

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Portfolio Holder (Environment) Decision Making Session

Date of Committee 16 October 2009

Report Title Consultation Response to Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategies

Summary Network Rail has published consultation on its Great Western and East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategies. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder notes the contents of the report and approves the proposed response of the County Council.

For further information please contact Daniel Caldecote
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members Councillor D Bryden }
Councillor M Doody } for Information
Councillor R Sweet }
Councillor J Whitehouse }

Cabinet Member Councillor A Cockburn
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Chief Executive

Legal I Marriott – agreed.

Finance

- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**Portfolio Holder (Environment) Decision
Making Session - 16 October 2009**

**Consultation Response to Network Rail's Route
Utilisation Strategies**

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder notes the contents of the report and approves the proposed responses of the County Council to Network Rail.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A consultation is being undertaken on the draft Great Western Route and East Midlands Utilisation Strategies (RUS) which have been produced by Network Rail.
- 1.2 A RUS is a planning document that Network Rail is required to prepare to show how it plans to make best use of the rail network and how it should be developed in the future given the funds available. The plan covers the next 30 years and has been developed in conjunction with train and freight companies, passenger groups and the wider rail industry.
- 1.3 The Great Western RUS covers the Great Western Main Line from London to the West of England, South Wales, Devon and Cornwall. It also includes the Cotswold Line between Oxford and Worcester via Evesham.
- 1.4 The East Midlands RUS covers the East Midland Main Line from London St Pancras International to Chesterfield via Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and other lines across the East Midlands. All passenger services that use these routes for part or all of their journeys are covered, including those from Birmingham to Leicester via Nuneaton and between Birmingham and Stansted Airport via Nuneaton and Leicester.
- 1.5 A copy of the draft Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy is available at:
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20Utilisation%20strategies/great%20western/greatwesternrus.pdf>
- 1.6 A copy of the draft East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy is available at:
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20Utilisation%20strategies/east%20midlands/east%20midlands%20rus%20draft%20for%20consultation.pdf>

2. Implications for Warwickshire

- 2.1 It is recommended that the County Council respond to this consultation as the RUSs consider the track and infrastructure improvements needed in order to meet future rail demand over the next ten to thirty years. Some of the routes contained within each RUS either pass through Warwickshire or pass nearby and are therefore used by residents in Warwickshire.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the County Council.

4. Proposed Response

- 4.1 It is proposed, subject to the approval of the Portfolio Holder, that consultation responses in the form of the drafts attached as **Appendices A and B** be made to Network Rail.
- 4.2 In summary, the County Council's responses make the following points:-
- (i) The County Council welcomes the publication of the draft RUS, and thanks Network Rail for the detailed and thorough work it contains;
 - (ii) The proposals to improve services, increase capacity and improve the level of service across the RUS area are also welcomed and will assist the railway to meet the growing demand for public transport;
 - (iii) The County Council welcomes the current work to redouble the Cotswold Line between Evesham and Moreton-in-Marsh and between Ascott-under-Wychwood and Charlbury to improve performance for the existing service pattern. However it is considered essential that the additional capacity that will be provided on the Cotswold Line as a result of the redoubling work should be used to increase the train service frequency on that line;
 - (iv) The County Council considers it essential that an integrated approach is taken to the improvements in and around the Nuneaton area to ensure that a consistent approach across the different RUSs and that improvements in one RUS area are not precluded by a RUS covering a different area;
 - (v) The County Council is disappointed that there is no reference to improving the connectivity between Coventry/Warwickshire and Leicester/the East Midlands. A through service, as envisaged in phase 4 of NUCKLE, would provide a direct rail link between the two regions.

PAUL GALLAND
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

1 October 2009

**Portfolio Holder (Environment) Decision
Making Session**

16 October 2009

**The Response to the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy
Consultation Document**

The County Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) consultation document.

The County Council has made substantial investment in providing improved rail facilities and continues to place a high priority on rail in delivering its transport policy.

The overall trend in the numbers of rail passengers in Warwickshire is one of sustained growth with rail travel becoming increasingly important. Commuting and business travel to the West Midlands Conurbation and Coventry form a substantial element of rail travel in the County for people from a wide range of socio-economic groups. In some communities in Warwickshire, trains provide essential 'socially necessary services' as rail is the only form of regular public transport. There is also significant use of rail for commuting and business travel to London and the South East. Rail journeys for retail, leisure and social activities are also growing.

The County Council welcomes the publication of the draft RUS, and thanks Network Rail for the detailed and thorough work it contains. The proposals to improve services, increase capacity and improve the level of service across the RUS area is also welcomed and will assist the railway to meet the growing demand for public transport.

The County Council's detailed comments on the draft Great Western RUS are as follows. The County Council:-

- Welcomes the current work to redouble the Cotswold Line between Evesham and Moreton-in-Marsh and between Ascott-under-Wychwood and Charlbury to improve performance for the existing service pattern.
- Considers it essential that the additional capacity that will be provided on the Cotswold Line as a result of the redoubling work should be used to increase the train service frequency on that line;
- Supports the redoubling of the Kemble to Swindon railway line. The scheme has numerous benefits and would provide an effective strategic route linking the West Midlands Region and Swindon, an alternative route for services connecting the West Midlands Region with the South coast/South East and a reliable diversionary route when other routes are closed for Engineering works.

