



## Report to Solent Transport

**Date:** 25 February 2015

**Report by:** Philip Marshall

**tel:** 01962 847122

**email:** philip.marshall@hants.gov.uk

**Subject:** Network Rail Wessex Route Study Consultation Response

### 1. Summary

1.1 The following decision is sought:

That the Joint Committee ratifies the consultation response to Network Rail's proposed Wessex Route Study in Appendix 1, which was submitted in advance of the deadline of 18 February 2015.

### 2. Reason

2.1 In order to influence the investment in rail infrastructure to ensure that this appropriately supports planned growth in the Solent area outlined in the Solent Strategic Economic Plan, and the significant associated levels of regeneration and development emerging through the work of the Solent Strategic Land and Infrastructure Board and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Spatial Strategy review.

### 3. Other Options Considered and Rejected

3.1 Taking no action – This has been rejected, as this would not allow Solent Transport to comment on or influence planned rail investment over the period to 2043.

4. **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Decision Maker or Other Executive Member Consulted – None.**

5. **Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel – None.**

6. Reason(s) for the Matter being dealt with if Urgent – None.

Approved by: ..... Date: .....

**Councillor Seán D T Woodward**  
**Chairman**  
**Solent Transport**



## Report to Solent Transport

**Date:** 25 February 2015

**Report by:** Philip Marshall

**tel:** 01962 847122

**email:** philip.marshall@hants.gov.uk

**Subject:** Network Rail Wessex Route Study Consultation Response

### Purpose of the Report

To provide a consultation response from Solent Transport to the Network Rail Wessex Route Study, which outlines proposed rail investment over the period to 2043.

### Recommendation

1. **That the Joint Committee ratifies the consultation response to Network Rail's proposed Wessex Route Study in Appendix 1, which was submitted in advance of the deadline of 18 February 2015.**

### Introduction

1. On 20 November 2014, Network Rail published its Wessex Route Study for consultation. This document is part of the Long Term Planning Process, which aims to identify the investment required in the rail network over the period to 2043.
2. This report outlines Solent Transport's response to this consultation and seeks its ratification. The response has already been submitted, as the consultation deadline was 18 February 2015.

### Background

3. Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process aims to identify its investment priorities over the period to 2043. The work started with the development of Market Studies for all sectors of the rail industry. These forecast demand for passenger and freight traffic, and proposed service level 'Conditional Outputs' for the industry to meet

subject to feasibility, affordability and value for money. The Route Studies identify the service provision requirements for both passenger and freight services to meet the Conditional Outputs and the infrastructure requirements that are required to support this.

4. Network Rail's investment programme is delivered in five year Control Periods. The current Control Period, CP5, runs from 2014 to 2019 and the infrastructure to be delivered in CP5 is now confirmed. However, the Route Study has identified any service improvements that can be delivered during CP5, taking account of the committed improvements being delivered. The next priority for the Route Study is to identify the priorities for the investment in CP6 (2019 to 2024) and finally the longer term investment necessary between 2024 and 2043.
5. The Wessex Route Study was published on 20 November 2014, for a 90 day consultation, which closed on 18 February 2015. Solent Transport welcomes the opportunity to comment on this important document.

### **Solent Transport Consultation Response**

6. The detailed Solent Transport response to this consultation is attached as Appendix 1. This has already been submitted in advance of the 18 February consultation deadline. The executive summary of this response is included below.
7. The Wessex Route Study is an important document, as it defines the planned investment in the rail network over the next 30 years. Rail already has an important role in the Solent area for both freight and passenger movements. Planned economic growth will significantly increase passenger and freight demand in the Solent. It is therefore important that the rail network is fit for purpose to accommodate this growth. The ongoing work of the Solent Strategic Land and Infrastructure Board, where Network Rail is directly represented and the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Spatial Strategy Review will help define the transport improvements required to support growth, including the role of the rail network.
8. The Wessex Route Study contains a number of proposed infrastructure enhancements. These are primarily driven by demand for services to/from London and increasing freight movements, particularly to/from the Port of Southampton. Solent Transport generally welcomes and supports this proposed investment and detailed comments are provided in the main response. There are however some key areas that need to be addressed in the Route Study. A Rail Summit held at Hampshire County Council on the 8 January with South West Trains also recognised the need for an even more ambitious investment programme. This was attended by a wide

range of political and business representatives, including those representing the Solent area.

### **Journey Times to/from London**

9. Connectivity to and from London is important for the economic success of the Solent area. Journey times from London to both Portsmouth and Southampton are already uncompetitive compared to other cities across the UK. Once HS2 is completed, most major cities in the Midlands and the North will have faster or similar journey times to/from London. Whilst the proposed service frequency enhancements will improve “generalised” journey times, it is important that more transformational investment is made to reduce actual journey times.

### **Portsmouth to Southampton (East – West) Connectivity**

10. The Route Study does not make any transformational proposals to improve Portsmouth to Southampton (East – West) Connectivity by rail, which is a key priority for both Solent Transport and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership. The levels of growth planned for the Solent area are significant and this will increase travel demand, due to more jobs and housing. Portsmouth to Southampton (East – West) rail services are currently slow and under-utilised. It is important that rail services are significantly improved to make them a more attractive option to fully support economic growth, improve labour mobility and ensure that increasing travel demands do not lead to unacceptable levels of congestion on the road network.
11. This is likely to require more transformational and innovative improvements to the rail network and further study work is required to determine the appropriate solutions. The Wessex Route Study should commit to undertaking this work. Transport work supporting both the Solent Strategic Land and Infrastructure Board and PUSH Spatial Strategy can help determine the necessary enhancements to the rail network. Some specific issues to be addressed include:
  - Improved rail connectivity between Portsmouth and Southampton through increased train frequency and reduced journey times to increase economic inter-action between the two cities;
  - Improved rail connectivity between major settlements and employment areas; and
  - Improved rail connectivity to Southampton Airport to/from the east.

### **Other Issues**

12. Other issues of importance which are not noted in the Study include:

- finding a long term and sustainable solution for Island Line; and
- ensuring that full consideration is given to inter-connectivity between the rail network and other modes of travel to ensure journeys are as seamless as possible, including smart ticketing.

### Summary

13. The Wessex Route Study is an important document, which outlines planned investment in rail infrastructure over the next 30 years. Rail will have an increasingly important role to play as a travel mode in the Solent area to support economic growth. Whilst there is much to support in the Route Study, further work is required to deliver the necessary enhancements to journey times to/from London, Portsmouth to Southampton (East to West) Connectivity and the Island Line.
14. Solent Transport already has a good working relationship with Network Rail and is keen to continue this to further develop an appropriate rail investment plan for the Solent area.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

**The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.**

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

*To be completed*