

ORR consultation
Network Rail strategic business plan for CP5
Hertfordshire County Council response
February 2013

Hertfordshire County Council broadly welcomes the proposals set out in Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for control period 5, including delivery of:

- Croxley Rail Link by 2016
- Thameslink by Dec 2018
- Crossrail by Dec 2019
- Intercity Express Programme
- Stevenage turnback/additional crossovers - especially if service frequency along the Hertford Loop, connection times/through services going north from Stevenage, and intercity stops can be improved
- improvements to the Overground service from Watford Junction to Euston
- station infrastructure improvements with £103 million fund
- station access for all with £103 million fund

However the County Council does have some additional comments to make on the following proposals:

- increasing the number of long distance high speed services from London to the north on the East Coast Main Line
- increasing the capacity of the West Anglia Main Line
- improving the journey time to Stansted airport

East Coast Main Line long distance services

The County Council would welcome the proposals to increase the number of long distance high speed services from London to the north on the East Coast Main Line if provision is made, within the new timetable expected towards the end of CP5, for additional stops at Stevenage.

Stevenage is a key railhead for Hertfordshire which has seen the number of intercity services picking up and setting down reduce over the past few years. Increasing these would mean that there would not only be greater opportunities for interchange with the local service network but also a reduction in pressure on the ECML south of Stevenage, by reducing numbers of local passengers travelling to/from Kings Cross to access intercity services.

West Anglia Main Line Capacity

The County Council welcomes the proposals to increase the capacity of the West Anglia Main Line to allow 4 trains per hour with a third track to Tottenham Hale.

However the County Council would urge that 4-tracking to Broxbourne from Tottenham Hale be accelerated within CP5. This would provide a more reliable and frequent service along the West Anglia Main Line and from Hertford East into London, with shorter journey times as well as ensuring that existing and future growth can be accommodated.

4-tracking is a key aspiration in the County's Rail Strategy and is being pressed for by authorities along the line both individually and via the West Anglia Routes Group, of which the County is a member.

Ahead of 4-tracking the County Council would like to see the implementation of the third track extended from Tottenham Hale to at least Angel Road, during CP5, as this would go further to addressing current capacity issues.

Improvements to journey time to Stansted airport : line speed study

The County Council would welcome these proposals if they facilitated access to the airport for Hertfordshire residents. However if only fast services from London to Stansted are improved this would not provide better links to Stansted from Hertfordshire and could compromise existing slower services, which the County Council would not support.

If the proposed study finds that improvements can be made to journey time to Stansted for Hertfordshire residents, without compromising local services, the County Council would like to see these changes implemented within CP5.

Further to the above comments on Network Rail's proposals the County Council would like to raise the following issues:

- addressing future capacity needs of the East Coast Main Line, between Knebworth and Welwyn Garden City
- linking the West Coast Main Line to Crossrail

East Coast Main Line capacity

There is a pinch point on the ECML between Welwyn Garden City and Knebworth, in the form of the two tracked Welwyn Viaduct, which could limit service capacity in the future. The County Council would like to know what plans Network Rail has for the viaduct going forward.

West Coast Main Line links with Crossrail

It is understood that during the proposed construction of Euston Station services going south to Euston along the WCML will be diverted on to the Crossrail line to alleviate congestion at the station. The County Council would like to see these services retained after construction has been completed to increase travel choice for Hertfordshire residents and other travellers.