (VLR) trains proposed for this link will themselves be an exciting part of the journey, and will demonstrate Cirencester's forward-looking approach to technology while being steeped in history.

The cost-benefit argument for this Project will be more fully examined as part of the Feasibility Study, as many of the cost factors are not yet fully evaluated. However, it is recognised that with such life-changing infrastructure enhancements the real benefits arise as the population finds itself able to live conveniently with fewer cars per family, or without privately-owned cars at all.

This strengthens the growth of car-share clubs, communal hire groups and cost-effective taxis for those journeys where public transport is not available. So a key public transport link such as this soon becomes a vital part of individuals' way of life, building up its usage as it does so.

1.5 Easing Congestion

Many of the roads around Cirencester are already clogged every morning and evening, with long queues and delays. This Project will help to ease this problem in two ways, as follows:

The number of cars travelling between Cirencester and Kemble will be dramatically reduced as commuters find the train a convenient and speedy alternative. This especially applies to the T junction where the A429 from Kemble meets the A433 from Tetbury. Any reduction in traffic at this junction will also be a major benefit to road safety.

The provision of a station close to the centre of the town, adjacent to the Cotswold Leisure Centre, coupled with a large car park at the main station between the RAU and the Chesterton development, creates a de facto park-and-ride scheme with a guaranteed regular service. This will ease the current and future problems of lack of parking in the town, while preserving the buildings and charm of the town itself.

1.6 Auspicious Timing

This is a particularly important time to proceed with this Project, for the following reasons:

- 1 The main line from Swindon to Kemble has recently been dualled, with plans for increasing the number of trains on the line, and therefore the passenger traffic through Kemble.
- 2 The main line through Swindon is being electrified, giving an opportunity for a major increase in the frequency of trains on those routes.
- 3 The land to the west of Chesterton has been allocated for housing, so a significant number of new dwellings will be built on this side of the town in the next few years. This will increase the number of passengers able to walk to the proposed service, and the development of the rail service should increase the value of all the houses on the west of Cirencester significantly.
- 4 In view of the significant increase in the population of the Cirencester area, the number of passengers through Kemble station would be expected increase, especially as the new housing will accommodate a high proportion of young families wishing to commute to London.
- 5 The additional 333-space car park at Kemble is now open, and already GWR is forecasting that it will be filled by 2022.
- 6 It has been suggested that assistance with the clearance, engineering and bridge-building may come under the remit of the emerging charitable organisation JointForcesUK. This will draw on the resources and expertise of ex-service personnel in similar construction Projects.

1.7 Influence and Status

There is an expectation that a town of the size and importance of Cirencester *should* have a railway station. With its university and a large tourism industry, Cirencester would derive a huge benefit from an effective public transport link from the rail network and from London.

Cirencester is in the unusual position of being a university town without a railway station - a situation which needs to be remedied.

This is an especially important time for the Royal Agricultural University - many potential students feel the need to be close to an active social centre, and its necessarily rural location is sometimes seen as a deterrent. A rail link almost to the front door of the RAU will help to mitigate this problem.

