

Council

23 July 2020

Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019 - 2034

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1) Note the results of the consultation and the resulting modifications made to the draft Warwickshire Rail Strategy.
- 2) Endorse the Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034 and agree that the document is added to the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The County Council's existing Rail Strategy, as contained within the Warwickshire's third Local Transport Plan is no longer reflective of the local, regional and national wider policy context or Warwickshire's aspirations to deliver improvements to both rail infrastructure and services. As a result, the decision was taken to undertake a comprehensive review of the Rail Strategy ahead of the development of the new Warwickshire Local Transport Plan.
- 1.2 The Rail Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 30 January 2020, who recommended that the strategy be endorsed by Council.
- 1.3 Once adopted, the revised Warwickshire Rail Strategy will become a companion addendum to Warwickshire's existing Local Transport Plan. The Plan will not be formally modified at this stage, but the Strategy can be incorporated into the new Plan when the existing Plan is reviewed.
- 1.4 The draft Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034 (See Appendix 1) was subject to public consultation which ran from 20th July to 20th September 2019. The consultation gave key partners, stakeholders and the general public the opportunity to comment on the draft Rail Strategy
- 1.5 A wide range of stakeholders were contacted directly to notify them of the consultation and to seek their views. The consultation was also publicised to the wider community using a variety of the County Council's media channels and through the local press.

- 1.6 A range of methods were used to gather views during the consultation period. These included; an online survey on Ask Warwickshire using Citizen Space; a paper-based version of the standard online survey could be requested by telephone or email. Alternative formats and languages could also be requested. In addition, comments and full written responses relating to the proposed draft strategy could be sent directly to the County Council.
- 1.7 167 responses were submitted via the online survey; in addition, the County Council received 43 written responses, predominately submitted via email. The written responses were primarily submitted by key partners and stakeholders, including Midlands Connect, West Midlands Rail Executive, Birmingham Airport and local Town and Parish Councils. Most respondents who completed the online survey did so in their own capacity; eleven respondents completed the survey on behalf of an organisation. These included a mix of public, private and voluntary sector agencies. North Warwickshire Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Warwick District Council and Stratford -on-Avon District Council all submitted a response to the consultation, either via the online survey or a written response.
- 1.8 Responses to the online survey were received from across the County, with the highest number of respondents (31%) coming from North Warwickshire Borough, whilst only 8.4% came from Rugby Borough. The response rate for each Borough/District is shown in table 1 below. It should also be noted that the majority of responses received, over 80% identified themselves as 'White British'.

Table 1: On line responses: Proportion by Borough/District

Area	All Respondents (%)
North Warwickshire Borough	31.3%
Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough	12.0%
Rugby Borough	8.4%
Stratford-on-Avon District	15.1%
Warwick District	16.9%
Other, including Countywide	16.3%

- 1.9 Responses were received from the following organisations;

Table 2: Organisations who responded to the consultation

<i>Responded via written responses</i>	
<i>Key Stakeholders/Partners/MPs</i>	<i>Town & Parish Councils</i>
Birmingham Airport	Ansley Parish Council
Chiltern Railways	Honeybourne & Pebworth Parish Council
Guide Dogs	Kingsbury Parish Council
Highways England	Lapworth Parish Council
Midlands Connect	Shrewley Parish Council

Network Rail	Southam Town Council
Shakespeare Birthplace Trust	Welford Parish Council
University of Warwick	Rail User Groups
West Midlands Rail Executive	Atherstone Rail User Group
Craig Tracey MP	Northampton Rail User Group
Nigel Huddleston MP	Rugby Rail User Group
	Shakespeare Line Promotion Group
Local Authorities	Stratford Rail Transport Group
Coventry City Council	Other
Gloucestershire County Council	Responses submitted on behalf of individuals – 8 responses submitted
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Atherstone & Mancetter Labour Party
Leicestershire Country Council & Leicester City Council	Earlwood & Forshaw Heath Residents Association
North Warwickshire Borough Council	Tamworth Residents Association
Rugby Borough Council	Stratford Transport Group (verbal response)
Stratford –on-Avon District Council	
Warwick District Council	
Worcestershire County Council	
Federation of Small Businesses	
Warwickshire Health	
Organisations who responded via online survey	
Combe Fields Parish Council	Atherstone Town Council
Warwick Town Council	The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Campaign for Rail	Coventry and Warwickshire LEP
Carbon 3IT Ltd	
Henley in Arden Joint Parish Council	
Restoration and Archiving Trust	
Solihull and Leamington Rail Users Association	

2.0 Consultation Feedback

- 2.1 The consultation report based on the submissions received via the online survey is included in Appendix 2.
- 2.2 Headline results from the analysis of all responses along with how the strategy has been amended as a result of the consultation are set out below.
- 2.3 Over half of respondents completing the full online survey either strongly agreed or agreed with the overview of the Warwickshire context and there

was generally a high level of agreement for the Key Objectives as set out in the draft strategy.

