

Subject:	Rail South		
Date of Meeting:	July 2017		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Prior, Assistant Director, City Transport	Tel: 01273 292095
	Email:	Mark.prior@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
LA's affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The report outlines the options available to the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) in securing greater influence over rail infrastructure investment and rail franchising in the Region by working with and through the emerging Sub National Transport Body, Transport for the South East.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members of the Board support the proposal to develop a "Rail South" model as a workstream under the emerging Sub National Transport Body, Transport for South East
- 2.2 That the Board use their positions on the Shadow Board of SNTB Transport for the South East to ensure;
- The development of a Rail Strategy as part of the SNTB Transport Strategy
 - The prioritisation of Brighton Main Line Upgrade project by Network Rail early in the next Control Period (CP6: 2019-2024)
 - The prioritisation of other rail improvements and regional connections including those centred on Lewes – Uckfield, and connecting the Region to other areas of the South East including Heathrow.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Rail is of great strategic importance to the Greater Brighton City Region. The Region needs a rail service it can rely on, that delivers for commuters, for tourists and for business. An efficient and reliable service is critical to maintaining the Regions' competitiveness, driving its economic growth and boosting employment.
- 3.2 The rail network infrastructure in the Region is, however, not fit for purpose and the Brighton Main Line in particular has suffered from long-standing capacity and reliability issues.
- 3.3 Train services on the Brighton Main Line are among the busiest in the country, while levels of on-time performance are among the lowest nationally, a situation exacerbated in the past 18 months by the industrial action on Southern Services.

Progress is urgently needed on the Brighton Main Line Upgrade project to increase capacity and reliability in the long-term, providing the infrastructure not just to support planned growth but to transform the Greater Brighton economy.

- 3.4 Members of the GBEB have expressed a desire to have greater control and influence over the levels and timings of rail infrastructure investment in the Region and over the award of franchises operating within the Region. It has been suggested that one way to do this would be to establish a rail partnership body - "Rail South" - following the example of Rail North.
- 3.5 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act makes provision for the establishment and constitution of a Sub National Transport Body (SNTB) for any area in England (outside of Greater London). The establishment of a SNTB provides an opportunity to develop a strong strategic partnership and a Transport Strategy for the wider South East regional area.
- 3.6 The first meeting of the Shadow SNTB was held on 26th June 2017, attended by Leaders and Lead Members of the Constituent Authorities including Brighton & Hove City Council, East & West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire County Councils, Medway, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth Councils and Coast to Capital and Solent LEPs with DfT observing. At this meeting Cllr Warren Morgan outlined the importance of Rail to the South East and City Region, giving it equal priority to roads within the Transport Strategy development process and further outlined a proposal for the new Body to support his proposal for a "Rail South" model to deliver improvements in franchises and rail services for commuters through a formal engagement structure with the DfT, Network Rail and Rail Operators.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Opportunities exist for the GBEB, through its constituent members, to be more closely involved in influencing rail franchises and rail network infrastructure programmes in the region. Involvement in the process of appointing a new train operator for the routes currently run by Southern GTR, on future service delivery and standards of operation could be gained through;
 - The new DfT initiative, operating currently in new South Eastern franchise area, whereby Local Transport Authorities are embedded in DfT franchise teams
 - Working with, and through, the Sub National Transport Body (Transport for the South East) which is currently being established to ensure that the rail priorities of the Greater Brighton City Region are included and prioritised within the SNTBs Transport Strategy. The SNTB would become a statutory partner in rail investment processes.
- 4.2 The GBEB and its constituent Local Authorities could continue present channels of lobbying government for improvements but this is unlikely to see the step change required to meet the regions' needs. Working through the statutory instrument of the SNTB will provide significantly more influence on future Rail investment and franchising.

- 4.3 The GBEB and its constituent Local Authorities could seek to establish a smaller and/or independent Rail body operating outside of the SNTB and focused specifically on the rail network within the Region. Such a body would, however, have no statutory basis and would lack the influence of a SNTB. Rail North was created prior to the emergence of SNTB Transport for the North (TfN), predating the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act and is now planned to be integrated into TfN once it gains statutory status. A more effective solution would be to follow the example of Rail North and site such a body within the wider Sub National Body.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation at various levels will take place as part of the establishment of the SNTB. This consultation will include consultation on the SNTBs Transport Strategy which will include Rail priorities and proposals.

6. CONCLUSION

As previously outlined in the report to this Board in January 2017, the SNTB will be the main mechanism available to the GBEB to influence and prioritise investment by the major national transport agencies including Network Rail.

The SNTB offers the best mechanism for the GBEB and its constituent members to influence rail investment and franchise arrangements within the Region.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.
- 7.2 A £0.020m contribution to the work of the SNTB, to develop constitutional arrangements and a Transport Strategy has previously been approved from existing Brighton and Hove City Council revenue budgets.
- 7.3 There may be officer time and other costs for the each of the constituent local authorities to be represented on the SNTB and for specific work on issues related to Rail as the SNTB and its Strategy develops. Any cost associated with officer time will be met from existing revenue budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date: 05/07/17

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. As set out in the report, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 allows the Secretary of State to make Regulations to establish a SNTB as a corporate body for any area in England outside Greater London. The constituent authorities of the proposed SNTB are required to submit a proposal to the Secretary of State and to consent to the Regulations being made.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert, Head of Legal Services
Date: 06/07/17

Equalities Implications:

7.5 There are no specific Equalities issues arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications:

7.6 There are no specific Sustainability issues arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD Agenda Item 23 Subject: Transport for the South East Proposals Date of Meeting: 31st January 2017