

## **Response by Edenbridge & District Rail Travellers' Association re Uckfield Line capacity**

E&DRTA is concerned that increasingly our members using Edenbridge Town station are having to stand for at least the 25 min journey to East Croydon. On occasions this is increased by a further 10-15 mins by trains running late off the single line sections having to follow stopping East Grinstead services on the section between Hurst Green and South Croydon. Our own counts indicate Load Factors up to 135% on departure from Edenbridge Town in the high peak, which we believe is in excess of prevailing standards. They also indicate a steadily increasing trend in numbers of passengers joining trains further down the line.

The Class 171 diesel fleet is inadequate to meet demand on the Uckfield and East Coastway lines. It appears that scope for offering any further relief by timetable and stock diagramming adjustments has now been exhausted So our members have to hope for eventual cascading of compatible units from an as yet unidentified source, at an unknown date.

The following extracts from the HLOS Illustrative Options document gave encouragement from the fact that the recommendation in the L&SE RUS had been carried forward, albeit for some unspecified time within the CP5 Control Period, which could mean up to six years wait.

*".....the HLOS describes a strategic requirement such as the number of passengers to be accommodated into London Bridge. In this example the illustrative peak train service suggested that there would be substantial crowding on the Uckfield Line and tested the value of lengthening the diesel trains to 10-cars, as recommended by the rail industry's London and South East RUS. This proved an efficient solution and the specimen option infrastructure enhancements includes the costs of platform extensions and other modification on the Uckfield line. Again, if another better way of providing the capacity is identified the industry should put this forward as a solution."*

**"London Bridge (Southern) Peak train lengthening with additional electric units. Peak train lengthening on Uckfield branch with additional diesel units and platform extensions"**

**"South East**

*Uckfield line platform lengthening for 10-car operation"*

However, we are concerned that the wording of the Sussex Route Plan seems to have been toned down in terms of both scale and urgency:

*P.31: "Crowding on the East Grinstead and Uckfield routes has been substantially relieved by the East Grinstead 12 car project delivered in December 2011. A small number of specific Uckfield peak services remain overcrowded but this is due to the availability of diesel rolling stock, not the capability of the infrastructure to handle longer trains".*

We would certainly take issue with the first sentence in the above extract insofar as the Uckfield line is concerned.

*In the table on P.42. "CP5 Date to be determined.....Strengthening of peak Uckfield line services to 8-car (and possibly 10-car in the longer term),,,,,,,None for 8-car. Platform lengthening on Uckfield branch for 10-car"*

Thus the 10 car option appears to have receded. We would strongly urge that measures to relieve overcrowding on the Uckfield line should not be subject to slippage- we would wish our members to be able to look forward to more comfortable journeys sooner rather than later.....

Regards,

Geoff Brown,

Secretary,

E&DRTA