



18 February 2015

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **Wessex Route Study Consultation Response**

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the team at Network Rail for involving us and the other local authorities throughout the study process via the Thames Valley Regional Working Group. We found it a useful exercise and valued the opportunity to contribute as the study progressed.

The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership has already responded to the consultation and we are broadly supportive of the comments that they have made. The following points are of particular relevance to the Royal Borough and should be considered alongside the LEP's response.

#### Control Period 5 (2014-2019)

We support the following improvements, which would bring strong benefits for the Royal Borough:

- Full re-opening of Waterloo International for use by Windsor line services, which will create additional capacity (p27)
- Works at Queenstown Road to increase capacity on the Windsor Lines (p27)
- Feltham re-signalling, which will give the potential for future 12-car operation on the Windsor Lines and more efficient operation of level crossings (p27)
- 10-car operation on the Windsor Lines (p29)

Proposals to increase the service frequency to 4 trains per hour for all stations in the Royal Borough (p90-91) would deliver a step change in service for our residents, which is welcomed. However, our support for the proposal would be subject to satisfactory mitigation of adverse impacts on road traffic at the Sunningdale level crossing. We would therefore like to see more detailed modelling of the impacts of any additional services running through the crossing and we need a better understanding of the likely mitigation measures that would be required.

The slight improvements to journey time to London Waterloo from Ascot and Sunningdale (p91) are welcomed, but it is disappointing that further improvements cannot be achieved, since journey time is a key issue for local residents.

We would support the introduction of a new direct service between Bagshot, Camberley and Frimley to Waterloo. To facilitate this, Network Rail should consider opening the Sturt Road Chord to link to the South West Main Line. This would reduce the number of passengers driving to Ascot and Sunningdale, which currently causes congestion and parking issues around the stations.

## Control Period 6 (2014-2019)

We welcome the fact that the planned increase in capacity for the Windsor Lines that will be delivered during the current Control Period will mean that no further investment in on-train capacity will be required during CP6 on these routes.

## Accommodating the Conditional Outputs in 2043

Crossrail 2 (p127) has the potential to deliver a step-change in capacity, relieving crowding on existing services, as well as offering the potential for interchange connections to other destinations across London. As such, we would strongly support this proposal.

The proposal for 12-car operation (p129) on the Windsor gives rise to concerns about the practicalities of platform lengthening, selective door opening and access for less mobile passengers. Therefore, we would only wish this to be considered as a last resort.

It is disappointing to note that it will not be possible to achieve all of the long-term conditional outputs for the Windsor Lines (p139). As mentioned previously, opening the Sturt Road Chord would connect Camberley, Bagshot and Frimley to the South West Main Line, which would help to alleviate pressure on the Windsor Lines.

Depending on the outcome of the Southern Access to Heathrow Study, Network Rail may wish to consider options for routing trains from Southampton to Heathrow (p145) via Ascot and Staines, although this should be subject to satisfactory mitigation of traffic impacts at the Sunningdale level crossing.

Finally, we would encourage Network Rail to give consideration within the study to existing proposals for linking the two Windsor Stations to see if there are sufficient operational benefits from the scheme to justify its inclusion in future plans.

Yours sincerely,

**Cllr Geoffrey Hill**

Lead Member for Highways and Transport