

Rail Consultation 2015
Transport, Access and Safety Unit
Hertfordshire County Council
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please reply to:
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12 August 2015

Dear Sir,

Railfuture response to Hertfordshire Draft Rail Strategy consultation

I am pleased to submit this response on behalf of the Railfuture Infrastructure & Networks and Passenger Groups. It has been prepared primarily with contributions from the Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire division of our London & South East regional branch.

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for passengers and freight. It is a voluntary organisation to which many rail user groups are affiliated and the organisation is independent both politically and commercially.

Our comments are not confidential, and we would be happy for them to appear on your website and you are welcome to use them in discussion with funders and other stakeholders. We would be happy to enlarge on any of the points made or to work with you to identify the best options for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jan Brown

Ian Brown
Railfuture
Director of Policy

**www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
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Railfuture response to Hertfordshire Draft Rail Strategy consultation

Introduction

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway for passengers and freight, to which many rail user groups are affiliated.

- 1.1 This response, which follows the format of your Rail Strategy Consultation 2015 response form, is made by our Policy Group, on behalf of our Infrastructure & Networks and Passenger Groups and with contributions from the Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire division of our London & South East regional branch. Comments made are not confidential, and we would be happy for them to appear on your website. You are welcome to use them in discussion with funders and other stakeholders, and we would be happy to enlarge on any of the points made below and to work with you to identify best options for the future.
- 1.2 We are interested in and shall comment on all of the corridors and topics in the consultation draft of the Rail Strategy.
- 1.3-1.8 Our members and those of our affiliates travel frequently by train in Hertfordshire, for the full range of journey purposes and using all of the corridors.

West Anglia Main Line Corridor – proposed strategic priorities.

- 2.1 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for WAML corridor?

WA1 – Service improvements from the committed 2014-19 enhancement scheme.

Strongly agree.

WA2 – Train and platform lengthening, extra platforms at London Liverpool Street and investigation of service improvements through timetable changes.

Strongly agree.

WA3 – Support Crossrail 2 to secure long-term capacity improvements and promote extension into Hertfordshire.

Strongly agree.

- 2.2 Which of listed priorities for WAML corridor is most important?

WA1.

- 2.3 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for WAML corridor?

Improved connectivity for Hertfordshire at Stratford, through additional platform capacity on High Meads Loop between Temple Mills East Jn and High Meads Jn – for operational resilience and new direct interchange at Stratford International with Southeastern Highspeed and DLR for services from/to Hertfordshire, and also dual use with London Overground as their platforms 1 and 2 cease to be sufficient for medium/long-term capacity/service frequency/train length.

East Coast Main Line corridor – proposed strategic priorities.

2.4 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for ECML corridor?

EC1 – Develop a Stevenage Interchange Hub and secure better long-distance connections

Strongly agree.

EC2 – Promote service improvements through a ‘Hertford Loop Metro’ and advancing role of Stevenage as a hub interchange.

Strongly agree.

EC3 – Post-HS2, secure more long-distance stops at Stevenage and improved local services with capacity released by HS2.

Strongly agree.

2.5 Which of listed priorities for ECML corridor is most important?

EC2.

2.6 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for ECML corridor?

No more strategic priorities.

Midland Main Line corridor – proposed strategic priorities.

2.7 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for MML corridor?

MM1 – Long-distance service stops at St. Albans connecting to Sheffield, Nottingham etc.

Neither agree nor disagree. Questions about desirability compared with other means of achieving same outcome, and deliverability post-Thameslink Programme.

MM2 – Extension of Thameslink services to improve connections to the East Midlands.

Agree. Additional rolling stock required for extended services; new Thameslink trains could be found unsuitable by passengers for longer-distance regional journeys.

MM3 – Post-HS2, secure further long-distance stops at St. Albans with capacity released by HS2.

Agree.

2.8 Which of listed priorities for MML corridor is most important?

MM2.

2.9 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for MML corridor?

No more strategic priorities.

West Coast Main Line corridor – proposed strategic priorities.

2.10 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for WCML corridor?

WC1 – Extension of Crossrail 1 to Watford Junction and Tring.

Agree. Additional rolling stock required for extended services; Crossrail trains and service stopping pattern could be found unsuitable by passengers for longer-distance regional journeys.

WC2 – Develop Watford Junction into an interchange hub with better facilities and connections, including more long-distance stops post-HS2.

Strongly agree.

2.11 Which of listed priorities for WCML corridor is most important?

WC2.

2.12 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for WCML corridor?

No further strategic priorities.

London to Aylesbury Corridor – proposed strategic priorities.

2.13 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for London-Aylesbury corridor?

LA1 – Delivery of Croxley Rail Link and development of a Watford Interchange Hub.

Strongly agree.

LA2 – Longer trains and higher capacity from next Chiltern franchise.

Strongly agree.

LA3 – Develop an Aylesbury to Watford service via re-instated Amersham Chord.

Agree.

LA4 – Improved services from Watford eg. extended Bakerloo line, more London Overground services and direct London Underground services to Amersham via Croxley Rail Link.

Agree.

2.14 Which of listed priorities for London-Aylesbury corridor is most important?

LA1.

2.15 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for London-Aylesbury corridor?

No more strategic priorities.

Orbital (East-West) Movement within the County – proposed strategic priorities.

3.1 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for improving orbital/east-west movement in Hertfordshire?

OM1 – good quality east-west bus service between key stations.

Agree.

