

West Anglia Routes Group

Notes from 30th September 2008 Meeting

14.00 to 16.00, Committee Room 2, City of London, Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ

1. Introductions and Apologies

The Chair – Ita O'Donovan – was unavoidably detained so Stephen King took over and led introductions. The attendee list is attached at the end.

The City of London representative was thanked for hosting the meeting.

2. Update on Recent Developments – Dominic Millen

Meeting with Tom Harris MP – June '08

WARG representatives met with Tom Harris MP, Undersecretary of State for Transport, who offered an opportunity for the 120 new carriages to be delivered early in the wider HLOS programme (2009 onwards).

In addition, the DfT made it clear they are keen to engage with stakeholders on longer term capacity enhancements, with the WARG being acknowledged as well placed to perform this role.

A follow up letter was sent to Tom Harris from Cllr Meehan, outlining the positive outcomes and raising ongoing WARG concerns around additional carriages and four tracking.

Politicians' Briefing – July '08

The annual briefing event was well attended, with over 40 delegates attending, including Tom Harris MP, Undersecretary of State for Transport. This sent a positive message about the Department for Transport's commitment to the West Anglia routes, including the speedy delivery of the new carriages allocated in January's Rolling Stock Plan.

On 4-tracking, the message from Network Rail was generally positive, although the Group has continued to make the case for improvements to the line from Coppermill Junction to Broxbourne Junction.

Response to Office of Rail Regulation Draft Determinations

Following the publication of their Periodic Review Draft Determinations on Network Rail spending plans, a WARG response letter has been sent to the Office of Rail Regulation, raising concerns about the potential shortfall in funding for improving outer suburban services and addressing capacity issues on inner suburban services.

DfT Meeting

WARG representatives also met with colleagues from the DfT to discuss their work around long term improvements to the West Anglia Routes. This is picked up under Item 5 - Four Tracking and Longer Term Improvements.

3. Better Trains and Stations

Corinne Sharpe from National Express East Anglia was unable to attend the meeting but did provide an update which was summarised for the meeting.

Background

About 18 months ago National Express East Anglia (NXEA) developed a comprehensive programme of initiatives to improve services and infrastructure, which has led to better performance and increased investment:

- West Anglia services have achieved a Public Performance Measure of 93% with a 31% reduction in the number of cancellations and 30% reduction in the delays that NEEA are responsible for.
- £1.5m has been invested in improving trains and stations and currently the Class 317/6s that serve Bishops Stortford, Audley End and Cambridge are being refreshed and refurbished.
- £0.75m has been spent making trains more reliable with an extra £0.5m being used to make them cleaner.

Delivering and Deploying New and Cascaded Rolling Stock

The plans NXEA formulated also recognised, in particular, the need for additional capacity and improved facilities. Various options had been considered, however procuring additional coaches is expensive and, in the life of the average franchise, it is often unaffordable.

Therefore the Government's White Paper; Delivering a Sustainable Railway and the associated HLOS was warmly welcomed by NXEA, since it acknowledged the problems of overcrowding across the network and, more importantly, gave a commitment to doing something about them.

The DfT's Rolling Stock Plan published on January 30 (updated on July 30) outlined the allocations of new and cascaded rolling stock by franchise.

In light of this, NXEA have been actively engaged in the process of reaching agreement, aimed at introducing the level of additional capacity indicated in the DfT's rolling stock plan, and have now received a Request for Proposal from DfT

In parallel with the DfT franchise variation process, the rolling stock procurement process is going ahead, so that the need for agreement with DfT should not delay the ordering of carriages.

It was noted that it is important to make sure that the ordering, delivery and

deployment of new carriages on the West Anglia Routes remains a priority.

Making Stations more attractive and accessible

A number of initiatives are being delivered to improve stations:

- Introduction of heavy cleaning gangs on West Anglia inner stations to improve their appearance.
- Better facilities - Toilets upgraded (including Broxbourne and Cambridge), installation of CCTV and Help Points (Wood Street), enhanced station car parks (Audley End, Broxbourne and Harlow Town) and improved ticket offices (Broxbourne and Bishops Stortford).
- Station hosts at Liverpool Street to assist customers which are being rolled out to other key stations.
- DDA improvements at Broxbourne, Ely, Harlow Town and Walthamstow Central.
- Working with Network Rail to deliver lifts at Audley End, Tottenham Hale and Walthamstow Central through Access for All.
- Trial of security officers on the West Anglia routes from October following successful trials elsewhere on NXEA. These officers work mainly on train and provide a visible security presence.
- Further station improvements through the National Station Improvement Programme at Cambridge and Wood Street.
Increased car parking spaces at various locations.

