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For the attention of Tessa Sweet-Escott, Principal Transport Policy Officer

Dear Tessa,

<u>East Sussex Draft Rail Strategy</u>

Thank you for the invitation to the Rail Symposium, and for the opportunity to provide feedback on your draft rail strategy. We have completed the online response, but have included here some additional material which does not fit into the online response boxes.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our feedback further, and to work with you on developing an engagement strategy to build stakeholder support, to align LEP objectives with the strategy objectives, and to inspire stakeholders to promote the transport improvements which the plan identifies as high priority to drive economic growth in the county.

The proposed meeting between East Sussex, Network Rail, Jonathan Roberts and Railfuture would be a good first step. When the final Strategic Rail Development Plan has been published, we would propose a launch event to engage a wider group of senior stakeholders, and to build the linkage with the SELEP strategic economic plan, the publication of the final Network Rail L&SE Market Study, and the consultation on the draft NR Sussex Route Study.

We would also recommend annual Rail Symposia in order to maintain impetus, and to strengthen the commitment and strategic consensus which is vital to our shared endeavours for the more successful railway needed to realise shared aspirations for a more successful county.

Yours sincerely

Dick Tyler
Railfuture Sussex & Coastway

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Railfuture response to East Sussex CC draft Rail Strategy

1.   Do you have any comments to make about the draft Rail Strategy?

The East Sussex strategic development plan for rail must answer the following exam questions that Network Rail identified in the Rail Symposium, before Network Rail will consider rail in East Sussex to be worthy of investment:

1. **Improved journey times vs increased stops.** This balance should be struck on the basis of maximising rail travel, so that as usage grows more frequent services can be justified with a pattern of both limited-stop and all-stations services (for example a fast Brighton – Ashford service running alongside an all-stations East Sussex Metro service).

2. **East Sussex in Figures prediction of a flat working population.** East Sussex must determine whether this prediction is in fact valid. The prediction may not be recent so may not take account of actual growth between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, or may have been influenced by a desire to minimize the requirement from government for new house building. Economic growth in East Sussex is dependent on an increase in the working population (and in their earning/spending potential). It is also worth noting the growth in travel by the non-working population, usually off-peak, which improves rail utilisation.

3. **Low rail modal share and recent road investment**.   The recent road investment and the rail modal share of 7% in East Sussex reflects the lack of infrastructure in East Sussex, which makes journeys slow and holds back economic growth in areas such as Hastings and Newhaven which desperately need it. Stimulating economic growth is a key objective for East Sussex, and there is also a statutory requirement to build additional houses. Both require investment in reducing journey times and increasing journey opportunities by rail, which will increase rail modal share.

The draft strategy identifies a number of good potential schemes. However to be acceptable to Network Rail, these must be expressed as outputs (to use the rail industry jargon) - it is then for Network Rail to identify schemes to deliver those outputs (although the strategy may identify indicative schemes to illustrate what is required).

For any of these outputs to make it through the funding gates at the Local Transport Board, Network Rail, ORR or DfT, the East Sussex strategic development plan for rail must explain:

4. **Strategic fit** – for example reinstating Uckfield – Lewes would provide more capacity with an additional route between the Sussex Coast and London, helping to relieve the Brighton Main Line and improving connectivity

5. **Alignment with LEP programmes** – in particular the emerging Strategic Economic Plan, and the LEP should for example create and match-fund with Network Rail a programme of journey time improvements

6. **Link individual economic development objectives, transport needs, rail outputs and potential solutions/schemes** – for example economic development is planned in Hastings, which is dependent on the transport need for improved access to employment and connections with business in Brighton and London, which requires rail outputs of journey time improvements between Hastings and both Brighton and London, which might be provided by schemes to build a new Willingdon chord with direct services between Hastings and Brighton, and to electrify Ore – Ashford, build a connection between HS1 and the Marshlink line at Ashford, and extend HS1 services to Hastings (or Eastbourne). Therefore the table of improvements at paragraph 6 would be better structured by economic development objective than by line.

The strategic development plan should also make it clear which improvements are for the ORR to mandate through their Periodic Reviews and Network Rail to provide through their Long Term Planning Process, and which are for the DfT and Train Operator to provide through commitments made in the franchise process.

