

West Sussex Connectivity CMSP

August 2019



Introduction

This is the second in a series of regular newsletter updates to keep our stakeholders informed of the latest work on our study looking at rail services in West Sussex, covering the line between Brighton and Havant, as well as the Arun Valley Line to Three Bridges and the seaside branches to Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. The study is looking at the long-term prospects and opportunities for these lines, recognising the key role they can play in supporting future economic growth and recognising the significant housing growth planned for the area.

What have we been working on?

Over the past six months, we've carried out an in-depth investigation in the West Coastway and Arun Valley Lines. We've considered a wide range of factors including current passenger numbers, key drivers of demand, the current capability of the infrastructure. We've also examined how the railway fits into the wider transport network, looking at both the road network and congestion hotspots as well as bus services and how well they integrate with the rail network. At the same time, we've also been speaking extensively to stakeholders such as yourselves, to hear your aspirations and what you'd like to see from the line in the future.

From all this work, three core themes emerged. For each of these three themes, there are a series of sub-questions and these will inform the second part of our study and where will we examine if there is any scope for improvements in these areas and if so, what steps need to be taken to achieve this.

The three themes...

1. Rail Connectivity

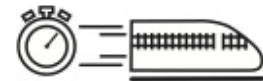
- Local connectivity: How best can the railway deliver local connectivity for shorter journeys on the West Coastway?
- Long distance connectivity: Can journey times be reduced and additional longer distance services beyond Southampton introduced?

2. Wider transport connectivity

- First and last mile: How can access into the railway network be improved, including better integration with bus services and expansion of station car parks where required?
- Road congestion: Can rail, through improved journey times or through changes to certain level crossings, offer an opportunity to reduce congestion on key roads?

3. Accommodating future growth

- Responding to future demand – can the rail service in West Sussex accommodate current and projected future demand at peak time?
- Responding to housing growth – how can the rail service in West Sussex support the delivery of substantial amounts of new housing planned across the area in the coming years?



Next steps

As many of these themes relate back to the current timetable in operation, we're carrying out some timetable development work. This will focus on: improving journey times between Brighton and Chichester, maintaining good connectivity between existing local stations as well as looking at the possibility of more longer distance services operating on the line.

Recognising this could require modification to the existing infrastructure, we are also carrying out some early stage feasibility work looking at the best location for 'passing loops'. This would allow faster trains to overtake stopping services at key locations on the line. This will also look at any opportunities to increase the line speed on sections of the route through improvements to the track.

Both these pieces of work are now well underway and we eagerly await their conclusions due later this autumn. We will then share these findings with you in December, ahead of the publication of our final report, with recommendations and choices for funders from this work, which will be published in March 2020.



We would like to hear from you...

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or if you would like to suggest any organisations in your area you think it we should be talking to about this work.