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Our ref: L&SE RUS/TfSH Response

Mr A P Scogings
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Network Rail
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Monday 14 March 2011

Dear Andy,

Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) formal response to the Network Rail London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy (consultation draft)

Many thanks for consulting Transport for South Hampshire (TfSH) on the draft RUS.

We were delighted to see the inclusion of a dedicated Solent Area chapter in the RUS and it was particularly helpful, that Paul Best was able to attend and deliver a presentation on the RUS to the TfSH Joint Committee held in Winchester on Wednesday the 26th of January. My colleague, Geoff Hobbs and I attended the Stakeholder Briefing held at your offices at Euston Station on the 2nd of February and that has also helped frame our response.

This officer response will be formally reported to the TfSH Joint Committee at their next meeting, due to be held in Portsmouth on the 20th of April. Any additional comments made by the Joint Committee will be fed back to you after this date. In preparing this response, I have discussed the draft RUS with colleagues at Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council, local District Councils, South West Trains and key business stakeholders; including Associated British Ports and Freightliner.

TfSH is a strategic transport planning body so we will not be commenting on everyday operational issues such as timings or those issues, more properly dealt within the individual responses of the three constituent Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), on matters such as closure of level crossings and provision of cycle storage at stations.

We continue to work closely with the Rail Industry on a daily basis. Our relationship with Network Rail and South West Trains has been assisted by the signing last year of the 'Rail Communications Protocol'. We remain the Transport Advisor to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and are exploring the scope to play a similar role with the new Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Our specific comments follow.

Chapter 7 Capacity gaps and options beyond existing strategy

We are pleased to note that the South West Main Line (SWML) 'outer' mainline capacity constraints have been acknowledged in section 7.9. The high peak hour capacity shortfall by 2031 is stated as 6,000 passengers.

It is appreciated that this will be a difficult issue to resolve, however the rail links between South Hampshire and London are of considerable importance to local businesses and we would want to see the continuation of a regular, reliable service where available capacity keeps up with the increase in demand, to help businesses to drive economic growth.

Two options proposed involve either longer trains, or possibly the use of double-deck stock. The suggestion of double-deck trains is interesting, although one imagines that they may be somewhat constrained internally due to gauge limitations. Of the two, we therefore prefer the general use of 15 or 16 carriage trains on peak hour services to London Waterloo, which should also be accompanied by a programme of selective platform lengthening at key stations. Such services would best run at 15 or 16 carriage train lengths from Southampton Central onwards, to avoid performance issues associated with attaching / detaching trains at locations such as Basingstoke or Woking.

We are concerned about the lack of urgency in bringing the former Waterloo International platforms back into use for domestic rail services, these having sat unused since 2007. The timescales envisaged in the SWML RUS for redevelopment of Waterloo including the International site, involved this work taking place during Control Period 4 (up to March 2014). Whilst recognising the complexities involved, we would ask that Network Rail prioritises this in the short term, to provide much needed additional capacity, rather than looking for this issue to be resolved as part of the South West Trains re-franchising process to be addressed post-2017.

Chapter 9 Freight in South East England

Section 9.1 Introduction fails to mention the term 'International Gateways' of which there are three in South Hampshire; the Port of Southampton, Southampton International Airport and Portsmouth Port. This is a Central Government designation and in terms of our nation's maritime assets a phrase that more accurately emphasises the critical importance of major ports to trade and the wider National Economy. 'Container movement from South-East Ports' fails to adequately convey this impact. We would like to see the term 'International Gateways' within the final RUS.

Freight traffic to / from South Hampshire is dominated by the Port of Southampton. ABP have a published 'Port of Southampton Masterplan' which should be clearly referenced. The Port Masterplan envisages a dramatic increase in rail freight activity, primarily (but by no means exclusively) related to container movements to and from the Western Docks. By 2030 i.e. within

this RUS timeframe, the Masterplan states that container movements (measured in TEU equivalents) are expected to have trebled, compared to 2005 levels.

It is worth noting that 95% of containers come from the Far East and that 50% of all goods purchased on the UK High Street come through the Port of Southampton. There was a 30% growth in container numbers last year (but from a low base, as a result of the recession) and trade as at January 2011 was ahead of target. There is committed investment of £80 million for re-piling berths 201 / 202 in the Western Docks to accommodate the largest container ships currently afloat and a complementary £80 million investment in dredging of the main approach channel. Currently, 5 – 6% of containers leave the Port by sea (transhipment), 25% by rail and the rest by road.

