

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2013****REPORT OF: MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT,
HIGHWAYS AND THE ENVIRONMENT****LEAD OFFICER: IAIN REEVE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ECONOMY, TRANSPORT
AND PLANNING****SUBJECT: SURREY RAIL STRATEGY****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

This paper presents the outcomes of the development of a Surrey Rail Strategy. It makes recommendations for immediate active engagement with the rail industry and government, and proposes the development of an implementation plan to be integrated with the Surrey Transport Plan.

Good rail services are vital for maintaining and growing Surrey's economy. They provide fast links to jobs, education and leisure and reduce the number of car journeys adding to congestion. A good rail network is also a key factor in businesses and residents choosing to live and work in the county. Therefore, whilst the council has no statutory role in planning or delivering rail services or rail projects, we must actively engage with the rail industry to ensure that our priorities are reflected in medium and long term rail planning. We should not take the risk of leaving this to others.

While the county has a generally comprehensive rail network and a large number of rail stations, many services are at capacity and suffer from peak time overcrowding. Not all parts of Surrey are well served by rail. Some towns have no direct connections to London and some rail connections to Heathrow and Gatwick airports are unsatisfactory within Surrey.

The objective for the Surrey Rail Strategy is to identify proposals for strategic investment that the county council could work with others to deliver. Many of these proposals are long term but to secure investment in Surrey the county council needs to actively engage with the rail industry now.

The Surrey Rail Strategy includes high-level actions but does not list all the detailed activity needed to deliver investment in infrastructure and an improved rail service for Surrey residents. This will need to be developed through further engagement with the rail industry and other partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. notes the Surrey Rail Strategy and five suggested priorities; Crossrail 2 (regional route), the North Downs Line, access to airports, access to stations (car parking) and access to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley.

2. approves the list of schemes on which Surrey County Council should immediately begin active engagement with government and the rail industry, including on Crossrail 2 (regional route) (see paragraph 13).
3. agrees that officers work with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment on developing options for Surrey County Council involvement in specific projects and initiatives. These will be reflected in an implementation plan to be integrated with the Surrey Transport Plan. As part of the Surrey Transport Plan, the implementation plan will need to be approved by Cabinet and Full Council. Proposals which progress specific schemes, including business cases, will be brought back to Cabinet.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Delivering the Surrey Rail Strategy will support the county council's priorities to promote sustainable economic growth and secure investment in infrastructure. The Surrey Rail Strategy would benefit Surrey residents and businesses by driving economic growth, maintaining global competitiveness, reducing impacts on the environment and accommodating sustainable population growth.

DETAILS:

Background

1. Consultants (Ove Arup & Partners Ltd) were appointed in November 2012 to write a Surrey Rail Strategy (the strategy), as part of the Surrey Future initiative.
2. Surrey Future brings together Surrey's local authorities and business leaders, to agree the investment priorities to support the county's economy over the next few decades and establish a list of long term infrastructure priorities.
3. The strategy (Annex 1) provides a framework through which the county council and partners can:
 - a) Develop future rail policy, service and infrastructure initiatives
 - b) Respond to consultations e.g. rail franchises and aviation reviews
 - c) Lobby to influence national rail policy and planning
 - d) Support wider council growth initiatives.
4. It also provides an opportunity to review Surrey's position on rail services. It replaces the outdated Rail Services Strategy in Local Transport Plan 1 (2001/02 – 2005/06) and will be part of the Surrey Transport Plan (LTP3).
5. The strategy is closely linked to the Congestion Programme, a parallel work stream of Surrey Future.

Issues

6. At the start of the study the key issues affecting rail were identified. Surrey has an extensive rail network, with 84 stations, (more than any other

county except Kent) and some of the busiest commuter lines in the country.

