

APPENDIX A

An Investigation into the impact of planned changes to rail services in Wokingham Borough.

(A paper for the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.)

Introduction.

Rail services in the Borough are seeing very significant changes which are set to continue over the next 10 years with, inter alia, the opening of the Elizabeth Line later in 2019 and HS2 in 2026 with an interchange station at Old Oak Common on the Great Western Main Line. The Communities and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked to investigate the likely impact of these changes on Wokingham Borough and to recommend actions to maximise positive impacts and to mitigate any negative impacts.

This paper does not seek to replicate the work of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group which reported in December 2015 but will refer to that report where appropriate.

This report will deal with services on the 5 rail lines serving the Borough in the order of the Great Western Main Line, Henley-on-Thames branch, Reading to Waterloo services, the North Downs Line and, finally, the Reading to Basingstoke line.

Great Western Main Line (GWML).

The GWML, serving Twyford Station, is in the process of 'Route Modernisation' with electrification, albeit 2 years late and 4 times over budget, new inter-city and suburban trains, the remodelling of Reading Station and new signalling. Electric services through Twyford commenced in January 2018. There will be progressive timetable changes over the next few years taking account of enhanced acceleration of new trains. Change will, if anything, gather pace with Great Western Railway (GWR) having taken over the operation of Heathrow Express in November 2018, the phased opening of Crossrail (to be titled Elizabeth Line), the now almost certain construction of Western Rail Link to Heathrow, the opening of HS2 in 2026 with a major new interchange station at Old Oak Common (3 miles west of Paddington) and the work of the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation in redeveloping the area at the new station as a major London hub.

Crossrail (to be known as the Elizabeth Line)

What is Crossrail? Crossrail will be a service from Reading and Heathrow in the west through new tunnels and stations under London to Abbey Wood and Shenfield in the east. It will run on existing Network Rail lines from Reading to Royal Oak (just to the west of Paddington) and then run in tunnel with new stations at Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon (where it will interchange with Thameslink), Liverpool Street and Whitechapel before dividing. One branch then goes towards Stratford surfacing just beside the London Stadium prior to proceeding on existing Network Rail lines to Shenfield. The other branch

runs on dedicated Crossrail lines and has stations at Canary Wharf, Custom House, Woolwich Arsenal and terminates at Abbey Wood.

The Promoter. Crossrail is promoted by Transport for London (TfL) who will take the revenue risk on the line and have let the concession to operate stations and the trains to MTR Crossrail, the concession specifying in considerable detail the upkeep and quality of the service to be provided of trains and stations. TfL also specified the trains where the interiors are optimised for inner London Metro service with, in the main, longitudinal seating similar to that on London Underground and London Overground.

The Concessionaire. MTR Crossrail is a company of MTR UK who also have a 10% interest in South Western Railway. MTR is simply Mass Transit Railway of Hong Kong. In December 2017 MTR Crossrail took over the management, from GWR, of stations from Taplow to Acton Main Line with the exception of Slough which, with Maidenhead and Twyford, will continue to be managed by GWR.

The Trains. The trains have been constructed by Bombardier in Derby and consist of 9 x 23m carriages each with 3 sets of double doors per side. They are unit trains with driving cabs at each end and are 205m long with wide gangways between cars. They are high capacity trains accommodating up to 1,500 passengers but seating only about 400. (By comparison an 8 car GWR electric train, 50m shorter, seats 446.) They have a high rate of acceleration with a design speed of 90 mph, are air conditioned but have no toilets.

The Opening of Crossrail. Crossrail was to open in 5 stages as follows:

- MTR Crossrail took over the Liverpool Street to Shenfield last year marketed as London Rail with the gradual introduction of new Crossrail trains into service.
- **20th May 2018.** MTR Crossrail took over the Heathrow Connect stopping service running from Paddington Station (High Level) to Heathrow T4. Frequency will increase from 2 trains per hour (tph) to 4 tph although this will depend on the availability of rolling stock.
- **December 2018.** The central London tunnels were to open for service with trains operating from Paddington Low Level to Abbey Wood with the service being officially designated 'Elizabeth Line.'
- **May 2019.** Services from Shenfield were to be linked into the central London tunnels running to Paddington.
- **December 2019.** The Elizabeth Line was to open throughout with trains to and from Reading.

