

Railfuture Observations on the Waterside Rail Re-Opening Strategic Outline Business Case

Note: Reference numbers relate to sections of the SOBC

Ref	Subject	Comments
3.3.2	Solent Metro	We see the restoration of a passenger service on the Waterside Line as a key element of a regional metro for the Solent area. Indeed, completion of the project is likely to be the catalyst for higher frequency rail services across South Hampshire.
3.10.3	Fawley Waterside	There should be passive provision for extension of the line to Fawley Waterside (and possibly beyond) at a later date.
3.10.3	Option 2 service	We appreciate the reasoning behind the suggestion that the second train/h should be an extension of the Southern Victoria-Southampton service, but we are concerned that delays on the main line will lead to frequent termination of the service at Southampton with consequent service cancellations for Waterside Line passengers. There may also be operational complexities arising from two different rail operators on the branch. There may be better rail-service candidates for extending over the branch line as rail timetables evolve in the future (eg: Portsmouth-Southampton stopper). Failing this, the second train/h should be a stand alone Fawley-Southampton shuttle.
3.10.3	Motive power	If diesel motive power is to be used initially, there should be a firm commitment to the introduction of electric traction (battery or third rail) at a later date to assuage residents' concerns about noise and air pollution. Battery-Electric hybrid trains could be considered for the branch line service, but line electrification at least to Marchwood is likely to be necessary in the longer term due to the high power requirements of freight traffic. We suggest that the Waterside Line could be a "beacon project" for the provision of DC third rail power supplied direct from solar panels, as being developed by Riding Sunbeams.
3.10.4	Totton	An enhanced rail service for Totton has been correctly identified as a major benefit of the Waterside Railway project. This cannot be overstated, since the train frequency at Totton has been poor for many years, and has undoubtedly led to suppressed rail patronage.
3.11.1	Level Crossings	With three automatic-barrier LCs in Marchwood and a further three in Hythe, we suggest there is scope for further cost savings by closing one or two of these crossing, especially where there is to be a replacement overbridge nearby. Nearby residents may welcome closure of a crossing and consequent loss of through traffic.

3.11.1	Overbridges	<p>The cost of replacement overbridges should be borne by the highways budget and should not be shown as part of the railway infrastructure costs since they will primarily benefit road users.</p> <p>At most, only the cost of upgrading level crossings to modern standards at these locations should be shown against the railway project. The upgrade cost (from manual gates to modern level crossing) could then be transferred to the highways budget should replacement by overbridges be deemed necessary.</p>
4.2.1	Phased service introduction	<p>We support a phased approach for the introduction of passenger services, with 1tph initially and 2tph after a specified level of occupation of new homes. A further enhancement to 3tph could be considered later when funds for infrastructure upgrades become available.</p>
4.2.2	Operating costs	<p>It is our experience that new commercial opportunities are overlooked when estimating the operating costs of new rail services. On UK railways, a significant proportion of revenues (we have seen figures in the order of 8%) can accrue from income sources such as advertising, wayleave for cables, sites for telecomm masts and business lettings.</p>
4.3.3	Bus services	<p>It is our experience with rail reopenings elsewhere in Britain that there is an uplift in public transport usage across all modes wherever new rail passenger services are provided. The SOBC correctly identifies some opportunities for connecting bus services, but we feel there are many others especially to/from New Forest destinations.</p>
4.3.3	Ferry	<p>Hythe ferry would benefit from a general uplift in public transport usage especially if there is a "Solent Travelcard" offer encompassing all modes. We suggest that there are other destinations which could be usefully served by ferries from Hythe pier, for example: Woolston and Netley.</p>
4.7	Construction disturbance	<p>We suggest that the disturbance to residents from the railway upgrade could be mitigated by using the branch line itself for bringing in construction materials (since it already exists as a freight line). Furthermore, a temporary freight siding could be provided for the transshipment of construction materials associated with the Fawley Waterside development.</p>