Executive Summary

West Sussex County Council has been consulted by Network Rail on the Network Rail Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) Draft for Consultation.

The aim of the RUS is to identify a strategy for accommodating growing demand on the railway, in a manner that is deliverable, affordable and consistent with performance and safety improvements. The Sussex RUS considers demand, resulting strategic gaps and proposed interventions to a long-term timescale through to 2019. Strategic gaps are defined in the RUS as where the current or future railway system does not or will not meet the requirements that will be placed upon it, unless intervening action is taken. The RUS covers the rail industry regulatory Control Periods 4 (2009-2014) (CP4) and 5 (2014-2019) (CP5), and also includes consideration of options for the longer-term, up to 30 years.

The County Council will respond to the consultation document as a whole and will make particular reference to the strategic gaps identified and options appraised in Chapter 8 of the Sussex RUS document. Reference to strategic development proposals in West Sussex, in particular expected housing and employment development and its expected impact on rail passenger demand, will be made to ensure that the County Council consultation response sits within the broader strategic context of the county’s future development.

Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport approves the County Council’s response to the Network Rail Sussex RUS Draft for Consultation before 21 August 2009. A proposed response is set out in an appendix to this report.

1. Background

1.1 The aim of the Network Rail Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) is to identify a strategy for accommodating growing demand on the railway, in a manner that is deliverable, affordable and consistent with performance and safety improvements. The Sussex RUS considers demand, resulting strategic gaps and proposed interventions to a long-term timescale of 2019 covering the rail industry regulatory Control Periods 4 (2009-2014) (CP4) and 5.
(2014-2019) (CP5), and also includes consideration of options for the longer-term up to 30 years.

1.2 The geographic scope of the Sussex RUS includes all services from London Victoria, London Blackfriars and London Bridge which operate on the Brighton Main Line through East Croydon and on to:

- Brighton (via Gatwick Airport)
- Bognor Regis/Littlehampton
- Portsmouth/Southampton (via Arundel or Hove)
- Seaford
- Eastbourne
- Tonbridge
- Reigate

It also includes services operating to and from Brighton, to and from the West Coastway (Portsmouth/Southampton, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis) and the East Coastway (Seaford, Eastbourne and Ashford) lines.

1.3 Network Rail is seeking comments to its Sussex RUS Draft for Consultation document. Where possible, comments from stakeholders will be taken into account for the publication of the Final Sussex RUS document in Autumn 2009. The strategy considers future service patterns, capacity issues, rail freight, engineering and the strategic development of the Sussex rail network.

1.4 It is important that West Sussex makes a clear response to the Sussex RUS consultation to strengthen its currently operating productive dialogue with Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies (TOCs). West Sussex comments should be strategic in nature to reflect the nature and context of the RUS.

1.5 The County Council will frame its consultation submission in the context of the individual chapters contained within the Sussex RUS Draft for Consultation, but will focus in particular on the strategic gaps identified and options appraised within Chapter 8, as requested by Network Rail. The County Council response will draw on consultation and dialogue undertaken with key stakeholders including: the Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee; district, borough and neighbouring local authorities; Passenger Focus, GATCOM/Gatwick Airport Ltd, the Sussex Community Rail Partnership and the South East England Partnership Board.

2. Discussion

2.1 Across the Sussex RUS area significant growth in population is expected throughout the period which the RUS covers, for example across all the identified Strategic Places of West Sussex. Population and employment growth, and the release of latent demand facilitated by service frequency improvements, is forecast by Network Rail to lead to an increase in passenger demand across the RUS area of 26 per cent between 2007 and 2019.

2.2 A key finding of the Sussex RUS modelling work presented is that peak capacity on services into London Victoria and London Bridge through the
Brighton Main Line/East Croydon corridor is expected to be reached between 2019 and 2023. The issue of meeting current future predicted demand growth is the key overriding issue for the Sussex RUS. In this regard, Network Rail working with core rail industry stakeholders have identified specific strategic gaps and resulting options/recommendations within the Sussex RUS. The RUS considers strategic gaps ‘where the current or future railway system does not, or will not, meet the requirements that will be placed upon it, unless intervening action is taken’ (Page 5, Sussex RUS).

