

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	<b>SOLENT TRANSPORT JOINT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>RAIL UPDATE</b>		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>25 FEBRUARY 2019</b>		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>RICHARD PEMBERTON, PRINCIPAL TRANSPORT PLANNER, SOLENT TRANSPORT</b>		
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<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
<p>This report provides Committee Members with a general update on rail-related matters around Solent. A summary of the most recent station entry/exit figures is provided, which indicates that rail patronage at Solent stations has reduced slightly for the second successive year. Due to a nation-wide “pause” on major new rail timetable changes, significant improvements which had been proposed to rail services in the Solent area are mostly being delayed with only more limited enhancements now planned for 2019, and no decision has yet been announced by central Government regarding funding for regeneration of the Island Line.</p> <p>Solent Transport has been proactively working to set out to Network Rail it’s views on what longer term development of the rail network in Solent is required to meet future travel demand and make better use of the rail network.</p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
	(i) That the Joint Committee notes the content of this report. No decisions are sought by this report.
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
1.	
2.	
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
	N/A
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
1.	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>This report is intended to provide Committee Members with a general update on rail-related matters around Solent since the last Joint Committee, where certain rail matters were covered as part of a report on responses submitted</p>

	by Solent Transport to consultations run by the Department for Transport (DfT) on various subjects (including several rail franchises).
<b>2</b>	<p><b>2017/18 Rail station patronage figures- brief summary</b></p> <p>The Office for Road and Rail (ORR) publishes annual estimates of station usage for all stations in the UK. These estimates are based primarily upon ticket sale data, with some assumptions made about how many journeys season ticket holders make. Estimates are generated of the number of entries and exits at each station. Combined together, these give total estimated usage levels.</p>
2.1	The latest set of estimates, covering the period April 2017 to March 2018, were published on 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2018. It is therefore timely to provide this Committee with a broad overview of these statistics and the long term trends that are apparent.
2.2	Across all 39 stations within the boundaries of Solent Transport, there were 25.99 million entries and exits during 2017/18.
2.3	There has been a long term growth trend in rail patronage both nationally and within the Solent-sub region: this 2017/18 figure is 80% higher than the estimated level of usage in 1997/98 (when there were an estimated 14.39 million entries and exits).
2.4	However the 2017/18 usage figures indicate a reduction in overall rail usage in Solent for a second consecutive year, from 26.23 million entries/exits in 2016/17, and 27.24 million entries and exits in 2015/16. This is the first time since these records began (in 1996/97) that there has been a reduction in usage of Solent stations for two consecutive years. Indeed there have only been a total of three years where patronage reduced (the other year in which a reduction occurred being 2009-10).
2.5	Reasons driving this reduction in use may include increasing numbers of individuals working regularly from home or via other flexible styles of work, or working part time rather than commuting most days. However rail-industry related issues including above-inflation fare increases, industrial action affecting some train operating companies, and limited tangible enhancements to rail services in Solent in recent years may also contribute to the trend indicated.
2.6	<p>The top five busiest stations within Solent in 2017/18 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southampton Central: 6.54 million entries/exits</li> <li>• Havant: 2.20 million entries/exits</li> <li>• Portsmouth Harbour: 2.04 million entries/exits</li> <li>• Portsmouth &amp; Southsea: 1.99 million entries/ exits</li> <li>• Southampton Airport Parkway: 1.67 million entries and exits</li> </ul>
2.7	Eastleigh, Fareham and Fratton were the other stations in Solent with over one million entries and exits (all having between 1.60 and 1.63 million entries