2 THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

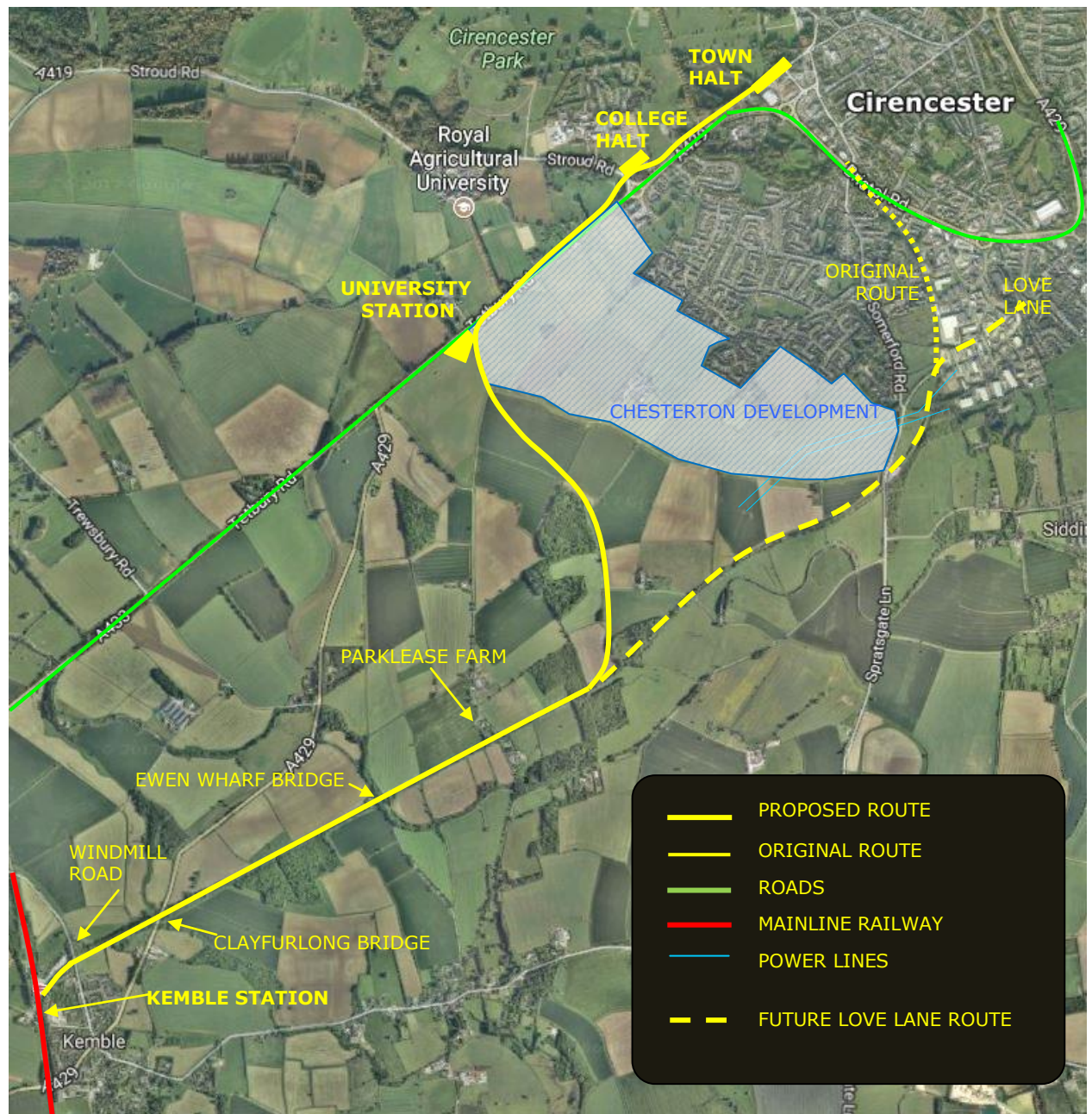


Figure 1 - Plan of the Route, Options and Relevant Features

2.1 Objectives of the Project

- To re-instate the train route from Cirencester to Kemble
- To build a single-track line with passing places following the old route as far as possible and terminating near the centre of Cirencester
- To provide a local service to meet all trains on the newly-dualled line between Swindon and Kemble.

2.2 Overview Strategy

A major part of the rail line between Cirencester and Kemble follows the route of the original line which used to cross Spratsgate Lane and Chesterton Lane, then running along the route now occupied by the dual carriageway past the Amphitheatre.

The track was removed and the wooden sleepers have taken on a role as fence-posts, but the route remains. Most of the way it is an open path, in a few places closed but without major obstructions.

However, due to the construction at the crossing with Chesterton Lane and the residential housing in Meadow Way, the Cirencester end of this route has now become impractical.

In view of the importance of providing access to the centre of the town, the proposed route leaves the original route and swings across open fields to meet the A433 Tetbury Road, and then follows alongside that road down Tetbury Hill to terminate near the Leisure Centre, St.James' Place and the Marlborough Inn.

This scheme is intended as a medium for promoting discussion and gathering views and support, and is a living document which will grow and develop as the plan takes shape.

It is expected that the final implementation will differ slightly from the details outlined here, and views and contributions are welcomed to help us get the best public amenity possible.

3 THE ROUTE IN DETAIL

The route is shown in Figure 1, and is described here travelling from Kemble to Cirencester.

