

railfuture

Railfuture is campaigning to reopen the railway line from Uckfield to Lewes. This will create an additional through route between the Sussex coast and London, with the following benefits:

- Direct train services between Kent, the Weald, Lewes, and Brighton for education and jobs
- Faster more reliable services between the Weald and London
- Direct trains between Newhaven and London, supporting regeneration
- Additional trains from Brighton, Eastbourne and Lewes to London, relieving the Brighton Main Line
- Reduced traffic congestion around Lewes and Brighton.

Adrian Shooter, Railfuture vice president and former chairman of Chiltern Railways said: "Given the population density and highway congestion, it seems inconceivable that a way cannot be found to make this project happen."

The JRC Report

Railfuture has put its money where its mouth is by engaging independent advisor JRC to assess the evidence of economic and transport needs in Sussex. The key recommendations put to East Sussex County Council are:

- Options for Uckfield-Lewes investment which achieve affordable and effective journey times between the Weald, the Sussex Coast and Brighton
- Faster travel and extra capacity between the Sussex Coast and Gatwick, Croydon and London
- Investigation of electrification and other infrastructure which expands services and connections, reducing journey times - by through trains not changes
- Investment in a direct Coastway connection between Polegate and Pevensey to reduce journey times to attractive levels along the main coastal corridor, between Brighton, the Sussex Coast and East Kent
- Coastway Metro service linking Eastbourne and Hastings, with more stations.

Why will it work this time?

The 2008 Network Rail study proved that reinstatement is technically feasible. By taking a wider view and combining the benefits of regional economic growth with increased network capacity, a positive business case can be created for an affordable initial scheme which aligns with NR priorities and plans.

The original route into Lewes has been blocked by redevelopment. The JRC report identifies three viable alternative routes which would allow direct trains between the Uckfield line and Brighton.

Railfuture is working with East Sussex County Council, the district, town and parish councils and Network Rail to build an alliance of stakeholders inspired to believe that reopening Uckfield-Lewes is justified, credible and deliverable as well as a springboard for expansion.

This realistic, evidence-based approach will command the support of political and industry stakeholders. Ian Brown, Railfuture vice-president and former managing director of London Rail, described the Railfuture approach as "all sensible well-balanced stuff".



At points in this incremental development both electrification and a link to Tunbridge Wells become viable