4. Longer Platforms – Rob Fairhead, Network Rail

Rob Fairhead gave an update on the Office of Rail Regulation draft periodic review of the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan (NR SBP) and the impact on WAR improvements:

- Funding has been allocated for a turnback facility at Seven Sisters (£2m) to allow a shuttle service from Cheshunt.
- Significantly less funding than was proposed has been allocated to increase outer services to 12 car (£21m compared to £27m in NR SBP). This is linked to ongoing Network Rail efficiency savings, which will be hard to deliver immediately.
- There is an absence of funding for Inner Suburban platform extensions (£32m in NR SBP) meaning a suitably funded short term solution needs to be urgently agreed.

In response to the ORR draft periodic review, Network Rail has indicated that the proposed funding would not allow them to undertake all the activities required to deliver the Strategic Business Plan. However, it might be possible to deliver the capacity required in the HLOS but this could mean investing in more modest schemes, which might only deliver capacity improvements in the short term.

Despite this, Network Rail are keen to develop projects contained in the SBP, particularly those which are large or complex, including the lengthening of outer suburban platforms on the West Anglia Routes. If funding is confirmed

in October 08, final development work for WAR platform lengthening can begin. This would mean a possible completion date of spring 2012, with a phased approach seeing longer platforms at Broxbourne in 2010 and Cambridge in 2011.

It was noted that, despite recent positive news, there is still much to play for and it is important to make sure that, if suitable levels of investment are to be committed by the rail industry, the West Anglia Routes must remain high on the list of national priorities.

5. Four Tracking and Longer Term Improvements – Stuart Baker, DfT

Stuart Baker (Deputy Director, National Projects, DfT) gave a presentation on DfT business appraisal work on the long term rail strategy for the West Anglia Routes, including options for four tracking.

The business case appraisal work responds to strong regional growth (including at Stansted) along with increasing crowding and relatively poor journey times. It acknowledges that the route is currently constrained by the existing infrastructure and that there are conflicting demands between different markets and services.

The main objectives of the work are to provide options which:

- Provide additional capacity for passenger services
- Allow faster journey times
- Support regeneration in the Lea Valley with 4 trains per hour
- Can accommodate potential growth at Stansted Airport
- Safeguard regular freight movements
- Improve operational reliability and consistency

Initial findings indicate that there is a good business case for a significant scheme which can deliver the main objectives, while giving the flexibility to cope with future service requirements.

The emerging options which best address the objectives at a reasonable cost consist of:

- Improved rolling stock
- Grade separation of Coppermill Junction
- Four tracking north to Ponders End
- Remodelling and new platform at Broxbourne
- Level crossing and road diversion works
- Upgraded track, signals, stations and overhead lines with line speed improvements where possible
- Second tunnel and platform improvements on Stansted branch

Potential service improvements could include:

- Journey time reductions on outer services (Cambridge 66mins, Stansted 37mins).
- 4tph fast services (not mixed with airport traffic) to Bishops Stortford

- (36mins) and Harlow (29 mins).
- Frequency and journey time improvements on Hertford branch (e.g. 4tph to Hertford East 46mins).
- 4tph service for Lea Valley stations to Stratford.
- Additional 2tph into Liverpool Street.

A number of issues have been identified that will also need to be addressed:

- The required mix of services and differing demands, along with funding constraints, will mean balancing objectives and stakeholder aspirations.
- Relatively high cost of major works (junctions and four tracking) and significant technical challenges at some locations.
- Impact of any scheme on existing east-west connectivity.
- Possible alternatives for serving inner stations.
- Longer term opportunities post Crossrail, which have not been considered at this stage.

In terms of moving this work forward, the proposed next steps for the DfT are:

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| To end of 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete initial business case appraisal • Progress report to the Secretary of State • Emerging preferred direction outlined in DfT report |
| From 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal consultation with stakeholders • Specification agreed for future work • Network Rail undertakes detailed development work • DfT sponsors plans for route improvements |

Following the presentation, a number of points were clarified:

- There is no fixed timetable for the procurement process for new rolling stock. Final arrangements are dependant on negotiation and agreement between DfT and the Train Operating Company.
- Grade separation at Coppermill Junction is the preferred option because it allows greater service flexibility and shorter intervals between trains.
- Four tracking as far as Ponders End allows enough fast trains to pass through to improve the service mix, while avoiding additional costs and physical constraints associated with extending it past Brimsdown.
- Upgrades to Broxbourne junction and station will mean Hertford East services can be segregated from the mainline.
- Existing level crossings do not allow an intensive service to operate. A precise solution is yet to be determined, although it will most likely involve a mix of closure and road diversion, with the aim of balancing the benefits of improved rail services with demand for road access.
- Line speeds currently vary, being constrained by service mix and physical issues. These should mostly be resolved by the proposed changes, which will allow higher average journey speeds and reduced journey times.
- Direct services to and from Stansted (with Tottenham Hale the only intermediate stop) are assumed at 4tph. To provide optimum capacity the possibility of using fixed units might be considered. A further 2tph will be provided by stopping services.
- Freight services are likely to operate at 1tph, probably via Stratford, with

line gauge clearance to W10 at Audley End and Bishops Stortford allowing a wider range of services and some relief for the North London lines.