3.1 The Platform at Kemble

The platform for the old route still exists, and the track is in place to connect to the main line. In order to avoid becoming subject to heavy rail regulations, the track must be disconnected so that it is not possible for the VLR vehicles to interact with the main line.

At present the old spur track is designated for engineering use, so we will have to work with Network Rail to agree a convenient platform area. Note that the VLR carriage is low to the ground and doesn't require a high platform.



3.2 Leaving Kemble

As the route leaves the station, it passes to the side of the existing car park, occupying part of one row of parking spaces. It rises up to clear the embankment, which also raises it high enough to clear traffic on Windmill Road which serves the station. It can then fall slightly to match the old route of the railway line.

This route will reduce GWR's car park revenue, so we will need to demonstrate that reduction in income will be insignificant compared with the increase in passenger fares.

3.3 Crossing the A429 - Clayfurlong Bridge

After the line between Cirencester and Kemble was closed, the bridge over the A429 was removed and the road was straightened. This has resulted in a gap in the embankment about 40 metres wide, which will need to be bridged.



3.4 Following the Original Route

1. General Condition of Route

The route is generally in good condition, with some undergrowth which can easily be removed. It will be necessary to properly survey the track bed and embankments, and remove small trees as necessary. However, it is important to leave as many trees as possible to provide a wildlife corridor, and to avoid disturbing the hydrological system and stability provided by trees.



2. Ewen Wharf Bridge



The line passes over this bridge. This bridge will require examination, but appears to be reasonably sound. The load on it will be significantly less than it was originally designed for, but its current strength will need to be checked.

The arch to the right of the picture is for the old canal, which used to run alongside the road here.

3. Park Lease Farm Bridge

The line passes under this bridge, which carries the road to Park Lease Farm, and its strength therefore should not be an issue. However it will still need to be checked.

The possibility of building a 'request' halt there to service the farm will be considered. It is noted that in 1962 there was a halt at this location. For the proposed link, it is suggested that the train will make a brief stop there when requested by an internal button or a text message or web request.



4. Adjacent Properties

There are a number of properties, originally owned by the railways, adjacent to the route, and it is important to try to minimise the nuisance to them caused by the re-instatement of rail traffic. The Project will if possible use an electric battery-powered rail bus, although this may mean working with possible developers of this technology.

If full battery operation is not technically available in the timescales, then a diesel hybrid will be used temporarily, which will only run the engine when away from the stations, halts and houses.

The properties will be screened from the view of passing trains.

3.5 Approaching the RAU

Three options were considered for the route either past or through the Chesterton Development. After discussions, the options passing through the development have been set aside because (a) they introduced additional safety considerations due to passing the train through areas where children might be playing, and (b) they would require re-working a considerable amount of effort already made to reach the existing design stage.



The route crosses open farmland and skirts around the western boundary of the Chesterton Development. This avoids the use of residential land, and minimises the potential for interaction between trains and pedestrians in a residential area.

The photo shows the point where the route reaches the Tetbury Road, which would also be the location of the Station.



3.6 The University Station



The main station for the line will be located outside the town, as space for parking is extremely limited near the town centre. It is planned that the VLR service will double as a park-and-ride service for Cirencester, easing the parking problems. As a result, a large car park will be needed.

The Station will be located on the field to the west of the Chesterton Development, which is on the left of this photo. It is opposite the entrance to the College Workshops site.

This position for the station will minimise encroachment onto valuable building land.

3.7 Crossing the Tetbury Road



The route will then run alongside the Tetbury Road, either within the RAU boundaries or between the hedge and the Chesterton Development. Note that on the south side, there is a hedge and a strip plantation of trees alongside the road. Between the hedge and the plantation is a gap suitable for the train. However, it would be necessary to trim back the branches of the trees regularly to avoid obstructing the train.

As part of the RAU's Triangle Research Centre, a new roundabout will be constructed on the Tetbury Road, which will also form the entrance to the Chesterton Development. This will provide an ideal place for the line to cross the busy road at a point where traffic is moving slowly and represents lowest risk of obstruction or delay.

The line will then cross some of the RAU 'Triangle' site to reach the entrance to the Old Tetbury Road, shown dotted red on the right of the

plan in Figure 2 below.

Being a Very Light Rail system, this type of vehicle can be classified as a tram and is permitted to travel on roads, and to cross them without special measures. However, this crossing will be designed to minimise the inconvenience for both trains and road traffic.

