



# Windsor Link Railway

Presentation to Windsor  
Neighbourhood Plan Group

16 October 2013

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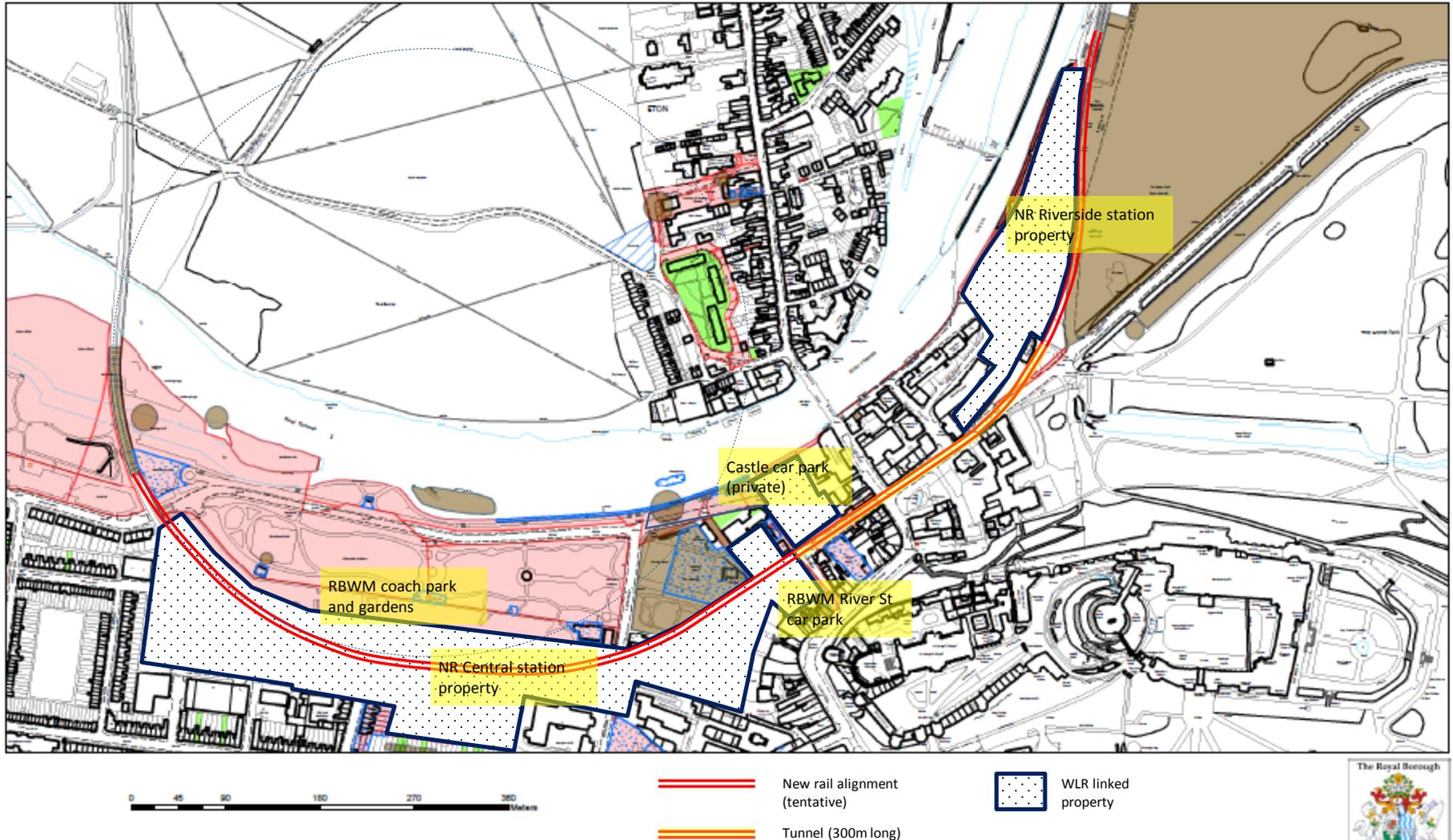
## **Richard Wickerson, Corporate Development Director, WLR**

- Qualified as commercial lawyer with Clifford Chance
- Over 20 years as corporate financier with Schroders, Hill Samuel/Close Brothers and Wyvern Partners, advising on acquisitions and disposals and major projects and privatisations, mostly in the infrastructure sector
- Experience covers identifying opportunities, advising on structuring of deals, negotiating commercial and contractual terms and project managing transactions; substantial experience of public/private partnerships in the infrastructure sector including negotiating joint ventures
- Eight years' experience in senior in-house corporate development roles with major UK quoted infrastructure services companies (Atkins, Jarvis and Tribal)
- Well connected in the UK infrastructure services industry
- Worked for WLR for four years