Ticketing. TfL intends to extend Oyster, really pay-as-you-go, to all stations served by the Elizabeth Line.

Twyford Station.

Services. While we have not yet seen even a draft timetable for December 2019, it is understood that there was to be an Elizabeth Line service of 4 tph during peaks extended to Reading with that reverting to 2 tph off peak. This off peak service is expected to be in

addition to 2 tph GWR services giving the same basic 4 tph service off peak (as now) with peak augmentation including the retention of fast services on the main lines. It is expected that GWR services will skip various stops offering shorter journey times leaving Elizabeth Line trains to offer an all stations service.

Travel Patterns.

The Elizabeth Line will transform eastern connections from Paddington, meaning no longer will one have to shuffle onto the Hammersmith & City for a slow stop/start journey to Liverpool Street. The Elizabeth Line and its interchange with Thameslink at Farringdon will result in many passengers choosing new routes for their journeys. There is expected to be a marked preference for GWR services with passengers for London then changing to the Elizabeth Line at Ealing Broadway eastbound. Westbound passengers may choose to change at Paddington to better assure a seat. Passengers using the peak hour fast services will change at Paddington but their onward journeys within London may well be on different routes from those used today.

The opening of Old Oak Common Station in 2026 is expected to see all trains calling there making Old Oak Common the preferred interchange station onto Elizabeth Line eastbound but Paddington will tend to be used westbound in order to board GWR trains at the buffer-stops.

It is likely that the frequency of Elizabeth Line trains serving Old Oak Common will increase on the opening of HS2 by extending all trains from the east that otherwise would turn back at Paddington. Increased frequency of Elizabeth Line services will preclude GWR services on the Relief Lines accessing the terminal platforms at Paddington with the consequence being that Elizabeth Line will then provide all services out to Reading on the Relief Lines.

Western Rail Link to Heathrow.

Western Rail Link to Heathrow will run from a new grade separated junction just to the east of Langley Station through bored tunnels to Terminal 5 at Heathrow. The business case for the link is based on the existing 2 runway airport. But the aim of having 50% of passengers by 2030 travelling to the airport by public transport after construction of the new NW runway only strengthens the case for the link. It is not yet funded although this is expected to be resolved with a ‘fair and reasonable’ contribution from Heathrow Airport Ltd. An application for a DCO is anticipated to be submitted this summer. The Heathrow Express depot was to be re-located at this new junction (adding to the complexity and cost) but the agreement to transfer the operation of Heathrow Express to GWR from November 2018 has obviated the need for this new depot.

Western Rail Link is designed to provide rail connections from Bristol, South Wales and Oxford without having to go via Paddington. Services are planned to be 4 tph running from Terminal 5 to Reading calling at Slough and, alternately, at Maidenhead or Twyford giving Twyford a service of 2 tph to Terminal 5 and an additional 2 tph to Reading – if that station call is realised. Wokingham Borough Council, in its response to DfT’s Consultation on the next GW franchise, has asked for these services to be non-premium, run by GWR and to be extended through

Reading alternately to Newbury and Basingstoke so improving connectivity from Twyford, make better use of platform capacity in Reading by through running and offer connections at Basingstoke to provide Hampshire with a service to Heathrow in advance of any Southern rail link.

Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation. (OPDC) The OPDC was established in April 2015 to redevelop the largest regeneration site in London based on the interchange station between HS2, the GWML and the Elizabeth Line. It is planned to build 25,500 new homes on the site and provide some 65,000 jobs that will make it a destination in its own right from Wokingham Borough with travel from Twyford Station.

