
A POLICY FOR RAIL TRANSPORTATION IN ESSEX

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the details of a rail policy prepared by Essex County Council to accord with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Essex Rail Policy is an integral part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process and sets out the role that railways might play in the overall vision for transport in Essex.
- 2.2 The County Council intends to take a pro-active role and lead in addressing issues and highlighting potential developments for the rail network in the County. A 'Strategic Rail Forum' is proposed whose overarching mandate will be "to optimise the use of railways for transporting people and goods in Essex".
- 2.3 The Rail Policy is currently a draft document and Members have the opportunity to send comments and views to the County Council before it is finally adopted.

3 THE RAIL POLICIES

- 3.1 The 16 policies included in the Rail Policy document are attached to this document as appendix one. The key aspects of the policies are explained below.
- 3.2 Policies RP1-3 deal with the development of an integrated network and seek to promote a modal shift from road to rail. Detailed studies will be undertaken in order to fully understand the current situation and the ways in which it might be altered.
- 3.3 Policies RP4-7 deal with freight movements and ways to attract businesses to make more use of rail to move their goods.
- 3.4 Policies RP8-9 reflect the need to understand and plan for rail capacity within Essex and linking to areas beyond.
- 3.5 Policy RP10 suggests the need to identify strategic locations for the provision of rail facilities that will ensure best use can be made of the network.

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- 3.6 Policies RP11-13 reflect the need for integration of services and different transport modes, as well as the development of information technology.
- 3.7 Policies RP14-15 deal with safety across the railway lines.
- 3.8 Policy RP16 indicates the need to ensure that other modes including pedestrians and cyclists are properly catered for and provided with good access to the rail network.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 There is no doubt that the fact that Essex County Council is proposing to take a lead role in the development of rail initiatives in the County is to be welcomed. However, it is not clear that their willingness to take on such a role will actually reap substantial benefits in the long run given the privatised nature of railways in the UK.
- 4.2 However, that being said, it is clear there is an essential need for a level of co-ordination and integration in the provision of rail services, and if the County Council can play a part in achieving this, their lead is to be commended.
- 4.3 At this stage, the proposed policies do seem to deal with the key issues with regard to rail travel, but it will only be with the development of specific initiatives that progress can be gauged. It is considered that Essex County Council should be informed that this Council supports the proposed rail policy.

5 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to comments by Members, the County Council be informed that Rochford Council supports the principles outlined in the policy for rail transport in Essex. (HPS)

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Background Papers:

On the Right Lines – September 2000

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APPENDIX 1

Policy

RP.1 - Essex County Council will contribute to stimulating realistic changes in modal share in the three markets identified (London flows, inter-urban and South East Essex/Southeast urban flows). It recognises that capacity constraints may limit market share increases to off-peak travel only.

RP.2 - The County Council will continue to be associated with studies to assess socio-economic changes impacting on transport demand, notably to and from the London conurbation. This greater understanding of travel patterns will support County Council efforts to forecast future emerging demand and address capacity short falls.

RP.3 - The County Council will encourage the development of a cohesive network of inter-urban services based on the core rail infrastructure, complemented by dedicated express bus/coach links and feeder services. Quality partnerships will be sought with the operators to agree standards, co-ordination and marketing.

Associated Actions

The County Council will take the lead in refining data to measure changes in market share. This will draw on new and existing studies and provide a basis for agreeing realistic targets, priorities and monitoring processes with the operators.

For the commuting market, it is proposed to concentrate project work initially on flows between larger settlements and Greater London which each generate over 10,000 journeys per day, but where the rail share is 25% or less¹². Agreement will be sought with operators on five year targets.

Essex County Council will pursue discussion with District and Borough Councils, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and the train operators on proposing realistic targets for rail share in South Essex. The use of contra-flow capacity between Basildon and Southend during peak periods will be encouraged to relieve road congestion on the A13.

The Council will produce a study on branch lines to determine how far they can contribute to inter-urban sustainable mobility and be linked to the objectives of the Community Rail Partnership.

The Council will investigate the feasibility of new rail infrastructure between south and central Essex, and to the east of Stansted.

¹² Journey analysis in Steer Davies Gleave Inter-Urban study identifies Brentwood, Harlow, Basildon and Loughton within these parameters.

Policy

RP.4 - Essex County Council will not see an increase of the relative volume of freight being transported to from and through Essex by rail. It will co-operate on a regional basis to measure change and identify targets for action.

