

Introduction

The business plan suite of documents is produced annually and in accordance with our network licence condition 7. Our plans and the way in which we intend to achieve those plans are summarised in the Business Plan itself. This document provides further detail on:

- specific plans for each of our 26 Strategic Routes, building on progress from Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs) and other initiatives and
- the expenditure, activities and outputs that will be delivered across the network over the next three years to the end of Control Period 3 (CP3).

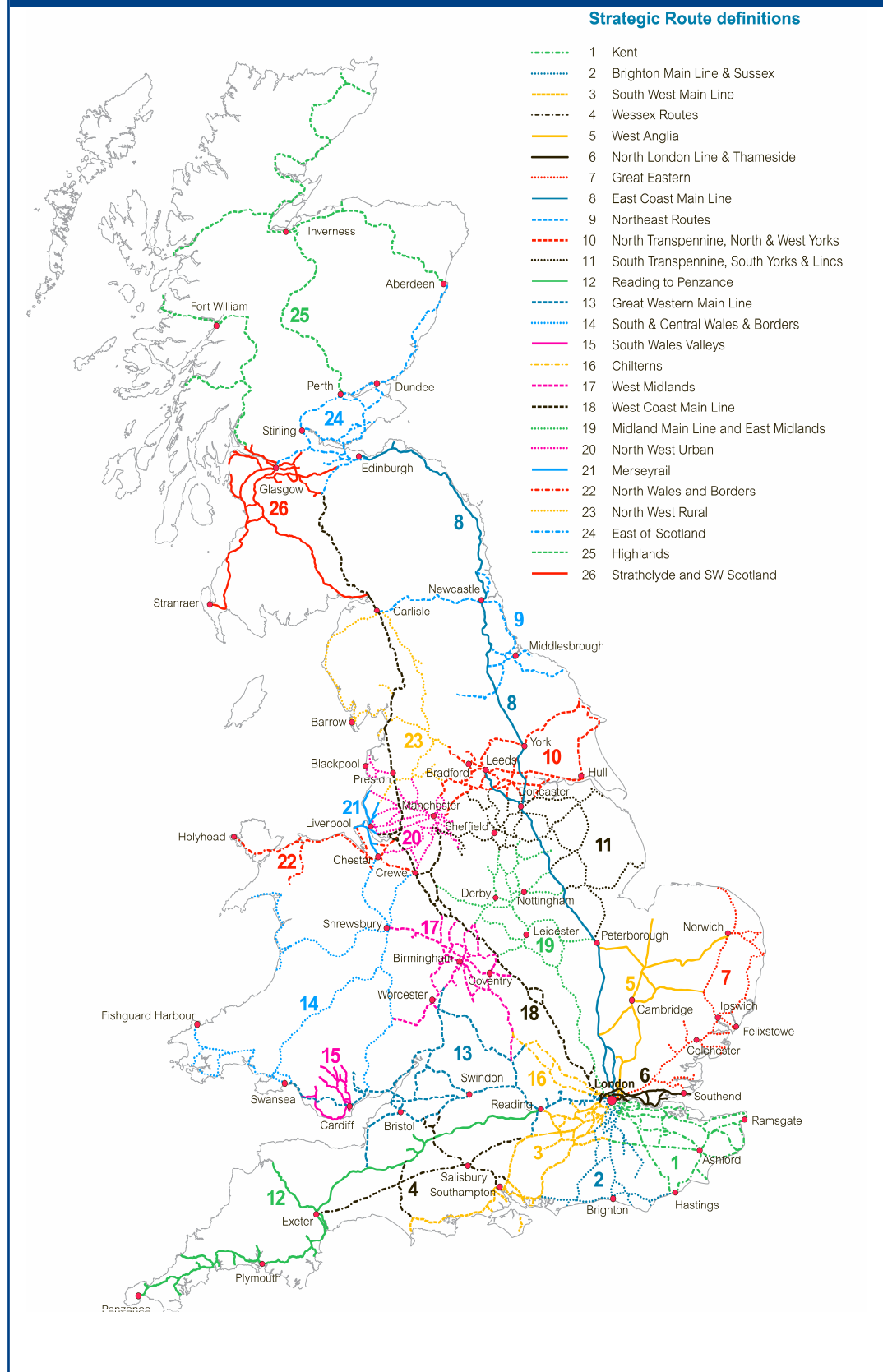
Previous business plans have examined a ten year time horizon. This year our business plan focuses on only the remainder of Control Period 3 (to March 2009). We will provide a further draft submission to the Office of Rail Regulation in June 2006, which will set out our initial view of the expenditure and activities that will be required in Control Period 4 (2008/09 to 2013/14).