OM2 – Bus rapid transit or light rail solution for the Abbey Line between Watford and St. Albans.

Strongly agree with rapid transit as the basis for connecting the two towns, not just the two stations; strongly disagree with bus rapid transit option as unattractive to existing and potential users compared with potential of light rail option.

OM3 – Support an East-West Central Section southern option via Stevenage and Luton

Neither agree nor disagree. Note not now one of the two options for further development.

OM4 – Consider wider options for east-west movement through the County Council's future transport plans and strategies.

Strongly agree.

3.2 Which of listed priorities for orbital/east-west movement is most important?

OM2 light rail option.

3.3 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for orbital/east-west movement?

In OM4, include consideration of potential for light rail in former rail corridors.

Access to international airports – proposed strategic priorities.

3.4 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities to improve access to international airports?

AA1 – Increase services and connectivity on WAML to Stansted Airport.

Agree.

AA2 – Support Crossrail 1 - WCML link to improve connections to Heathrow.

Agree.

AA3 –Direct links from Watford and Hemel Hempstead to Gatwick through re-instated WCML to Brighton Line services.

Strongly agree.

AA4 – Support East-West Rail Central Section southern option via Stevenage and Luton.

Neither agree nor disagree. Note not now one of the two options for further development.

AA5 – Long-term opportunities to improve connections to Stansted, including Crossrail 2 services, direct rail link from Hertford East, and improved connectivity at interchanges.

Agree to improved connectivity at interchanges.

3.5 Which of listed priorities for improving access to international airports is most important?

AA3 [services extended to Gatwick Airport/Three Bridges].

3.6 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for improving access to international airports?

Include consideration of whether any schemes identified under OM4 in 3.1/3.3 above might feed any of the three north-of-Thames London airports eg. Luton.

HS2 opportunities – proposed strategic priorities.

3.7 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities in terms of opportunities arising from HS2?

H1 – Benefit from capacity released on WCML, including long-distance stops at Watford Junction and more frequent commuter services at eg. Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead.

Strongly agree.

H2 – Benefit from capacity released on ECML, including more long-distance stops at Stevenage and frequency and capacity at eg. Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.

Strongly agree.

H3 – Benefit from capacity released on MML, including more long-distance stops at St. Albans and capacity at eg. Radlett and Elstree & Borehamwood.

Agree.

3.8 Which of listed priorities arising from HS2 is most important?

H1.

3.9 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities arising from HS2?

No more strategic priorities.

Station facilities access and facilities – proposed strategic priorities.

3.10 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for improving station facilities, access and train facilities?

FA1 – Improvements of cycle and car parking facilities where needed.

Agree.

FA2 – Improvement schemes to improve access for all users, particularly by sustainable modes.

Agree.

FA3 – Address train facility shortfall through higher quality rolling stock.

Agree.

3.11 Which of listed priorities for improving station facilities, access and train facilities is most important?

FA2.

3.12 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for improving station facilities, access and train facilities?

Address station facility shortfalls through higher specifications in franchises eg. improved way-finding signage and information screens, public address, wifi, toilets, weatherproof shelters, seating, staffing, and shared commitment with DfT/Network Rail for more step-free access.

Freight – proposed strategic priorities.

3.13 Agree or disagree with strategic priorities for freight?

FT1 – Manage impacts on passenger services from freight path requirements.

Agree.

FT2 – Safeguard rail freight facilities for transport of minerals and aggregates and support new terminals where compatible with local community needs.

Agree.

3.14 Which of listed priorities for freight is most important?

FT1.

3.15 Anything further to include in list of strategic priorities for freight?

No more strategic priorities.

General Aims

4.1 Agree or disagree with general aims of draft Hertfordshire Rail Strategy 2015?

A1 – Improve connectivity to a wider range of destinations, either with direct trains or requiring minimal changes.

Strongly agree.

A2 – Improve service frequency and journey times.

Strongly agree.

A3 – Reduce overcrowding on trains and at stations by addressing capacity needed now and in the future.

Strongly agree.

A4 – Improve access to stations for all.

Strongly agree.

A5 – Ensure that rolling stock meets the needs of all customers.

Strongly agree.

A6 – Improve access to key employment centres and hospitals.

Strongly agree.

4.2 Which of listed aims is most important?

A1.

Overall top priorities

4.3 Agree or disagree with overall top priorities for Hertfordshire Rail Strategy 2015?

TP1 – Croxley Rail Link and Watford Interchange Hub.

Strongly agree.

TP2 – Long-distance stops at St. Albans to Sheffield, Nottingham etc.

Disagree as a top priority. See MM1 in 2.7 above.

TP3 – Crossrail 1 - WCML link to improve services and journey opportunities.

Agree.

TP4 – Hertford Loop Metro and Stevenage Interchange Hub.

Strongly agree.

TP5 – East-West Rail Central section southern option via Luton and Stevenage.

Disagree as a top priority since two other corridors identified as better value-for-money.

TP6 – Capacity and service improvements on WAML through four-tracking and Crossrail 2.

Agree. Doubtful business case for four-tracking Lea Valley line pre-Crossrail 2.

4.4 Any other comments about the draft Hertfordshire Rail Strategy 2015?

Commend the open process which has produced it, including stakeholder workshops. Also commend the methodology and structure of the draft strategy with a logical sequence built on baseline analysis and starting with rail development objectives, through themes, issues, conditional outputs, interventions, strategic and top priorities.