

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

2 July 2015

HERTFORDSHIRE RAIL STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Author: Liz Drake (Transport Access and Safety, HCC)

LTB Chair: Terry Douris (HCC Executive Member for Highways)

1 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current position of Rail Strategy development within the county.

2 Background

2.1 The rail network across the county will be undergoing significant change over the next 30 years, with the potential for substantial schemes to impact upon Hertfordshire and the effect of re-tendering of franchise operators.

2.2 The existing Rail Strategy has served as a useful tool for making the best of existing infrastructure in the short-term, but requires a fresh evidence-based approach in order to secure the maximum benefit over the medium- to long-term.

2.3 The new Rail Strategy, and the evidence it is based on, will help inform the emerging transport vision work so that rail is fully integrated into the county's longer term transport and spatial planning objectives.

2.4 This paper highlights the current position of this work stream.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is requested that the Board note this report.

4. Overview

2.5 The current Rail Strategy was adopted as part of the Local Transport Plan in 2011. The strategy set out the need for greater capacity on particular lines, but focussed on getting the most out of the existing network for Hertfordshire residents and businesses.

2.6 The new Rail Strategy sets out the need to provide new services and/or infrastructure, with a particular focus on economic benefits, as well as showing the support for these changes from local government and other partners.

2.7 A draft of the new Rail Strategy is currently the subject of public consultation to 4th August, and can be found at www.hertsdirect.org/railconsultation. Key stakeholders have been informed, including districts, LEPs, neighbouring authorities, MPs, the business community, train and bus operators, airports, Network Rail, rail user groups.

2.8 The Draft Rail Strategy considers shorter distance travel within and to/from the county, making up the majority of current journeys, as well as longer distance regional and national journeys.

2.9 It recommends a large number of short, medium and long term interventions in the rail network in Hertfordshire, to meet its overarching development objectives (to support economic growth, population growth and competitiveness, and address sustainability).

2.10 Top priorities identified include:

- Croxley Rail Link
- Watford Interchange Hub
- Long distance stops at St Albans
- Crossrail 1 West Coast Main Line Link
- Hertford Loop Metro
- Stevenage Interchange Hub
- East West Central section link southern option
- Crossrail 2

2.11 More generally the Draft Rail Strategy aims to:

- Improve connectivity to a wider range of destinations, either with direct trains or with minimal changes
- Improve service frequency and journey times
- Reduce overcrowding on trains/stations by addressing capacity needed now and in the future
- Improve access to stations for all
- Ensure that rolling stock meets the needs of all customers
- Improve access to key employment centres and hospitals

5. Next Steps

5.1 The Draft Rail Strategy will be amended in light of the responses received from the public consultation and is expected to be presented to the Environment, planning and transport panel on the 8th December 2015 for endorsement.