

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	Research and Development Committee	Item A1	Page 1 of 6
Report Originator	Valerie Hitchman Head of Community Services	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	All	22 nd April 2014	
Title	Report of HS2 Task and Finish Group		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To submit the conclusions and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, for debate and consideration and in order to formulate a reference to the Executive Committee on 7th May 2014.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 3rd December 2013, the Research and Development Committee identified the impact and implications of High Speed Two (HS2) and rail services in the borough, for inclusion on the Committee's work programme as a Task and Finish Group.
- 2.2 The aims and objectives for the Task and Finish Group were set by Research and Development Committee at its meeting on 29th January 2014 and are listed below:-

Aims:

To seek to understand the implications of HS2 on the future economy of Kettering Borough and on rail services available to Kettering residents over the longer term.

Objectives:

- What impact will there be on the Borough, both adversely and beneficially in terms of economy and otherwise?
- Train services in the Borough and connectivity to HS2
- The effects of the proposed 3rd rail line between Kettering and Leicester

The terms of reference did not include scrutiny of whether HS2 is in the national interest, or the business case for the investment.

- 2.3 The Task and Finish Group met on four occasions and consisted of Councillors Cliff Moreton (Chair), David Bishop, Paul Marks, Margaret Talbot and Michael Tebbutt. The scrutiny was undertaken between February and April 2014. The minutes of the Task and Finish Groups held on 25th February, 11th March, 25th March and 1st April are attached as Appendix A (i) to (iv).

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2.4 The Task and Finish Group members have been invited to attend the committee meeting to introduce the report, answer questions members may have and participate in the debate.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 To assist in the consideration of their task, initial background information and documents were provided by officers, including a report to Planning Policy Committee dated 30th January 2014.

3.2 Evidence was taken from the following external organisation:-

- Chris Wragg from Northamptonshire County Council
- Hilary Chipping from SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership)
- Jo Lappin from NEP (Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership)
- David Horne, Managing Director of East Midlands Trains
- Simon Taylor, Head of Network Development for East Midlands Trains
- Andrew Pritchard, Director of Policy & Infrastructure for East Midlands Councils
- Christopher Groome Chairman of LANRAC (Leicestershire and Northampton Rail Action Committee)

3.3 The work of the Task and Finish Group, and their resulting action plans, has the potential to make a significant and positive impact on the future prosperity of the borough.

4. HIGH SPEED 2 (HS2)

HS2 is a government plan for a new high-speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. The initial plan is for a new link between London Euston and Birmingham Curzon Street which would operate at speeds of up to 250mph. This would be followed by a V-shaped Phase 2 taking services from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds. A final route for Phase 2 is expected to be chosen by the end of 2014. Construction on the London-West Midlands phase is expected to begin around 2017 and open in 2026. The construction on Phase 2 could start in the middle of the next decade, with the line opening in 2032-33. The East Midlands Hub Station, which will be the nearest connection for North Northamptonshire to access HS2 for onward connection to Sheffield Meadowhall, Leeds and stations further north, is proposed to be at Toton which is between Derby and Nottingham and about one mile from the M1 motorway.

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4.1 What impact will there be on the Borough, both adversely and beneficially in terms of economy and otherwise?

The consensus is that there will be little adverse environmental impact on Kettering Borough because of the proposed route. Potentially, it could have a positive economic impact. Northamptonshire County Council is supportive of HS2 due to the potential benefits it could bring to the county and LANRAC supports this view.

However, the extent of economic impacts is not known with certainty. NEP and SEMLEP' views on HS2 are still being formed, as the information required to make a serious economic assessment is yet to be made available. They both wish to work together to undertake further work on economic impacts in consultation with all partner organisations including the county council and district and borough authorities.

Passenger numbers on Midland Mainline (MML) have more than doubled from 6 million to 14 million a year, with growth set to continue strongly. As a result of these increases, MML has reached maximum capacity. As a consequence, in the short term there is a need for electrification of the line going north, and in the long term HS2 is critical for ongoing growth because it will free up capacity as long distance passengers, for example from Sheffield to London, would switch to HS2.

There is housing growth, jobs growth and manufacturing in this area and plans for regeneration of the Station Quarter and an Energy Park. These are strong arguments for more investment in rail to serve Kettering but there needs to be more of a city region approach to the lobbying activity.

4.2 Train services in the Borough and connectivity to HS2

Connectivity northwards was considered to be very important, although it may prove difficult to secure. The view of East Midland Trains is that it would be possible to use Toton as a nodal point for trains straight down MML to St Pancras in order to provide a more direct route to Europe.

