

Railfuture in London and the South East

quarterly branch newsletter

Campaigning by the Railway Development Society in London and the Home Counties - Kent, Surrey, Sussex, south Hertfordshire, south Essex, Bedfordshire, Greater London

The *independent* campaign for a better passenger and freight rail network

Members autumn regional gathering – mixing business and pleasure

Saturday 29th October will be the next opportunity for members from across our regional branch area to gather, in **St. Albans**. Following the Tunbridge Wells/Spa Valley Railway gathering in July this will be the next in what is an emerging pattern of quarterly regional gatherings for local members and fellow rail campaigners from the local area, as well as from across our region, to share experiences and ideas for current and future rail development campaigns.

The day is planned to start with a morning session from 11.00 until 12.30. Local MPs with specific interests in rail matters have been invited. We hope to be joined too by people from the Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership and from the Abbey Line and Watford Rail User Groups. After finding lunch in town the afternoon then enables us to continue our discussions before taking advantage of the choice of routes home from the city's two stations.

The venue near St. Albans City station will be confirmed to those expressing interest to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman detailed on page 8.

Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategies – and us

RUSs go back to the days of the Strategic Rail Authority [2001-06] and the responsibility for producing them then transferred to Network Rail upon the SRA's abolition. RUSs have now been produced which cover the entire rail network. All the 'Generation 1' geographic RUSs have been published and all but two, detailed below, have been formally 'established' after final review by the Office of Rail Regulation [ORR]. Similarly our own 'Generation 2' regional RUS, also detailed below, has been published and awaits establishment. Meanwhile two draft Network RUSs have recently concluded public consultation, again mentioned below.

What is the importance of this to us in Railfuture? One of our Railfuture products – our consultation responses

– are a vitally important shop window through which others see us. These RUS and other public consultations are therefore key opportunities for us, not just to say what we want to say but also to say what others, opinion-formers and decision-takers, will find constructive, creative where relevant, critical where appropriate, and credible. Our comments are for nothing if not campaign-oriented, seeking not just to observe but to influence the course of events.

Debates within and beyond our organisation about the RUS process itself will continue, and debates about the particular content of specific RUSs will too. So they should, but RDS is not the Railway Debating Society. The Railfuture processes towards our products have to align with and contribute to a public consultation if they are to be effective. They have meanwhile been a shared learning experience for those who have tangled with them. We have learned more about the railway industry [service?], we have learned how we and adjoining branches perceive and prioritise what we call railway development – the real D in RDS, and our core business – and Network Rail and other rail bodies learn something about, and we believe from, us through our consultation responses.



London and South East RUS

Network Rail published this 'second generation' RUS at the end of July. This followed several months of further development by the rail industry and extensive discussions with stakeholders following publication of a Draft for Consultation in December 2010. The full 226-page document can be viewed at www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4449.aspx and Railfuture's response is among the many listed as received.

The RUS builds on the series of first generation RUSs, published between 2005 and 2011, covering routes into and around the capital. Given the length of time which has passed since some of these earlier publications, and the current circumstances which now apply, updates are needed in several areas which this RUS examines. As a result it represents Network Rail's latest analysis with respect to an appropriate strategy to 2031 for the South East England railway network as a whole.

The RUS forecasts a significant increase in the numbers of commuters using National Rail services into the capital during the weekday morning peaks. This is linked to economic forecasts for central London employment, which is expected to grow throughout the lifetime of this strategy. The RUS therefore focuses on how to increase peak rail capacity to accommodate this extra demand on the routes where it is forecast to materialise.

It restates, where still appropriate, previous RUS recommendations affecting routes into the capital. Beyond this, it also makes the case for additional interventions on the Great Western, West Anglia, Great Eastern and South West main lines, together with the busy orbital network around the capital. Passenger capacity for commuters is a central theme in the document, with significant growth forecasts on many routes. The RUS also covers the growing role of rail freight, removing lorries from increasingly congested roads.

The recommendations contained in this RUS are designed as a starting point to inform future infrastructure or train service planning and, where necessary, further analysis. In this context the RUS is consistent with Sir Roy McNulty's Value for Money study and in recommending these interventions, the RUS has sought to avoid major capital expenditure unless absolutely necessary. In most cases the capacity interventions appear achievable through relatively modest works. However it is recognised that routes into London Waterloo remain a longer term challenge with further development of options required.