- Possible alternatives to existing inner services (for example by extending the DLR) would need to be investigated.
- The reinstatement of the Hall Farm Curve is not essential to addressing the objectives or ongoing issues which have been identified at this stage.

Having considered the DfT proposals, the concerns of whether they actually address long term capacity requirements was raised:

- HLOS improvements by 2013/14 are planned to add 31.9% capacity, although it is not clear if this is focused on particular services.
- DfT plan has been designed to satisfy known growth to 2021, mainly by providing an additional 4tph with segregated Stansted airport services.

In light of this, further questions were raised about the ability of the proposals to address demand (particularly post 2021) which could potentially increase faster than predicted:

- New trains, along with more services and reduced journey times, will only encourage more people to travel.
- Implementation of Crossrail will open up new connections, although it should also free up capacity at Liverpool Street.
- Housing growth, particularly in the Lea Valley, is planned to increase above current estimates.
- Increasing road congestion on the M11 could lead to a significant shift in mode share to rail.

This last point will be considered by the DfT when they look at the whole London to Cambridge corridor, with the aim being to coordinate related strategic rail and road projects.

Following these detailed and informative discussions, it was agreed that the DfT proposals would need to be considered alongside current Network Rail and WARG views on the timing, phasing and extent of improvements:

- Necessary development work and powers for four tracking to be completed within railway Control Period 4 (2009-14). This should include resolving issues around level crossings.
- Delivery of a four tracking scheme in Control Period 5 (2014-19). This links to other major schemes, and it would helpful to have an indication of when in Control Period 5 work could start.
- The current WARG view is that four tracking from Coppermill Junction to Broxbourne Junction is the only viable long term solution, although the Secretary of State's announcement looked at '...a potential four tracking scheme from Tottenham Hale to south of Cheshunt'.

6. Activities Going Forward

Following the discussions around recent developments and progress towards short, medium and long term improvements, it was agreed that the Group

should:

- Work with colleagues at National Express and DfT to ensure that urgently needed new rolling stock is ordered to allow delivery in 2009/10.
- Meet again in early 2009 to more fully discuss the emerging preferred direction outlined by DfT. Following any work arising from this discussion, a Group response should be sent to DfT about their proposals.
- Individual members to update politicians outlining progress and key areas for action in the next six months, and encouraging their active engagement.

It was noted that responses to key consultations and developments, should be targeted at the organisations with responsibility for the relevant element of the rail network:

- DfT sets the strategy, expenditure and outputs for the railway
- Network Rail operates, maintains and renews the network
- Train Operating Companies leasing trains and operating services.

Members were also reminded that subscriptions are due for 2008/09, and it would be appreciated if they can raise purchase orders and send them to Dominic Millen.

7. Updates and Any Other Business

Stansted G1 decision and G2 Inquiry

At the time of the meeting a decision by the Secretary of State was still awaited on the Stansted G1 application; while the Stansted G2 Inquiry had been announced and is due to start in spring 2009.

Following the meeting, on 9th October 08, the Secretary of State for Transport decided to grant planning permission to allow an increase in the number of annual flights to and from Stansted airport from 241,000 to 264,000 and an increase in the maximum number of passengers using the airport from 25 million to 35 million per annum.

Stansted Surface Access Transport Forum

The annual conference has been scheduled for Friday 21st November 2008 and BAA Stansted will be in touch soon with an invite.

East of England Plan

The EEP was published in May 2008, following a lengthy review process. The Plan constitutes the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England and is meant to provide a consistent regional framework to inform the preparation of local development documents.

Mayor's Transport Strategy

The Mayor of London has indicated that the Mayor's Transport Strategy will be reviewed with a Direction of Travel document due in October '08, which will provide a first opportunity to highlight key issues and proposed solutions. A first draft is then expected in early 2009.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Early 2009 – this allows members sufficient time to consider and consult on DfT and Office of Rail Regulation reports.

Meeting Attendee List

Name		Organisation
Kerry	Bangle	BAA Stansted
Eileen	Oliver	Cambridge City Council
Tom	Noble	City of London
Stuart	Baker	Department for Transport
Jonathan	Holland	Department for Transport
Stuart	Westgate	Department for Transport
Jim	Collins	Department for Transport
Rupert	Furness	Department for Transport
Sheena	Lamont	East of England Regional Assembly
Keith	Lawson	Essex County Council
Mike	Seager	Harlow Renaissance
Trevor	Mason	Herts County Council
Ranj	Chandrasena	London Borough Enfield
Roger	Blake	London Borough of Hackney
Malcolm	Smith	London Borough of Haringey
Bob	Turner	London Borough of Newham
Suzanne	Fry	London Travelwatch
Rob	Fairhead	Network Rail
Stephen	King	North London Strategic Alliance
Dominic	Millen	North London Strategic Alliance
Geoff	Hobbs	TfL London Rail