

THE REIGATE SOCIETY

The Civic Society for Reigate, Redhill and Merstham

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See at [www. The Reigate Society.org.uk/committees/transport](http://www.TheReigateSociety.org.uk/committees/transport).

HU REIGATE SOCIETY (RS) REPORT No. 49.4 14.06.2013 Draft for consultation

SURREY RAIL STRATEGY REVIEW :-

1.0 PREAMBLE;-

Recently GATWICK has promoted the concept of a rail service every fifteen minutes between Gatwick and Heathrow.

This consultation document takes note and participates in the debate about the long term transport facilities needed to enable both local and regional traffic to pass smoothly through Surrey.

2.0 RECENT POLICY CHANGES;-

2.1 Within the last decade Central Government has decided to rapidly expand the population within the South East Region (SE) and although the target figures South of the Thames are currently under review we may be considering the need to accommodate homes, work places, schools and recreational facilities for a approximate population increase of say 1.5 million persons within the plan period in the Counties of the SE area plus the proposal to accommodate a further 1.1 million persons (recently increased) within the Greater London area and more thereafter.

2.2 The Regional Assembly had a development Plan for homes, industry and transport links. It is understood that this plan has now been revoked. (See Reigate Society Reports 44,to 48)

3.0 RAIL TRANSPORT and AREAS of RISK :-

3.1 The primary area of risk in the East Surrey area appears to be that of the London Brighton railway at the bridges over the M25 at Merstham and at the tunnel and steep sided cutting immediately North of the Motorway. An event at this site may disrupt services ie.:-

- a. The London - Brighton and Sussex coast rail line.
- b. The M25 East / West traffic flow.
- c. The M23 traffic;- A high percentage of this North / South flow transfers to the A217 North of Reigate via the M25
- d. Rail Freight traffic;- Although it may be possible, with forward planning, to divert this traffic through Oxted to Croydon and the London crossing of the Thames.

3.2 Other areas of Safety Risk;-

- a. Rights of way pedestrian crossings of fast Rail service routes, especially those with four rail tracks, where development may result in increased use and where pedestrian/ cycle tunnels or bridges may need to be provided.
- b. Rail level crossings where pedestrian and road traffic may conflict with rail causing damage and injury.
- c. Narrow or low or weak Bridges over or under the Railway where there is a risk of vehicular BRIDGE STRIKES. See Reigate Society Reports No.5.

4.0 THE NORTH DOWNS LINE;-

This rail route links;- OXFORD + READING + HEATHROW – GATWICK – HS1 at ASHFORD – RAMSGATE ERURO_PORTS and the KENT INTERNATIONAL MANSTON AIRPORT.

4.1 Previously this rail route provided a train service between Ramsgate and Birkenhead that avoided the London passenger transfer problem.

4.2 More recently a high speed rail line has been suggested between Heathrow and Gatwick with the objective of reducing the London passenger transfer delay. However the proposed long length of tunnel may prove to be too costly to gain financial support.

4.3 In or about the early 1990's **Howard Humphreys** (Consulting Engineers) proposed a relatively low cost scheme for a short rail connection to **Heathrow** from the adjoining rail network and thence to Guildford and **Gatwick**. This proposal probably remains the lowest cost option for a London Airport rail connection service.

4.4 RAIL FREIGHT as an alternative to the growth in road haulage;-

4.4.1 The RS Report No. 24 discusses the long term advantages of Rail Freight block trains over Road Haulage. 4.4.2 Report No. 8 considers the problems of Mineral Extraction and Transport of minerals by road.

4.4.3 Report No.25 considers the problems of waste disposal and the complication of waste re-cycling.

4.4.4 The population expansion of the South London Boroughs, their need for waste re-cycling and tip disposal sites. At present most of this haulage work is contracted out and Surrey Depots / Tips are increasingly used.

4.4.5 The problems listed above together with the problem of finding new tip sites within the Metropolitan Green Belt will make it necessary to find new sites and the need to consider **the block train option** as against the currently used bulk road haulage system with the associated problems.

4.4.6 It is noted that the rail network has unused capacity for night freight.

4.5 RAIL NETWORK PROBLEMS;-

Apart from some of safety problems listed above the main areas of difficulty appear to be areas where block freight train traffic use is frustrated by rail junction layout.

At Redhill :- The junction only allows the East / West & / South movement of traffic by reversing the direction of travel, this reversal of direction involves a short delay for passenger services to Gatwick or the Kent Ports.

However this reversal of direction presents a serious delay problem for block freight trains that might be required to find an alternative to the busy route through London. (Similar problems arise along the South Coast railway and need to be addressed if more Continental Rail Freight is to be introduced as a cost/carbon lowering alternative to Air Freight).

4.6 RAIL and ROAD traffic growth at Level Crossings;-

In considering traffic problems at the Reigate NW Quadrant ring road, B2032 Pebble Hill with the level crossing. It may prove to be easier and more economical to provide grade separation at this site rather than at the alternative level crossing on the A217 immediately North of Reigate where previous proposals have been frustrated by development. The pressure from Gatwick for a 15 minute service to Heathrow, the high maintenance costs, accident risk, and the need for cross country freight routes makes it desirable to review all level crossings.

There are no doubt other sites within Surrey that should be considered for **a grade separation review** if the population is to grow.

5.0 DORKING RAIL STATIONS;-

Passenger transfer facilities between the two Rail routes are described as poor but this may be of low priority if improvements can be made at the REDHILL HUB RAILSTATION.

6.0 THE REDHILL HUB;-

This Hub intersection of two rail routes is of prime importance for both passenger and freight traffic. However recent and proposed developments have and will reduce its utility.

6.1 The Thames link- capital connect- has been virtually discontinued and whilst this may benefit the train operating companies it is not to the benefit of passengers, lack of capacity is blamed. It should be within the wit of man to re-programme to allow a regular service by transferring some trains to / from the South Coast to the bypass route thereby leaving space for a service through London and the North. It is to be hoped that some of the projected Sussex / Redhill / London and Northern routes will come to fruition.

6.2 The proposal to sell the rail car park for retailing and homes with provision of new facilities to the East is likely to result in further traffic delay on the A25. The Reigate Society Redhill Committee has prepared several reports on this aspect of the development proposals all of which are available for the review.

6.3 It is suggested that rail parking facilities at Redhill need to be increased rather than reduced or made more complicated to use. At Merstham the rail parking facilities are simply inadequate for current use and need to be expanded for the projected population growth.

John Chittenden, Chairman RS Transport. (logistics) Committee.
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14th June 2013 Review and Update.