The Port Masterplan is looking to rail to increase the modal share of rail from the current 25% to at least 40%, a move that we wholeheartedly support in terms of its positive impact on congestion (not least on the A34) and air quality. However, such a modal shift will result in nearly a fivefold increase in the movement of containers by rail. Even taking into account the more general use of 775 metre long trains and the opportunities afforded by the recent completion of W10 gauge enhancement works; this still effectively means nearly three times as many train movements. We are therefore fully supportive of the proposal to provide significant additional freight paths to the Port of Southampton, leading to fifty one daily train paths (each way) by 2030.

Most container traffic from the Port of Southampton is destined for the West Midlands, North West of England and to some extent the west of Scotland. A very modest proportion is destined for London and therefore, the route of choice for railfreight operators is via Basingstoke, Reading and Oxford. We are therefore pleased that the W10 gauge clearance works from Southampton to the West Midlands covered the partial diversionary route to Basingstoke (via Andover). We welcome the major Reading remodelling project, with the new grade-separated connection removing the need for freight trains to cross the main lines to the west of Reading station.

Whilst these measures, taken together, should alleviate the main north-south capacity constraint, there remain other limitations south of Oxford. We are concerned that capacity constraints between Millbrook and Northam and (to an extent) around the Basingstoke area only get a passing mention in 9.4.5 with no real firm proposal as to how this will be tackled. We would like the final RUS document to include definite solutions to address capacity issues at these locations and in which Control Period the necessary investment would be made.

We fully agree that East-West Rail (Oxford-Bicester-Bletchley for the WCML, or Bedford for the MML) is a more appropriate option, as opposed to re-doubling of the Coventry-Leamington Spa route; assuming that this route and the MML can be gauge cleared for W10. Likewise, we are supportive of suggestions that further W10 loading gauge diversionary routes will be considered, including re-routing via Melksham.

Freight traffic to the Eastern Docks is dominated by the export of cars, which account for over 70% of car movements through the Port. There has been a growth in deep sea exports of 30% in 2010. At a meeting with the Port Director on the 28th January, the link was made to activity at the Port of Southampton supporting the UK car industry; delivering clear national economic benefits. Car manufacturing in the UK was up 28% last year and Jaguar / Land Rover exports are forecast to quadruple this year. Currently two trains per day loaded with cars arrive at the Eastern Docks and these movements are expected to increase

There has been considerable recent investment in multi-deck car stores to accommodate this booming market, £6 million is being invested in a further store and it is likely that a further two multi-decks will be required to service this trade. ABP have invested £5 million on rail infrastructure within the Port boundary over the last two years; £3 million in the Eastern Docks (including at the QEII cruise passenger terminal) and £2 million in the Western Docks. There has also been investment at ABPs inland terminal at Hams Hall in Warwickshire, which witnessed 30% growth last year.

Given the anticipated growth in vehicles for export and booming cruise passenger numbers (see next section) the Port Director expressed some concern about the lack of investment in Network Rail owned level crossings at Canute Road and Chapel Road.

The freight terminal at the former Fratton Goods Yard is currently lying dormant We would like it to be acknowledged as a viable rail freight facility in the RUS document and we would support an ongoing and open dialogue between Network Rail and our colleagues at Portsmouth Port to actively explore ways of bringing it back into regular use.

Although it is mentioned in Chapter 10, there is a very real issue with Freightliner crew changes taking place at Eastleigh Station adversely impacting on the reliable operation of SWT and Cross-Country services. At present the length of these trains means that they block the 'Up' line until after the freight service leaves Eastleigh following the crew change, which prevents passenger services from overtaking. In the aforementioned context of a trebling of container train movements, this situation will only be exacerbated. We therefore fully support extending the 'Up Slow' line trackwork south from the country end of Eastleigh towards Southampton Airport Parkway which would enable passenger trains to use the 'Up Fast' to overtake freight trains on the 'Up Slow' stopping for crew changes without undue delay.

Chapter 10 Solent and South Hampshire

We are delighted to see that you acknowledge the very important role that rail plays in our sub-regional transport network, in terms of supporting economic growth, tackling congestion and improving air quality. The TfSH authorities view rail as a key means of access to employment opportunities and for moving goods.

Under 10.2.4.1 the South East England Regional Assembly was wound up some time ago with the South East England Economic Development Agency in the process of being disbanded. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is in the process of abolishing the South East Plan as part of the new Localism Bill and there is a renewed focus in South Hampshire on 'cities first' with most new residential, retail and employment development being directed towards Southampton and Portsmouth. The three LTAs have recently adopted their third Local Transport Plan documents, which each contain a shared South Hampshire Joint Strategy, approved by the TfSH Joint Committee. Policy K of the joint strategy states that TfSH will *"work with rail operators to deliver improvements to station facilities and, where practical, better infrastructure and services for people and freight"*. Given that the timeframe for these documents is also to 2031, there will be considerable merit in drawing attention to them as a key part of the local policy framework.