RP.5 - The County Council particularly aims to attract businesses to the county that have minimal adverse impact on the environment. However, where transport activity is inevitable, the County Council will give proactive packaged advice to existing and new enterprises on the availability of suitable sites and the scope for Freight Facilities Grants.

RP.6 - Where inter-modal terminals are feasible, the County Council will determine the obligations of the developer to ensure that rail shares are maintained.

RP.7 - The County Council will support measures to reduce the associated detrimental effects of rail freight operations (e.g. noise and vibration), provided that this takes full account of net environmental benefits compared with road.

Associated Actions:

The County Council will establish a database of road freight statistics to ascertain the scope and profiles for modal shift. The contribution of rail freight will be included within a strategy for sustainable distribution.

The County Council will bid to attract import opportunities to the county through favourable Channel Tunnel routing.

The County Council will try to influence local companies to undertake a 'green' distribution audit to raise awareness on road nuisance and identify opportunities for modal change.

Drawing on the Essex Rail Freight Forum, the County Council aims to explore future developments in distribution, and to support pilot schemes.

Policy 9

RP 8: Essex County Council will ensure that an early start is made to planning future capacity requirements for peak Essex-London travel and to examine links with various cross London schemes, particularly the Crossrail proposal.

RP 9: The County Council will participate in the evaluation of schemes to expand the rail infrastructure in Essex. A clear understanding is required on the respective roles of the Strategic Rail Authority, Central Government and Railtrack within the development of these schemes.

Associated Actions:

The County Council is considering forming a consortium of key stakeholders to promote and support the development of Crossrail.

In order to assess and rank schemes for new infrastructure, a two tier evaluation process will be adopted. Evaluation should address the social, environmental and economic impact of each scheme and lead to a more detailed feasibility assessment if appropriate.

The County Council is participating in the project to enhance short term improvements in capacity on the Braintree line.

Policy 10

RP 10: Essex County Council seeks to cooperate with stakeholders to determine strategic locations which favour rail usage. This will be undertaken on a regional basis for freight activity and a line of route basis for passenger services and facilities.

Such sites might need to be protected by local authority purchase orders. The County Council will encourage the listing of other suitable lineside sites for development.

Conditions of minimum rail usage will be applied as a precondition of site development where appropriate.

Policy

RP.11 - Essex County Council promotes integrated transport and will implement measures to improve urban and inter-urban links. It is accepted that integration of services will involve many competing forms of transport and that quality partnerships and providing reliable information are key to combining them.

RP.12 - The County Council wishes to see a measurable change in information quality and integration. The County Council will take the lead as appropriate to co-ordinate standards, joint technology and user groups.

RP.13 - The County Council would like to see parking provision at stations complement the demand management policies for other types of parking. In this context it will encourage Park & Ride facilities provided that it does not give rise to long distance railheading or exclude off-peak travellers. Permission for new parking sites will be conditional on assessing the road and rail impact.

Associated Actions

The County Council wishes to develop quality partnerships to facilitate integrated transport. These can be initially based on key lines of route to assess the scope for co-ordination and to measure impact on modal switch. This will link with the intermodal needs of the inter-urban network and with the modal shift objectives in the South Essex/Southeast area.

The County Council will design its proposed survey of interchange facilities to meet the needs of both bus feeder and inter-urban services.

A process for monitoring improvements in information systems is required so that various systems are brought together and matched against user expectations. This would involve the setting up of a specific user panel or "mystery traveller" activity to report on perceived quality of information.

"Help points" similar to those installed on London Underground stations are to be installed at every station in Essex. The scheme is currently being piloted throughout the Great Eastern network.

Discussion within the County Council and with the Highways Agency is required on the use of integrated signage to help direct motorists to Park & Ride locations. A case study at Marks Tey will help determine the right balance between interchange and Park & Ride and examine the impact of railheading.

Policy:

RP 14 - Essex County Council will plan the safety of access across the railway running lines and will examine the use of crossings periodically. This is in accordance with the aspiration to "create a safe and caring community".

RP 15 - The County Council will continue to assist others in maintaining their responsibilities for the safety of rail users, and will examine scope for RPP funding.

Policy:

RP 16 - Essex County Council through RPPs will continue to encourage the provision of facilities to help pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, mobility impaired, young and elderly passengers secure access to rail services.

Associated Actions

The County Council will investigate the improvement of routes to and facilities at rail interchanges as part of implementing the LTP strategies for powered two-wheelers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The County Council will seek to encourage the carriage of bicycles on rail services.