2.3 These strategic gaps have been identified through demand modelling, including forecasts of future local population and employment growth, and future car ownership and fuel costs, taken from the DfT’s TEMPRO 5.4 model.

2.4 The modelling work undertaken is based on the assumption that Gatwick Airport station improvements will deliver track layout enhancements and an additional platform 7 in all future scenarios.

2.5 Eight strategic gaps were identified. In terms of strategic gaps with specific relevance for West Sussex, these focused on:

1. future peak demand on key routes to/from London, along the North Downs/Redhill (and to Gatwick Airport) line and along the West Coastway line;
2. future peak demand on the West and East Coastway lines;
3. future peak demand on the North Downs Line (Reading-Guildford-Redhill to/from Gatwick Airport);
4. journey times on the West Coastway line;
5. current and future major station capacity, car parking and access;
6. current and future performance/reliability levels;
7. potential for increased access to the network, particularly at weekends;
8. freight use of the Channel Tunnel Freight Route 3 (Tonbridge – Redhill).

2.6 Key options, existing commitments and recommendations to fill these strategic gaps with specific relevance to West Sussex and the Brighton Main Line corridor which are outlined in the Sussex RUS are set out below.

1. **Brighton Main Line (BML) corridor commuting** – The RUS recommends selected peak lengthening of services (up to 12-car) where appropriate and a small number of additional peak hour services for BML commuting corridors. The RUS also states that ‘Further work on the case for inserting Clapham Junction stops into one or more existing peak Gatwick Express services will be undertaken prior to the publication of the Final RUS’.

2. **North Downs Line/Redhill/Gatwick Airport** – The RUS states that a case exists for some targeted lengthening of peak services on the North Downs/Redhill route, however a case cannot be established at this stage for extension of the second train in each hour on the North Downs line through to Gatwick Airport.

3. **West Coastway Line** - A strong case exists to lengthen specific services in the peak between Chichester and Brighton however no case is found from initial Sussex RUS modelling for an off-peak fast West Coastway to
Brighton service calling at Portsmouth Harbour, Portsmouth & Southsea, Fratton, Havant, Chichester, Littlehampton, Worthing, Hove and Brighton.

(4) *Arun Valley Line* - A case exists to reduce signalling headways on the Arun Valley, in particular between Christ’s Hospital and Billingshurst, to help improve reliability of Arun Valley Line trains splitting at Horsham.

(5) *Redhill* - a case is likely to exist to build an additional platform at Redhill on the western side of the station and this will be confirmed in the Final RUS document.

(6) *Other major station capacity, parking and station access (West Sussex specific)*
- various car parking capacity enhancements are identified at Burgess Hill (80+ spaces), Hassocks (50+), Horsham (140+), Pulborough (300+) and Three Bridges (230+ & potential 800+ multi storey subject to commercial development);
- National Station Improvement Scheme (NSIP) projects identified at Hassocks and Horsham (East Grinstead is outside of the Sussex RUS scope);
- DDA schemes identified at Hassocks and Three Bridges;
- Potential commercial development schemes identified at Burgess Hill, Crawley, Ford, Haywards Heath and Three Bridges;
- Route Enhancements schemes identified at Gatwick Airport station (see 2.3 above) and Billingshurst (platform extension to take 12-car trains).

3. **Discussion**

3.1 The proposed County Council response to the content of the Network Rail Sussex RUS Draft for Consultation, as summarised above, is included as an appendix to this report.

4. **Consultation**

4.1 Informal consultation and dialogue has been undertaken with a number of bodies, including: the Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee, district, borough and neighbouring local authorities; GATCOM/Gatwick Airport Ltd; Passenger Focus; the Sussex Community Rail Partnership; the West Sussex Economic Partnership and the South East England Partnership Board regarding priority concerns related to the Sussex RUS Consultation. Including comments from previous consultation undertaken with County Local Committees regarding the South Central Franchise renewal, the most notable comments are included below.

