Report for Information - 9e

Regional Transport Forum - 12th October 2012

GEML Vision Technical Study

Report by: Alastair Southgate (Essex County Council)

Purpose:
To update the RTF on the Great Eastern Main Line Technical Capacity Study carried out for the GEML Vision group and note the recommendations for taking this work forward.

Recommendations:
- Acknowledge the findings of the study and endorse the need for Network Rail and the Department for Transport to act upon its recommendations
- Support continued engagement with the rail industry by the GEML Vision Group in lobbying the rail industry to act on the findings of the work
- Support the need for continued technical development of the proposals to maintain momentum from HLOS and Franchising.

1. Introduction

1.1. The GEML Technical Capacity Study was commissioned by the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML) Vision Group to identify suitable enhancements for the GEML which will improve the level of service for rail users across East Anglia. The work was prompted by assertions in the London & South East Route Utilisation Strategy (L&SE RUS) that a capacity gap of 5,100 seats will exist for the busiest morning peak hour by 2031. The RUS did not identify any clear options for fully mitigating this shortfall.

2. Summary of report

2.1. The GEML Vision Group has defined vision objectives for the route which includes securing faster journey times, increased capacity, a better quality travel experiences for users and longer term franchise stability. The GEML Technical Capacity Study identifies a package of works which can deliver these vision objectives. This builds on previous studies, completed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and the Vision Group since 2008, into the potential economic impact of investing in the GEML.

2.2. The Capacity Study considered over 30 potential enhancements and appraised the potential feasibility and impacts of each option. The options were appraised with the outcome of the sifting assessment being the identification of a ‘core’ package and a series of ‘supplementary schemes’.

2.3. The most vital infrastructure measures identified are:
   - the remodelling of Bow Junction (to provide additional capacity in/out of London); and
   - the provision of a new three-tracked section at Boreham, north of Chelmsford.

2.4. The Bow Junction scheme has secured development funding in Control Period 5 (2014-2019) and will, once implemented, enable up to 28 trains per hour out of London Liverpool Street Station. However, the scheme is not yet fully committed so the Vision Group will need to continue their support of this scheme and Network Rail’s ongoing work to ensure that it gains a high priority for inclusion within the HLOS for CP6. Part of the development spending is to be used to develop and test potential timetables, and in particular to quantify any adverse impact on train service performance. To maximise the benefit of this, the Boreham 3-tracking scheme would allow flexibility for regulation of services. Upgrades to rolling stock and other supporting infrastructure improvements (such as works to structures and level crossings) would also be required to capitalise on the on-going renewal of the overhead line equipment and other rail infrastructure to allow line speeds to be raised from...
80-100mph to 110mph and operated at this speed. A ‘proof of concept’ analysis has also been completed to demonstrate that the 3-tracked section would allow up to 28 trains per hour to feasibly operate.

2.5. Supplementary schemes include train lengthening and supporting works to lengthen 3 platforms at the London Liverpool Street main line terminus to accommodate 12-car services and adding a new loop on the Braintree Branchline to double service frequency to half-hourly. An opportunity to integrate with a private developer’s proposals to build a new main line station north of Chelmsford at Beaulieu Park could also help to achieve the service performance targeted in the vision objectives.

2.6. The earlier EEDA Economic Evidence Study (2010) concluded that conventional transport related economic benefits of £3.4 billion could be realised over a 60 year appraisal period within the East of England (both NPV 2002 prices and values). This excludes potential benefits in areas outside the East of England, notably in East London. These economic impacts were re-evaluated to reflect the updated package of enhancements put forward by the Capacity Study. Over a 60 year appraisal period, conventional transport related economic benefits are calculated to be £2.5 billion and represent very high value for money when considered against costs of c£400m at 2012 prices and excluding Optimism Bias.

3. Next Steps

3.1. There is clear potential to deliver significant benefits by increasing capacity and reducing journey times. This improves the attractiveness of rail for current rail users as well as growing additional demand on to the rail network. Opportunities to influence Government spending and the 15 year longer term franchise contract specification (which was due to operate from July 2014) must now be maximised to help ensure that gathering momentum is maintained.