

please reply to:

Neil Middleton

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hertsandbeds@railfuture.org.uk

Dear Team

Luton Local Transport Plan 5 – A response by Railfuture

Railfuture is Britain's leading independent organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway for passengers and freight. We are a voluntary group representing rail users. This response has been informed by setting out planned comments in our newsletters and seeking comments and by debate at one of regular meetings. That included a presentation by the relevant Luton BC staff.

Our lead contact on this is Neil Middleton, Convenor of our Herts & Beds Division. We have prepared our response to be in line with the survey questions in use.

1. Before today, had you heard about Luton's draft fifth Local Transport Plan? For example, via the Snapshot Survey, the Council website, social media or other media?

Yes

2. How clear is the vision of the plan? The vision can be found on [page 7](#):

Very clear

3. To what extent do you support the objectives of the plan? The seven objectives underpinning the vision are [found](#):

Strongly support

4. Which of the following plan areas do you feel are most important? (Select all that apply)

Accessibility and equality (e.g. easier transport access for all)

Strategic connectivity and economic growth

Maintenance and resilience of transport assets

(Other): As a pro Rail campaign Group our focus is rail related

5. Overall, to what extent do you agree that the plan will improve transport in Luton?

Strongly agree

6. How confident are you that the plan can be delivered successfully with the right funding and partnerships?

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

Confident

7. What types of support or investment do you think Luton needs most to deliver this plan successfully?

To achieve the rail related elements in the plan the Council will need to work very closely with the Department for Transport and Great British Railways (in time – and in the interim, with East West Rail, East Midlands Railway and Thameslink).

The key challenge will be to persuade these bodies to support Luton's goals in the context of other key priorities. For instance a key goal for getting long distance services to stop in the Borough will be to persuade the DfT and GBR/EMR that the disbenefits of the time taken for the stop for those passing through are less than the benefits to Luton and those travelling to/from the borough.

Likewise Government funding will be needed for projects such as lifts at Leagrave; it seems to us that there is a move from the government towards local contributions for this type of improvement.

8. Is there anything missing from the draft plan you'd like to see included?

Whilst having a goal for longer distance services to stop at both Luton (Town) and Luton Airport Parkway is sensible, we believe it important that the Council does not bid for a pair of stops but instead bids on separate benefit cases for each. For instance, we have spoken to stakeholders in the Sheffield area who have emphasised the disappointment of loss of through services to Luton Airport Parkway – as it gives them a better route for trips to destinations outside the UK. We suspect that Luton Airport Parkway's business case can more easily garner outside support. We also believe that activity for both stations should peak after EMR's new Aurora trains have settled in and whilst decisions are being made for the Midland Main Line as East West services start to both support Universal and to Cambridge.

With the arrival of the full East West Rail service, Cambridge will become much more commutable without a car, whether for work, for study, visits to the biomedical campus in Cambridge et al. We note that specific destinations are not mentioned in reference to East West Rail – which we can understand. However, given the importance of Cambridge connectivity for Luton, we think the diagram in Figure 10 should make explicit reference to East West Rail to Cambridge, perhaps by an inset at the top right.

We welcome the plan to encourage cycle use to travel between start / end points in the Borough and Railway stations. We think there should be an explicit goal of providing secure storage suitable for e-bikes which are considerably more expensive.

On integrated ticketing, in addition to bus multi operator and bus / rail through ticketing, we think bike hire and rail / long distance coach integrated ticketing should be explored as an option – in a single transaction book the rail / coach ticket and reserve and pay for a hire bike (normal or e-bike).

On Policy 20, on Rail Electrification we welcome this. In our view further electrification of the Midland Mainline is a 'good thing', but for good order we note that all passenger services (less the occasional charter service) are already due to become electric operated when passing Luton once EMR complete their rollout of their Aurora trains. We think that 20B remains a worthwhile objective, but from Luton's perspective, for a switch to electric hauled freight. Supporting other electrification can also support a greater portion of electric hauled freight though Luton.

We note that the 'Sustainable user transport hierarchy' does not mention rail. In one sense, we can understand that as it focuses on travel in the borough, rail is less relevant. We have two observations:

1. We believe it is appropriate for there to be a supplemental note to the table explaining why rail is not mentioned.
2. We do see a specific use case for rail travel within the borough, which is for airport workers within active travel distance of Leagrave station who could credibly cycle to Leagrave, take the train to Luton Airport Parkway then DART (or the reverse). Possibly, the note referred to in 1 should also mention rail as equivalent to the bus for selected use cases.

Yours sincerely

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