- 2.4 In terms of the proposed policies, the highest agreement scores for policies were for Policy 3 - New rail services and stations and Policy 11 - Rail fares and ticketing. The lowest score was for Policy 9 which sets out that the County Council will endeavour to secure the maximum benefits from HS2. This low level of support for Policy 9 may be a result of respondents using the opportunity to register their objection to the HS2 project overall.
- 2.5 The key issues raised by respondents completing the online survey or via the submission of a written responses are summarised below in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of key issues raised via online survey and written submissions

Key Issue raised	WCC Response	Amendments made to draft strategy
Service and Station improvements		
Support for re-opening of the Stratford – Honeybourne line. Desire by some respondents to see this happen as soon as possible.	The County Council is a member of the North Cotswold Line Taskforce, which has committed to examining the case for the future reinstatement of the Stratford – Honeybourne rail link. The scheme cannot come forward until after other capacity improvements have been delivered along the North Cotswold line and therefore this is not a scheme that can be delivered in the short /medium term. The County Council is working with the Train Operating Companies to secure further improvements to services operating between London and Stratford.	No amendments to the draft strategy are proposed. The strategy sets out the Council's commitment to the North Cotswold Line Taskforce and the associated programme of work, which includes examining the case for the reopening of the Stratford- Honeybourne line at the appropriate time.
Support for the development of Coleshill Parkway as an interchange hub and Henley-in-Arden station as a rail hub for the rural hinterland.	The County Council welcomes this support and is working with the relevant organisations to progress these proposals.	No amendments to the draft strategy are proposed. The strategy clearly sets out the County Council's aspiration to develop Coleshill Parkway to maximise the site in terms of its local and strategic value and to promote Henley-in-Arden station as a rail hub to serve its rural hinterland.
Support for service improvements but concern regarding car parking availability. Some concern that public transport/sustainable travel options should be promoted in addition to/instead of increasing car parking provision.	Where possible the County Council will deliver improved sustainable transport provision to and at stations. Good availability of car parking at stations is also supported as it can encourage people to switch from road to rail for a proportion of their journey. Funding for a variety of improvements will be sought from a number of sources when and where appropriate.	The strategy has been amended to reflect the fact that car parking availability may not keep pace with demand, especially when service improvements are delivered. Greater emphasis has been placed on ensuring that a range of transport options are considered when improving access to stations.

<p>Desire to see service improvements across the network including the NUCKLE and Stratford - Birmingham corridors.</p>	<p>The County Council works closely with West Midlands Rail Executive and the Train Operators in an attempt to secure the maximum improvements to the rail network in Warwickshire. West Midlands Trains have recently introduced more evening and weekend services across many routes and further improvements will be delivered over the life of the franchise. Some further service improvements such as those on the NUCKLE corridor will require significant infrastructure improvements in order to be realised.</p>	<p>No amendments are proposed, the strategy sets out the County Council's aspirations for further service improvements to be delivered across Warwickshire including how we would like to see the service along the NUCKLE corridor be improved.</p>
<p>Improved access to UK Central/HS2 interchange.</p>	<p>The County Council will seek to maximise access to the HS2 interchange and wider UKC area via a range of modes, including rail. To access UKC by rail from a number of locations across the County will require an interchange due to a lack of direct rail infrastructure along certain corridors.</p>	<p>The draft strategy has been amended to further strengthen the aspiration for better connectivity from across Warwickshire to the HS2 interchange and UK Central. It is noted however that this connectivity may not always be possible by rail due to a lack of infrastructure and interchange with other transport modes will be required.</p>
<p>General support for improvements to existing stations, including enhancements to frequency and quality of services, as well as supporting more rapid delivery.</p>	<p>Improvements to stations will be delivered as soon as practical. Funding and delivery opportunities will be sought and where possible improvements will be brought forward more quickly. The County Council works closely with Train Operators and West Midlands Rail Executive to secure improvements to services, including frequency and rolling stock provision.</p>	<p>The strategy has been amended to reflect the fact that a number of the aspirations identified are either wholly or partly dependent on other regional or national schemes being delivered. Where possible efforts will be made to deliver improvements quicker than stated within the strategy but it has been made clear that delivering significant service or infrastructure on the rail network is challenging and requires the involvement of a number of partners.</p>
<p>New station proposals</p>		
<p>Comments regarding proposals for parkway stations, both in support and objections,</p>	<p>The proposals for new parkway stations, as set out in the draft rail strategy will be subject</p>	<p>The strategy has been amended to further strengthen the fact that the proposals for</p>