We feel that you should also make explicit reference to the new, business centred structure of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). In the South Hampshire area, two LEPs have been established, the Solent LEP (covering the TfSH / PUSH area plus the Isle of Wight) and the Enterprise M3 LEP (covering the rest of Hampshire and all of the west of Surrey). The Solent LEP is clearly of most relevance to us and our recent Regional Growth Fund bid was submitted by them.

It is disappointing that Chapter 10 reaches no firm conclusions as to whether the proposed Eastleigh Chord should be recommended, only going as far as summarising costs and options from earlier studies. We feel that if the rail industry view is that the costs of such a scheme would make this prohibitive, it would be helpful if this was clearly stated in the RUS, enabling this proposal to be discounted in favour of lower-cost alternatives.

Please allow me to clarify that TfSH does not have an aspiration to take over the Netley Line itself, or to then operate either guided busway or Bus Rapid Transit services on it. We accept the view expressed in the RUS that the rail industry wishes for this route to remain heavy rail because it functions as a useful diversionary route during engineering work. We feel that were improvements to be made to the Botley Line to increase capacity, together with platform and track improvements at Eastleigh, including the Eastleigh Chord, then higher frequency tram-train services could potentially be developed on the Netley Line that would replace the hourly all stations stopping service. We envisage that tram-trains could leave the heavy rail route at Woolston, continuing via the Itchen Bridge into Southampton City Centre. Further feasibility work on costs of such an option would be needed and we do appreciate that this is very much a longer term solution, which is fully dependent on significant investment in both Botley line capacity improvements and implementation of the Eastleigh Chord.

We remain committed to working with you and the TOCs on improved services linking the two cities and in this regard would certainly want to offer

our support for delivery of Option S1.5 to provide an additional service to Portsmouth. Traffic congestion on the M27 is significant during peak-hours and rail is actually reasonably competitive on journey times in the morning and evening peak. The possibility of a skip-stopping timetable is one that TfSH Joint Committee Members took interest in. If such a timetable change improved journey times and encouraged modal shift then we would support these proposals.

Southampton International Airport is also a key driver of the sub-regional economy and forms one of the aforementioned 'International Gateways'. The Airport Masterplan, prepared by BAA envisages considerable growth in the coming years and is looking for more passengers to arrive / depart from the airport by public transport.

We note that Southern Railways planned to introduce a new service to the airport from the east (by diverting an existing service from the Netley Line to the Botley Line) as a franchise commitment in December 2010. The Cross-Country timetable change precluded this. TfSH wholeheartedly support BAA in their aspiration to have the Brighton-Southampton Southern service diverted via Eastleigh, serving the airport, but when revisiting the timetable would be keen to see a call added to Hedge End. Patronage growth at Hedge End has been impressive in recent years, and a growing number of people are using rail to travel into Southampton. A direct service, avoiding the need to change at Eastleigh is likely to prove a very attractive alternative to the private car, offering quicker end-to-end journey times, and avoiding congestion on the M27 and routes into the centre of Southampton.

We most certainly do not wish to see this intended service enhancement for South Hampshire kicked into the long grass due to timetabling difficulties. In the short term, such a service diversion may also assist in helping to identify latent demand for more services on the Botley Line, given that full or partial redoubling (which the TfSH authorities support) appears to have been ruled out in option S1.4. and in Table 10.3. In the medium-term, running the Southern service via Eastleigh would also improve rail access to proposed employment development in the vicinity of Eastleigh station and help establish a clearer business case for a fourth platform at Eastleigh.

Platform lengths are shown in Figure 10.13 and there are a number of locations across South Hampshire where entry and exit is restricted to the carriage or part of the train that the guard is in, leading to passenger confusion and extended dwell times. Given the recently announced Network Rail devolved business unit Wessex pilot, this would seem to be the sort of low-cost / high-impact 'quick win' that devolved management could deliver.

Planned growth in Southampton and Portsmouth City Centres is of such a scale that the current main stations are not likely to be 'fit for purpose' in the future. Whilst we acknowledge the NSIP works at Southampton Central and the planned repainting and repairs at Portsmouth Harbour will lead to an improved passenger experience, they are not of themselves sufficient to cope with the quantum of development.

Both main Portsmouth Stations in particular would benefit from immediate investment to make them suitable for their role as 'gateways' to the City. Major development continues at Gunwharf Quays and Portsmouth City Council have consulted on aspirations for a major upgrade to The Hard as part of their LDF process, with a focus on improved interchange facilities. Considerable potential exists to improve access from Portsmouth Harbour station into Gunwharf Quays to make the most of their proximity to one another, and encourage visits by rail.