7. Feedback from stakeholders and detailed analysis suggests that over the medium-long term the rail network will simply not be able to cope with the increasing demands placed upon it.
8. That Surrey's rail network, like its road network, is congested is a consequence of Surrey's dynamic, powerful economy, with strong links to London and two international airports on the county's borders. Inadequate infrastructure and poor services are holding Surrey's economy back.
9. Overcrowding is already a problem in many areas. Four of the 10 most crowded trains in England and Wales travel through Surrey (according to Department for Transport (DfT) figures (autumn 2012)). Without investment overcrowding is likely to get worse, with significant problems expected on the South West Main Line; serving stations including Woking.
10. The issues are outlined in full in a detailed Issues Paper and summarised in the strategy document. Given the nature of the rail network they include problems outside the county, including London Waterloo and Clapham Junction. The issues are diverse and include:
 - a) Inadequate access to local employment centres, such as Guildford,
 - b) Infrequent services from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley,
 - c) Poor connections to other modes of public transport,
 - d) Poor access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports,
 - e) Inadequate car parking at certain stations.

Options

11. Options were identified for service and/ or infrastructure improvements that could address the identified issues. These underwent a rigorous assessment process to arrive at a short list of preferred measures. Schemes that could address the problems were identified.
12. All the options are outlined in a detailed Options Paper and summarised in the strategy document.
13. Several actions in the strategy relate to the county council's support for existing or planned schemes. These provide the county council with a list of options on which officers and members could now start to actively lobby Government and the rail industry. These include:
 - 13.1 On the South West Main Line:
 - a) strong support for the Crossrail 2 regional scheme;
 - b) support the committed scheme to lengthen trains;
 - c) work with Network Rail to develop incremental improvements to train frequency and length in the medium term, including 28 trains per hour;

- d) promote the Sturt Road Chord (a rail line which would connect Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley to the South West Main Line) option in the next High Level Output Specification (statement on what the Secretary of State wants the railway to deliver for the public funds made available).

13.2 On the Windsor lines:

- a) support the committed schemes to deliver 10-car operation and additional services.

13.3 On the North Downs Line:

- a) support the committed scheme to provide an additional service to Gatwick with the completion of platform 0 at Redhill;
- b) lobby the DfT to include train lengthening in the next franchise specification.

13.4 Brighton Main Line:

- a) support the committed schemes to provide additional capacity through the Thameslink Programme and lengthening of the Uckfield line,
- b) lobby the DfT to ensure that junction improvements are included in the next High Level Output Specification (statement on what the Secretary of State wants the railway to deliver for the public funds made available).

13.5 Access to airports:

- a) support the western connection to Reading that will benefit rail access to Heathrow.

- 14. Cabinet is asked to approve active engagement with government and the rail industry on this list of schemes.
- 15. Surrey County Council needs to engage the rail industry now to ensure that its priorities are reflected in medium and long term rail planning. Rail industry planning timescales are long. Each Control Period, the period over which the Office for Rail Regulation sets regulatory targets, income and costs for Network Rail, lasts five years. This provides certainty but means new infrastructure schemes are planned with more than five year lead times. There are opportunities to progress smaller schemes through the rail franchising process.

Priority options

- 16. Three priority options were identified in the draft strategy; Crossrail 2, the North Downs Line and access to airports. These were selected because they have the potential to have a major impact in Surrey. Two further priority options have been added following public consultation; access to stations (car parking) and access to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley.

17. By concentrating on these options the county council will ensure resources are prioritised. These priority options are briefly outlined below (in timeline order).

Access to stations (car parking) (short term)

18. Problems with parking at certain rail stations, and the consequent impact on the surrounding roads, featured strongly in the consultation responses. Several stations around the county were highlighted. Further work is needed to quantify the problem, where the most significant problems are located and, if appropriate, consider further action in consultation with the rail industry. This work needs to be set in the context of an integrated transport system, which includes links to other forms of transport such as bus and walking/ cycling and undertaken in partnership with districts and boroughs.

North Downs Line (medium term)

19. The North Downs Line is the last significant stretch of non-electrified line left in Surrey. Addressing this issue is an opportunity for the county council to lead a rail project and demonstrate how improvements in infrastructure can benefit Surrey residents and boost economic growth.
20. Train lengthening and electrification between Reigate and Guildford, will improve east-west connectivity and allow faster and more frequent services to Guildford, Reading and Gatwick Airport. Electrification and upgrading would also allow for current Southern and South Western services to extend to the North Downs Line.