HS2 Phase 1. The first phase of HS2 running from London Euston via Old Oak Common to Birmingham, with a link to the West Coast Main Line, is due to open in 2026.

Demand for Travel from Twyford Station.

GWR, in its bid to the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Growth Fund, confirms there is suppressed demand for travel from Twyford because of the constrained access and insufficient car parking at the station. Indeed commuter parking at Twyford was the primary reason for the Task and Finish Group to be established and as its December 2015 report described in detail, which will not be repeated here, "The problems at Twyford are manifold." Yet for large areas of Wokingham Borough and Bracknell Forest, Twyford will offer the fastest journeys into Central London and other destinations following the opening of the Elizabeth Line.

Another factor to encourage travel from Twyford is the peak fares and car parking charges that are £27.80 and £6.10 (if paid for by telephone) respectively or £33.90 per day. Yet the fares and car parking charges at Reading, only 5 miles distant, are £47.70 and £23 respectively, over £70 (all 2018 prices), a significant lead to pay for a greater frequency (and operating hours) of fast services.

GWR considers that patronage from Twyford would double in the next 10 years if access to the station was unconstrained.

Impact on Wokingham Borough.

This additional demand will be generated by:

- **The Pull Factors.** The significant enhancements in services, the journey times compared to the Reading – Waterloo line, the new services to Heathrow, the development at Old Oak and Park Royal and the differential in pricing for travel from Reading compared with Twyford.
- **The Push Factors.** Primarily the additional housing planned for Wokingham Borough and Bracknell Forest and the relative ease of travel to Twyford from the south making it the station of choice (if unconstrained) for travel to London from large parts of Wokingham, Woodley, Binfield, Winnersh, Charvil, Sonning and even Arborfield Green.

Constraints. There are many constraints at Twyford, listed in detail in the Commuter Parking Report, which include the congestion at Twyford crossroads and the resulting air quality issues there.

Access and Parking. The Committee may wish to consider the Borough's plans for enhancing access including the provision of bus links and the interface, if any, with the allotments land at Twyford and the number of 'unconstrained' car parking spaces required and where and how that could be provided.

The impact on Wokingham Borough of train service changes on the GWML will be to significantly boost the demand for travel using Twyford Station as a railhead. Enabling that demand to be unconstrained will:

- Provide access to employment opportunities in the Thames Valley and London.
- Provide access to labour supply for the Thames Valley and London.
- Deliver a reduction in congestion on the local and strategic road network.
- Enable planned housing growth.
- Deliver infrastructure between towns.
- Provide access to Heathrow.
- Provide access to London.

The Henley-on-Thames Branch.

2017 saw the train service frequency increased from roughly 3 trains every 2 hours to a 2 tph service but this was coupled with the withdrawal of the through trains from Henley to Paddington (there were 2 up and 3 down services). Initially this reduced Wargrave, by far our least busiest station, to an hourly service but stops on all but a few services were introduced during the year.

The branch is just under 5 miles long and the journey time is 12 minutes therefore maintaining the 2 tph service gives a turnaround time of 3 minutes. A regular 2 tph service is logical as the stopping service on the GWML was on a 4 tph regular interval basis, but it does mean that punctuality is essential if connections are to be made. The brief dwell time at the terminal stations precludes branch trains being held for late running GWML trains and the thick end of half an hour waiting at Twyford illustrates the inadequacy of the public facilities there.

Future Plans. The GW Route Modernisation included electrification of the branch but after the debacle of the GW electrification programme this was deferred by the Hendy Review into Control Period 6 (the 5 years from April 2019) and is, as yet, unfunded. The rationale of electrifying the branch is to eliminate a 'diesel island' and the better acceleration of an electric unit would help the resilience of the timetable.