The RUS is published at a time when work on the Crossrail and Thameslink projects is well underway. These will provide a major capacity increase for London's rail network and will reduce the need for passengers to interchange onto the congested London Underground network. The RUS

includes the latest assumptions regarding possible Thameslink service patterns and describes industry thinking for potential future extensions to Crossrail, including recommendations for an extension to Reading and an extension to the West Coast Main Line.

With respect to key growth areas around Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire the RUS notes that the development of a new high speed line will free commuter capacity on the suburban and inter-urban services into London Euston.

Transport for London has been heavily involved in the RUS development. The RUS outlines possibilities for future development of the rail network in the London area, including the possible development of a 'Crossrail line 2' route. Other potential expansions to the network include a recommendation for further work on a new western rail access to Heathrow Airport.

The RUS notes that, along with the Department for Transport, the industry is keen to participate in the planned fares review, and in particular to investigate the extent to which ticket pricing structures might enable a more even distribution of passenger numbers across the day.

The RUS contains a detailed study of the South Hampshire and Solent area, which was only partially covered by the 2005 South West Main Line RUS. This section has been developed closely with the local authorities and train operators using this part of the network.

Subject to approval by the Office of Rail Regulation this RUS was due to become established industry strategy later this summer.

West Midlands and Chilterns RUS

The West Midlands and Chilterns RUS, published in late-May, came just too late for mention in the previous newsletter. The 232-page document can be viewed at the same place as the L&SE RUS given above and Railfuture's response is again among the many listed as received.

The RUS has considered all services that operate:

- in the West Midlands urban area
- together with regional services that operate to and from the area
- long distance high speed areas that pass through the RUS area
- freight services that operate to and from terminals in the West Midlands and which also traverse the RUS area.

The RUS identifies a number of gaps, the most significant of which are peak crowding on a number of services into and out of central Birmingham, connectivity both within and to and from the region, and capacity to deal with growth in freight services.

The RUS recommends a range of options to bridge these gaps, including train lengthening and additional services to address capacity and also recommends that further studies are undertaken to consider optimum routing and infrastructure requirements to deal with freight growth.

The RUS additionally considers a number of regional transport initiatives and the opportunities that this will present for rail as well as looking to the longer term and the introduction of a new high speed line linking London, the West Midlands and beyond.

West Coast Main Line RUS

This was published in early-July and is the last of the first generation of geographic RUSs. The 146-page document can be viewed at the same place as the L&SE RUS given above, and again the Railfuture response is there.

The RUS sets out the priorities for rail investment along the West Coast Main Line in the next thirty years. It considers value for money investments on the existing route to accommodate the expected numbers of passengers and volumes of freight. To do this the RUS considers a number of options, many of which make better use of the existing network. These include running longer trains, more long distance trains in the off-peak, faster services between Birmingham and Manchester and some additional fast commuter services into London. It supports the need to develop capacity for freight customers, particularly at the northern end of the route.

The RUS notes that by 2024 the West Coast Main Line will effectively be full, particularly at the southern end of the route. Network Rail supports the development of High Speed Two, which would provide significant additional capacity on this corridor. It will help address the capacity constraints identified in this RUS, improve connectivity on the existing network, support national economic competitiveness and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging more people to shift from roads and air to rail.

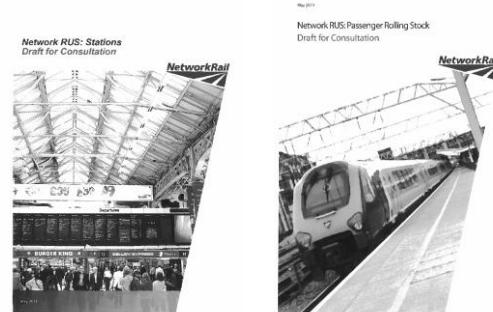
Network Rail and their industry partners believe that this RUS provides a robust strategy for the rail industry in the coming years.

Network RUSs – stations, and passenger rolling stock

As reported in the previous newsletter, these two drafts were published by Network Rail for consultation at the beginning and end of May respectively, with closing dates of early-July and early-August respectively. Both can be seen on Network Rail's website at www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4449.aspx. The

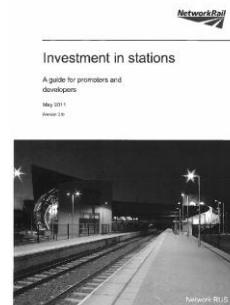
Railfuture responses can be seen at www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Submissions

The Network RUS for Stations was published at the end of August and will be reviewed in the next branch newsletter.



