

# Swift Rail: Achieving Better Suburban Links

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# Today we will

1. Set the context for Swift Rail
2. Explain what it is and how it would work
3. Discuss possible applications
4. Outline potential benefits and challenges

## Mid-sized British cities need better urban transit.



- Housing output must double to meet population forecasts
- New settlements are being planned
  - e.g. Oxford, Gloucester, York
- Bus services are in decline & poorly supported
- Local rail usage outside London is low
  - National rail services focus on medium distance trips

## Swift Rail – A new concept in urban transit.



- An urban transit system on some existing Network Rail routes & new sections of railway
- Shorter distance local lines focused on smaller growth cities
- Aimed at turn up and go convenience, fast travel
  - Provides for everyone, attracts car users
- Geared to mostly Network Rail standards
  - Not highway ones (hence not tram-train)
- Based on 9 key features

## Swift Rail features – Route & station design:



1. City station linked to suburbs in catchment region
2. City station as hub for coordinated local transport
3. All stations located & designed as area focal points

## Swift Rail features – Service operations:



4. High standard but simplified signalling on purely Swift rail lines
5. High-frequency services throughout
  - every 15 minutes basic?
6. Integration with local bus & other rail services
  - links at stations / common ticketing / common promotion



## Swift Rail features – Trains:



Stadler



Vivarail/URBED concept

### 7. Multiple units

- With high acceleration and deceleration rates
- High density, high quality interiors fitted for local needs

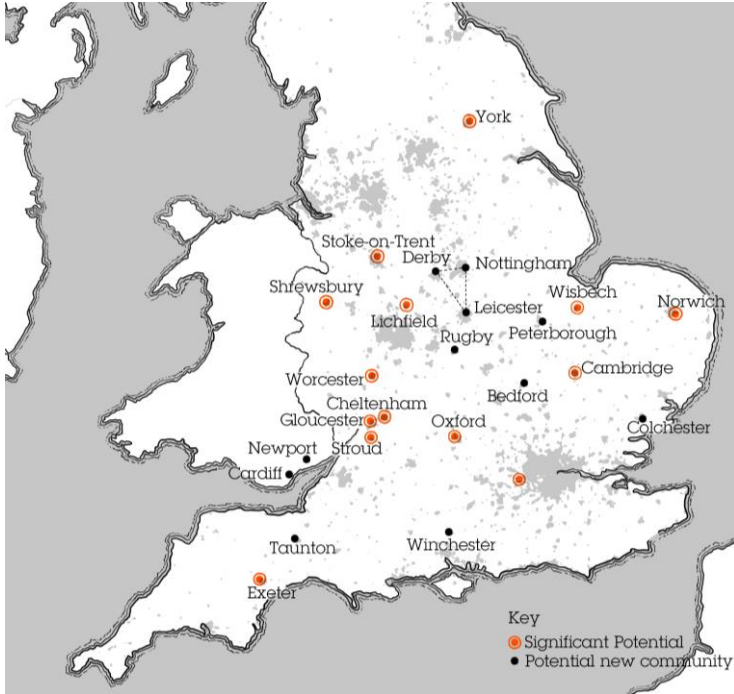
## Swift Rail features – Planning and Management:



8. Planned, funded & franchised by locally based corporation linked to development
  - involving bus or rail company and/or local authorities
  - NB - New Town Development Corporations provide the powers, e.g. LDDC
9. Managed by locally based company or development corporation
  - could include local bus or rail company