Aspirations. Both Henley Town Council and the (very active) Henley Branch User Group requested the re-instatement of through services in their responses to DfT's Consultation on the GW Franchise. Wokingham Borough Council took what is suggested was the pragmatic view that punctuality of services ensuring robust connections was the key. The through services meant that the branch train was 'captive' in the bay platform at Twyford for 30

minutes at peak times while the through train occupied the branch. Through services would probably require re-modelling of the junction in Twyford Station, the re-instatement of the passing loop at Shiplake and associated signalling, all highly unlikely to be justified financially.

The Impact. The impact is to reduce the attraction of using Wargrave Station with its limited but free parking because of the real or perceived uncertainty of the connections, particularly in the down direction. This, in turn, adds pressure on the Twyford crossroads and on the inadequate car parking at Twyford Station. There is also the problem of ticket purchase during the peaks as there is no booking office or Ticket Vending Machine at Wargrave and the conductor may have time to sell about 5 tickets before the train arrives at Twyford where passengers without tickets make a dash for the ticket windows if time allows. The introduction of Pay as you Go when the Elizabeth Line opens should ease ticket purchase at Twyford but not at Wargrave.

The Reading to Waterloo Service.

The Wessex Capacity Upgrade, developed by the previous franchisee, South West Trains in partnership with Network Rail, was being completed by South Western Railway and Network Rail prior to the revised December 2018 timetable which should have delivered a 4 tph service on the Reading to Waterloo service.

The Wessex Capacity Upgrade will deliver increased capacity into Waterloo, the UK's busiest station in terms of passenger throughput. Work at Waterloo will bring the former International platforms into full domestic use and has extended the main suburban platforms on the south side for 10 car trains. South West Trains had brought additional trains into service and their rolling stock plan introduced 10 car trains to the Reading line and, while these trains increase capacity, there are few, if any, more seats than in an 8 car train. The seating is arranged 2+2 rather than 3+2 with the additional standing room increasing capacity.

These 10 car trains are to be replaced by December 2020 with new Class 701 trains being constructed by Bombardier in Derby. They will be unit trains with only 2 driving cabs walk though gangways, 2+2 seating, be air conditioned, have wi-fi and charging points and, unlike the Elizabeth Line trains, have toilets. These new trains are in fact variants of the Class 345s for the Elizabeth Line.

Complementing the rolling stock plan has been the Reading remodelling giving 3 x 12 car platforms for services to Wokingham, platforms have also been extended at a number of stations (Wokingham has now 2 x 12 car platforms) and the traction power supply has been upgraded. Platforms at Earley, Winnersh Triangle and Winnersh have not been extended with Selective Door Opening (SDO) in use on 10 car trains – doors on the rear 2 cars not opening.

One impact of having longer trains is longer walks for passengers travelling from Reading. With exits all at the south end of our 4 stations on this line, the cumulative additional distance to be walked to the Wokingham exit with 10 car trains is about 80m, making a contribution to Public Health.

The new franchise has a commitment to deliver a 4 trains per hour service and it had been planned to provide this in the December 2018 timetable change. This had been the subject

to public consultation and a number of changes have been proposed, with the new timetable yet to be formally agreed by Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail. Following problems with the introduction of the Thameslink timetable in May 2018, the Department for Transport instructed South Western Railway to postpone their planned changes. This major timetable rewrite is the first of two such exercises with another major timetable revision planned for December 2020 to take account of the new fleet of trains introduced into service by then. The impacts will be economic, which will be beneficial, but the interface with our 4 level crossings that we currently have in Wokingham town will be detrimental. The service enhancements to Reading and the interface with the Barkham Road level crossing also include service enhancements on the North Downs Line and these will be discussed with the North Downs Line.