Station developments

Investment in stations – a guide for promoters and developers, by Network Rail. This was released with the consultation draft of the Network RUS for Stations. It has been updated from the original published in June 2008 and is likely to become one of rail campaigners' standard works of reference. See <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4449.aspx> where the document is a downloadable pdf in the Network RUS: Stations section.



Southend Airport station opened on Monday 18th July. It is just five minutes along the line from Southend Victoria station, 30 minutes from the main line at Shenfield and about 55 minutes from Liverpool Street.

Lea Bridge station closed in July 1985. Midway between Stratford and Tottenham Hale, it is now the focus of a re-opening campaign gathering support not only within its host Waltham Forest and from the local Chingford Line Users Association, but further afield in neighbouring Hackney, Haringey and Newham and also Enfield and the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority. Funding is potentially available from contributions generated by the recently-opened Stratford City development to improve transport access, and March 2014 has been set as the campaign target for the re-opening.

The service frequency on the line through the station site will improve with National Express's

West Anglia timetable changes from this December, with the current weekday peaks-only frequency of two trains per hour [just one per hour at all other times] spreading to cover the whole day Mondays-Saturdays. Building on that, Network Rail's London and South East RUS proposes a four trains per hour frequency between Stratford and Brimsdown within the next Control Period, possibly by 2016. The two extra trains per hour would form a Stratford-Brimsdown shuttle, but local campaigners are already concerned should this be anything less than an even-interval all-stations 4-tph service.

London Fields station officially opened a second access, on the west side of the West Anglia line viaduct and leading directly to the park whose name the station bears, in August. With it came a range of other station improvements such as a train departure screen by each entrance, two additional CCTV cameras giving full internal and external coverage of the new access, extra platform seating, and more information boards. The whole package was funded through contributions generated by a nearby development specifically for public transport improvements, and the project which includes a pair of new stops on a nearby bus route was managed by Hackney Council.

Interchanges – the missing link?

This is a subject capable of varying interpretations. One starting point is the ORR station usage data which shows some stations having interchanging passengers. Network Rail's recent Network RUS for Stations has helped to clarify that such data only refers to passengers changing trains within the same station, not between one and another station.

Another starting point might be, for us in London and the South East, ATOC's maps of 'Rail Services Around London & the South East' and 'London Connections, Rail and Underground Services'. Both show some Interchange stations.

A third starting point, and this is where anomalies and inconsistencies begin to appear when comparing with those two maps, is the GB timetable's list of 'Some other useful transfers'. Of the 31 listed nationally, 25 are in or near our region and 15 of those are in London.

Of the 10 outside London, the three most peripheral to our branch shown on the **London & South East map** – Bicester North-Bicester Town, Dorchester South-Dorchester West, and Yeovil Junction-Yeovil Pin Mill – are at least shown in proximity but not identified as interchanges, and in the case of the Yeovil stations that may be just as well since they're about 2.4 miles apart! Contrastingly the Dorchester stations are shown as needing a 15-minute connection time whereas the Transport Direct website suggests only 7 minutes at average walking speed, the GB timetable

thereby down-playing the value of the link. For completeness, the Bicester stations are said to need a 30-minute connection time but Transport Direct advises 23 minutes.

Two 'other useful transfers' are in Surrey and another just over the border in Hampshire, but again Farnborough Main-Farnborough North, Ash Vale-North Camp and Dorking-Dorking Deepdene are not shown as interchanges. Similar to the three peripheral [to our region] station transfers above, the connection times may be over-stated. The Farnborough stations are said to need 24 minutes while Transport Direct suggests 14 minutes, Ash Vale-North Camp apparently needs 19 compared with a more likely 11 minutes, and the Dorking stations while said to be only 9 minutes apart may be walkable in as little as 4 minutes!

Three 'other useful transfers' in Kent are also not shown as interchanges yet they may well be viable as such. Edenbridge-Edenbridge Town is said to need 20 minutes connection time and Transport Direct suggests 18 minutes. Maidstone East-Maidstone Barracks apparently needs 16 minutes but Transport Direct suggests needs only 7 minutes. Canterbury East-Canterbury West officially needs 25 minutes connection time but may only take 17 minutes.