	and exits).
2.8	Cosham, Swanwick, Romsey and Hedge End all recorded between 0.5 million and 1 million entries and exits, making these the most heavily used of the smaller stations in Solent.
2.9	The five stations with the lowest usage were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bitterne 95,832</li> <li>• Bursledon 54,012</li> <li>• Redbridge 42,586</li> <li>• Millbrook (Hampshire) 36,826</li> <li>• Warblington 26,568</li> </ul>
2.10	Overall, 28 out of 39 stations registered a reduction in usage during the 2017/18 year.
2.11	Some of the stations showing the largest drops in usage over the last two years are those which were most heavily affected by industrial action on Southern Rail services- for example Emsworth station (where all services are provided by Southern) recorded a 30% drop in usage between 2015/16 and 2016/17, albeit showing a recovery with an 11% increase in usage between 2016/17 and 2017/18.
2.12	Comparison of long-term usage trends between stations in the Portsmouth and Southampton city regions indicates no substantial difference in the overall pattern of growth (or recent reductions in patronage) between the two parts of the Solent sub-region.
<b>3</b>	<b>Update on South Western Rail Franchise</b>  South Western Railway, operated by First Group and MTR, took over operation of the South Western Rail Franchise (the primary rail franchise for the Solent area) in August 2017, and are contracted to operate this rail franchise until at least August 2024.
3.1	First/MTR's winning bid for this franchise included a number of significant improvements planned which would benefit the Solent sub-region, most notably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional "semi fast" train each hour between Portsmouth and Southampton (giving three direct trains per hour city centre to city centre- which would start to address weaknesses of the rail link between the two cities)</li> <li>• The existing Portsmouth to Southampton stopping train would be extended through to Weymouth (giving direct link to Totton, the New Forest, Bournemouth and Poole from stations on the Portsmouth to Southampton line)</li> <li>• Additional peak time capacity to London Waterloo and faster journey times from the two cities to London: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8 minutes faster from Southampton Central to London</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5 minutes faster from Portsmouth to London</li> <li>● Introduction of a fleet of dedicated intercity trains with 2+2 seating on Portsmouth to Waterloo fast trains (addressing long-standing complaints regarding usage of 3+2 abreast seated commuter trains on many of these services)</li> <li>● Enhanced Sunday timetables</li> <li>● Significant improvements to Southampton Central station</li> <li>● Refurbishment of existing trains to provide improved seating, charge points, and other enhancements for passengers</li> <li>● Improvements to stations including improved energy efficient LED lighting</li> </ul>
3.2	Many of SWR's timetable enhancements were planned to be introduced through a major timetable change in December 2018. Solent Transport responded positively to SWR's consultation on these proposals during 2017.
3.3	However following well-publicised difficulties experienced by Network Rail and train operators whilst delivering similar timetable changes in other parts of the UK (Northern Rail and Thameslink franchises) during 2018, the DfT announced that major rail timetable changes, including the SWR December 2018 change, would be "paused" temporarily. DfT also committed to undertaking a major review of the structure of the whole rail industry, led by Keith Williams (deputy Chairman of John Lewis and Partners) to report in 2020, to seek to avoid similar issues occurring in future.
3.4	In the meantime, SWR are planning to implement more modest incremental improvements to timetables and other enhancements to services in May 2019 and in timetable changes in 2020. Some limited elements of the December 2018 plans are expected to be introduced in May 2019 but the full proposals will not be delivered at this time.
3.5	Introduction of 2+2 seated intercity-standard trains to Portsmouth to Waterloo fast services will begin in February 2019 with an increasing number of upgraded trains entering service on this route during the year. Refurbishment of other existing trains is also now well underway with around one train per week being refurbished. And some enhancements to stations, particularly installation of energy efficient lighting, are also underway.
<b>4</b>	<b>Island Line</b>  The Island Line railway between Ryde Pier Head and Shanklin is also operated by the South Western Rail franchise. Island Line faces a number of unique challenges relating to the physical limitations and condition of its infrastructure, as well as the age of its ex-London Underground trains (which date to 1938) and issues around costs exceeding revenue from operation. In combination these pose a significant challenge to the viability of Island Line.
4.1	South Western Railway were required as part of their franchise to work with Isle of Wight Council and other stakeholders develop a "costed option", submitted to the Department for Transport, which identifies improvements and investment required to address these viability issues and bring infrastructure and rolling stock up to a more sustainable long term standard.
4.2	Solent Transport has contributed to the development of this costed option, and to efforts to secure the future of and enhance Island Line more generally, through membership of the IOW Transport Infrastructure Task