Economic Impacts. In 2013 the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP together with Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils commissioned a high level Economic Impact Study into services on the Waterloo to Reading line from JMP Consultants (now part of the Systra Consultancy.) This study reported in March 2014 having examined a number of scenarios and concluded that with a 15% reduction in journey time (a reduction of about 8 minutes) and a 4 trains per hour service there would be potential LEP annual benefits of about £60m representing around 2% of annual GVA. Journey time reductions should be delivered in the December 2020 timetable as that is expected to reduce station dwell times in line with DfT's specification. Even though the headline journey time may be little changed in the interim 2018 timetable, the greater frequency of service means less waiting time for a train and therefore the 'generalised journey time' is reduced.

Level Crossings. As Barkham Road level crossing is being discussed later, only the Smith's Farm User Worked Crossing (UWC), Star Lane LC on Easthampstead Road and Waterloo LC on Waterloo Road are considered here. Waterloo LC has to close when the Eastern Gateway roadbridge is opened, expected to be spring 2020. But there are no plans for the closure of the UWC or Star Lane LC.

Star Lane Level Crossing. This crossing is protected by signalling so has to be proved down before the signals can be cleared. In the London direction this means that the barriers are down prior to the starting signal at Wokingham Station being cleared. Therefore the closure times at Star Lane (Easthampstead Road) are extended, resulting in long tailbacks of cars at peak periods and in drivers deliberately avoiding the level crossing so increasing congestion elsewhere, for example on Finchampstead Road. Currently the basic train service of 2 tph results in 4 crossing closures per hour: the draft December 2018 increased the service to 4 tph which would result in 8 separate crossing closures. The draft timetable suggested that 2 train pairs each hour would more or less cross at Star Lane and while that may reduce the number of separate closures, 2 of them may be extended with "second train coming" adding to the frustration of road users. When the SDR is opened, car drivers will have the choice of using the SDR rather than wait for the barriers. But this choice will not be available to schoolchildren trying to reach St Crispins, Holme Grange, St Theresa's or the new primary school to be built on Wood's Farm. A pedestrian 'crossing' of the railway is therefore essential prior to house occupation in the SDL south of the railway.

Smith's Farm UWC. This UWC gives access from Gypsy Lane to 2 houses south of the Wokingham to Bracknell railway and a single person making a journey by car has to cross this double track, 3rd rail electrified railway on a curve with restricted visibility no less than 5 times – for a single journey! Network Rail is required to assess the risk and imposed a long standing Temporary Speed Restriction (TSR) of 30 mph for about a mile from Wokingham Junction to about Easthampstead Road where the line speed was 60 mph. Therefore the consequence was that trains took a minute longer to reach Star Lane resulting in longer delays on Easthampstead Road, more frustration for motorists and, on other roads elsewhere, increased demand and congestion. Alternative access to the Smith's Farm houses (also known as Knowle Farm) may be available from the SDR once that is constructed but 2021 looks the best estimate for that road to open. Network Rail wishes to close this crossing, examined alternative access and offered to purchase the properties but the 2 householders held out for mega-payments. In assessing the risk of the proposed 4 tph service, Network Rail may not agree the proposed service because of increased risk at this UWC and the difficulty of mitigating that risk. It is suggested that Wokingham Borough Council could consider taking action to get the crossing closed. The arguments for that are:

- **Duty of Care.** If and when someone is killed or injured on this crossing then the probability is that it will be one of our residents.
- **Economic.** Following the JMP Consultants study, it should be possible to calculate the loss of GVA for an additional one minute in journey time for some 3m passengers per year.
- **Congestion.** The extended closure time because of the UWC at Star lane adds to the problems of congestion on Easthampstead Road and elsewhere in the Borough.
- **Risk.** The assessment of risk may result in Network Rail not agreeing the 4 tph service.

It should be noted that Network Rail has now lifted the TSR restoring line speed by the re-introduction of 'whistle boards' (actually a round sign with a **W**) with train drivers now sounding their horns from 0600 until midnight.

The North Downs Line.

