

# West Sussex Connectivity CMSP – Summer Update Meeting

## Introduction

On Monday 19 August, we held a Summer Update Meeting in Horsham which was attended by a wide range of stakeholders. These notes are based on those taken at the three tables used in the meeting and a summary of the feedback responses that were completed on the day. The last section shows the contact information for Network Rail staff.

The slides from the meeting have already been circulated. The tables discussed one of the three Strategic Themes, although they sometimes strayed into other areas.

## Table discussions

### Table 1: Rail Connectivity

***This table was hosted by Simon Hulse and Alex Hellier, Network Rail, and Nigel Searle, Govia Thameslink Railway.***

- Long-distance connectivity was discussed to Bristol and Basingstoke, perhaps there will be an opportunity through the next round of Connecting Cities to bid again.
- How do people perceive their journey time? Is it door to door or is it opportunities to travel? It is overlapping in terms of walking distance to stations as well as journey times by car, particularly on the West Coastway.
- Weekend, particularly Sunday, travel was highlighted as an issue because train services start later to enable Network Rail to carry out maintenance for a longer period overnight but there is evidence that more people are trying to travel on a Sunday than a weekday off-peak but some people are put off even trying to travel by rail because of the perceived problems of engineering works, which do not occur every weekend.
- Another issue was the industry's reliance on overtime working and voluntary Sundays which restricts the number of trains that can operate.
- There is still a gap in services from the Arun Valley line to Gatwick Airport in the peaks.
- Last year there was a recast of the East Coastway timetable seeing significant improvements in on-train capacity between Brighton and Eastbourne, this had been a result of really good engagement with local stakeholders.
- House prices are a problem in Brighton so people are moving to places such as Worthing.
- Brighton and Hove are going Carbon Neutral by 2030 so it will be interesting to see how travel behaviour changes.
- It was highlighted more work is needed to get the Education and Health sectors involved as there isn't a direct link between rail user groups and wider transport policies and stakeholder management. [We have tried to get a contact in the NHS but to no avail – Paul]
- If station environments were better than they currently are, people will be inclined to travel by train because they know they still have creature comforts at the station if they have missed the train. Often this is just somewhere warm and dry, with the ability to charge their phone.
- Station car parking charges are set for the commuter – they are set at a daily rate so you know, for example, that's £5.50 before you even buy your rail ticket. Pulborough station car park has had its fees reduced.

- Making better use of the existing Great Western Railway service to Southampton and beyond was discussed. With the existing infrastructure it was felt that the service will not change.
- There was some discussion about the rapid bus link to Southampton.
- There was concern that additional train services will impact level crossing and the overlapping implications of road congestion.

## Table 2: Wider Transport Connectivity

***This table was hosted by Sam Cullen, Network Rail, and James Harris, Govia Thameslink Railway.***

- There was an extensive discussion on getting the right measures in place when new developments are approved. Attendees spoke of the challenge felt as district councils have planning powers but no transport authority and the county council has transport powers but not planning. How do you get a good link-up without one side feeling like its stepping on the others toes? It was felt this is a broader issue in relation to the structure of local government across England and not confined to West Sussex!
- On more specific matters, Metrobus spoke about their experiences of the new development at Kilnwood Vale. They'd been promised a specific bus only access road as part of the development, but this hasn't been delivered yet even though a fair proportion of the homes are now occupied.
- It was agreed that ideally you'd want some form of public transport option in place as soon as people start moving into a new development as it's harder to get people out of their cars once they've got into the habit.
- Talking more broadly about the role their buses play across West Sussex, Stagecoach explained that they did experiment with 'express limited stop' buses along the coastway but discontinued this. Their view is that their buses serve the local communities and journeys off the A27/A259 and that the train serves the other market of direct town to town journeys.
- Two attendees also asked again about the Arundel Chord and if there is any chance of this being revisited again in the future or if the reasons behind it not being taken forward in 2015 remain and are insurmountable, even if considering the broader social benefits and not merely the economic case.
- Gatwick Airport were also supportive of earlier trains from Horsham/Arun Valley for their staff that live in that area.

## Table 3: Planning for Growth

***This table was hosted by Paul Best and James Hodgson, Network Rail.***

- Replacing the Class 313s with 6-car trains was challenged – wouldn't 8-car better suit the future market growth?
- How does decarbonisation affect the strategic and business cases?
- There was a discussion on taking cars off the road and reducing road mileage.
- Parking strategies should be reviewed as stations are priced as premium car parking, but we should be looking to move car parking out of the town centres.

- More emphasis is needed on cycling and walking with proper interchange hubs, how do you fund such schemes when they have no tangible benefit to rail.
- Cycle routes should include bridges over main roads for a seamless journey.
- We discussed Network Rail's Town Planning team, who are a good point of contact for local authorities, and their role in co-ordinating Network Rail's response to consultation documents and direct requests for information.
- It was suggested that NR System Operator also meet the local authorities (rather than County Council) and neighbourhood planners to discuss how to improve accessibility for the neighbourhoods etc.
- The location of new developments at Fishbourne, Bosham and Nutbourne were discussed and not as set in stone as thought.
- A new bridge is proposed ay Southbourne.
- On the outskirts of the larger towns, could Park & Ride stations be the solutions?
- There was a discussion on discounted station parking or reduced rail fare for new residents.

### Next steps

Another meeting will be held in early December, it has been suggested that we meet in the Brighton Area so if anyone is able to offer a meeting room for around 30 people of a similar size to that at Horsham, please contact [paul.best@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:paul.best@networkrail.co.uk)

Meanwhile, GTR are continuing to work on the train service specification based on everyone's 'asks' and Network Rail Design and Deliver (NRDD) are looking at some infrastructure solutions. The results of these workstreams will be presented to you at the next meeting.