

£6.14m Portishead and Bristol railway line contract awarded

Plans to restore an abandoned railway line between Portishead and Bristol have taken a step further with the appointment of a main contractor in a £6.14million deal.

Network Rail has appointed engineering and construction firm Volkerfitzpatrick as primary contractor on the project, which will see new stations in the North Somerset towns and nearby Pill.

It is estimated the £150m project to restore the line to and from Bristol Temple Meads station, which was approved by the government in November, will connect 50,000 residents to the rail network.

Portishead's passenger station closed in 1964 and was due to reopen in December 2024, before delays on a decision amid concerns over rising costs.

Preparatory works will now take place over the next year and half as part of the scheme's design stage and as a full business case is completed.

David Davidson, Network Rail's interim Western route director, said: "We're delighted to have awarded the contract for the restoration of the Portishead to Bristol line to VolkerFitzpatrick, reaching an important milestone for the reintroduction of passenger services.

"The railway line has been long awaited and we look forward to working with our partners to deliver this major scheme which will play a significant role in supporting sustainable travel in and around Bristol."

Paul Lilley, operations director for VolkerFitzpatrick, said:

“I am delighted that Network Rail has chosen to work with VolkerFitzpatrick to deliver this important project, including the new stations on this revitalised line. Our team is excited to be part of these plans to connect communities, create a better-connected transport network and support the region’s ambition to be net-zero carbon by 2030.”

West of England Metro Mayor Dan Norris added: “This is a really important project that will see communities in south Bristol and across our city reconnected to Portishead and help keep us firmly on the right track when it comes to reaching our ambitious West of England net-zero-by-2030 target. I look forward to working with VolkerFitzpatrick as we begin the hard work of physically bringing this rail line back to life.”

The Portishead line is part of Network Rail’s wider MetroWest programme, which seeks to bring suburban rail services to more stations across the West Country.

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