

Surrey County Council

Surrey Rail Strategy

Surrey Rail Strategy Report -
Executive Summary

Final | 21 March 2013

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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Ove Arup & Partners Ltd
13 Fitzroy Street
London
W1T 4BQ
United Kingdom
www.arup.com

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		Name	Stephen Bennett	Stephen Bennett	Stefan Sanders
		Signature			
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			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
		Name			
		Signature			
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			Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
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Executive Summary

Objectives

Arup was appointed by Surrey County Council (SCC) in November 2012 to undertake the Surrey Rail Strategy study. This document is the **Surrey Rail Strategy Report**, the main deliverable from the study.

In line with SCC's requirements the Strategy provides a framework through which SCC can:

- develop future rail policy, service and infrastructure initiatives;
- respond to consultations (e.g. rail franchises, aviation reviews);
- lobby to influence national rail policy and planning; and
- support wider Council growth initiatives.

We have developed a high-level **strategic approach** to this study. The strategy does not develop detailed options, rather it identifies potential interventions that SCC and partners can either develop directly or can support third parties to develop. From our experience we are confident that this approach provides SCC and its partners with the influential rail strategy that they require.

The four **rail development objectives** for Surrey were identified through review of relevant planning and policy documents and discussions with SCC; they are:

1. Maintain Global Competitiveness;
2. Drive Economic Growth;
3. Reduce impacts on the Environment;
4. Accommodate Sustainable Population Growth.

The objective for the study is to identify proposals for strategic investment that the County Council, working with partners, can plan and deliver.

Key Issues

The key issues affecting the delivery of the rail development objectives for Surrey, and the gaps remaining were identified in the Issues Paper. Issues were split into two categories:

- **Capacity issues** – related to the size and scale of the rail system (infrastructure and services) to meet the required demand, e.g. train length, number of trains; and
- **Adequacy issues** – related to the capability of the rail system to meet the requirements of passengers and policy, e.g. journey times, frequency, station facilities.

Issues were identified by undertaking extensive stakeholder consultation, and desk research and analysis.

Capacity Issues

The main capacity issues for rail in Surrey have been identified as:

- **Capacity to Waterloo** – without action, significant overcrowding is forecast to result by 2031 particularly on main line services, with demand growth likely to be suppressed;
- **Capacity on the Brighton Main Line** – some overcrowding is forecast to continue to occur by 2031, even after significant investment; and
- **The North Downs Line** – there is existing overcrowding on peak services between Guildford and Reading.

Adequacy Issues

The main adequacy issues for rail in Surrey have been identified as:

- **Access to London** - from locations in the Blackwater Valley area, e.g. Camberley and Frimley;
- **Access to main centres in the County** - existing train services are often infrequent and offer poor connections, for example Alton to Guildford;
- **Access to stations** – both lack of car parking and poor connections to other modes of public transport;
- **Links between new developments and stations** – to support sustainable travel choices, and developing appropriate solutions; and
- **Access to international gateways** – particularly Heathrow and Gatwick airports, but also High Speed (HS) 1 & 2, to maintain Surrey's global competitiveness.

Optioneering

Having identified the capacity and adequacy issues for rail in Surrey, a list of options was identified for service or infrastructure improvements that could address the different issues. This took the form of a **long-list of options** obtained from a range of existing sources, such as previous rail studies, Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategies and stakeholder consultation. A number of options are original solutions proposed by Arup.

An **assessment process** was undertaken to arrive at a short-list of preferred options that would be recommended for inclusion in the Surrey Rail Strategy. Each option was assessed against three criteria: *Suitability*, *Feasibility*, and *Acceptability*. These terms are explained below:

- **Suitability** - How does the option address SCC's objectives, does it support wider plans and strategies and is rail the most suitable mode?
- **Feasibility** - Is the option deliverable and by whom, what are the key risks and obstacles, can funding be obtained?
- **Acceptability** - Does the option have a good business case, does it have stakeholder support?

Options were scored either a Good Pass, a Pass, or a Fail. All options in the categories *Good Pass* and *Pass* were recommended for inclusion in the Surrey Rail Strategy. **Four options in the *Fail* category were rejected:**

- Double-deck trains on South West Main Line (SWML) outer services;
- 16-car trains on SWML outer services (to Waterloo International);
- Reinstatement of the Guildford-Cranleigh railway line;
- Interchange at Frimley to the South West Main Line.

Rail Strategy

The strategies for each area or topic comprise the committed schemes and the preferred options (those achieving a Pass or Good Pass in the assessment) for the short, medium or long term timescales.

Committed schemes are generally those that are included in the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan for Control Period 5 (2014-2019).

Options included range from those that are already being developed by the rail industry and just need support and input from Surrey County Council and its partners, to those that are new ideas and are not yet proven, which need further development to determine if they are viable schemes. In all cases, Surrey County Council and partners should be convinced that there is a robust business case for any option before they give their full support and certainly before any funding is committed.

The **main actions** to deliver each option are also considered; to inform the action plan.

The **areas/topics** covered are:

- South West Main Line;
- Windsor Lines;
- Brighton Main Line;
- North Downs Line;
- Access to airports;
- Access to Guildford; and
- Network wide and stations.

These area/topic strategies combine to form the Surrey Rail Strategy.

Delivery

The recommended actions for Surrey County Council, its partners, and other stakeholders in the short, medium, long term to deliver the rail strategy are presented in the Action Plan.

The Action Plan is split into three tables:

- Short and Short-Medium term
- Medium and Medium-Long term
- Long term

The top priority actions are identified to enable the effort and resources to be focused on the most important issues.

