

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

7 APRIL 2007

STRATEGIC RAIL UPDATE

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LTB Chair: Derrick Ashley (HCC Executive Member for Environment, Planning & Transport)

1. Purpose of Report

To update the LTB on current rail issues which have implications for Hertfordshire.

2. Current Rail Issues

(a) Network Rail Route Studies

The Network Rail Route Studies set out the potential outputs for Control Period 6 (2019 – 24) and also look further ahead to 2043.

Two Route Studies were published on 24 March 2016:

Anglia Route Study – which in Hertfordshire covers the West Anglia Main Line between Waltham Cross and Bishop's Stortford, the Hertford East branch, and the Southbury loop via Theobalds Grove.

East Midlands Route Study – which in Hertfordshire covers the Midland Main Line between Elstree & Borehamwood and Harpenden.

(b) East West Rail

Network Rail announced on 29 March that the East West Rail central section corridor will run from Bedford to Sandy to Cambridge. This means that there will be no direct connection to Hertfordshire, although a station at Sandy will provide connections between the East Coast and Midland main lines serving the county.

Hertfordshire County Council is currently working with Stevenage, North Hertfordshire and Luton councils to investigate possible local east-west connections which would complement the East West Rail scheme.

(c) Crossrail 2

Hertfordshire County Council, along with Broxbourne, continues to work with the Crossrail 2 team on preparatory work. Focus so far has been on the level crossings

which would need to close, and the next meeting in April is expected to widen to have an initial consideration of station design.

The Hertfordshire responses to the earlier consultation have included the desire for a new station at Turnford (between Broxbourne and Cheshunt).

(d) High Speed 2

The High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on 23 March 2016.

The main impacts of the scheme on Hertfordshire are the opportunities of released capacity on the West Coast Main Line when the scheme opens in 2026, and, in the shorter term, the impact of construction on the local environment and highway network. The construction impacts are particularly significant as all of the spoil for the 16km Chilterns tunnel will be taken out at the Hertfordshire end over a four year period.

(e) Rail services in London and the South East

The Department for Transport and Transport for London have recently consulted on changes to local rail services in the London area. The implication for Hertfordshire is that the services from Moorgate to Welwyn Garden City and Hertford North / Stevenage could be transferred to the London Overground network when the franchise is renewed in 2021.

The consultation also considered opportunities for local authorities and LEPs to have a greater influence over the rail services provided. This has not been determined, and the county council is liaising with its counterparts around London to see how this could be achieved.

(f) Metropolitan Line Extension

The Metropolitan Line Extension ("Croxley Rail Link") is due to open in December 2020. Further details are included in the Major Projects Update paper.

(g) Watford Junction Station

HCC is looking at a short-term set of measures to improve access / egress for the car park. Watford is working with Network Rail to look at wider uses of the site.

(h) Stevenage Station

Stevenage First is currently investigating options for developing the station to link it into a wider redevelopment of the town centre.

(i) HCC-funded Station Schemes

The county council is funding an improved station forecourt at Broxbourne, providing better access for buses, pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme is currently being constructed, and is due to be completed by early April.

A scheme to improve highway access to Hitchin station is currently being developed, with a view to delivering it during 2016/17.

(j) Franchises

The new East Anglia franchise will commence in October 2016, with the successful bidder to be announced in June.

The new West Midlands franchise will commence in October 2017. The DfT consultation on the franchise specification has recently closed.

(k) Abbey Line

The county council has submitted a bid to the DfT's Sustainable Travel Transition Year fund, including a shuttle bus to link with train services at St Albans Abbey station. The DfT is due to announce the successful bids in May.

(l) HCC Rail Strategy

The county council's Rail Strategy is due to be considered by the Environment, Transport and Planning Cabinet Panel in May. However, further revisions regarding longer-term projects may be required when the Transport Vision work is complete at the end of 2016.