



Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board  
9 September 2015

## Surrey Rail Strategy Update

**Purpose of the report:** Policy Development and Review

The report outlines the work undertaken on Surrey's rail priorities since the publication of the Surrey Rail Strategy. This includes detailed assessments on the North Downs Line and the Crossrail 2 project.

### Introduction:

1. The Surrey Rail Strategy (rail strategy) was published in September 2013. The rail strategy identifies proposals for strategic investment that the county council could either deliver itself, or work with others to deliver, including lobbying for central Government support.
2. Since the publication of the rail strategy further work has been undertaken to progress Surrey's rail priorities. This work is ongoing and an update is provided in this report.

### Background:

3. Consultants (Ove Arup & Partners Ltd) were appointed in November 2012 to produce a Surrey Rail Strategy, as part of the Surrey Future initiative. The Rail Strategy forms part of the Surrey Transport Plan and is part of the council's strategic work in developing transport programmes in Surrey.
4. The rail strategy has been developed to ensure that the county has the rail infrastructure needed for sustainable economic growth and to identify proposals for improvements that partners in Surrey can plan and deliver. It was intended to provide a framework through which the county council and partners could:
  - a. Develop future rail policy, service and infrastructure initiatives
  - b. Respond to consultations e.g. rail franchises
  - c. Lobby to influence national rail policy and planning
  - d. Support wider council growth initiatives.

5. The rail strategy has been well received by stakeholders. It has helped to focus Surrey's engagement with the rail industry and Government on Surrey's rail priorities. It has informed consultation responses and the LEP Strategic Economic Plans, and supported wider council growth initiatives.

### **Progress on priorities**

6. Three priority priorities were identified in the rail strategy because they had the potential to have a major impact in Surrey. These were:
  - a) Crossrail 2
  - b) The North Downs Line; and
  - c) Access to airports.
7. Since the publication of the rail strategy further work has been undertaken on these priorities as outlined below.

### **Crossrail 2**

8. Crossrail 2 is a new cross-London rail line being developed by Transport for London with Network Rail (see annex 1 for a route map). The route as currently proposed includes a central core between Wimbledon and New Southgate / Tottenham Hale, almost entirely in a tunnel. There are various possible routes to the north into Hertfordshire, and to the southwest into Surrey using existing rail lines.
9. Crossrail 2 has the potential to bring significant benefits to Surrey. It will provide direct connections to stations in the county providing more frequent, faster links into central London.
10. Crucially, it will also release capacity on the South West Main Line into London Waterloo. This means that most areas in Surrey should see the benefits of improved connectivity into London.
11. Surrey County Council has commissioned a detailed assessment of Crossrail 2. The aims of the assessment are to:
  - a) Identify the optimum configuration (bringing the most economic and social benefits) of Crossrail 2 services for Surrey and the best use of released capacity; and
  - b) Provide an evidence base for use when providing input and response to the Crossrail 2 design development and subsequent consultation process.
12. The Assessment will be completed in September 2015.
13. Next steps: Transport for London will consult on Crossrail 2 in autumn 2015. Surrey will need to make a robust response to ensure the optimal scheme for the county is properly considered.

14. A Member Seminar on Crossrail 2 will be held in the autumn to coincide with the consultation.

### **North Downs Line**

15. The North Downs Line runs through Surrey and Berkshire between Reading, Guildford and Redhill. It provides direct access to Gatwick Airport via the Brighton Main Line. The line forms an important orbital route to the south and west of London, with connections to the capital.
16. Several issues were identified with the North Downs Line in the rail strategy. In summary, it is the last significant stretch of non-electrified line left in Surrey and offers an infrequent, relatively slow service. Improvements along the line could boost economic growth in the county.
17. The county council has commissioned a detailed assessment of the North Downs Line. This sets out a vision for this line which will see investment and incremental journey improvements along the corridor.
18. The council is calling for a package of measures along the North Downs Line including line speed enhancements, platform lengthening and electrification. There is a good business case for these improvements as set out in detail in annex 2.
19. Next Steps: The work Surrey County Council has led on the North Downs Line has been undertaken in partnership with a group of stakeholders, including District / Borough Councils served by the line. The Cost to Capital, Enterprise M3 and Thames Valley Local Economic Partnerships have also been involved in this work, attending liaison meetings with the other key partners from local government and the rail industry. These stakeholders share an interest in improvements along the corridor and collectively we will now work to lobby for investment along the North Downs Line.

### **Access to airports**

20. With two of the UK's major airports on Surrey's borders, access to airports is considered to be a significant issue.
21. Further work on surface access to airports has been completed. This work has informed the county council's response to the Airports Commission consultation on runway capacity in the South East.
22. Following the publication of the Airports Commission (Davies Commission) recommendations on expanding airports capacity the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning and the Cabinet Member Highways, Transport and Flooding supported by Officers recently met with Heathrow Airport Limited. The discussion included rail access to airports with both parties agreeing to work closely on this matter, which will be dependent on the nature and timing of the government's response to the commission.

23. Next steps: The county council will review the Government's response to the Airports Commission report to determine whether it is fully satisfied that Surrey's surface access needs have been fully addressed.