Access to airports (medium to long term)

21. With two of the UK's major airports on Surrey's borders, access to airports is considered to be a major issue. Further work on access to airports has been commissioned. This will identify the infrastructure improvements needed to address existing surface access issues to the airports and the improvements needed to regional and local links in the event of additional runway capacity at Heathrow and/ or Gatwick Airport. This work will help inform submissions to the Airports Commission.

Access to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley (medium to long term)

22. Poor connections to London from Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley was identified a key problem during the issues analysis. The consultation responses also strongly emphasised the need to address this issue. This is a long term scheme because additional services can only be incorporated on the South West Main Line when other options – Crossrail 2 regional route – have been implemented. But there are potential short term measures that the strategy suggests should be explored to improve connections.

Crossrail 2 (long term)

23. Crossrail 2 has the potential to bring significant benefits to Surrey. The exact nature of the scheme has yet to be agreed, with a recent

consultation asking respondents to choose between two preferred routes – a ‘regional’ and a ‘metro’ route.

24. The regional route has the potential to provide a significant capacity increase on the South West Main Line. It will do this by diverting certain suburban services to Wimbledon, where passengers would interchange with tube, Crossrail 2 or other existing rail services. This will enable additional trains into London Waterloo, serving stations including Woking and Guildford. These extra trains could be used to:
- a) Reduce overcrowding on existing routes, particularly Woking
 - b) Encourage more people to travel by train as an alternative to the car
 - c) Improve the frequency of train services
 - d) Allow the Train Operating Companies to provide new services, for example direct London services to Camberley (via a re-instated Sturt Road Chord).
25. The thinking for Crossrail 2 also includes the construction of a rail flyover at Woking, which would further increase capacity on the South West Main Line.
26. Residents from parts of Surrey would benefit from better connectivity to the capital because faster, more frequent services into London will be made available from Wimbledon and Clapham Junction.
27. Surrey County Council responded to the recent Crossrail 2 consultation expressing support for regional route with the caveat that Surrey would expect to see no loss of service or declines in frequency of service to Central London from any station in Surrey as a result of the scheme. The county council’s response to the consultation is attached to this report (Annex 2).

Implementation

28. The extent to which the strategy and the priority options can be developed and implemented, will depend on the county council’s level of ambition in terms of rail. The county council has the opportunity to play a significant role in leading a rail renaissance in Surrey. This is a direct means to promote economic growth and make the Surrey economy more competitive.
29. Alternatively, the county council might maintain a more limited, business as usual approach. This could include:
- a. Engagement to ensure that rail infrastructure priorities are reflected in the Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plans.
 - b. Some lobbying of partners in the rail industry to support existing and planned schemes, as listed above. This would be based on existing engagement with partners including the DfT, Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies.

30. The more ambitious actions outlined in the strategy are beyond current capacity and technical capabilities. Dedicated rail expertise is needed to progress these actions and ultimately implement the strategy. We propose to look at a temporary solution with someone with specific rail expertise. The initial focus will be for this person to engage with the rail industry to map out how each action might practically be achieved and where Surrey County Council might most effectively contribute.
31. Further actions which require additional resource are set out below. These include some of the actions needed to progress the priority options. For brevity not all the actions have been included, the list is only indicative. Where known the potential costs are identified:
- a. Lead on the proposals for the development of a North Downs Line improvement project with electrification and general upgrading of the line. To include engaging DfT, Network Rail and the Train Operating Company and the potential commissioning of a business case.
 - b. Explore short-medium term options to reduce journey times between Camberley and London via Ash Vale. Proactive engagement with South West Trains is needed.
 - c. Confirm the business case for two trains per hour from Alton to Guildford. Cost of the business case to be determined in partnership with Network Rail.
 - d. Take the lead in developing a station access improvement programme, with the support of local partners and the rail industry. This includes a review of parking arrangements at local stations. Problems with a lack of capacity have been highlighted at several car parks. Research will need to be commissioned to determine the problem. Car park expansions cost between £1 - 3 million.
 - e. Support the development of a station facilities improvement programme with Network Rail. Work would need to be commissioned.
 - f. Confirm the business case for Park Barn station and if proved lobby the DfT to include it in the next South Western franchise specification. Cost estimated to be circa £5 million based on similar projects
 - g. Develop a standard service specification for Surrey. External work would need to be commissioned.
 - h. Hold an annual rail summit: this approach, modelled on successful events facilitated by Kent County Council, would be a means to monitor delivery of the strategy, and ensure ongoing engagement with the rail industry. Resource would need to be identified to organise this summit but it could be linked to the creation of a rail forum.
32. It is not proposed that the council funds the various measures listed in the report. It is anticipated that the rail industry or government would lead on funding.
33. Using dedicated rail expertise, an implementation plan will be developed which will set out how the actions could be achieved. This plan will be