3.8 Crossing the RAU



Figure 2 - RAU Triangle Research Master Plan

The RAU 'Triangle' site is to be developed to become a major Research and Technology Centre, as shown on the Master Plan. The options and preferences for this section are to be discussed with the RAU, to provide the minimum intrusion and maximum convenience for the University. While the inclusion of the route of the VLR through the site might add complexity and cost to the RAU's design for the Triangle, it will also add to the image of the RAU as a connected hi-tech establishment.

In order to fully benefit from the VLR, the RAU may wish to route the track alongside their proposed bus route (shown in yellow) and through the middle of the site, which would merit consideration.

3.9 Crossing the Stroud Road

Leaving the RAU Triangle site the route crosses the Stroud Road. As with the Tetbury Road crossing, the VLR is permitted to cross the road without special measures, but it is important to avoid triggering congestion and accidents. At this crossing it is also important to ensure good visibility between the road traffic and trains, since the road curves on its approach to the roundabout and visibility is already poor. It may be necessary to move hedges beside the road and junction to ensure clear lines of sight for a safe crossing.

Immediately after crossing, the route enters the Old Tetbury road which is wide and quiet. However, it is important to note that from here into Cirencester there is a significant amount of underground service installation such as surface water drains, water supplies and telecommunications ducting.

A detailed survey and discussion with service providers is necessary in order to locate exactly any services, to ensure that access to them is not impeded by the track. In many cases it is sensible to move the service out of the way so that future work on the services does not require closure of the train. In this case, the Route is between four and 5 metres wide and it may be possible to lay the track without obstructing many of the services.

In order to encourage the use of the railway by students of Cirencester College, Deerpark School and the RAU, as well as visitors to the Cirencester growth Hub, a request stop will be located between the Stroud road and the pedestrian underpass. It is anticipated that this stop will be used during arrival and departure times of students.



3.10 Descending Tetbury Road Hill

The Route continues wide all the way down the hill alongside the dual carriageway, providing room for the VLR, cyclists and pedestrians.

The gradient of the hill up Old Tetbury Road is estimated to be 1:30. When ascending, this is well within the capability of the WMG VLR, but the effect of this hill at the outset of the journey needs to be analysed in detail.



3.11 Approaching Town Halt

As the Route leaves the dual carriageway and continues direct to the centre of Cirencester along the Old Tetbury Road, it takes two levels as the footpath and old road are very different. It will be preferable for the VLR to use the elevations of the road, since this is a more gradual rise which will shorten journey times for trains leaving the town.

Note the buried services in both road and footpath. It may be necessary to relocate the pipes and cables so that future maintenance of services does not require closure of the line.



3.12 Location of Town Halt

At the West Gate of Cirencester the footpath and paved area are especially wide, offering a lot of room for the Town Halt. When using the VLR it is not necessary to provide large platforms, although a small low platform may be needed to facilitate disabled access.

It is proposed that the Town Halt is located opposite the Old Station Car Park, giving only a very short walk to the Market Place, the Corinium Museum and many of Cirencester's attractions.

Town Halt will comprise little more than a low platform, shelter and signage. The signage will include active screens displaying imminent arrivals and departures, and if possible a ticket-purchasing interface linked to the mainline rail ticketing system.



4 IMPLEMENTATION

This proposal is to re-build a single track following the old route as far as possible, using modern materials and modern technology.

The rolling stock will be a single motorised carriage, normally housed at the station near the RAU.

This will make a return journey to Kemble to meet each train stopping at the station, with a potential for a stop on demand at the Bed and Breakfast *en route*.

It will also include the Town Halt in its route, so that passengers arriving at Kemble are able to travel direct to the Town Halt with the minimum of delay.

A detailed analysis and modelling exercise will form part of the Feasibility Study, and will determine the number of carriages needed to meet the expected levels of passengers. It may also be necessary to provide passing places to allow VLR carriages to meet each train arriving at Kemble.

4.1 Tracks

The most cost-effective method for laying track for VLR-type systems is in pre-cast slabs, which are manufactured off-site and laid along the route. These include drainage ducts and provision for cabling, they do not require ballast or sleepers, and are much more tolerant of uneven surfaces. In itself, this construction solution avoids deep excavation of the ground, but nevertheless such excavation may be needed to divert existing services from the route of the track near the town.

