

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 15 JUNE 1999

NOTE: Full copies of the report mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Environment Committee and other members who have requested it. Any queries on this report to: Joan Blake, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Tel: 01992 555560)

RAILTRACK'S 1999 NETWORK MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

The Network Management Statement (NMS) is published annually by Railtrack in accordance with their network licence. Its purpose is to achieve a shared understanding of plans and investment over a ten year period, with greater details given for the first seven years of the programme.

The 1999 NMS outlines Railtrack's plans for the management of railways and expresses a shared industry vision for major network expansion to carry more trains with greater reliability and reduced journey times, with bigger, heavier, freight trains and 21st Century stations. It is predominantly about growth and investment to provide the additional capacity to overcome current constraints and to accommodate future demands for passengers and freight. Forty per cent of the proposed £27bn investment is for network enhancement, although significant elements of the programme are dependent for their funding on partnership arrangements with train operators and other bodies.

There are a number of specific proposals in the NMS with a direct effect on Hertfordshire in respect of mainline rail network enhancements to all rail routes in the county. These were considered by the Transport Panel at their meeting on 10 May, and are listed below:-

- Thameslink 2000
- London Underground Integration
- Channel Tunnel Rail Link
- Croxley Rail Link
- West and East Coast Route Modernisation
- Midland Main Line
- West Anglia Route Modernisation (WARM)
- East-West Rail Project
- North London Line and West London Line
- Freight Routing Strategy

The proposals put forward by Railtrack address a number of issues which are considered important if Hertfordshire is to meet its Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives. However, the sustainability impact for the county if the measures are to be supported have positive as well as negative implications. On the positive side, the proposals would make a significant contribution to the potential transfer of passengers from car to rail and for the switch of freight from road to rail as well as providing improved travel opportunities for all, especially those without car access. On the negative side, the proposals will consume significant quantities of construction resource and would have a local impact on aggregate supplies. Some of the proposals, in particular those related to the East Coast Main Line, would have a detrimental effect on the local built environment.

The Committee agreed a response for submission to Railtrack and other appropriate bodies, which included the following:-

- (a) A request for further detailed information on station investment programmes, so that the County Council may make judgements on partnership schemes in the context of its Local Transport Plan.
- (b) A statement of continued support for the Thameslink 2000 project and a request for further dialogue with Railtrack over the proposed withdrawal of Moorgate services. *
- (c) A recommendation that the CrossRail project be reinstated.
- (d) A recommendation that formal closure of the Croxley Green branch be deferred until the results of the County Council's bid for Croxley Rail Link funding through the LTP is known.
- (e) Concern about the future of local services on the West Coast Main Line in the light of Passenger Upgrade Agreement (PUG2) proposals between Railtrack and Virgin Trains, and a recommendation that additional capacity be included in the base specification for West Coast Route Modernisation to allow further expansion of local services beyond 2005. *
- (f) Support for the principles of the East Coast Route Strategy, subject to further detailed discussions on Digswell Viaduct, Hitchin Junction and Parkway Stations proposals, including the future of Stevenage station. *
- (g) A request for further information on the options for the WARM programme, and encouragement for the necessary capacity enhancements to allow expansion of Stansted Airport rail services.
- (h) A commitment to continued support for the East-West Rail project and a request for dialogue with Railtrack on its consequences for Hertfordshire as part of on-going discussion on the East Coast Route Strategy. *
- (i) A request for further information on the content of the Freight Routing Strategy and its impact on the county's rail network.

- (j) A recommendation that Railtrack adopts strategies to promote a greater modal shift towards rail travel in Hertfordshire.

[Since this item was reported to committee in June, progress has been made in the areas marked by an asterisk, as updated below:-*

- (b) The dialogue has taken place leading to a report to October Environment Committee on 12 October and a resolution that our objection to the Moorgate closure be withdrawn to reflect the improved facilities for passenger interchange proposed by Railtrack at Farringdon.*
- (e) Further assessments of capacity have been undertaken and members will have the opportunity of making their comments in a half-day seminar on this issue at Milton Keynes Borough Council in November.*
- (f) Joint county/district member meetings with Railtrack are taking place on the Hitchin and Welwyn proposals, prior to public briefings in the new year.*
- (h) The consultation and briefing process for East Coast Route Strategy at Hitchin includes proposals for the East-West rail project.]*

Jane Pitman
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford

15 June 1999