## Swift Rail features – Opportunities and applications:



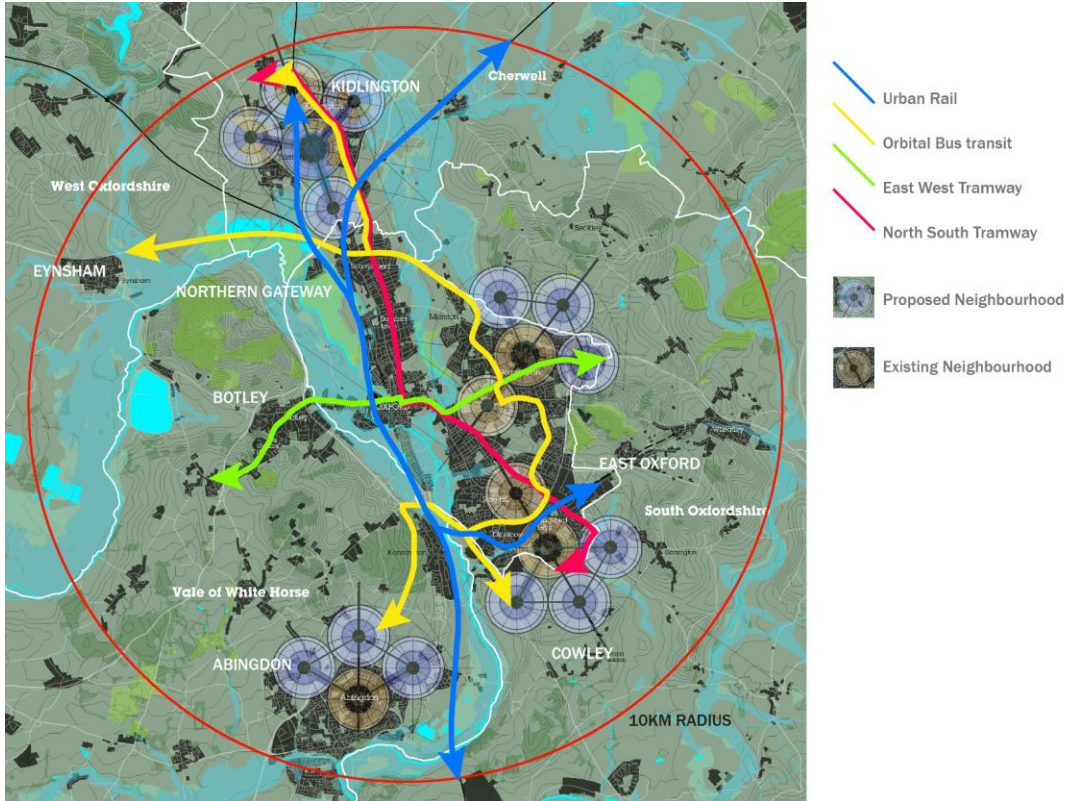
- Potential for up to 30 urban systems in Britain
  - based on analysis of Uxceter cities
- Possibilities across various types of city:
  - historic university cities like Oxford and Cambridge
  - growing commuter towns like Gloucester, Colchester, &c
  - post-industrial clusters, e.g. the South Wales Valleys, the Derby/Nottingham/Leicester triangle
- Expansion around London & major cities
  - under-served parts of Outer London e.g. Southall to Brentford

## Swift Rail – Potential benefits: For health transport



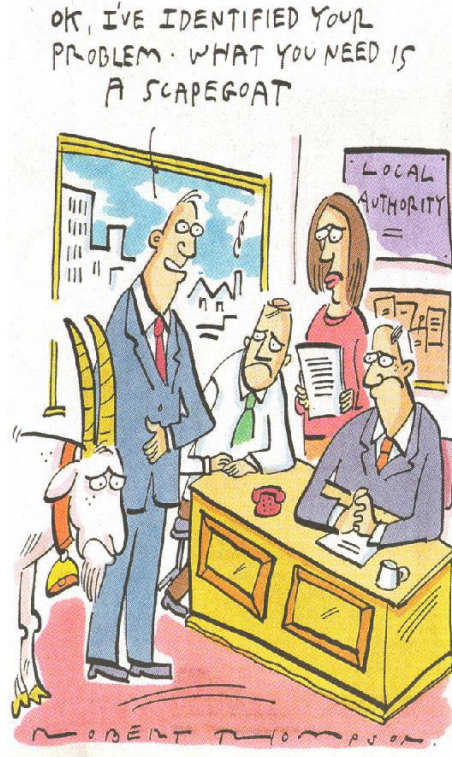
- A distinctive brand with a distinct role
- Short routes with high frequencies
- Local accessibility
  - new & reopened stations at heart of communities
- Focus for coordinated local transport
  - e.g. common ticketing, bus-transit/bike links at hub stations
- Park & Ride potential on edge of cities

## Swift Rail – Potential benefits: For growth



- Expands labour markets for cities
  - peripheral estates, small towns, etc.
- Avoids congested road travel & reduces road congestion
- Improves health & air quality
- Matches best Continental cities quality
  - e.g. Schnellbahnen in mid-sized German cities

## Swift Rail – The Challenges:



- Lack of regional bodies to sponsor Swift Rail
- Focus of Network Rail & TOCs on current railway system maintenance & upgrade
- Constraints on public authority finances
- No effective strategic planning for transport
- Narrow technical focus of project assessment processes

# Swift Rail- The Journey starts here

Want to know more?

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Reports:

TRAMWAYS & URBAN TRANSIT 1601 – January 2016

Logistics & Transport Focus 18/4 – April 2016

PUBLIC MONEY & MANAGEMENT – September 2016