Finally it is also important that East Sussex develop an engagement strategy to build stakeholder support, to align LEP objectives with the strategy objectives, and to inspire stakeholders to promote the transport improvements which the plan identifies as high priority. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you on both the prioritisation and the engagement strategy.

## 2.	Have any rail improvements been omitted from the list of suggested rail improvements identified for East Sussex?

The new station in the locality north of Hampden Park (Stone Cross and/or Polegate Parkway) is not an alternative to the Willingdon chord. The new station is to improve journey opportunities and travel times for journeys starting or ending in the immediate area, including the district centre of Hailsham, whilst the chord is to improve journey times between Ashford/Hastings and Lewes/Brighton.

In addition a new station should be considered at Bulverhythe.

Rather than specifying an additional train per hour on East Coastway (not clear how this can comprise a limited-stop hourly service and an hourly all-stations service) the strategy should call for at least 2 trains per hour at all stations, plus at least 2 trains per hour stopping only at major stations between Lewes and Hastings.

The strategy should call for reduced journey times on East Coastway/Marshlink (Brighton to Ashford).

The strategy should call for increased capacity between East Coastway and Gatwick/London. In addition to services from Eastbourne to Victoria, services are required from Eastbourne to London Bridge/Thameslink for access to the City and Docklands.

The strategy should call for services on the Uckfield line to be accelerated to reduce journey times. This can be achieved by electrification, as a better-value alternative to platform lengthening on the line. In addition the off-peak service should be increased to 2 trains per hour.

Rather than just enabling an Uckfield service to run to Tunbridge Wells, which would be unlikely to have a positive business case, enabling service trains to run between Eridge and Tunbridge Wells West would provide for a Brighton – Uckfield – Tunbridge Wells service, providing journey opportunities between these business, education and employment centres.

3. Should any of the rail improvements listed not be included in our priorities, and if so, why?

Glyne Gap station has no business case – the strategy should focus on Stone Cross and the concept of an East Sussex Metro as proposed in the Jonathan Roberts report at http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=603.

4. What should the priorities for rail in East Sussex be and why?

East Sussex should define a methodology by which the priority of each rail output can be assessed against criteria of alignment with East Sussex economic development objectives, feasibility, acceptability (to stakeholders) and viability. An example of a method which could be used for this is given in paragraph 4.2 of the Annex 1 - Surrey Rail Strategy Report document, which can be downloaded from http://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=3252&Ver=4 - the link is at item 46/13.

East Sussex should also identify timescales for each output - short, medium and long. However the priorities (not timescales) should inform when scheme development work will start; timescales should only relate to delivery (for example a high priority long term scheme may take 10 years to deliver, but scheme development work must start now to achieve that timescale).

In Annex 1 to this response we have shown the correlation between objectives, transport needs, high level outputs and the potential schemes and service improvements identified in the strategy. We have also used a simple method to propose priorities for each output. The codes in the Output column show the correlation with the low level outputs identified in the Jonathan Roberts report at http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=603. More work is required to fully reconcile the Jonathan Roberts report with the strategy.

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5.   In addition to focusing on rail service and infrastructure improvements, are there any other rail-related measures we may wish to pursue which would support or help us achieve our emerging rail priorities? If so, what are these and why?

The Jonathan Roberts report at http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=603 identifies the following generic outputs to improve public transport in East Sussex:

1. **G1 Marketing and integrated ticketing** – expanding 'The Key' ITSO smartcard from Southern. Experience of Oyster in London shows that smartcards change people's behaviour by providing a life-style-friendly equivalent to the psychology of filling a car with a tank-full: your money's already spent and so your next trips feel free!

2. **G2 Car parking and station railheads** – improved car parking can encourage people to use closer, less congested stations. The plan for Uckfield is an example.

3. **G3 Bus interchange and foot and cycle access** – the easier that interchange becomes, the more likely that people will use multi-stage journeys instead of travelling throughout by car. The proposal for the Uckfield Transport Hub is a model for effective partnership working to deliver shared objectives

4. **G4 Travel planning** – real time information and guidance on journey options will enable public transport to compete more effectively with the private car.