Southampton City Council's adopted LDF Core Strategy highlights the City Centre as key focus for sub-regional economic development. Policy CS1 supports the provision of 130,000M² of retail floorspace, at least 322,000M² of office floorspace and around 5,450 additional residential units. Our Southampton colleagues advise that there will be a 40-45% increase in the numbers of people arriving in the City Centre in the AM peak period (against a 2006 base). Approximately half of this travel demand will be internal to the City and should be delivered by increased use of bus and active travel modes. Rail has a key role to play for inter-urban journeys to and from the City Centre.

The City's Transport Strategy therefore envisages a doubling in the number of passengers arriving at Southampton Central in the AM peak hour, due to both an absolute increase in people travelling, together with a greater modal share for rail. A key component of this growth will be delivered through the creation of a Major Development Quarter focussed on Southampton Central Station and the land to the south.

We cannot see any reason to extend the Salisbury "Figure Six" services from Romsey, back to Salisbury, particularly as patronage at intermediate rural stations is modest and not likely to significantly increase. The proposal set out in Option S1.7 would lead to service overprovision and poor use of a DMU that could be more usefully utilised elsewhere on the sub-regional network. TfSH therefore does not support this proposal.

We are very supportive of proposals to re-open the Marchwood / Hythe freight-only line for passenger use and do not concur with your conclusion (10.8.3.10) that rail cannot compete successfully with bus and ferry services on this route. Hampshire County Council has commissioned a study into the viability of rail service on this line, which although it will not be made publicly available until April 2011, it offers a much more positive perspective on the introduction of an (initial) hourly service. We would point to the situation with the successful Chandlers Ford re-opening – an area with very good bus provision – where the new direct rail service into Southampton has established a strong rail passenger flow by offering an attractive alternative to the private car.

The New Forest District Council Core Strategy (Policy CS23 f) states that the Council will seek the reinstatement of passenger services on the Waterside branch line as well as safeguarding land for associated works and facilities.

Policy CS24 also references that improvements in the quality and sustainability of transport infrastructure are promoted. Within the Core Strategy Plan Period (2006-2026) 1,636 new dwellings and up to a further 200 affordable homes are to be provided in the Totton and Waterside area. A further 5ha of employment land is being provided in the greater Totton area. Clearly, this development will generate more demand on the local transport network, which a service on the Marchwood line could help to address.

We fear that you may have substantially overestimated the attractiveness of the high frequency bus services *currently* operated to the Waterside communities. At peak times these services suffer from poor timekeeping due to congestion on the A326 and A35, heading into the City of Southampton. Bluestar 9 (the fastest service from Hythe to Southampton) has scheduled journey times of 37 – 44 minutes, but monitoring has revealed that actual peak journey times can take up to an hour. The ferry journey from Hythe to Southampton takes approximately 30 minutes (longer if you include a lengthy walk along the pier) and importantly does not take you into Southampton City Centre.

Initial results emerging from the feasibility study show that a direct train service from Hythe – Southampton Central (with calls at Marchwood, Hounslow and Totton) would only take some 20 – 23 minutes. TfSH and our Hampshire County Council colleagues would therefore welcome further dialogue with Network Rail on the potential re-opening of the Waterside line for passenger use. If redevelopment takes place at Southampton Central as mentioned earlier, this offers potential to bring the bay platform at the country end (Platform 5) back into passenger use for such a service. Please note that the station at Marchwood has only one extant platform, not the two referred to at 10.8.3.2.

Finally, some observations on cruise passengers.

Demand from the burgeoning cruise passenger market is considerable, as is the potential for growth in rail's market share. A recent study has calculated that each cruise ship call generates £1.5 million for the local economy. The Port of Southampton Masterplan has forecast an increase in passenger numbers from 1 million in 2006 to 1.5 million in 2020 and around 2 million by 2030. There was 19% growth in passenger numbers during 2010, resulting in throughput of 1.25 million passengers. Consequently, projections have been revised with a throughput of 2 million passengers likely to be achieved by 2020.

The catchment area for cruises from Southampton is nationwide. Given this impact on the wider transport network, we are keen to encourage rail as an alternative means of getting to / from the cruise terminals. The cruise market has helped drive demand for improved Cross Country services and there is potential to develop this further. We have had some initial discussion with SWT on the scope for Airport – Eastern Docks shuttle services and are pleased that DRS are introducing Charter Trains from Edinburgh and Glasgow into the Eastern Docks. TfSH are supportive of any

improvements that help to facilitate rail access to cruise terminals in the Port of Southampton.

I leave TfSH at the end of the month on a long-planned two year (overseas) career break. I am very happy to answer any queries and provide further background information up until the 31st of March. After this, please contact my colleague, Geoff Hobbs on 01962 846811.

Yours sincerely

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