The final listed 'other useful transfer' beyond the London Connections map's area is Southend Central-Southend Victoria, where the official connection time of 17 minutes is double the Transport Direct estimate of 8 minutes.

Before we leave for the London area, the 10 examples above already appear to point to a serious under-statement of the potential convenience of interchanges between routes heading in significantly different directions, the more so when some can be made even more quickly using a bus as at least part of the connection.

In the area of the **London Connections map** the 15 'useful transfers' are as follows: GB = the GB timetable transfer time, TD = the Transport Direct website time, TfL = Transport for London's Journey Planner.

Catford-Catford Bridge – GB 10 minutes, TD 0.5 minutes! TfL 1 minute. The only interchange shown as linked.

Clock House-Kent House – GB 15 minutes, TD and TfL 6 minutes.

East Croydon-West Croydon – GB 25 minutes, TD 8 minutes, TfL 13 minutes or 7 minutes by tram. The only interchange with tram as well as bus link.

Enfield Chase-Enfield Town – GB 29 minutes, TD 11 minutes, TfL 10 minutes walk or 4 minutes by bus.

Forest Gate-Wanstead Park – GB 13 minutes, TD and TfL 2 minutes.

Hackney Central-Hackney Downs – GB 14 minutes, TD and TfL 5 minutes. Proposed Hackney Interchange 2 minutes.

Harringay-Harringay Green Lanes – GB 14 minutes, TD and TfL 6 minutes.

Hertford North-Hertford East – GB 34 minutes, TD 20 minutes [less by bus]

Penge East-Penge West – GB 19 minutes, TD and TfL 7 minutes.

Purley Oaks-Sanderstead – GB 10 minutes, TD and TfL 7 minutes.

Seven Sisters-South Tottenham – GB 14 minutes, TD and TfL 4 minutes.

Walthamstow Central-Walthamstow Queen's Road – GB 14 minutes, TD and TfL 8 minutes. Planned link 4 minutes.

West Hampstead-West Hampstead Thameslink – GB 11 minutes, TD 1 minute! TfL 3 minutes. The only interchange shown close.

Windsor & Eton Central-Windsor & Eton Riverside – GB 14 minutes, TD 8 minutes.

Conclusions? Most of these ‘other useful transfers’ are being dramatically under-sold, even squandered. They’re not even shown on the map most passengers use as anywhere near each other [Clock House-Kent House being one of the worst examples, compounded by the presence of Tramlink’s Beckenham Road stop very close by, in between the mainline stations] and the transfer times appear to be grossly in excess of what’s actually required, at least for an unencumbered or non-impaired traveller. Readers will all have their own examples of yet more which are omitted altogether – Camden Town-Camden Road springs to mind, walkable in 5 minutes yet shown far apart. On the other hand the Piccadilly line’s Sudbury Hill and Chiltern’s Sudbury Hill Harrow are still shown as interchange stations and placed close together!

This forensic examination was prompted by recent coverage in Tony Smale’s excellent ‘Rail User Express’ of issues arising from the roll-out of ATOC’s ‘Onward Travel’ posters at many stations. You can get onto Tony’s circulation list via ruglink@railfuture.org.uk

For those interested in a more geographically-correct Tube map, designer Mark Noad has sought to out-do Harry Beck by producing an update 80 years after the original. See www.london-tubemap.com Unlike TfL’s versions of the recent past, it helpfully includes the next extension of the East London line, this time between Surrey Quays and Clapham Junction, over a year before it’s due to open, at 05.30 on 9th December 2012 to be precise.

Finally, the London Connections map is no more! It’s now known as ‘London’s Rail and Tube services’ and the first issue in the new format, valid until the end of December, was launched in August. The flip-side of the foldable map is now ‘London & the South East rail services’ [rather than Rail Services around London & the South East!]

Southern’s Marsh Link in July

Marsh Link services and stations at Winchelsea and Three Oaks came under detailed scrutiny by the branch’s Coastway division during two all-day evidence-gathering passenger counts. These East Sussex communities have been enjoying the restoration of their regular all-day Monday-Saturday services since last December, albeit at only half the previous hourly frequency which ended six years ago with the westwards extension of the Ashford International services through to Brighton. A term-time weekday and holiday Saturday were chosen to sample current patronage levels, adding to the evidence base started with the division’s count at Rye in September 2009.