	Force and the Island Line Stakeholder Forum.
4.3	The “costed option” was submitted to the Department in May 2018, and included proposals for replacement of the line’s ageing rolling stock with more modern trains offering an up-to-date user experience, refurbishment and repair of most of the line’s tracks, and proposed improvements to infrastructure to enable a half-hourly even interval service. A decision by the Department regarding funding of the costed option had been expected by the end of 2018, but it is understood that this is now being delayed.
4.4	Proposals for enhancements to Ryde Esplanade station and interchange, as part of the wider Ryde Gateway scheme being led by IWC, have also been a focus of input from Solent Transport during 2018/2019. Officers have provided substantial support to development of a set of proposals for a step-change improvement in facilities, for which funding is planned to be sought via Portsmouth City Region’s bid to the DfT’s Transforming Cities Fund.
<b>5</b>	<b>Other rail franchises</b>  The originally planned timescales for retendering of some rail franchises serving the Solent area has changed, following rescheduling by the DfT.
5.1	The current Crosscountry franchise which was due to be retendered in 2019 will no longer be retendered this year and will continue to be operated by the existing franchisee – owned by Arriva – with options beyond this “to be considered in due course.” This franchise competition was cancelled by DfT as a result of concerns that retendering this nation-wide franchise at this time could hinder the Williams Rail Review now underway (see previous item 3).
5.2	Solent Transport had previously provided a response to the DfT’s franchise consultation highlighting a critical need for more capacity (additional carriages) on many Crosscountry services as well as noting the importance of maintaining the direct links between Solent and the Midlands/ North provided by this rail franchise.
5.3	On the Great Western franchise, there has been little further news regarding future direction of this franchise (which operates the Portsmouth-Southampton-Bristol-Cardiff service). It was understood that the Government were negotiating an extension to the existing franchise (held by First Group) to at least 2022, and Solent Transport submitted a response in February 2018 to a consultation on the future of the franchise beyond that point, highlighting opportunities to improve the speed and quality of the Portsmouth-Cardiff service (including opportunities to potentially speed up Portsmouth to Southampton trains by a few minutes through use of faster-accelerating rolling stock). However little further news on this franchise extension has been made public.
5.4	Great Western Railway have started to deploy longer trains (five carriages, compared to the current three) on Portsmouth to Cardiff services to increase capacity on this busy route and tackle regular overcrowding. However the trains now being introduced to the route are commuter trains with mostly five-abreast seating, rather than the more comfortable four-abreast seating provided on the long-distance trains now being withdrawn from this route.
<b>6</b>	<b>Solent Rail Connectivity Study (“Mini RUS”)</b>  The current Solent Transport business plan identifies developing a rail

	strategy for the Solent as a key area of work for 2018/19. Network Rail have committed to leading this study as part of their “Continuous Modular Strategic Planning” process working in close partnership with Solent Transport, for completion during the 2019/20 financial year.
6.1	This study will seek to identify how the rail network can be developed to better meet the challenges posed to quality of life, the environment and the economy by increasing development and traffic congestion across the Solent sub-region. This will include seeking to identify how both faster Portsmouth to Southampton journey times, and improved suburb to city centre and employment hub connectivity can be achieved.
6.2	Solent Transport have been engaging closely with Network Rail over recent months developing and refining proposals for the “strategic questions” that the study will go on to answer, as well as preparing data and information for use in the study.
6.3	A key piece of work undertaken by Solent Transport has been a large-scale comparison between Census 2011 data on levels of rail commuting across 14 UK city regions comparable to Solent, and train frequencies at each station and across the rail network serving these city regions.
6.4	The results of this work indicate that achieving a rail mode share sufficient to offset impacts of committed development and substantially reduce car-dependency is likely to require a frequency of four trains per hour at all stations in the Solent area. Provision of four direct trains per hour from suburban stations to one or preferably both of the main city centres also appears to be required if rail’s potential share of travel into the city centres is to be maximised.
6.5	The research clearly shows that rail is much more widely used by commuters in city regions where this level of train frequency is already provided (eg Brighton, Merseyside) and suggests that the rail networks and services in these city regions are exemplars which the Solent Mini-RUS should consider the possibility of emulating within Solent.
6.6	For reference, the average station in Solent is served at present by 2.3 trains per hour- the initial steer provided by this research indicates that the Mini-RUS should seek to establish how train frequencies can be (on average) doubled at stations across the Solent area.
6.7	Moving forward, from February 2019 onwards Network Rail will be engaging with wider groups of local stakeholders on the draft strategic questions in order to proceed with formal commencement of the study. Solent Transport staff resource, access to the Solent SRTM model to test different options, and potential funding contributions towards SRTM modelling have been offered as part of this process.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**Capital/Revenue**

Nil- no capital or revenue costs associated with this decision

**Property/Other**

Nil- no property considerations associated with this decision

<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</b>	
	<b>S.111 Local Government Act 1972</b>
<b>Other Legal Implications:</b>	
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
	No tangible risks attached to this decision.
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
	Not directly applicable.

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	N/A
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	Affects all parts of Solent area with access to rail services.
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	None
2.	

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

1.	None
2.	

**Equality Impact Assessment**

<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.</b>	<b>No</b>
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**Privacy Impact Assessment**

<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.</b>	<b>No</b>
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**Other Background Documents**

**Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	
2.	