The North Downs Line running from Reading to Gatwick Airport is currently a rather Cinderella service operated by GWR. The line is unusual in being electrified for 3 stretches, at either end and roughly in the middle, on the 3rd rail system but separated by 2 non-electrified stretches. It has been agreed that, if funding can be identified, electrification would be completed using the 3rd rail system.

The basic service is currently an hourly semi-fast from Reading to Gatwick Airport and an hourly stopper from Reading to Redhill with considerable changes at peak times. GWR has had an unrealised franchise commitment to introduce a 2nd service to Gatwick each hour since 2006 but that has been frustrated by infrastructure shortfalls (platform capacity at Gatwick Airport and Redhill) that has now been rectified and this service was to run from December 2017 only to again be frustrated by Network Rail because of increased risk at open level

crossings between Guildford and Reigate. GWR hope to agree mitigation methods with Network Rail to allow the second Gatwick some time during 2019.

In 2016 GWR announced their 'Vision' for the line that would deliver:

- An electrified service.
- Sub 1 hour journey time between Reading and Gatwick.
- A 2 tph stopping service between Reading and Guildford.
- A 1 tph service between Guildford and London Victoria via Redhill.
- A 24 hour express service.
- 2 tph between Gatwick and Oxford (or beyond.)
- Improved performance.
- Sufficient supporting infrastructure (such as an expanded car park at Crowthorne) to meet the demand generated by the service improvements.

The target date for the full vision was 2024.

Earlier this year DfT consulted on the award of another Direct Award Franchise to GWR to which Wokingham Borough Council submitted a comprehensive response asking, inter alia, for a 2 tph service at Crowthorne (the Reading to Guildford service) and to include a stop at Winnersh Triangle to expand the stations with a direct service to that station to provide an alternative to car use and contribute to reducing congestion. We also requested the extension of trains from Gatwick Airport through Reading to Oxford (or beyond) to increase connectivity from Wokingham.

GWR announced early in April that they are procuring tri-mode 4 car trains (diesel, 750Vdc and 25kVac) to replace the 3 car Diesel Turbo fleet so that these trains can be re-deployed to the West Country. As the tri-mode trains are conversions of existing rolling stock, they are expected to be introduced in the latter half of 2019. These tri-mode trains will be capable of operating from Gatwick to Oxford albeit with somewhat frequent changes of the power source.

Wokingham to Reading. The cumulative service from Wokingham to Reading in December 2018 is therefore planned to increase to 7 tph, with 2 being stoppers at Winnersh etc taking 14 minutes for the journey with the other 5 being non-stop in 9 minutes with the possibility that this will increase to 8 tph with the new GWR franchise in April 2020.

Impacts. The impacts of these changes will be twofold: an attractive frequent service with the downside being the additional closure times of the Barkham Road level crossing. In more detail the effects will be:

- A service of 7 tph providing a fast, frequent service throughout the day to the heart of Reading with Platforms 4, 5 and 6 being convenient for an exit towards Broad Street and with an adult peak fare of £4.70 (£4.60 after 0900), coupled with the adjacent bus interchange on the station approach will offer an unbeatable service in terms of cost and journey time. But it will add to the pressure on the Reading platform at Wokingham Station which is minimum width where it is busiest and is, to all intents

and purposes, totally devoid of shelter. The provision of platform awnings is to protect passengers from the elements and to encourage the dispersal of passengers on the platform so that all train doors are used to minimise station dwell times.

- Depending on the timetable operating there may be 14 separate train movements over the Barkham Road level crossing leading to an extension of the closure time to road traffic. To put this into perspective, there are currently 12 trains using this crossing now between 1700 and 1759, therefore the addition of another 2 is not, in itself, excessive. But the 14 trains per hour will operate throughout the day rather than just in a single hour. Currently there are 4 train pairs, many scheduled to roughly cross at Wokingham so that often one closure of the barriers serves 2 trains. With the additional road traffic expected to use Barkham Road following the development at Arborfield Green it would appear prudent to consider alternative routes that could allow the complete closure of this level crossing.
- Were the level crossing to be considered for complete closure (which would greatly assist traffic in Wellington Road) then the provision of step free access from Barkham Road to Wokingham town centre will need to be considered. Going through the station (using the lifts on the station footbridge) will not be an option as South Western Railway is to install ticket barriers. This may add to the case for developing a step free crossing at the Tan House crossing bridges.