integrated with the Congestion Programme (already developed through the Surrey Future Initiative), subsequent work on surface access to airports and the Surrey Transport Plan to ensure an integrated approach. It will be developed with boroughs and districts and the Local Enterprise Partnerships which have new responsibilities to develop Strategic Economic Plans.

34. Officers will work with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment to agree the implementation plan and the development of options on specific projects and initiatives. As part of the Surrey Transport Plan the implementation plan will need to be approved by Cabinet and Full Council. Proposals which progress specific schemes, including business cases, will be brought back to Cabinet.

CONSULTATION:

35. The strategy has been informed by extensive engagement with the rail industry and subject to a 14 week public consultation. Engagement has included discussion at five local committees and the Environment and Transport Select Committee.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

36. No risk management implications have been identified at this stage. A failure to secure investment in rail infrastructure in Surrey might impact on resident's quality of life and Surrey's economic performance.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

37. If the recommendations in this report are agreed, a dedicated rail expertise will be required (explained in paragraph 30). This temporary resource would be funded by New Homes Bonus grant which is already allocated to Environment & Infrastructure to support economic growth activities.
38. Options in the Surrey Rail Strategy might be suitable for county council financial support or investment. These proposals would be the subject of future reports, as appropriate.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

39. The S151 Officer confirms that all material financial and business issues and risks have been considered in this report. If the recommendations are agreed additional temporary expertise will be required and this will be funded from existing budgets. Implementation of the further measures outlined in the report is expected to be funded primarily by the rail industry or by central government; any financial support from the council would be the subject of a future report and business case.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

40. No legal implications or legislative requirements have been identified.

Equalities and Diversity

41. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been drafted and attached as annex 3.
42. The EIA identified that the strategy would have positive impacts on groups of people with the following projected characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Pregnancy/ maternity
43. No negative impacts on any protected characteristic group were identified.
44. No changes have been made to the strategy as a result of the EIA. However, comments received during the consultation comments will need to be reflected on in the delivery of certain actions.
45. No mitigating actions are necessary as no negative impacts have been identified.

Climate change/ carbon emissions implications

46. Improvements to railway infrastructure and/ or services should encourage modal shift from vehicles. This could have a positive impact on climate change and carbon emissions.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

The actions contained in the rail strategy have implications over the short, medium and long term. Dedicated rail expertise, funded from the New Homes Bonus grant, will be sought to help us support economic growth activities linked to rail. Options for delivering those activities will be developed in consultation with the rail industry, boroughs and districts, the Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

The draft strategy has been subject to a 14 week public consultation. This consultation has included Surrey districts and boroughs, neighbouring transport authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the rail industry, parish councils, residents associations, business groups and other bodies.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Surrey Rail Strategy

Annex 2: Crossrail 2: Surrey County Council consultation response

Annex 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Sources/background papers:

- Surrey Transport Plan (LTP3)

- Surrey Rail Strategy Issues Paper
 - Surrey Rail Strategy Options Paper
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