The Route Plans show in more detail how the strategies set out in the Management Plan will be delivered at a route level across the network, and how we are working with our customers and other stakeholders to improve the performance and utilisation of the network. They present a portfolio of activities to develop the network.

Figure 1 shows how the network is divided into 26 Strategic Routes. The 26 routes align closely to the traffic flows in the planning areas, and they also broadly align to the 18 Areas to enable direct use of route plans for delivery.

Increasingly our Route Plans will reflect and build upon Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs). Responsibility for developing RUSs has transferred from the SRA to Network Rail. Consultation documents for the first two Network Rail RUSs, South West Main Line and Cross London have been issued, and work on a number of other RUSs, including a national freight RUS, is underway.

Figure 1 26 Strategic Routes



Structure of Route Plans

We set out below how route plans are structured, and specify what information they contain. The headings below refer to headings in each route plan.

Route diagram

We include route diagrams to show the geography of routes, including all stations, major junctions, capacity constraints and other issues. The locations of key renewal and enhancement projects planned for the next three years (2006/07 - 2008/09) are also shown on the diagrams. The key to these projects is shown at the end of each route plan, in the form of key project summary and diagram key tables. The diagrams are schematic and not to scale.

listed. The route plans for Scotland and Wales are informed by the Scottish Planning Assessment and the Wales Rail Planning Assessment respectively. This section also notes whether a RUS for the route has been completed, is in progress or is planned.

Some lines are designated community railways, under the DfT Community Rail strategy. Designation provides the flexibility to adopt a different (and appropriate) approach on standards without implications for the rest of the rail network, to ensure that the specific needs of local railways are addressed. Where part of the route is so designated, this is noted here.

Figure 2 Key to route diagrams



Each route is divided into strategic route sections: these sections are listed in the appendix to the route plans, and the lines on the main route diagram are shaded to aid identification of the sections.

Simplified miniature versions of this map are used within the route plans to illustrate traffic data and route capabilities. These maps should be read in conjunction with the main route diagram.

Route context

This section describes the geographical area covered by each route, and the main markets it serves. For routes in England, Regional Planning Assessments relevant to the Route are

Today's route

This section contains a description of each route, including its current capabilities and traffic. An introduction lists the principal components of the route, and provides a summary of its characteristics.

Passenger and freight demand

This section describes the underlying passenger and freight demand on the route.

Current services

This section lists the train operators which run services on the route. This section includes an outline of the type and level of passenger service provided to key destinations served by

the route, and describes significant freight flows on the route.

Current Traffic

This section describes the way in which the services mentioned in the previous section combine to produce overall traffic on the route. It includes a map indicating tonnage levels over the route and a table showing the overall level of passenger and freight traffic on the route

Current Infrastructure Capability

This section contains maps showing linespeed, electrification, route availability and gauge.

The maps provide an indication of the predominant capability on each section of route. We are continuing to improve and refine data quality and a workstream is currently in progress to review capability measures. It is possible, therefore, that there may be changes to information between the publication of these route plans and the next publication in March 2007. The route plans are not intended to be operational documents and enquirers should refer to Network Rail to ensure that any data being used is the latest available information.

Linespeed

The maps show the prevailing linespeed, including dispensations given to certain types of rolling stock. On multiple track sections where the slower lines are in a different speed band, this is also indicated on the map.

Electrification

The maps show the electrification provided on each route section.

Route Availability

Axle weight limits and equivalent distributed vehicle loadings which the current network can carry vary according to engineering characteristics of each route, particularly of the underline bridge and viaduct structures. Axle weight limits and equivalent distributed vehicle loadings are classified into Route Availability (RA) values between 1 and 10.

The maps indicate current permitted traffic flows. It should be noted that in some cases these flows require operating restrictions to permit the passage of traffic heavier than the capability of structures at the maximum permitted line speed for the route.

