

***rail*** ***future***

# A Lewes-Uckfield rail link

If it's an answer, what is its question?

Which of the two is the greater challenge?

# Lewes District Council Scrutiny Committee

- A presentation/discussion with Railfuture on Thursday 19 April 2018.
- Arising from Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 18 January 2018:-
- Minute 29 and two other Meeting Documents
- 4-page Briefing Note - Lewes to Uckfield Railway Line
- 3-page report 'The future of the Lewes to Uckfield railway line'
- and Agenda for today's meeting:-
- 3-page report 'Lewes to Uckfield railway line'

Ref: <https://lewes.cmis.uk.com/cmis5/Meetings.aspx>

# Railfuture Ltd

- A not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee.
- A long-established, national, voluntary, and independent organisation campaigning for a bigger better railway in Britain for passengers and freight which more people choose to use and to recommend.
- National Board of Directors and policy groups, 14 regional branches, and in London & South East branch several county-based Divisions.
- Supported by Vice-Presidents, many seasoned rail 'elder statesmen'.
- See our Review of 2017: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1709>

# Imagine ...

- There never was a railway between Lewes and Uckfield. Would we build one now? What would the irresistible justification look like?
- If a case for linking Lewes and places south with Uckfield and places north - by rail - is sufficiently compelling, why hasn't it happened?
- Beware the definition of insanity! (Repeated question, same answer)
- Railfuture's approach to the Lewes-Uckfield question documented in *"Access and Connections: East Sussex – Opportunities to align railway investment to the economic growth requirements of East Sussex"* in July 2013. See <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display603>

# “It’s the economy, stupid!”

- Rail as a means of transport as a type of communication – always about the growth and prosperity of communities and individuals.
- Growth-enabling investment – questions of type and scale.
- Responding to local needs – and embracing sub-regional needs?
- City of Brighton & Hove ranked 20<sup>th</sup> GB conurbation by population, 15<sup>th</sup> by productivity – association with a succeeding economic hub.
- Authority Monitoring Report 2016/17 notes Objectively-Assessed Housing Need 2010-30 at 30,000 new homes, only 13,000 within City.
- The other 17,000 new homes – a problem, or an opportunity?

# Imagine ...

- “*Connecting Communities – Expanding Access to the Rail Network*” by ATOC in 2009 suggested a population of 15,000 (6,000 homes) as a guidance threshold for new/reopened rail lines/stations.
- That’s very roughly about the size of a Lewes or an Uckfield today.
- It’s also very roughly about one-third of the unmet housing need of your sub-regional economic centre which it cannot accommodate.
- Will Districts including Lewes around that centre reluctantly accept, or actively embrace, their share of its growth as well as their own?
- Railfuture suggests that the latter choice could be the game-changer for the prospects of a Lewes-Uckfield rail link.

# There are alternatives ...

- The London and South Coast Rail Corridor Study was published a year ago and included '*A new approach to Lewes-Uckfield*'. It set us all an exam question: "What level of housing and employment growth along the Tunbridge Wells-Uckfield-Lewes-Brighton corridor would be needed in order to create viable demand levels and a viable funding package?" See <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1737>
- Just over a year ago the private sector London and Southern Counties Railways Consortium met the Transport Secretary. While Railfuture welcomes the interest of private investors their feasibility study is still awaited. See <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1732>

# Imagine ...

- A government now looking for schemes which deliver growth and with opportunities for third-party involvement.
- Railfuture, Campaign for Better Transport and Dept for Transport: *“Expanding the Railways – how to develop and deliver a proposal”*: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1745-Expanding-the-Railways>
- Then came DfT’s *“Connecting people: a strategic vision for rail”*
- Now Railfuture with CfBT lobby for a Network Development Fund: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1781-Rail-reopening-fund>
- And DfT launches call for financially-credible market-led proposals <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-market-led-proposals> alongside a new ‘pipeline’ approach to rail enhancements requiring government funding <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline>

# Aligning means and ends

- Alternative mechanisms to deliver a Lewes-Uckfield rail link. How to.
- But to what end, if not to enable delivery of growth to meet identified need for new homes in the sub-region? Why to.....
- Recall that in mid-2016 MHCLG invited bids for 'garden villages' of up to 10,000 new homes, announced in early-2017.
- Railfuture campaigning for new station for Welborne Garden Village of 6,000 new homes <http://www.welbornegardenvillage.co.uk/>
- Rail projects of any significance delivered with strong partnership of stakeholders. Lewes in alliance with other Councils, two LEPs, TfSE?

# Re-imagine...

- Lewes-Uckfield as part of growth corridor, and rail line between them as an economic/housing growth enabler, not just transport scheme.
- Lewes/Eastbourne Councils ready to embrace a new paradigm, welcoming a sub-regional scale of new housing growth?
- Where to locate a scale of development sufficient to justify a rail link?
- Bottom line is almost certainly **No new growth = No new railway.**
- Thank you for listening. Railfuture remains ready to collaborate.
- <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Uckfield+Lewes> @Uckfield\_Lewes