

Southern could be buzzin'



Electrify Uckfield!

Railfuture is campaigning for electrification of the Uckfield line to improve reliability, increase capacity and speed up journeys.

Chris Gibb's independent report to the Department for Transport on how the performance of the Gvoia Thameslink Railway franchise might be improved was published on 23 June 2017. His recommendations include the proposal to electrify the Uckfield line. If his recommendations are implemented, then passengers would see an unprecedented improvement in punctuality, reliability and customer service.

railfuture

Performance and reliability would be better because electric trains are inherently more reliable than diesel, and it would be easier to provide a replacement train in the rare event of a failure. Problems on the Uckfield line have a knock-on effect on the whole Brighton Main Line because the constraints of a dedicated fleet and single line working on the branch force the Uckfield line service to be planned in the timetable first. Therefore improved reliability of the Uckfield line will result in improved reliability of all Southern services.

Electrification will reduce journey times and give more flexibility for connections. Electric trains cost less to lease, operate and maintain than diesels, and have less impact on the environment – an important consideration in the area of the Ashdown Forest and in London.

Network Rail does not have the capacity or funding to carry out this electrification, but GTR's franchise agreement allows it to procure technical services from SNCF, which could design and implement the electrification as a private venture, recovering the investment from a surcharge on the supply of electricity.

East Sussex County Council has made electrifying the Uckfield line and Marshlink the top priorities of its Rail Strategy. Railfuture urges the County Councils of East Sussex, Kent and Surrey, and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, to work with GTR, DfT, Network Rail and the Mayor of London to deliver this proposal urgently.

Register your support or join Railfuture at:

www.railfuture.org.uk/article1744

 @Uckfield_Lewes

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