During both days there was a very stark bias at both stations towards journeys to and from the Hastings-Eastbourne-Brighton direction, rather than the Ashford International direction, which was even more pronounced than observed at Rye two years ago with its 60%:40% split the same way. The Saturday was notably busier than the weekday at both stations, confirming the division’s view that an urgently-required improvement is for the alternate-hourly service to be run on Sundays, at the very least during the months of British Summer Time with their longer hours of evening daylight.

The Coastway counts undertaken at Rye in 2009 and Bexhill last year generated data which was broadly consistent with the ORR station usage data, so the official data for Winchelsea and Three Oaks has again been used as a comparator. The general conclusion is that even using conservative multipliers to factor up the two-day counts to annual estimates, it appears that both stations have already achieved levels of patronage after only seven months of a two-hourly service that are broadly similar to what they used to have with an hourly service six years ago. At Winchelsea the last full-year ORR figure before the December 2005 timetable change, ie 2004-05, estimated 7728 passengers; the Coastway count suggests 7950 now. At Three Oaks the 2004-05 ORR estimate was 8574, the Coastway count suggests 6540 now.

Network Rail is apparently to undertake maintenance work to Ore tunnel early next year, and it is understood that this will require Marsh Link to be closed for about a couple of winter months. If confirmed this presents a clear opportunity for other improvements to the line, such as lifting line speed restrictions. Journey time savings might then most appropriately be re-invested in an improved station calling pattern, such as adding regular stops at Ore to the Marshlink service.

Chiltern's Sudburys in September

Evergreen 3 phase 1 kicked off on 5th September with a new timetable. Our branch has long taken an interest in the train services and station facilities, or more accurately the lack thereof, at Sudbury Harrow Road station in Brent and Sudbury Hill Harrow station in Harrow. The new timetable changes the times of most services at these two Zone 4 stations, and while reducing the already extremely limited weekdays-only uni-directional peaks-only service at Sudbury Harrow Road [now just three rather than five 'down' in the evening] it interestingly slightly increases the weekday peak services at Sudbury Hill Harrow. The morning peak period there sees one extra train in each direction, while the evening sees three extra trains calling in the contra-peak 'up' direction.

Before we talk of acorns and oaks it's nevertheless worth recalling that 15 years ago this is how the service, and station patronage, at Cambridge Heath and London Fields started their resurgence, with a sequence of incremental service improvements which have seen peak period station usage at London Fields multiply literally 10-fold, and at Cambridge Heath not much less.

Passenger counts undertaken in July before the schools broke up suggest that, conservatively factored-up to an annualised basis, both of Chiltern's Sudbury stations may well have patronage levels almost double the official station usage data published by the ORR. Whilst a common problem with London station data, it again underlines how the real value to a local community of their nearest station runs the serious risk of uninformed perceptions fed by the distortion of dodgy data.

High-speed developments

On HS1 the second network expansion, following the May introduction of weekday peak services to and from Maidstone West, has been accelerated. The weekday peak Southeastern High Speed services for the east Kent towns of Deal and Sandwich, piloted with such success for the Open Golf Championships at Sandwich and originally planned for early-October, have now commenced a month earlier from Monday 5th September.

Stratford International station is having its international platforms domesticated. All part of Olympic preparations, this is because the Javelin service during the 2012 Games will require the use of all four of the international station's platforms. Eurostar passengers from the continent will change at Ebbsfleet International for the Javelin shuttles, and vice versa on return. The domestication works are adding a temporary platform on top of the lower international platforms, over the length of a 12-car

class 395 not an 18-coach Eurostar, to reach the correct stepping distances.

Freight trials on HS1 have also moved forward. The first successful trial of a European-sized freight train from Dollands Moor near Folkestone into the terminal at Ripple Lane, Barking was operated in July.

Steady progress continues to be made towards the extension of international services via HS1 beyond Brussels. The Anglo-French Intergovernmental Safety Commission is considering Deutsche Bahn's application to use its new Velaro ICE-3 EMUs through the Channel Tunnel. This follows the IGC's earlier decision to permit EMUs with distributed power, rather than two end locos as on Eurostars, to use the tunnel. Meanwhile Eurostar have an order for 10 [with options for a further 13] Siemens-built Velaro trains. These developments open up the prospect of through services to destinations such as Amsterdam and Frankfurt as the new trains would have the required range of inter-operable power and signalling system compatibilities. The German initiative in particular may also offer the best prospect of restoring some calls by international services at Ashford International station, since Eurostar have shown no interest.