### **Other progress**

#### **Access to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley**

24. Although not identified as one of the priorities in the rail strategy, poor connections to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley was highlighted as a significant issue. Consultation responses strongly emphasised the need to address this issue and a campaign to improve connections continues to receive strong local support.
25. This is a long term scheme because additional services can only be incorporated on to the South West Main Line when other options – Crossrail 2 – have been implemented.
26. We are currently scoping a piece of work to understand the costs and benefits of providing a connection directly onto the South West Main Line. The primary objectives of this study are:
- a) To assess the options for improving rail service frequency and journey times from Camberley to London via the South West Main Line; and
  - b) To assess the costs of each of these options, and so estimate the benefits that would need to be achieved in order to produce a positive business case.

#### **Devolution of suburban rail routes**

27. There are currently nine rail franchises operating in the London and South East region, providing inner suburban services. In addition to these, Transport for London (TfL) directly controls National Rail services on the London Overground network, and will also control the Crossrail service, which opens in 2018.
28. Network Rail is responsible for maintaining rail infrastructure and also manages most of London's major terminus stations.
29. The Mayor of London has proposed that control of all suburban rail routes in London are devolved to TfL. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, along with the Cabinet Member for Kent County Council, addressed the London Assembly's Transport Committee in regard to this setting out the views of this council to inform the consultation.

### **Conclusions:**

30. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken on Surrey's rail strategy priorities since the publication of the rail strategy. This has helped the county present a strong case to the rail industry and Government for investment. This work is ongoing.

**Recommendations:**

31. The Committee is asked to:

- a. Comment on the work undertaken on Surrey's rail priorities.

**Next steps:**

North Downs Line: Use the detailed assessment undertaken on the North Downs Line to lobby for investment.

Crossrail 2: On completion of the assessment, lobby for the optimal scheme for Surrey.

Surface access to airports: Consider the Government's response to the Airports Commission report on aviation capacity in the South East.

Access to Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley: Commission a detailed study on options to improve connectivity.

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**Sources/background papers:**

Annex 1: Crossrail 2 route map

Annex 2: North Downs Line enhancements

# Annex 1: Proposed Crossrail 2 route map

All stations marked provide an indication of where Crossrail 2 stations could be located. No station or infrastructure location has yet been finalised as that level of engineering has not taken place at this stage in the project.



**Key**

- Stations
- ⊖ London Underground
- ⊕ London Overground
- ≡ National Rail
- 🚊 Tramlink
- ⤵ Core tunnel portal
- Central core of route
- - - Regional scheme - possible options
- - - Option for a future Eastern Branch

## **Annex 2: North Downs Line enhancements**

The North Downs Line Assessment we have had undertaken sets out a series of investments over the short, medium and long term.

**The total package of improvements is expected to offer good value for money. Compared against the current timetable, an electrified 4-train per hour scenario with service extensions to both Oxford has a BCR of 1.8:1.**

### In the short term:

The Base Option (the improvements set out in the Draft Wessex Route Study) offers important benefits and should be implemented during Control Period 5 (2014-2019), (on completion of platform 0 at Redhill in December 2017).

There should be careful timetabling to maximise peak time travel opportunities and to ensure that smaller stations are appropriately served given the importance of the North Downs Line for commuter and education trips. Minimising the layover at Guildford will also ensure that the increase in frequency is not delivered at the detriment of journey times.

As part of a three train per hour timetable, extensions of services beyond Reading to Oxford should be considered in order to widen direct access to Gatwick and build on the North Downs Line's role as an orbital route.

In the short term, services should be operated with the existing rolling stock, refurbished to a high standard.

Sufficient capacity needs to be provided on these services with targeted train lengthening, initially limited to fast services which stop at stations with capacity for 4-car trains.

### In the medium term:

The first phase of the Guildford Capacity Enhancement should be delivered in Control Period 6 (2019-2024) in readiness to deliver future main line frequency enhancements. Bringing forward this enhancement will deliver significant benefits to the North Downs Line.

A targeted programme of line speed enhancements should be undertaken as well as an upgrade to signalling to reduce signal headways and minimise journey times.

There is also likely to be a good case for prioritising the North Downs Line for electrification during Control Period 6. The most feasible and beneficial electrification is likely to be infill overhead line (AC) electrification with dual voltage rolling stock, although there is merit in retaining third rail electrification as an option should the costs of overhead line electrification prove to be prohibitive.

With more modern rolling stock, use of Selective Door Opening may be an option for the North Downs Line. However, there are only two stations –

Sandhurst and Gomshall – which are 3-car in length and therefore it would seem desirable to lengthen platforms to a minimum of 4-car capacity.

A programme of station investment to improve access to stations and to improve station facilities should be undertaken.

The case for a new station at Park Barn merits further investigation and could also be delivered in the medium term.

In the long term:

Following electrification, a further step change in the North Downs Line timetable should be delivered. In the long term a frequent, all-day 4-train per hour timetable is required to fulfil the potential of the North Downs Line.

Achieving a more frequent timetable with faster journey times offers the flexibility to consider different stopping patterns. One option meriting further consideration is to allow the stopping service to call at additional locations between Reading and Guildford that are not currently served by the North Downs Line services.