Note that because the VLR vehicle is so light, the track and bridges are significantly cheaper to construct than heavy rail infrastructure.

4.2 Rolling Stock

The Project needs a single reliable rail bus, essentially a passenger carriage with built-in propulsion.

In the longer term, ideally this would be battery electric powered, to avoid the noise of a diesel engine and to avoid vulnerability to oil prices. In the interim while technology advances, it may be necessary to use a hybrid diesel-battery-electric to provide on-board power and limit the use of the engine.

Although there appear to be currently no readily available battery electric rail bus vehicles in the UK, discussions have been held with the [Very Light Rail Innovation group](#) based at WMG Centre at Warwick University, who are developing a Very Light Rail vehicle. This is planned to be 18m long, weigh only 18 tonnes and would be ideally suited to act as a vehicle for our link. A preliminary hybrid vehicle is now being replaced by a lighter fully battery-powered vehicle, which is being developed for use in a new line across Coventry City.

It is envisaged that it would seat about 20, with standing room for 25 more during rush hours. Provision for convenient transportation of bicycles is also a consideration. Although the vehicle is small, it is designed so that multiple carriages can be linked together to provide more capacity during rush hours without overloading the network.

If the VLR vehicle is available in time for our needs, this would enable us to move straight to a technology-leading comfortable transportation system.



Figure 3 - The WMG VLR Vehicle

4.3 Tasks

The following is a list of the main tasks

- 1. Consultation:**
Some of the bodies and individuals with who consultation must be held are:
landowners, especially Bathurst Development Trust,
Network Rail,
other rail Projects,
Cotswold District Council,
Gloucestershire County Council,
materials suppliers,
construction companies/JointForcesUK,
rail bus builders,
signalling experts,
owners/occupiers of Park Lease Farm for a request halt.
- 2. Planning:**
Feasibility Study,
Materials Estimation,
Assessment of Underground Services,
Assessment of Bridges,
Costings.
- 3. Construction:**
clearing route,
building Clayfurlong bridge across the A429,
building bridge across Windmill Road, Kemble,
maintaining bridge at Ewen Wharf,
moving or diverting services under Tetbury Road,
constructing the station near the RAU,
provision of services at the Station,
fencing route,
laying ballast,
laying tracks.
- 4. Establishment of Operating Company:**
legal issues,
liability issues,
funding issues,
selection of company type,
selection of governing body,
recruitment of staff, helpers, supporters, volunteers.
- 5. Rolling Stock:**
definition of requirements,

identification of possible suppliers,
investigation of electric battery option,
hire or purchase of rail bus.

5 POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS

The following benefits are expected to result from this Project:

- reduced car usage;
- reduced car ownership;
- improved access to the town for visitors, businesses and students;
- increased car parking availability for future rail travellers via Kemble;
- operation as a park-and-ride service between the University Station car park and Cirencester;
- increased tourism for the many attractions in the town;
- increased property values in the Chesterton area;
- improved access to Gloucester Royal Infirmary;
- easier access to the Royal Agricultural University for students, staff and visitors;
- community integration;
- improved employment opportunities for the increasing numbers of non-drivers;
- reduction of traffic at the junction between the A433 and the A429;
- provision of a focus for the new green corridors and cycle paths throughout the town.

6 CHALLENGES

6.1 Land Ownership

After the closure of the old rail connection, the land occupied by the track was sold back to adjacent landowners at a low cost. It is therefore necessary to reach agreement with all the owners of this land. If it is necessary to purchase the land, the Project will need to create a legal entity to own the land and enter into contracts.

The route across open fields will obstruct valuable farmland and will deviate from the old embankment. It will therefore require significant earthworks and possibly a bridge for agricultural access.

In particular, the acquisition of the land for the University Station car park may involve a significant sized parcel of land. However, the land selected is planned to be agricultural for at least the next 20 years, and its use as a station will provide a far greater benefit to the community and to the owners.

6.2 Safety Management

The original route is currently open to the public as a walking and bridle path, we assume permissive, except for the bridges and some areas that are fenced off. If this access is to continue, then it will be necessary to fence the line from pedestrians. The rail bus will not travel excessively fast, but nonetheless precautions will have to be thorough to prevent collisions with people and animals. There may be a possibility of automatic vision systems to check that the line is clear.