**Portfolio Holder (Environment) Decision
Making Session**

16 October 2009

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The County Council has made substantial investment in providing improved rail facilities and continues to place a high priority on rail in delivering its transport policy.

The overall trend in the numbers of rail passengers in Warwickshire is one of sustained growth with rail travel becoming increasingly important. Commuting and business travel to the West Midlands Conurbation and Coventry form a substantial element of rail travel in the County for people from a wide range of socio-economic groups. In some communities in Warwickshire, trains provide essential 'socially necessary services' as rail is the only form of regular public transport. There is also significant use of rail for commuting and business travel to London and the South East. Rail journeys for retail, leisure and social activities are also growing.

The County Council welcomes the publication of the draft RUS, and thanks Network Rail for the detailed and thorough work it contains. The proposals to improve services, increase capacity and improve the level of service across the RUS area is also welcomed and will assist the railway to meet the growing demand for public transport.

Nuneaton

The area and services around Nuneaton are covered in three different RUSs – the East Midlands RUS, the West Coast Main Line RUS and the West Midlands and Chilterns RUS. Therefore, the County Council considers it essential that an integrated approach is taken to the improvements in and around the Nuneaton area to ensure that a consistent approach across the different RUSs and that improvements in one RUS area are not precluded by a RUS covering a different area.

NUCKLE

The NUCKLE (Nuneaton-Coventry-Kenilworth-Leamington) scheme is an example of a future improvement in the Nuneaton area that is covered by all three RUSs. NUCKLE is the enhancement of rail services along the 'North - South' corridor from Warwick/Leamington to Nuneaton via Kenilworth - Coventry and Bedworth and then on to other areas and regions. There are four incremental phases.

Phase 1 is the upgrade the Nuneaton to Coventry Rail Line. Warwickshire County Council is working closely with Coventry City Council and Centro to develop and deliver

the scheme. The three partner organisations have formed a Programme Board to manage the project and the scheme has been allocated funding from the West Midlands' Regional Funding Allocation.

Phase 2 is the provision of a new station at Kenilworth. John Laing have recently been appointed as the County Council's Joint Promoter and Funder and will assist the County Council to progress further development of the scheme.

Phase 3 is the provision of a through rail service from Leamington Spa to Nuneaton via Coventry.

Phase 4 is the extension of the service north from Nuneaton towards Leicester and the East Midlands.

Regional Connectivity

The section on improving regional connectivity is noted and the County Council is pleased that the RUS acknowledges development of regional connections to improve the public transport offer to support regional economic development both in terms of employment opportunities and housing growth.

However, it is disappointing that there is no reference to improving the connectivity between Coventry/Warwickshire and Leicester/the East Midlands.

There is strong demand for travel between Coventry and Leicester and along the urban corridor linking to the two cities which includes the towns of Bedworth, Nuneaton, Hinckley, Earl Shilton and Naborough. The M69 motorway runs along the corridor and provides a direct road link between Coventry and Leicester, cities that both have populations of around 300,000.

The density of the population and the level of activity in Coventry, Leicester and the M69 corridor is set to grow substantially as a result of both the West Midlands and East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategies which will create increasing demand for transport between Coventry/Warwickshire and Leicester/the East Midlands.

Even with the need to change trains at Nuneaton and an hourly service between Coventry and Nuneaton, the East Midlands base RUS information shows that in 2006/07 over 35,000 rail journeys were made between Coventry and Leicester and 25,000 between Coventry and Nottingham.

However, a key shortcoming of the current rail network between the East and West Midlands is the lack of a through rail service between the two regional cities of Coventry and Leicester without the requirement to change at Nuneaton. As part of the West Coast Main Line upgrade, Nuneaton station was remodelled significantly, removing the link between the Nuneaton-Coventry and Nuneaton-Leicester lines. The loss of direct services has resulted in a reduction in regional rail connectivity, between Coventry/Warwickshire and Leicester/the East Midlands. A through service, as envisaged in NUCKLE phase 4, would provide a direct rail link between the two regions and would increase rail use along the corridor.

To enable through services a 'dive under' would need to be provided under the West Coast Main Line at Nuneaton to enable trains from Coventry avoid crossing the West Coast Main Line at grade. Sufficient capacity would also need to be available between Nuneaton and Leicester for the new services.

Through services and a dive-under are included in the West Midlands Rail Development Plan which has been produced by Centro on behalf of the Regional Rail Forum, a body which has representatives from local authorities, rail companies and other organisations across the region. Further details can be found at http://www.centro.org.uk/consultation/rail_development_plan.aspx.

Birmingham – Leicester/Stansted Airport Services

The County Council welcomes the proposals to extend Birmingham – Leicester services to Cambridge from 2011 and considers essential the lengthening of trains on the Birmingham – Leicester and Birmingham – Stansted Airport services. These improvements will help to increase the connectivity at Water Orton, Coleshill Parkway and Nuneaton and will also help to relieve some of the extreme overcrowding that can prevent passengers from boarding Cross Country services to Birmingham at Water Orton in the am peak.