## Current status of the project

- Network Rail has assessed the project as being *high value for money* under Department for Trade guidelines, which assess the social and economic benefits
- Network Rail has also granted WLR a 20 year exclusivity period to develop the scheme and agreed to grant options over all its land relevant to the scheme; it now awaits more detailed proposals from WLR
- The Alliance between SWT and Network Rail has given the scheme its formal support, Jim Morgan, the Alliance Infrastructure Director, says they believe WLR would be **a worthwhile addition to the rail network**
- Leading infrastructure development companies are keen to become WLR's development partner; they have assessed the scheme as technically viable and financially achievable; they are keen to know that the proposals have the support in principle of the local community and the Council

# WLR-linked land in Windsor



# The opportunity for Windsor

## The key benefits

- Faster and more frequent trains to London and around the region
- Addresses Windsor's chronic traffic and parking problems
- Adapts for an increased population and economic growth (transport cannot be ignored, as the summer traffic jams showed)
- Better community facilities (e.g. more retail, cinema, better park)
- Opportunity to vastly improve the look of the riverside area

## Transport-related benefits

- An infrastructure scheme that would link the M4 corridor with the M3 corridor and South London (and perhaps be the beginning of a London orbital railway)
- Major potential for increasing intra-regional travel by rail (Maidenhead will benefit as much as Windsor, becoming an important transport crossroads on several major rail routes) and improving the journey time to London
- The increased rail connectivity should mean less congestion on roads, with the consequential environmental benefits; the heritage of central Windsor would be preserved, indeed enhanced
- Within Windsor - easing of road traffic congestion and more appropriate transport links for such an important heritage destination; scheme would also provide a boost for local businesses and provide a park-n-ride facility at Chalvey, just north of the M4.
- East Berkshire was mainly rural when transport links were first built and these are now under great strain as the region has become economically successful; new roads are impossible politically, so it is a priority to make better use of existing rail infrastructure

## Property development opportunities

- The proposals also offer an opportunity, alongside and in conjunction with the railway scheme, to achieve substantial enhancement to the local environment and to provide much needed additional housing and other commercial/leisure uses as may be desired by the local community:
  - Enhance the character of Alexandra Gardens area and reconnect the town to the river
  - Build additional homes, easing pressure on the green belt
  - Better provision of car-parking facilities

# Managing likely concerns

- There will naturally be concern about the likely level and duration of disruption to the centre of Windsor:
  - The infrastructure companies WLR is working with are very experienced working in sensitive and congested areas with major pedestrian and vehicle movements
  - They have already begun thinking about steps that could be taken to minimise disruption and to allow people to still be able to go about their normal business
  - Local people when surveyed showed great maturity and acceptance of some disruption for long-term benefit
- There will likely also be concern about the nature and density of any property development:
  - Property development is not an essential part of the new railway. However, it clearly creates an opportunity to improve the riverside area in a more planned, sustainable and visually appealing way that could be achieved by piecemeal developments by existing landowners.
  - WLR is clear that the extent and type of any property development will need to have the support of residents
  - Any development will of course need planning approval but WLR anyway is keen to ensure that architectural heritage of central Windsor is respected and enhanced. No listed buildings will be harmed and the existing stations will be preserved and restored

## Evidence of public support

- WLR is very keen to build a consensus with the local community and other key stakeholders in support of the scheme
- WLR has put considerable effort into communicating with local residents by publishing a website, which is highly informative about the proposals and keeps residents up to date with relevant milestones achieved by WLR, and regular press releases, which have been given both prominence and favourable treatment by the local media.
- WLR has also already undertaken a consultation which was delivered to 2,500 addresses in central Windsor. The high level of responses (over 12%) resulted in a statistically significant sample of the overall population.
- This consultation indicated very strong support in principle for the scheme and a significant willingness to accept the inevitable disruption given the benefits of the scheme (see separate document or online at <http://windsorlink.co.uk/tag/consultations/>)

## Proposed way forward

- WLR is very keen to build a consensus with the Council and other key stakeholders and with the public and take the proposals forward in tandem with the Council and local residents
- RBWM has suggested that as a first step the approval of the neighbourhood plan steering group be sought. (Suggested motion on next page)
- This would then be followed by a pre-application planning process be pursued in which WLR, RBWM and local people would together develop an outline plan for the scheme for discussions with the Council and local residents

# Suggested motion

The Central Windsor Neighbourhood Plan resolves:

1. To support the Windsor Link Railway in principle
2. To request that the emerging Borough Local Plan marks the associated land (shown in blue on the attached map) as reserved so as not to impede the development of the railway
3. To set-up a working group, to report back to the Neighbourhood Plan, to work with WLR as it develops the proposals in more detail



## Windsor Link Railway

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