5. **EC6 Stronger Hailsham – Polegate bus link** with matching schedules to connect with train services at Polegate would encourage use of public transport.

6. **WL7 Assess the case for new or improved connecting bus services** to stations on the Uckfield line.

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Annex 1 Prioritisation of outputs

Objective	Transport Need	Output	Potential scheme	Align-ment with object-ives	Feas-ibility	Accept-ability /Via-bility	Priority	Time-scale	Potential service improvement
Economic development in Hastings and Bexhill	Access to employment and business in Brighton and Gatwick	Hastings – Brighton journey time improvement (EC1, EC2, EC3)	Reinstate Willingdon chord	2	1	1	4	L	Ashford/ Hastings – Lewes/ Brighton hourly limited stop service. Additional carriages
	Access to employment and business in London	Hastings – London journey time improvement (MH1, MH3)	Electrify Ashford – Ore	2	2	1	5	M	Extend HS1 service from Ashford to Hastings (or Eastbourne). Maintain Hastings – Gatwick-E.Croydon – Clapham Jn – Victoria service
			HS1 – Marshlink line connection	2	2	1	5	M	
	Access to local employment	Journey time improvement and Increased journey opportunities in coastal strip (EC4, EC5, EC7, MH2)	Completion of line speed and signalling improvements	2	2	2	6	S	East Sussex Metro service. Maintain existing services to smaller stations
			Stone Cross station	2	2	2	6	M	
			Wilting station	1	2	1	4	M	
			Bulverhythe station	2	2	1	5	M	
			Redouble Appledore – Ore	1	2	1	4	L	2 tph service, one limited stop, one all-stations

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Economic development in Eastbourne and Newhaven	Access to employment and business in Brighton	Eastbourne – Brighton journey time improvement (EC1, EC2, EC3)	Completion of line speed and signalling improvements	2	2	2	6	S	Additional limited stop hourly service (extend Brighton – Lewes shuttle to Eastbourne)
	Access to employment and business in Gatwick and London	Eastbourne – Lewes/ Gatwick/ London journey time and capacity improvement (EC1, EC2, EC3, WL1, WL2, WL3, WL8)	BML1 capacity improvements – Keymer Junction, East Croydon platforms, Windmill Bridge/Cottage Junctions	2	2	2	6	L	Cease split/join of trains at Haywards Heath. Reduce scheduled journey times. Improved services between Gatwick and Sussex coast locations.
			Completion of Thameslink programme	1	2	2	5	M	Allocate BML train paths to optimise utilisation of available capacity. Eastbourne - London Bridge/ Thameslink services
			Reinstate Uckfield – Lewes (and redouble/ electrify Hurst Green – Lewes)	2	2	2	6	L	Eastbourne – London via Uckfield limited stop service. Cease split/join of trains at Lewes. Through Newhaven – London service via Gatwick
	Access to local employment	Improve connectivity between transport modes at Newhaven	Newhaven transport hub	1	2	1	4	S	

Economic development in north of county	Access to employment and business in London	Uckfield – London journey time improvement (WL4)	Electrify Hurst Green – Uckfield	2	2	2	6	S	Lengthen trains. Accelerate services. Two trains per hour off-peak service. Alternate all-stations and limited-stop services
	Access to employment and business in Brighton and Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells - Weald – Lewes – Brighton journey opportunity (WL1, WL2, WL3, WL5, WL6)	Reinstate Uckfield – Lewes	2	2	1	5	L	Extend all-stations Uckfield services to Brighton
			Reconnect and upgrade Eridge – Tunbridge Wells West for service trains	2	2	1	5	M	Tunbridge Wells West – Brighton service
Undefined				0	1	1	2	S	Run Marshlink trains an hour later into the evening. Run all-day Saturday/Sunday services at rural stations. Increase number of late trains from London to Uckfield. Introduce earlier Uckfield trains on Sunday morning. Run Saturday trains on all public holidays.

Alignment with objectives, Feasibility and Acceptability/Viability scores: 0=Low, 2=High

Priority score: 0=Low, 6=High.   Timescale: H=High, M=Medium, S=Short