<p>including a desire to get a better understanding of the impact these proposals may have on other local stations and service provision.</p>	<p>to initial feasibility work. Such schemes will only be progressed if clear demand and a strong business case can be demonstrated. Parkway stations provide the opportunity for people to access the rail network and offer new connectivity between destinations. The possible location of sites, including the impact on the local and strategic road network, will be assessed during the initial feasibility work along with the potential service that would be able to call at the station. If positioned on the edge of settlements, they can offer the opportunity for users to either walk or cycle to the station.</p>	<p>Parkways stations are at feasibility stage and scheme progression depends on the outcome of this work.</p> <p>The Strategy has been amended to reflect that although parkway stations are accessed predominately by the car, they provide the opportunity for people to transfer from road to rail, thereby reducing their impact on the environment.</p> <p>The strategy has also been amended to acknowledge that Parkway stations will be located, if possible, on the edge of settlements to encourage access by modes other than the car.</p>
<p>General support for new station proposals and would like to see more rapid delivery.</p>	<p>The County Council welcomes the support for new stations. Improvements to stations will be delivered as soon as practical. Funding and delivery opportunities will be sought and where possible improvements will be brought forward more quickly.</p>	<p>The strategy has been amended to reflect the fact that a number of the aspirations identified are either wholly or partly dependent on other regional or national schemes being delivered. Where possible efforts will be made to deliver improvements quicker than stated within the strategy but it has been made clear that delivering significant service of infrastructure on the rail network is challenging and requires the involvement of a number of partners.</p>
<p>Planning improvements to take into account significant housing developments, for example Houlton SUE and Long Marston Garden Village.</p>	<p>Where feasible the County Council will seek to provide improved rail connectivity that will serve significant housing developments. However, this has to take into account the constraints of the existing rail infrastructure provision and a positive business case needs to be demonstrated.</p>	<p>No amendments to the strategy are proposed. The strategy adequately sets out possible new rail stations and service improvements that could improve rail connectivity for significant new housing developments where infrastructure exists.</p>