Community Rail Awards – our region's short-list

This year's Community Rail Awards Gala Dinner was held in Sheffield on 23rd September, after this newsletter's copy date so any winners from our region will appear in railse 114. Short-listed contenders from our region for the 15 awards were as follows:

1 – **Involving Young People**, sponsored by Network Rail – 13 entries, 5 short-listed, including Ian Paterson and Adrian Crowther for the Sheerness Photo Mosaic 'welcome' map, nominated by Kent CRP; also Jane Lee and Ali Rezakhani for Southern Railway's Makin' Tracks competition, nominated by Southern.

2 – Community Art Schemes – no L&SE short-listed.

3 – **Local Transport Integration**, sponsored by Lancashire County Council – 10 entries, 5 short-listed including Southern Railway-Network Rail-Merton Council for the Mitcham Junction Integration Project, nominated by Southern.

4 – Best Station Garden or Floral Display – no L&SE short-listed.

5 – **Best Station/Train Retail Outlet**, sponsored by MerseyTravel – 9 entries, 5 short-listed including Bistro at Etchingham Station, nominated by De Etchingham Interest Company, TOC Southeastern;

also Brown and Green @ the station, Gipsy Hill Station, nominated by Southern.

6 – Station Development, sponsored by Railway Heritage Trust – 15 entries, 5 short-listed including Southeastern-Network Rail-De Etchingham IC for Etchingham Station Development, nominated by Southeastern.

7 – International Award – no L&SE short-listed.

8 – Photo Competition – open competition via ACORP website – a choice of 91 to vote for!

9 – Best Marketing Publication – no L&SE short-listed.

10 – Best Marketing Event – no L&SE short-listed.

11 – Outstanding Volunteer Contribution – no L&SE short-listed.

12 – Best Station Adoption Group, sponsored by National Express East Anglia – 14 entries, 5 short-listed, including Plumpton Station Partnership, nominated by Sussex CRP-Southern.

13 – Outstanding Railway Staff Contribution – no L&SE short-listed.

14 – Outstanding Teamwork Award, sponsored by Network Rail – 13 entries, 6 short-listed including Sam Bryant-Yvonne Leslie for the Southern Station Partnership, nominated by Tim Sparrow [Chair of Sussex CRP].

15 – Passengers Matter – no L&SE short-listed.

Focus on passengers – spring 2011

The latest National Passenger Survey for spring 2011 was published in late-June. It is available on www.passengerfocus.org.uk

For the 12 London & South East operators overall satisfaction was 1% ahead of the previous year's spring survey at 83%. Within that the biggest negative trend for the region was the ongoing and national decline in satisfaction with 'the value for money for the price of your ticket'. This is hardly surprising with rail fares continuing to rise in real terms while disposable incomes for many people remain static or decline, and crowding on many routes continues to outpace the provision of extra carriages whether by longer or more frequent trains. Even lower in the league, availability of staff, dealing with delays and toilet facilities remain bottom.

Top of the regional, and national, league was Heathrow Express with 95% overall satisfaction, followed by c2c on 91%. Joint 3rd in our region on 89% were Heathrow Connect and London Overground [which had a 17% points improvement

on spring 2010], followed by Chiltern Railways on 88% and South West Trains with 85%. Then London Midland on 83% were followed by First Great Western, Southeastern and Southern in joint 8th place with 82% overall satisfaction, with First Capital Connect and outgoing National Express East Anglia sharing foot of the regional, and national, league position with just 78%.

Engaging with our TOCs

As the Network Rail RUS programme, and the very considerable work involved for us to respond to their consultations, draws to a close so the Department for Transport's re-franchising programme looks set to replace it as our next major pre-occupation. In August the DfT announced its new programme for re-letting franchises, taking account of various changes such as First Great Western deciding not to opt for the extension to their franchise.