There are concerns that the planned growth of Kettering in homes and jobs is being underestimated by Network Rail. The Kettering Borough Council Business Survey 2013 indicates that the majority of businesses rate the area as a good place to do business and travel aspects are the highest rated. Kettering borough is also an area with an important manufacturing base.

Northamptonshire is poorly served with regard to core city connections, other than London or Birmingham. Figures on the top 10 destinations from Kettering and into Kettering were provided by East Midland Trains and are attached as Appendix B. A service to the East Midlands Hub at Toton, and connection to HS2 would provide much faster access to cities such as Leeds or Newcastle.

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This improved connectivity north and south is possible if six things happen:

1. Freeing up of capacity on MML by Sheffield passengers being routed through HS2 which would enable East Midlands Trains to concentrate on connectivity between towns and cities.
2. Electrification of the line to Toton: although electrification would take place as far as Kettering and Corby and with the recent Network Rail announcements up to Sheffield, there should be electrification to Toton and therefore connection to HS2.
3. Improved frequency of services stopping at Kettering: there are concerns regarding the current lack of services from Kettering to Derby, and only one train per hour to Nottingham, especially given rumours of services post-HS2 being reduced below current service levels. Improved connectivity north and south from Kettering is needed. We need to take advantage of the scope for more services day and night.
4. New track and line speed increases benefitting Kettering (the recent announcements mention that this may be in the scope of the electric spine development programme).
5. Infrastructure alterations and/or operational control measures at Kettering that will accommodate increased train lengths up to 260m in length for long distance high speed services operating at 125mph to London St Pancras and northwards.
6. Ensure that enhancements to Corby don't adversely affect routes north from Kettering.

4.3 The effects of the proposed 3rd rail line between Kettering and Leicester

The evidence given to the task and finish group focused on the forthcoming investments in rail transport locally. Over the next five years there would be substantial investment in the existing network, adding track between Bedford, Kettering and Corby, improved signaling infrastructure and with additional trains and certain platforms being increased in length to accommodate longer trains. There is a need to be clear about future station infrastructure so that development of the Station Quarter is planned appropriately.

On 31st March 2014 Network Rail announced its five year £38bn spending plan on tracks and stations saying that this investment will generate growth, create jobs and boost business as well as delivering faster journeys, greater comfort and better punctuality for passengers across the UK. Some of the announcements will have a direct benefit to the borough.

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The Delivery Plan includes:

- Extending the electrification of Midland Main Line north of Bedford to Corby, Nottingham and Sheffield.
- Electric Spine Development Programme and the Department of Transport priorities include MML capacity for additional future services (Bedford-Sharnbrook-Kettering-Corby). The scope may include doubling the track from Kettering to Corby, new track and linespeed increases between Bedford and Kettering.
- East–West Rail project between Oxford/Aylesbury and Milton Keynes/Bedford including the electrification of the route between Oxford and Bletchley.
- MML Long Distance High-Speed Services Train Lengthening: the routes mentioned are St Pancras to Corby, Nottingham and Sheffield. This could run counter to the objective of more north bound trains from Kettering.

5. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Council's policy is to grow the local economy as part of the growth agenda, delivering better town centres, better skills and higher density, better quality jobs. Rail connectivity is a crucial part of the attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live and to invest.

6. **FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None outlined in the report

7. **HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None outlined in the report

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None outlined in the report

9. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Potential positive impacts will not be achieved if there is no effective lobbying for the changes required.

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10. RECOMMENDATION

- (i) That work be undertaken with East Midlands Councils to find a compatible approach that provides effective lobbying. HS2 has the capacity to benefit Kettering Borough by providing better north and south connectivity, better capacity and faster, more frequent, trains if the following can be achieved:
- Freeing up of capacity on Midland Main Line
 - Electrification of the line to Toton and connection to HS2 at the hub
 - Improved frequency of services north and south from Kettering
 - New track and line speed increase as part of the Electric Spine Development Programme
 - Infrastructure alterations and/or operational control measures at Kettering that will accommodate longer and faster trains
 - Enhancements at Corby do not adversely affect routes north from Kettering
- (ii) To use our positions on NEP and SEMLEP to influence their Strategic Economic Plans to better promote the economic growth of the area and the need for rail networks to serve the area.

Background Papers:

Title of Document:
Date:
Contact Officer:

Previous Reports/Minutes:

Ref:
Date: