

LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

RAIL ISSUES PAPER

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1. FRANCHISES

East Anglia Franchise

(includes services through Broxbourne and Bishop's Stortford, and to Hertford East)

The announcement on the East Anglia Franchise is due to be announced shortly, with the new franchisee taking over in October. Current services are run by Abellio Greater Anglia.

West Midlands Franchise

(includes services through Watford Junction and Hemel Hempstead, and to St Albans Abbey)

The Invitation To Tender for the West Midlands Franchise is due to be published in July 2016, which will start a tender process leading up to a new franchise in October 2017.

InterCity West Coast

(includes long distance services stopping at Watford Junction)

The DfT is currently out to consultation on the InterCity West Coast Franchise, with comments required by 2 August. HCC's response was considered at Environment, Planning & Transport Panel on 30 June. Roadshows are currently being held.

Ashley Stower is leading on Network Rail's input to the process.

2. TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)

Temporary changes have been announced to the Southern timetable in order to cope with its current operational difficulties. The changes include withdrawal of the Milton Keynes to Clapham Junction service which stops at Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Watford Junction. The change took place from 11 July and is initially for a four week period.

Consultation on the Thameslink December 2018 timetable will start in mid-July. December 2018 is when Great Northern services (e.g. from Stevenage) will be linked into the Thameslink network, allowing through working across central London.

The GTR ticket office changes, replacing booking offices with “station hosts” on the concourse, will start with a soft launch in September. Royston will be the only station in Hertfordshire affected by the soft launch, but the main programme will see station hosts introduced at Elstree & Borehamwood, Harpenden, Hatfield, Hertford North, Hitchin, Letchworth, Potters Bar, Radlett, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.

GTR have a franchise commitment to develop station travel plans by September 2017 at Harpenden, St Albans, Elstree & Borehamwood, Royston, Letchworth / Hitchin, Welwyn Garden City / Hatfield and Stevenage.

3. NETWORK RAIL PROJECTS

Capacity Plus Study

Further work is still required before this work can be published, which is now not expected until after the Autumn Statement.

East West Rail

A development methodology and evaluation workshop is being held on 13 July.

Stevenage Fifth Platform

The current estimated date for delivery of the fifth platform at Stevenage is 2020.

East Coast Route Study

The East Coast Route study is currently being developed, with consultation expected in Spring 2017.

West Midlands and Chilterns Route Study

The draft West Midlands and Chilterns Route Study has been published, with comments invited by 22 September. Although only directly covering Rickmansworth and Chorleywood, it provides an opportunity to flag up aspirations for services linking Watford with e.g. Aylesbury.

4. TRANSPORT FOR LONDON PROJECTS

Crossrail 2

TfL's response to the recent consultation submissions was published on 7 July.

Croxley Station

TfL are working with HCC and Three Rivers to develop a scheme to provide lifts at Croxley station. An application has been made to use S.106 funds to part fund the study.

5. HCC PROJECTS

Rail Strategy

The interim Rail Strategy was presented to Environment, Planning and Transport Panel on 30 June, and will now be considered by Cabinet on 11 July. It is expected that the strategy will be revised in 2017 to take into account any rail-related outcomes in LTP4 / Transport Vision, and will incorporate an audit of all stations.

Sustainable Travel Transition Year

HCC was successful in its bid to the Sustainable Travel Transition Year fund. The bid was based around access to stations, and 2016/17 schemes will include a pilot shuttle bus between the two St Albans stations and the city centre, and improved pedestrian and cycling signing linked to stations in St Albans, Stevenage and Hertford.

Hitchin Station

Designs are being developed to improve access and egress for buses at Hitchin station, and to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Harpenden Station

HCC is working with SADC and GTR to look at options for increasing car parking capacity at Harpenden station.

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY RAIL GROUPS

ECMA

The East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) event for MPs at the Houses of Parliament on 12 July was postponed due to the current national political situation. It is hoped to re-schedule an event in the Autumn.

7. OTHER PROJECTS

HS2 Bill

The High Speed 2 Bill is currently going through the House of Lords. HCC has submitted a petition, on the basis that insufficient evidence has been provided on the environmental and highway impact during construction arising from the decision to lengthen the tunnel section in Buckinghamshire (all spoil for the tunnel will be disposed of from the Hertfordshire portal).

Bishop's Stortford Ultra Light Railway

At its meeting in April, Bishop's Stortford Town Council supported the development of an ultra light railway. The scheme is not supported by HCC.