The Department anticipates the following programme of publication of OJEU [Official Journal of the European Union] notices, issue of invitations to tender to short-listed suppliers, announcement of franchise award, and contract start date, with direct implications for the branch's work programme:

2011

November – award announced for Greater Anglia [short franchise]
December – OJEU notices for Great Western, Essex Thameside, and Thameslink

2012

January – ITT for InterCity West Coast
February – contract start for Greater Anglia [short franchise]
May – ITTs for Great Western and Essex Thameside
August – award announced for InterCity West Coast; OJEU notice for InterCity East Coast
October – ITT for Thameslink
December – contract start for InterCity West Coast; OJEU notices for South Eastern and Greater Anglia [long franchise]
End 2012 – awards announced for Great Western and Essex Thameside

2013

January – ITT for InterCity East Coast
Spring – award announced for Thameslink
April – contract start for Great Western
May – contract start for Essex Thameside; ITT for South Eastern
August – ITT for Greater Anglia [long franchise]
Summer – award announced for InterCity East Coast
September – contract start for Thameslink
December – contract start for InterCity East Coast
End 2013 – award announced for South Eastern

2014

April – contract start for South Eastern
Spring – award announced for Greater Anglia [long franchise]
July – contract start for Greater Anglia [long franchise]

Engaging with our members

There are about 500 members in our regional branch and your committee is researching you! Nothing more than a basic analysis of the first part of members' postcodes so far but that is helpful in identifying where we have groups and gaps, although the vagaries of the postcode system itself can mislead.

One early conclusion is that we have significant numbers of members in parts of our region which are not yet covered by a more local divisional structure, as we have well-established for Kent, Sussex [Coastway] and south Essex [Eastern], to enable greater communication and campaigning around local issues. Look forward to quarterly members' gatherings coming to those areas – Surrey, south Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and even London itself with about a quarter of the branch membership – as with the St. Albans meeting on 29th October.

Members summer regional gathering – report-back

Tunbridge Wells played host to a July business-and-pleasure gathering of members and local activists, addressed in the morning by Tim Sparrow who is Chair of the Sussex Community Rail Partnership and works closely with his CRP colleagues in Kent. Also contributing local perspectives and concerns were the Chair of Tunbridge Wells and District Rail Travellers Association and the Vice-Chair of Tonbridge Line Commuters. Others present included the Branch Chair, Vice-Chair and Hon. Treasurer, and the organisers of our divisions in Kent and Sussex. For those present it was a thought-provoking session, with valuable contacts established for the future.

After lunch members took the opportunity to experience the full length of the recently-extended Spa Valley Railway route through to Eridge, where there is now a direct link into Southern's services on the Uckfield branch.

Branch divisions members meetings – open to all branch members

Coastway – usually meet monthly on the first Thursday [except mid-July instead of August, and mid-January instead of February] at 18.00 – the next one will be on 6th October at 31 Elm Grove, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 9NN, then 3rd November and 1st December at the Lewes Arms, 1 Mount Place, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1YH. Contact Dick Tyler at richard.tyler@railfuture.org.uk or 27 Windsor Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3PB or phone 01424 211500.

Eastern – usually meet bi-monthly on the second Wednesday of odd-numbered months at 18.30, in Stratford – the next one will be on 9th November. Contact Howard Thomas at howard.thomas@railfuture.org.uk or 24 South Primrose Hill, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2RG or phone 01245 496439 before 21.00 hours.

Kent – usually meet quarterly on the third Saturday afternoon, in a different venue around Kent – the next one will be on 19th November at The Alma public house, 126 West Street, Deal, CT14 6EB, a 6-minute walk from the station. Divisional Organiser is Peter Collingborn at 82 Burnham Walk, Parkwood, Rainham, Kent, ME8 8RX or phone 01634 364744; email contact is Chris Fribbins at chris.fribbins@railfuture.org.uk

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This branch newsletter is published quarterly and is usually distributed with each edition of *railwatch*. The copy deadline for issue 114 due to be published early in December will be Monday 31st October 2011. Please submit material through Branch Chairman Keith Dyall.

And finally, to repeat the footnote from a year ago in branch newsletter no.109 for October 2010 - what's in a branch newsletter name? Take your pick from the regional version *railfuture in London* and the *south east*; or, [remembering why there had to be an 'e' in the Anglo-French Concorde, a letter which nobody ever felt the need to pronounce or accentuate], the international version, reflecting that we're the only regional branch of Railfuture with direct *rails to europe*.

The Railfuture mission: to be the number one advocate for the railway and rail users

Websites: www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk and www.railwatch.org.uk

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