The Reading to Basingstoke Line.

For completeness, mention of the Reading to Basingstoke line is made which currently traverses the Borough for about 1,000m with, currently, no station. This is planned to change with the proposed development at Grazeley where a new railway station forms a central part of the future transport planning. GWR wrote to Wokingham Borough Council in on 2nd August 2017 giving their support for a new station at Grazeley. This 'letter of support' is an essential step in the long process to get agreement to open a new station.

However, this is a very busy railway with significant capacity issues as it forms part of the Cross Country network which plans up to 3 non-stop services per hour, it is an essential link for deep sea intermodal container traffic from the Port of Southampton to the Midlands with up to 4 freight trains per hour which may, in the future, be 775m long running at up to 75mph operating on a 24 hour basis and a stopping service of 2 tph where a stopping service consumes line capacity on a mixed traffic line.

Network Rail's plans for Control Period 5 (to March 2019) included overhead electrification as part of the GW Electrification Programme and, although this was deferred into Control Period 6 by the Hendy Review, is included in the Wessex Route Strategic Business Plan for CP6 although no funding has yet been identified. It is understood that one justification is access to an HV feed near Bramley which makes electrification from Southcote Junction (on the West of England line) to Basingstoke likely.

Reading Green Park Station, after many false dawns, is now under construction to open in December 2019. One problem was that the current stopping service is operated by 2 diesel trains that take 25 minutes for a journey. The additional call at Reading Green Park removes

resilience from the timetable (if a stopping train is late, it can never catch up again) and consequently DfT has agreed funding for another train simply to maintain a robust 2 tph service.

The other significant limitation is the short platforms at stations including the bay platforms at Reading and Basingstoke which precludes the operation of 8 car trains and yet, with Reading Green Park and probably Grazeley to come, additional passenger capacity on trains will be required.

GWR announced in early April the acquisition of tri-mode converted electric trains and these 4 car trains are expected to take over the services in late 2019.

Finally, the Borough's input to DfT's Consultation on the next GW Franchise has asked for Western Rail Link trains to be projected through Reading to Basingstoke and to Newbury to enhance connectivity from Twyford and Grazeley as well as providing connections from Hampshire to Heathrow in advance of any Southern Rail Link ever being constructed.

Summary.

With the possible exception of the Henley Branch, all our other 4 lines will see significant changes to rail services over the next few years with the most significant changes taking place on the GWML with the opening of the Elizabeth Line, Western Rail Link to Heathrow and HS2 leading to major impact on Twyford. However, major change will also take place on the Reading to Wokingham corridor through service changes on both the Waterloo line and the North Downs Line which will have major impacts on Wokingham town.

The changes to our rail services have the potential to drive economic growth and to help reduce congestion on our roads if access and parking at stations allows them to achieve their full potential. This applies particularly to Twyford on which the Prime Minister has written that "Improving car parking facilities at Twyford is vital..."

The planned combined train service from Wokingham to Reading of 7 tph with a journey time of 9 minutes for the 5 fast services or 14 minutes for the 2 stopping services will offer a service that in journey times, frequency, comfort and destinations probably makes the suggested service from the proposed Coppid Beech Park & Ride to Reading Station a significant commercial risk.

The paper has said little about Winnersh Triangle Station apart from our aspiration for North Downs stopping services to call there. This is despite the intention to deck the car park, improve the public realm of the station and re-name it Winnersh Parkway.

The interface with level crossings in Wokingham is likely to cause severe difficulties and this need to be considered and addressed as matter of some urgency.

DWS

16th December 2018