The section of the route which crosses Tetbury Road and then Stroud Road will have to be carefully designed. A VLR transport system is definable as a tram for the purposes of route design, which allows it to travel across and along public roads. However, the design should try to minimise the possibilities of adverse interaction and delays to motorists where the routes cross.

In addition, all the usual criteria for safe operation of a public VLR railway will have to be met. It would be preferable to operate the service without staff on the VLR train, but this question will be addressed after consultation with the appropriate authorities.

6.3 Operation of the Transport Services

In order to meet the requirements for safety and insurance the rail service will have to be operated by a legal entity. Normally tracks, facilities and stations are owned by Network Rail, and services are operated by a major rail company. Agreement will have to be obtained from the regulators to any arrangement proposed.

6.4 Kemble Station Car Park

The large new car park at Kemble is currently providing adequate spare space, but this will be dramatically reduced by the proposed Road Traffic Order to restrict parking on the roads of the village. In addition, GWR has warned that due to the doubling of the number of mainline trains through Kemble, and the extending of the trains themselves, the car park will be saturated by 2022.

One of the objectives of the Project is to reduce the number of cars travelling to the station, so the demand for parking at Kemble should be reduced while increasing passenger revenue. In addition, a much larger car parking space will be available at the University Station, reducing the number of cars coming from Cirencester and parking at Kemble.

The route of the old track passes through one side of the car park at Kemble, and although it will be possible to minimise the number a parking spaces lost, this will result in reduced revenue for Network Rail from parking fees. However, since the construction of the new car par at Kemble the loss of

parking space to the proposed track will be small in proportion, and will give a huge overall benefit in terms of passenger footfall.

6.5 University Station Car Park

A car park will be required in the field at the University Station, so agreement of the land owner will be needed, and a significant cost will be incurred in constructing it. However, the preferred area for the Station for Route A is open fields at present, and is not included in the Chesterton Development, so its market value is not as high as other land nearby.

Provision for safe storage of bicycles, as well as shelter for waiting passengers will be needed, and a suitable electrical supply for charging the rail bus. It is proposed that CCTV and other monitoring features are included. Charging facilities for cars and bicycles will also be needed.

6.6 Security

The Kemble end of the route and the track itself will be fairly immune from interference, but the facilities at University Station will need to be protected against vandalism and theft. This can be provided by linking to the Cirencester CCTV system which has recently come under the aegis of the Town Council.

6.7 Underground Services

A major part of the cost of construction of a rail line is in the diversion of services. In this Project, the majority of the route is free from such services. Along Tetbury Road, it may be necessary to divert some services, but it is hoped that the track can be laid to avoid the most problematic – for example drains and sewers.

6.8 Ticketing

Although the service is likely to be financially independent of the rail network, there will be an expectation that it will be possible to buy a through ticket to any destination. Initially this may be complex to arrange, but it is hoped that as technology develops it will become possible to provide ticket machines on the rail bus, linked to a major rail ticket website.

6.9 Changes to Bus Routes

The existing bus route to Kemble will be superseded to some extent. However, new opportunities for a local bus service will arise, with the need to have a circular shuttle service through the major residential centres of Stratton, Bowling Green, Kingshill, Siddington, The Beeches, Chesterton and the Town Centre.

6.10 Combined Use of Route

Alternative uses for the route are also being proposed, such as a walking or cycling route. The existing path is wide enough to accommodate more than one means of transport, with barriers to maintain safety, although care will be needed to arrange layouts under and over bridges.

We feel that a light rail link will maximise the use of this route, especially during commuter rush hours.

While the inclusion of a cycle or walking route is beneficial if there is space for it, there are two major reasons for preferring to use the route for the VLR link.

- (1) While a cycle path offers health benefits for a minority of citizens, the VLR provides an environmental benefit to a much larger proportion of the population. The numbers of travellers expected to use the VLR is large, while the numbers of travellers who would cycle to Kemble, even in good weather during daylight will be small in comparison. It can also be argued that encouraging the many to walk to the station rather than drive will add up to a greater health benefit than providing a facility for the minority to cycle further!
- (2) The route as a cycle path suffers from the lack of a bridge over the A429, so cyclists will have to dismount, scramble down a steep bank, cross the busy main road, and climb up the other side. The construction of a cycle path cannot justify the building of a replacement bridge. On the other hand, the construction of a VLR link will justify the building of a bridge, which it is hoped can also be used by cyclists. Thus the use as a cycle route is made practical by the installation of the VLR link.