In the **short term action plan** there are actions required to:

- Support committed train lengthening schemes on the South West Main Line and Windsor Lines;
- Commence strong lobbying for the Crossrail 2 regional scheme, working closely with Transport for London and other key stakeholders;
- Explore options to reduce journey times between Camberley and London;
- Support committed additional platform at Redhill;
- Lobby for train lengthening on the North Downs Line;
- Proactively engage with the Davies Commission on airport capacity;
- Support committed schemes that will benefit Gatwick Airport;
- Improve road-based access to Heathrow Airport;
- Lead the development of the station access and station facilities improvement programmes, as well as the standard rail service specification for Surrey;
- Lead review, and where appropriate, the development of rail improvements to support developments.

In the **medium term action plan** there are actions required to:

- Work closely with Network Rail to support the effective use of committed funding to deliver capacity improvements at London Waterloo;
- Lobby for additional train lengthening on the SWML, particularly its inclusion in the next South Western franchise specification;
- Proactively lobby for the inclusion of Surrey County Council and partners in the development of the Crossrail 2 scheme;
- Promote the Sturt Lane Chord scheme as an effective use of future additional capacity on the SWML;
- Monitor demand growth on SWML Inner Suburban and Windsor Lines services;

- Support committed schemes on the Brighton Main Line and monitor the construction impacts of the Thameslink Programme;
- Work with Network Rail to develop further Brighton Main Line capacity improvements;
- Lead development of the improvement schemes for the North Downs Line, working closely with the Department for Transport and Network Rail;
- Support committed Heathrow Western Connection to Reading;
- Develop options that will benefit Gatwick Airport in future;
- Engage with all options which seek to address access to Heathrow;
- Raise Crossrail extension option in discussions on Airtrack Lite;
- Confirm the business case for Guildford local access schemes, including 2tph Alton-Guildford, Worplesdon park-and-ride, and new stations at Park Barn and Merrow;
- Engage with the rail industry on demand management measures.

In the **long term action plan** there are actions required to:

- Identify further capacity upgrades on the South West Main Line and enabling schemes for Crossrail 2;
- Develop the concept of a new, possibly high speed, rail link across Surrey from Heathrow to Gatwick Airport and possibly beyond;
- Develop the business case for the Clapham Interchange option.

There are a number of actions identified above covering many different options. There is a risk of confusion over priorities and dilution of resources across too many activities, particularly if human resources to lead and develop options are limited.

The priority actions should be those which relate to those options which are closely aligned with the Surrey rail development objectives and which have the potential to have a major impact on rail in Surrey, in the short, medium or long term. These **priority options** are considered to be:

- **Crossrail 2** – the South West Main Line has significant capacity challenges in future. The Crossrail 2 scheme has the potential to fully address the capacity gap forecast on the line, and has wider benefits for Surrey in terms of greatly improved access to major employment centres in London and in maintaining Surrey’s global competitiveness by providing better connections to HS1 and in future HS2. It should be a priority of the strategy to implement actions that develop the Crossrail 2 scheme with stakeholders, and also to develop the enabling schemes in the short to medium terms;
- **North Downs Line** – improvements to this line will address capacity issues in the short-medium term, but it is the potential to significantly improve this corridor in the medium long term that has potential to create a really strong orbital link through Surrey, anchored by Gatwick Airport at one end and Reading at the other (for the future employment opportunities in Reading and

wider connections, such as the planned Western Connection to Heathrow) and with the major Surrey towns of Redhill and Guildford between the two. This is an option that Surrey County Council and its partners can step up to and take the lead on, and it should be a priority of the strategy to push forward with this option;

- **Access to Airports** – this is a high profile and political issue in Surrey, and it affects decisions to locate people and businesses in the County. There are a number of options in the short and longer terms to address access to Heathrow and Gatwick, but in the case of Heathrow, there are no easy solutions. It should therefore be a priority for Surrey County Council and its partners to demonstrate leadership on this issue, by defining its position on airport capacity, and taking the lead on improving access to airports from Surrey. Inevitably, a final position will be dependent on the conclusions of the Davies Commission, but it is important that Surrey lobbies strongly for the continued development of Heathrow and Gatwick, because of their contribution to Surrey’s global competitiveness, economic prosperity, and employment.

Implementing the strategy

Once the Surrey Rail Strategy is approved and adopted by Surrey County Council, it should be implemented quickly to maintain the momentum gained during the development stage of the strategy. In particular the short term options should be developed as a priority to feed into the main rail industry processes. Early engagement should include:

- Engagement with the **Department for Transport** to clearly promote Surrey’s requirements for:
 - the 2017 High Level Output Statement (HLOS) and Control Period 6;
 - future franchise specifications and priorities (Thameslink, South Western, Great Western, etc);
- Engagement with **Network Rail** to ensure Surrey’s active participation in the Long Term Planning Process (LTPP) particularly the London and South East Market Study and future Route Plans. Conditional outputs should be clearly defined so options for Control Period 6 are developed and agreed;
- Engagement with **Transport for London** to ensure Surrey’s active participation in the development of the Crossrail 2 scheme;

Regular engagement should also be held with the **Train Operating Companies** to build relationships around development and implementation of relevant options, and with **Surrey stakeholders**, such as Boroughs and Districts and the business community, to report on progress, build relationships around the rail strategy, and harness local skills and knowledge to support implementation.

There is excellent stakeholder interest and support from both within the County and the rail industry, and this should be harnessed by Surrey County Council and its partners to deliver a successful rail strategy for Surrey that delivers the development objectives for the County.