The capability of track on a route to carry traffic is dependent on its construction and the maintenance and renewal regime in place. There are some routes where an increase in traffic can be accommodated only with a prior increase in maintenance and renewal activity.

Loading Gauge

The maps show the current loading gauge, which stipulates the maximum height, length and width of a vehicle that can travel on the network. The size varies by route, primarily because of bridge and tunnel clearances.

All passenger-carrying vehicles are constructed to a similar height and width, although their length can vary, most carriages are usually between 20m and 23m long.

Generally, there are few gauging restrictions on passenger vehicles, but for freight vehicles, the capability of the network in ascending order of size is shown on the maps.

Current Capacity

This section describes current and emerging capacity constraints. It shows the current level of service on representative route sections.

Current Performance

This section provides a commentary on key performance issues, including major sources of primary delay. A table shows the current Public Performance Measure (moving annual average) for each TOC running over the route.

Future Requirements

Strategic Direction

This section contains a brief outline on how we expect the route to develop, informed by the appropriate RUS where one has been completed.

Future Demand

This section describes the way in which we expect demand on the route to change in the future.

A map indicates the forecast percentage change in total tonnage to 2015 over each part of the route. The route is split into three categories: sections where tonnage is expected to decline, remain stable or grow only slightly; sections where a moderate percentage growth in tonnage is forecast, and sections where a high percentage growth in tonnage is forecast.

The forecast percentage change in tonnage depends on the current mix of traffic, changes in demand for freight, which vary by commodity, changes in underlying passenger demand and the extent to which this can be accommodated within existing services. Capacity constraints which limit growth in train services are also taken into account. As we develop the Freight RUS, and continue our programme of RUSs, our forecasts of traffic change, and the consequent change in tonnage, will be refined.

Future Capability

This section describes the way in which the route capability is planned to change over time.

Future Capacity

In this section the implications of the forecast change in demand are described. Cases where projected growth could not be absorbed by current capacity are identified.

Where applicable, tables showing route sections where there are planned or potential changes to headways are included.

Future Performance

This section includes forecasts of the improvement in Network Rail delay minutes on the route, and shows a three year forecast of PPM for TOCs running over the route. Major initiatives to achieve the forecast performance improvement are described.

Engineering access

This section describes the arrangements for access for maintenance, renewals and enhancements. Details of individual possessions required to deliver infrastructure investment are published in the Rules of the Route on the Network Rail website.

Opportunities and challenges

This section describes the issues facing the route in meeting the future demands upon it. Where a RUS exists, this will have identified the issues describe here. In other cases the analysis is still in progress.

Delivering Future Requirements Summary

Where appropriate a summary is provided, describing the main emphasis of activity on the route, in the light of the preceding sections.

Expenditure

This section contains tables showing the planned level of expenditure and volumes on renewals on the route over the next three years, split by asset category. Expenditure figures are shown in 2005/06 prices, and are rounded to the nearest £1 million. An entry of £0 indicates spend of less than £0.5 million. It should be noted that in order to manage the deliverability of our Civils, Signalling & Electrification plans we have included an element of overplanning in our work banks. As a consequence the sum of our route plans exceeds our plan for the network as a whole. It is likely that a small proportion of the activities in these areas will slip to subsequent years.

Maintenance

This section contains tables showing the planned level of expenditure on maintenance

on the route over the next three years, and forecast activity volumes.

Infrastructure Investment

This section contains a list of the major items of planned investment in renewals and enhancement on the route.

For each item, the location is given (including the strategic route section on which it lies) the output change is described, details of third party funding, where appropriate, are given, and the current development level, (shown as GRIP stage) and forecast year of completion are shown. The meaning of the GRIP stages is given in the further information section.

A further list shows infrastructure investments which are not yet firmly planned, but which are under consideration. These are schemes which would address the opportunities and challenges identified in the route plan.

Non infrastructure developments

This section describes potential developments consistent with the strategic direction of the route, which do not involve changes to the infrastructure.

Appendix

The appendix includes:

- a table listing strategic route sections, and their predominant characteristics;
- a list of capacity and operational constraints referred to on the main route map; and
- a list of other issues referred to on the main route map.

Please note that figures in tables may not sum to the totals shown, because of rounding.