



Report to Solent Transport

Date: 8 October 2014

Report by: Phil Marshall

tel: 07551 152754

email: philip.marshall@hants.gov.uk

Subject: South West Trains Franchise Extension Consultation

1. Summary

1.1 The following decision is sought:

That the Joint Committee ratifies the consultation response submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) on the 26 September 2014, which outlines a range of suggested enhancements to be considered in the negotiations with South West Trains for the extension of its franchise to April 2019.

2. Reason

2.1 In order to seek the opportunity to secure short to medium term service enhancements to rail services in the Solent area, which will improve the overall travel offer and help support improved connectivity within and to/from the Solent, which will help support economic growth.

3. Other Options Considered and Rejected

3.1 Taking no action – There would be no opportunity to influence the negotiations between the DfT and South West Trains on the extension of its franchise to provide service enhancements in the Solent.

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: 8 October 2014

Report by: Phil Marshall

tel: 07551 152754

email: philip.marshall@hants.gov.uk

Subject: South West Trains Franchise Extension Consultation

Purpose of the Report

This report provides details of Solent Transport's response to the Department for Transport consultation on the proposed extension of the South West Trains franchise until April 2019. This includes a range of suggested service enhancements for the Solent area.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Joint Committee ratifies the consultation response submitted to the Department for Transport on the 26 September 2014, which outlines a range of suggested enhancements to be considered in the negotiations with South West Trains for the extension of its franchise to April 2019.**

Introduction

1. This report outlines Solent Transport's response to the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on the proposed extension of the South West Trains (SWT) franchise until March 2019. This response was submitted on the 26 September 2014 to meet the deadline specified by the DfT and this report seeks to formally ratify this submission.

Background

2. The current SWT franchise was awarded to Stagecoach Group for a ten year period until February 2017. The DfT is now proposing a 26 month extension to this franchise with Stagecoach Group until April 2019. The current timetable anticipates that the franchise extension agreement will be completed by January 2015.

3. Stagecoach South West Trains (SSWT) has undertaken meetings with key interested parties to discuss any aspirations, which could be incorporated within the franchise extension. SSWT has noted that aspirations would need to have a positive business case, demonstrate value for money, be affordable within funding constraints and where possible, align with policy.
4. Following this interim extension, the DfT will undertake a full tendering process for the new franchise from 2019. This will provide a more comprehensive opportunity to look at service enhancements in the medium to longer term.

Consultation Response

5. The full consultation response is included in Appendix 1. This includes a number of specific suggested aspirations. Many of these would help to address connectivity issues, which have been highlighted as a barrier to economic growth in the Solent LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. The suggestions below relate specifically to SSWT's mainland operation:
 - Improving East-West Connectivity within the Solent to improve rail journey times between Portsmouth and Southampton, including consideration of a "skip-stop" service pattern;
 - Providing improved linkage to Southampton Airport Parkway from the east;
 - Provision of Wi-Fi on trains and stations, free at point of use;
 - Improving journey time between both Portsmouth and Southampton and London;
 - Increased capacity into London from Southampton;
 - Improved on-train announcements;
 - Extension of the Solent Go smartcard to rail services;
 - Ongoing engagement with interested parties to work on partnership schemes to support economic growth and the spatial strategy in the Solent.
6. The SSWT franchise also incorporates the Isle of Wight's Island Line operation between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin. The Isle of Wight Council is keen to ensure the best possible solution is delivered as part of both the franchise extension to 2019 and in the longer term, beyond 2019. The Council and Solent Transport are working with local experts to consider what options might be possible and considers that the ideal solution would be the introduction of modern low floor vehicles. The Council will be pressing DfT rail to include within the next franchise as a minimum the requirement to introduce more modern rolling stock, clock face frequency and better connections with the local steam railway.

Summary

7. The consultation response contains a number of service improvement suggestions to be considered by SSWT and DfT Rail in the franchise extension to 2019. These make rail a more attractive option in the Solent, which would contribute to improved connectivity, in support of economic growth.
8. There will be a more significant opportunity to consider service enhancements, when the franchise is re-tendered for the period beyond 2019.

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

Solent Transport aspirations for proposed South West Trains Franchise extension to April 2019

Mainland

The following aspirations are made by Solent Transport in relation to the mainland Stagecoach South West Trains (SSWT) franchise extension to April 2019:

- **East/West Connectivity** – There is an urgent need to improve the train service between Portsmouth and Southampton. SSWT only run one direct service which takes over an hour. Journey times need to be improved to generate additional business.
- **Skip service** (above) MVA consultants – Can SSWT look at the MVA proposal for a skip stop service along the Netley line in order to reduce journey times and allow an additional service. Transport board would be happy work with SSWT on developing options.
- **Links to Southampton Airport Parkway** – A long held aspiration for direct services from Portsmouth, W Sussex to the airport. An interim could be via Eastleigh station and longer term a new cord.
- **Wi-Fi** – The Transport board have submitted a partnership scheme with SSWT on installing Wi-Fi at stations. The Transport Board would like Wi-Fi fitted on trains, available through out, on all SSWT trains and free to use.
- **Journey Times** – The Transport have made it clear through the Network RUS process, that improved journey times are need between London and Southampton and to Portsmouth. This is required to encourage more business activity and development in the two cities.
- **Capacity Increase** – The Transport board would welcome any opportunity to increase capacity from Southampton into London during the peak. This can be either through longer trains or additional/re-routed trains with some intermediate station points taken out.
- **On Train Announcements** – Would like SSWT to consider Southern policy of on board announcements advising which coach the passenger is travelling in. This is of particular importance on those trains that split and join.
- **Smartcard** – The Solent Travelcard will go live later in the year for buses/ferries but not rail. The Transport Board do want SSWT to finally roll out Smartcard at stations which would allow a possible extension as part of the Solent Travelcard.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – The transport board wish to support SSWT on partnership schemes especially those that will develop economic activity and links into the spatial strategy.

Island Line

The Isle of Wight Council recognises the importance of maintaining a direct transport link between Ryde Pier Head, Ryde Esplanade, Brading, Sandown, Lake and Shanklin, not only in terms of providing an alternative means of travel to the car, but also in terms of supporting the local economy and tourism. The current Island Line franchise is due for renewal in 2017, with an extension to 2019 and the Council is keen to ensure that the best possible solution is achieved as part of this process. The Council is working with local experts to consider what options might be possible and considers that the ideal solution would be the introduction of modern low floor vehicles, in order to significantly reduce operating costs and secure the longer term future for Island Line. The Council will be pressing and work closely with DfT rail to include within the next franchise as a minimum the requirement to introduce more modern rolling stock, clock face frequency and better connections with the local steam railway.