



## *CPRE Sussex Policy Position Statement*

### **RAIL**

#### **Section 1**

##### **The Scope of the problem**

Currently, rural railways are vulnerable to closure. The Beeching Report – 1963, led to massive cuts to the rural rail network. There has been some revival since, in particular through the development and support of community rail initiatives. However, once again the axe appears to be looming. Ministers have reported that some rural rail lines may need to be replaced by buses. Local rail services that have the potential to affect higher speed inter-city services are particularly vulnerable.

With the current debate on climate change, it is vital that rail services are expanded rather than contracted. The way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic is damaging our towns, harming our countryside and contributing to global warming. It must also be appreciated that new rail lines can put pressures on the rural environment and this must be avoided. Railways have a vital role to play in the Government's modern integrated high quality transport policy and in the reducing the need to travel by car.

##### **Local Issues**

Within Sussex there are 2 rail issues that have been debated for several years – the East to West Rail Link and the Coastal Route.

CPRE Sussex feel that there is not a sufficient case to have a completely new East - West route across open countryside and all that goes with such a scheme. A high speed link is currently being considered from St Pancras to the Midlands and Manchester and therefore funding for a new East –West link across Kent and Sussex would have little backing from freight or passenger groups or the Government.

A case could be made for a faster service on the existing lines if sufficient support was forthcoming but again costs would run into the millions.

CPRE Sussex also believes that there would be no support on both environmental and economic grounds for a new coastal route that went across the South Downs. Economically, it would not be possible for a new line to “bypass” the city of Brighton. Any scheme for improving the existing route would entail major track, platform and signalling at places like Lewes, Brighton and the whole line west of Brighton. In addition there are problems with the nature of Brighton station that only allows 4 coach trains to be reversed at just one platform out of the 8 at the station.

#### **Section 2**

##### **Central Government**

The Government introduced Regional Transport Strategies (RTS – an integral part of Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) - PPG 13) in its White Paper, A New Deal for Transport: Better For Everyone, (1998). PPG 11, Regional Planning, explains the value of transport strategies to RPG. The purpose of RTS is described in PPG11. This includes a strategic steer on the role and future development of railways in the region for both passengers and freight. It also considers public transport accessibility criteria to guide the location of new developments and the provision of new transport service or infrastructure. Any rail overview should include the purpose of schemes, their impacts on modal shift, how they are integrated with land use policies and consideration of how they fit within the overall regional priorities for investment.

The policy guidance provided by PPG11 and PPG 13 emphasises the multiple benefits of integrating transport and land use in terms of reducing the need to travel, reducing journey lengths, influencing the mode of transport and making it safer and easier to walk, cycle, and use public transport. The CPRE has campaigned to see the RPG process better incorporate transport planning, so that decisions about transport schemes can properly be integrated with land use. The role of the RTS in addressing transport issues facing the countryside can be weak and overlooked. Following the Transport White Paper, the Government produced Transport 2010: The Ten Year Plan which outlines the resources it will make available for transport investment from 2001 to 2010. It promised more investment in the transport priorities of each region.

The Government's role in the running of the railways is to provide rail services and projects that only it can specify. The responsibility for the day-to day delivery of the railway services rest with the industry. The DfT Rail Group is therefore working in partnership with the industry to secure the railway the County wants at a price it can afford.

In PPG13 the Government states that local authorities should work in partnership with public transport providers and operators, and use their planning and transport powers to improve public transport in ways which will reinforce the effectiveness of location policies in the development plan. The aim should be to establish a high quality, safe, secure and reliable network of routes, with good interchanges, which matches the pattern of travel demand in order to maximise the potential usage of public transport. They should explore the potential and identify any proposals, for improving rail travel, in liaison with the SRA, including the reopening of rail lines, or creation of new stations on existing rail lines or light rail.

### **Section 3 CPRE Sussex Rail Policy**

RTS should seek to improve the accessibility of rural communities to essential services including railways. Provision needs to be considerably improved and ensure that the needs of isolated communities are well served,

as well as providing a real choice to encourage less reliance on the car.

Below are some items for consideration. They are in no particular order of priority although they have been categorised into "services", "minor" and "major" works and investment criteria. There needs to be a modal shift away from road transport towards public transport, including railways. A rail overview should include the purpose of schemes, their impacts on modal shift, how they are integrated with land use policies and consideration of how they fit within the overall regional priorities for investment.

#### **Services**

- Retain the through London-Gatwick Airport non-stop services. If the present proposals for extra stops and extended journeys are implemented next December the air passengers will suffer seating problems and the ordinary local passengers will suffer luggage difficulties as well as the obvious longer journey times for all concerned.
- Replace the through service to Bournemouth from the Brighton line via Hove which was cut back in a recent timetable change. The connection at Southampton is not good.
- Cross Country Services
  - a) Retain the through service from Brighton to Manchester via the Midlands which is threatened to be withdrawn next December or earlier.
  - b) Provide a through service via Salisbury to Devon e.g. Exeter or Plymouth as there used to be.
  - c) Lengthen and increase the number of services to and from Wales via Bristol.
  - d) Provide a through, fast service between Brighton and Portsmouth stopping only at Worthing, Barnham and Chichester and Havant.

#### **Minor Investment**

- Provide facilities for trains to pass each other between Hove and Angmering in each direction to facilitate faster trains to pass the slow stopping services.
  - 1) Increase frequency of services by re-signalling between Brighton & Lewes.
  - 2) Abolish the old fashioned level crossing gates at Plumpton Station to increase

safety and improve the speed of working for road traffic.

- 3) Equip all trains with Drivers Door Isolation switches so that longer trains can stop at all stations with short platforms without inhibiting the longer trains on other parts of the same journey. E.g. Balcombe Southbound platform and some stations in the Arun Valley line.

### **Major Investment**

- Re-open the Uckfield – Lewes line.
- Re-open the Polegate to Pevensey spur line to give a faster and more direct service to Bexhill and Hastings
- Quadruple the line between Keymer Junction and Balcombe Tunnel Junction (except Haywards Heath Station and Copyhold Junction).
- Double the line between Hastings and Ashford International to give better and more frequent connections to the Eurostar services.
- A major scheme would be for the throat of Brighton Station being re-modelled to enable trains from the East side to go forward towards Worthing from more than one platform and by more than 4 car as at present. Thus returning the ability to run direct trains from the East towards Worthing without the need for passengers to change.
- In general, stations should be manned for far longer periods of the day than at the present time. When things go awry the passengers should be told the reasons for the delay as soon as possible and in a language they can understand i.e. railway jargon should not be used e.g. “a track has failed” which in English means that the electrical circuit which tells the Signaller where a train is and the route which is set is safe and locked in position.

### **Section 4 CPRE Branch Contact**

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### **Section 5 What Can You Do?**

#### **Reading**

Government guidance – A new deal for transport : Better for Everyone 1998  
PPG Note 11: Regional Planning 2000  
PPG Note 13: Transport 2001  
Transport 2010: The Ten Year Plan 2000  
CPRE – a campaign briefing paper –Regional Transport Strategies 2002  
CPRE website [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk) contains a number of press releases and a list of further publications on transport issues.