7 PLANNING ISSUES

The following issues are likely to involve discussions with the CDC Planning Officers and Gloucestershire Highways:

- access routes and traffic;
- habitat impacts;
- environmental issues

8 FUNDING

For the original railway, funding was raised by public subscription mainly from the affluent population of the town. Today the demographic of the area has changed, and the reasons for travelling have also evolved. The decision about whether the service is run by a profit-making or non profit-making organisation will be made after taking advice, as this will have a major impact on the options for fund-raising.

There is also an opportunity for investment by businesses which will benefit financially from the enhanced connectivity for Cirencester and the uplift on property values.

8.1 Government Sources

Government grants have been available for restoring stations and it is hoped that some funding for this type of practical, environmentally sound, infrastructure Project would be available from government bodies.

The recent announcement of major plans to re-open many routes closed by Dr. Beeching should open doors for funding of this Project.

8.2 Strategic Fit with Government Policies

This is a brief summary of a selection of the ways in which this project fits in with statements, strategies and plans by government at various levels.

The proposal aligns completely with:

- The Strategic Economic Plan v2 which states 'The three key themes to address are improvements to infrastructure, services, and access to stations. The outcomes of these will be to support sustainable economic growth, enable community connectivity, conserve the environment and improve community health and wellbeing.' This service answers neatly all these themes for the region around Cirencester.

- National policy, as illustrated most recently by the UK Industrial Strategy. This supports innovation of clean technologies, systems and services such as the Nationally significant VLR vehicles being developed at Warwick and others to be used on the CCRP, and improvement of rail services to deliver higher capacity.

- The Strategy's 5 foundations of productivity and responds to one of the Grand Challenges: investment in low carbon transport infrastructure for clean growth and future mobility.

- the objectives of the Department for Transport, as in 'The Williams Rail Review - The Role of the Railway in Great Britain', Evidence Paper February 2019.

- The [All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group](#).

- [Cotswold District Local Plan](#) (2011-2031), especially chapters 11.3 Sustainable Transport, 11.5.2 Local Highway Authority's policies, 11.5.6 'More sustainable modes of transport and forms of movement should be actively promoted as an alternative to private car use' and 11.5.11 'Planning applications need to address the transport implications'.

8.3 Housing Development

It is anticipated that the rail service will be seen as an integral part of the housing development adjacent to Chesterton, as there will be an obligation on the developer to contribute to local public transport enhancement.

9 NEXT STEPS

The following steps are seen as necessary to progress the Project:

9.1 Discussions with Landowners

An exploratory meeting has been held with the Bathurst Development Trust, which is responsible for the Chesterton development and also connected with the ownership of the relevant land. The Project was outlined and a response is awaited. In particular, views on preferences for the route options were sought.

It is hoped that an approval in principle of the Project can be agreed. This agreement would not be definitive at this stage, as the feasibility of the Project has not yet been established. However, a broad agreement in principle would pave the way for the Feasibility Study.

9.2 Discussions with Local Government

Preliminary talks have been held with Cirencester Town Council and Cotswold District Council, to seek broad agreement with the Project, establish planning requirements and seek funding for the Feasibility Study. Cirencester Town Council has offered to contribute to the funds for the Feasibility Study.

A meeting is being sought with Gloucestershire County Council transportation staff.

9.3 Rail Authorities

Preliminary discussions are needed with government advisors, Network Rail, GWR, Office of Road & Rail, etc.

9.4 Feasibility Study

A formal feasibility study will be undertaken to examine all aspects of the Project, including but not limited to:

1. costs; installation and operating;
2. selection of route option;
3. customer base and usage;
4. returns; financial, social and environmental;
5. legal issues;
6. funding arrangements.

The results of this study will reveal the realistic likelihood that the Project will be financially viable and socially and environmentally beneficial, and will determine whether it goes ahead.

9.5 Budgetary Costings

A major part of the analysis is to find realistic prices for materials and tasks, and calculate costs for the key aspects of the Project. These are seen as:

1. Clearance, preparation, drainage and fencing of the route:
the railway line will require fencing on both sides to prevent livestock and wild animals from straying onto the track.
2. Earthworks and groundwork for the new sections across farmland:
the approximate costs of construction of the embankments are required.
3. Materials for and laying of the track:
the approximate costs of materials for the construction of the track are required.
4. Provision of infrastructure and services at University Station:
the installation of electricity, water and drainage will be a significant outlay, but will be significantly reduced if taken in conjunction with the adjacent development of housing at Chesterton.
5. Materials for and construction of University Station and Town Halt:
although modern rail vehicles are designed to be accessed without a full height platform, some form of raised area will be required for accessibility, as well as shelter, bicycle racks and car parking.
6. Labour costs for design and construction work;
although it is hoped that a large proportion of the construction can be undertaken by ex-services personnel under a government supported scheme, there will be significant labour costs remaining.
7. Costs of construction of bridges:
the construction of suitable aesthetically appropriate bridges will require significant expenditure.
8. Rail coach, purchase or rental:
the review of the costs will also require a preliminary assessment of the types of vehicle available at reasonable cost.

9.6 Formation of Public Association

1. Setting up a website:
a simple website outlining the objectives and progress of the Project has been created, at CirenTrain.org.uk.
2. Formation of a Legal Body:
the formation of an appropriate body will require careful consideration; possibilities include a Limited Company or a [Community Interest Company](#).
3. Drafting a constitution:
a simple constitution is needed to define the objectives and administration of the Association; for a CIC, standard [Articles of Association](#) are published by HMRC.
4. Organising an inaugural meeting:
almost without exception, everyone with whom this Project has been discussed has expressed enthusiasm for it, tempered with realistic caution about the task involved. The District Council has also begun to show an interest.

10 LOVE LANE EXTENSION

10.1 Route Details

1. It is proposed that once the route to the town is in operation, the next most beneficial route will be to extend to the outskirts of the Love lane Industrial Estate.

2. Instead of turning off towards the RAU, this route will continue along the original alignment until it crosses Spratsgate lane, then follow alongside or on Wilkinson Road to the middle of the industrial estate.

10.2 Benefits

This extension will provide the following benefits to the line and to the people of Cirencester:

1. The trains will come right to the central area of the main industrial estate. Cirencester is a net importer of employees, that is more people commute into Cirencester than commute out, but large numbers commute in each direction. At present most use cars, but a regular train would provide convenience and CO₂ reduction.
2. The businesses in Cirencester will be able to attract staff.
3. Love Lane businesses will be able receive visitors from London, Bristol and the rest of the rail network more easily.

10.3 Challenges

The following challenges will need to be addressed and resolved:

1. The line will need to cross Spratsgate Lane, but this is a reasonably wide road with good visibility.
2. The route of the old line is now partially occupied by a main gas facility, but the new route can be diverted around this easily.

11 TETBURY EXTENSION

As the next step in an ongoing programme of restoration of rail connections, the next opportunity is to link up Cirencester and Tetbury, including Kemble Airport on the way. Interest has been expressed by the Airport owners to analyse the issues and benefits.

The following points should be noted:

1. It will be necessary to cross under the main line track in order to link direct between Cirencester and Tetbury.
2. The disused line to Tetbury is in the ownership of many different farms, making negotiation complex and time-consuming.

12 DOCUMENT VERSION CHANGES

2.0	8 May 2017	Addition of the Extension to the Centre of Cirencester
2.1	24 June 2017	Addition of Reference to the Extended Car Park at Kemble
2.2	05 Dec 2017	Addition of Results of Benefits Analysis, updates of car parking
3.1	20 Apr 2018	Refocus on Town Extension, addition of GCC aspects
3.2	12 July 2018	Major re-write with photos of Town Routes
3.3	20 July 2018	Clarification and wording improvements
3.4	20 Oct 2018	Re-emphasis of the case
3.5	27 Oct 2018	Additions to 1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 6.2
3.6	23 Jan 2019	Correction of bridge names, additions to text
3.7	1 July 2019	Addition of summary of strategic fit with government policies
3.8	7 Feb 2020	Rationalisation of route options on map
3.9	11 Feb 2020	Removal of route options B and C, addition of College halt