**County Local Committees (CLCs)**

4.2 A questionnaire was distributed to the CLCs during Spring 2008 as part of the process of responding to a consultation by the DfT on the renewal of the South Central Franchise. This questionnaire was designed to gather opinions on the rail service and to gauge thoughts on the future development of rail in the local area. Overall support was expressed for the importance of
maintaining the notable improvements on-board carriages for the future: clean trains, improving punctuality and reliability, new rolling stock, enhancing the frequency of services and an appreciation for the faster Chichester to London service on the Arun Valley. It is important that improvements in service quality, capacity, journey times and reliability continue throughout the period of the Sussex RUS in order to meet the needs of existing and the predicted increasing number of passengers in the future. These comments are referred to in the County Council’s consultation response.

Neighbouring local authorities and GATCOM/BAA

4.3 GATCOM statutory advisory Consultative Committee (representing diverse interests including local authorities, communities, passengers, airlines, business groups, and environmental and amenities groups) have shared thoughts on their response with the County Council regarding the Sussex RUS Consultation. The County Council’s response encourages the rail industry to work closely with Gatwick Airport Ltd regarding targets within its Surface Access Strategy for sustainable mode share for passengers and employees travelling to and from the airport, and in particular urges further consideration of a range of enhancements to service links to and from the airport from across the region.

4.4 The County Council has also been in contact with neighbouring and district/borough authorities to discuss responses to the consultation. In particular Adur District Council have shared comments regarding the Shoreham Harbour Growth Point and seek thorough consideration of the implication of associated development for rail industry planning. The County Council is broadly in agreement with neighbouring authorities regarding enhancements to rail infrastructure and service levels across the Sussex RUS, including enhancements to services to and from Gatwick Airport, and along the West Coastway Line.

Passenger Focus – Independent rail consumer watchdog

4.5 Officers have met with Passenger Focus to share West Sussex issues regarding the Sussex RUS, and a range of rail infrastructure and service level enhancement priorities and aspirations. The County Council will continue to remain in dialogue with Passenger Focus to discuss future priorities for rail service improvements.

Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee

4.6 The Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee was also consulted on its view on priorities for responding to the Sussex RUS consultation. In particular the Committee emphasised the following concerns which have been reflected in the response Appendix A:

- the importance of active engagement by Network Rail with partners on proposals to achieve better transport integration, including improved bus and cycling links and car parking facilities;
- concerns about level crossing down time;
• that strong representations be made to Network Rail regarding the need for Gatwick Airport station developments in time for the 2012 Olympics;
• the need for Network Rail to look at increasing demand by exploring opportunities for new through services to/from West Sussex, such as utilising the Horsham-Dorking line.

South East England Partnership Board (SEEPB)

4.7 The County Council’s response has also been informed by the draft proposed response by the SEEPB. The County Council’s response reflects a number of the issues within the proposed SEEPB consultation response; notably concerns about how well the Sussex RUS option appraisal methodology captures the contribution towards delivery of wider public policy objectives, including the Government’s new Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) policy objectives.

5. Resources Implications and Value for Money

No known direct implications.

6. Risk Management Implications

No known implications.

7. Customer Focus Appraisal

Customer Focus Appraisal (CFA) is not required for this decision. This is because the CFA process applies to services/policies that the County Council is developing/reviewing or implementing, rather than services or strategies being developed by the rail industry.

8. Crime and Disorder Act Implications

No known implications.

9. Human Rights Act Implications

No known implications.

Tony Toynton   Duncan Barratt
Director of Operations -   Service Manager -
Infrastructure           Local Development

Appendices

Appendix A – West Sussex County Council response – Network Rail Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy Consultation
Background Papers:

Strategic Environmental Services Select Committee – 3rd July 2009 - Network Rail Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy Draft for Consultation, West Sussex County Council Response Summary Report - Report by Director Operations, Infrastructure and Service Manager, Local Development -

Contact: Jamie Dallen, Ext. 77611