

Draft Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy (2022 – 2050)

Railfuture West Midlands **comments in green.**

WRIS 1 - Retained projects

NCL 1 - Two trains per hour between Worcester and London Paddington with one train per hour having a fast journey time of 1 hour 50 mins or less CP7 2024-2029

Whilst waiting some three years so far for DfT approval of the North Cotswold Line Task Group SOBC we support implementing a service from Kidderminster to Paddington. In view of the lack response by the DfT we would suggest that this element of the SOBC submission should be taken forward in advance of the main proposal, as it would seem that the rolling stock resources for some services can be provided without additional units, and the infrastructure requirements are not costly. The proposal was not separately evaluated for value for money, but we are of the view that it would show a positive BCR. Taking this out of the main scheme would not undermine the financial case for the remainder.

NCL 2 - One train per hour between Kidderminster, Droitwich and London Paddington CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

NCL 3 - Additional infrastructure on the North Cotswold Line to support the two trains per hour Worcester to London service CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

WAB 2 - New direct train service between (Birmingham) Bromsgrove, Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham Spa, Gloucester and Bristol Temple Meades - 2023 Supported.

WAB 3 - Support for additional infrastructure capacity and resignalling between Stoke Works, Droitwich, Worcester and Great Malvern – Hereford to support train service growth and development. CP7 2024-2029 We consider that this is the highest priority for implementation as the current signalling and track infrastructure creates frequent delays and inhibits service developments.

The Strategy should set out specific infrastructure requirements, which should include double tracking between Foregate Street and Shrub Hill, an additional platform on the north side of Shrub Hill, preferably a through platform, turn back facilities in Great Malvern station and modern signalling.

WPK 1- Introduction of Worcestershire Parkway calls on the hourly Exeter – Bristol – Manchester service CP7 2024-2029 Supported as this was part of the rationale for the station.

ELC 1 - Electrification of the Snowhill and Birmingham – Bristol lines to support service growth and development CP8 2029-2034 Supported as this will reduce emissions and increase rolling stock performance and reliability.

ACS 1 - Additional car park capacity at existing and new / or CP6 2019-2024 and six stations to accommodate forecast passenger growth CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk
www.railwatch.org.uk

WOS 1 - Shrub Hill Station Masterplan to support service growth to London, Birmingham, West of England and Shrub Hill Quarter regeneration CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 We strongly support this output of the plans for regeneration of the Shrub Hill area and station.

TKT 1 - Cross industry review of ticketing and fares structures to match new and developing train services (including Great British Railways when established) CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

WRIS 2 - In development

ACS2 - Station car park development assessment at Alvechurch, Blakedown, Kidderminster and Pershore. CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

DTW1 - Droitwich station masterplan and car park expansion CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

RED1 - Redditch station masterplan development delivery and engagement with the industry to restore pre covid Cross City line frequency 39% CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 The Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust has moved several surgical and other departments from the Worcestershire Royal to the Alexandra Hospital leading to challenging journeys for patients from Worcester using a train requires three train services and then a bus trip.

We believe that Redditch station has great growth potential compared to other towns in the county—if the right product of services and facilities can be offered. So have prepared detailed proposals for enhancement of rail in the District which is available on <https://www.dropbox.com/s/uhq3m1nnwh7hcxl/Redditch2.doc?dl=0>

RWK1 -Rushwick / West of Worcester new station development CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

WOP1 - Worcestershire Parkway access / car park expansion CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

FND1 - Develop third part funding innovation (all schemes) in context of rail industry funding challenges CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

FND2 - Maximising opportunities for funding bids (all schemes) to developing government sources eg: Levelling Up CP6 2019-2024 and CP7 2024-2029 Supported.

DCB1 - Adopting all rail industry best practice to support application of the decarbonisation agenda Supported.

HON1 - Assessment of incremental value of re-opened Stratford - Honeybourne line to NCL priorities 1 - 3 CP7 2024-2029 and CP8 2029-2034 WCC support via WMRE and Midlands Connect Membership We are pleased to see inclusion of some mention of Honeybourne - Stratford in the plan but consider that neither the County nor Oxfordshire properly appreciate the benefits of the additional services between Honeybourne and Worcester or eastwards to Oxford

WAB1A - Support for GWR and DfT proposal for increase from one train per two hours to one train per hour Worcester - Cheltenham Spa - Gloucester - Bristol 2023 Supported.

WAB4 - Support for Network Rail's Kings Norton scheme / Cross City frequency restoration 39% CP7 2024-2029 We are concerned that the present layout at Kings Norton will not be adequate to support the additional services that are included in the plan. We feel that the County should include a firm statement of an enhanced layout that is adequate for future service development.

MRH1 Support for Midlands Connect two trains per hour Birmingham - Bromsgrove - Worcester - Hereford CP8 2029-2034 We are concerned that the present layout at Kings Norton will not be adequate to support the additional services that are included in the plan. We feel that the County should include a firm statement of an enhanced layout that is adequate for future service development.

MRH2 - Support for Midlands Connect two trains per hour Birmingham - Worcestershire Parkway - Bristol / Cardiff CP8 2029-2034 We strongly support this output but believe that the timescale for implementation should be brought forward to CP7.

WMRE1 - Support for WMRE / West Midlands one train per hour Worcester Shrub Hill to Birmingham restoration 2023. Already in WMR's May Timetable.

WMRE 2 - Support for WMRE two trains per hour Birmingham - Stratford to support Wythall development options. **Supported.**

General comments.

Station as places (p13) Active Travel

There is a vanishingly small number of journeys that include a rail leg start and end at a station – for virtually all of them, rail is one segment within the journey, so to maximise rail usage, we need to consider and make attractive and sustainable the first and last mile.

Whilst 'car park' is mentioned 13 times within the document, there are no mentions whatsoever of bus integration, or active travel such as walking or cycling. Even in rural areas, stations are generally located near population centres, so maximising the active travel access to a station location should be the first option before car park expansion—and even the most expensive cycle parking is far, far cheaper per space than car parking—especially if additional land purchase is required.

Data from the Netherlands indicates that e-bike users make trips typically 35% longer than standard bike users. In a situation with a circular catchment around a station, this could almost double (90%) the cycling population catchment for a station—plus the monetise health benefits this could yield.

<https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documenten/reports/2018/04/01/cycling-facts-2018/Cycling+facts+2018.pdf>

Bikes are a high value item, and the effect of bike theft is severe. (see two articles below)
<https://edwest.substack.com/p/old-britain-has-a-cancer-the-cancer>
<https://zagdaily.com/featured/why-we-must-stop-bike-thieves-from-getting-away-with-it/>

When considering whether or not to make a journey by bike, the most significant considerations for a cyclist that has suffered from bike crime is not 'what are the roads like', it is 'will my bike still be there (and undamaged) when I return.'

We suggest that unless the bike parking facilities are within a covered, secure area with controlled access and CCTV, and the answer isn't yes to some of these four questions, then the cyclist could well say 'no' to travelling by train.

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