Wider connectivity improvements to stations		
Wider connectivity via other modes to and from stations, particularly by bus.	The County Council will look for opportunities to improve bus-rail integration and have delivered a number of improvements over recent years e.g. bus stop and access improvements in the vicinity of Warwick and Leamington stations. However this can sometimes be difficult to achieve if the bus service is commercial and the rail service is seen as in competition with the bus service. Patronage can also prove challenging; a comprehensive, subsidised bus service to Kenilworth station was provided on opening, however the service had to cease due to a lack of patronage. The County Council will also investigate alternatives to traditional bus services such as Demand Responsive Services.	The strategy has been amended to further strengthen the policy relating to access to rail stations.
Accessibility and rail travel		
<p>Specific issues raised include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that ticketing options i.e. ticketless travel does not exclude vulnerable people and communities who may be disadvantaged by these processes. - Ensure the redesign of stations and new build stations have improved/new facilities for bike access and storage, as well as safe and accessible walkways, with appropriate lighting to facilitate improved use and increased participation from population groups to support the active travel plan. 	The County Council works with the Train Operators in an attempt to improve access and travel options for people with a disability or other mobility impairment who wish to travel. Where appropriate the County Council will bid for funding, or support the Train Operators in such a bid (e.g. Access for All funding) where a particular scheme has been identified. Examples include Stratford station, where lifts were provided, and Warwick Station, which was recently awarded funding for the installation of lifts. Station refurbishments (e.g. Stratford station) also provide the opportunity for the rail industry to ensure that accessibility standards are met.	The strategy has been further strengthened to reflect how accessibility improvements may be delivered, to include Access for All Bids but also wider partnership working (e.g. with the train operators and wider groups who are representative of specific groups of people who need help/provision to access the rail network).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve access for existing stations where required, specific references made to Atherstone Station. 	<p>All new stations and station infrastructure is built in accordance with nationally recognised accessibility standards, including those specific to the rail industry.</p>	
<p>Wider Health and Wellbeing issues</p>		
<p>Specific issues raised include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consideration should be given to improving the rail travel experience to benefit wellbeing experiences and the commute to work i.e. waiting areas should have good quality seating and timetable displays to help people make healthy travel choices. - Improved access for all communities to transport opportunities 	<p>The County Council continues to work to help improve access to rail stations via a variety of modes. The rail operators are responsible for stations and the provision of waiting areas, timetables and platform information. The County Council continues to work with the operators to ensure the stations in Warwickshire benefit from high quality provision at stations, as appropriate for each individual station. In addition, the County Council is a core member of the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, which aims to deliver small scale projects to further improve the station environment for passengers.</p>	<p>The strategy has been amended to further strengthen the policy relating to access to rail stations and the Community Rail Partnership.</p>
<p>Other</p>		
<p>Supportive of Warwickshire's involvement in wider regional level work, e.g. Midlands Connect work streams.</p>	<p>The County Council is fully engaged in the work of Midlands Connect and will seek to maximise the benefits of identified programmes of work to Warwickshire and the wider sub-region.</p>	<p>No amendments to the strategy are proposed.</p>
<p>General support for policies as set out in the draft strategy.</p>	<p>The County Council welcomes the support provided.</p>	<p>No amendments to the strategy are proposed.</p>
<p>Explore the possibility of locating EV charging points at train stations.</p>	<p>The County Council will work with the Train Operators, who manage the majority of station car parks to explore how further EV infrastructure can be delivered at rail stations in Warwickshire.</p>	<p>The strategy has been amended to reflect this issue and is reflected in the appropriate policy.</p>
<p>Impact of HS2 on communities</p>	<p>To ensure that the impact of HS2 on Warwickshire's communities is minimised</p>	<p>No further amendments are proposed to the strategy</p>

	there is a dedicated team at the County Council who work closely with HS2 Ltd to try to mitigate issues where and when appropriate.	
Impact on local communities resulting from train service improvements, rail infrastructure improvements and the construction of new stations.	When developments and improvements are in the control of the County Council (e.g. new station construction) the necessary impact assessments will be carried out and the appropriate mitigation works incorporated into the scheme.	No further amendments are proposed to the strategy.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no specific capital or revenue implications associated with the adoption of the strategy itself. However it should be noted that funding opportunities will need to be sought to realise a number of the aims and aspirations set out in the strategy and this may include bids to the County Council's own funding sources (e.g. CIF); and will need to be aligned to the Council Plan and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy

4.0 Environmental Considerations

- 4.1 It is anticipated that the rail strategy will have a positive impact on the environment. Improved connectivity, station enhancements and the provision of new stations will all contribute to rising passenger numbers and a transfer of trips from away from road to rail.
- 4.2 It is acknowledged that, Parkway stations are predominately accessed by car, however, when correctly located they offer a real opportunity for people to transfer from road to rail. In addition, where possible Parkway stations will be located on the edge of settlements to encourage access by a variety of sustainable modes, thereby reducing the impact on the environment.

5.0 The Oakervee and Williams Review

- 5.1 The Rail Strategy has been prepared on the basis that HS2 will proceed as originally planned. Following the Oakervee Review, Government announced that HS2 will proceed as planned, albeit with some delay to the original programme. This delay (from 2026 – 2028 – 31) has been reflected in the strategy and will be kept under review.
- 5.2 The County Council will also consider the implications of the Williams Review when it is published in 2020. This has considered the structure of the whole rail industry and the way in which passenger rail services are delivered. The review will make recommendations through a White Paper for reform to the industry that prioritise passengers' and taxpayers' interests. These recommendations may be influenced by the need to provide ongoing support to the rail industry in light of the reduced passenger numbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 6.1 Subject to the approval of the Warwickshire Rail Strategy by Council, officers will proceed with undertaking the necessary work to enable the delivery of the strategy. The impact of COVID 19 on long term rail growth will be kept under review as part of the development of individual schemes.
- 6.2 If the outcome of the Williams Review have a significant impact on the strategy, a further revision will be presented to Council for approval.

Background paper

Equality Impact Assessment

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