

Maidstone Borough Council

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 10 November 2009

Maidstone Rail Services: Network Rail

Report of: Acting Overview and Scrutiny Manager

1. Background

- 1.1 Please see Agenda Item 8 for the background to the review and further information.

2. Network Rail

- 2.1 Network Rail runs, maintains and develops Britain's tracks, signalling system, rail bridges, tunnels, level crossings and viaducts.

- 2.2 Network Rail also undertakes 'route planning':

"Network Rail's 26 Strategic Routes are the foundation of the rail industry planning process. Route Planning develops and maintains the 26 Route Plans in consultation with our customers, end users and funders to ensure that they reflect customer's requirements and are consistent with the funds available. The Route Plans are published each year as part of our Business Plan and are updated at intervals through the year.

The plans are underpinned by a programme of Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs). RUSs establish the appropriate strategic direction from a systematic analysis of future requirements of the network. Each RUS is managed by a group consisting of key industry stakeholders.

The programme of 19 individual RUSs covers the entire network. It also includes a Network RUS which is developing strategies for stations, depots, rolling stock and electrification, and a Freight RUS which has established a strategy to meet anticipated freight demand.

The Route Planning team is responsible for liaison with the DfT and Transport Scotland in the development of passenger franchise specifications. It acts as client for enhancement schemes funded by Network Rail and liaises with customers and stakeholders with regards to the scope of future renewals programmes and the opportunities for enhancements.

- Richard Eccles, Head of Route Planning¹

- 2.3 Network Rail published the Draft Kent Rail Utilisation Strategy for consultation in April 2009. Consultation closed on 23 July 2009. The

¹ <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/4447.aspx> [accessed 27 October 2009]

External Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered information from the RUS at its meeting on 14 July 2009 and looked at Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council's responses to the RUS Consultation at its meeting on 11 August 2009. Copies of the RUS and the Council's response can be obtained from louisesmith@maidstone.gov.uk.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are recommended to interview Richard Howkins, South East Route Planner, and Murray Motley, Senior Commercial Schemes Sponsor – Kent with regard to future plans for rail services in and for Maidstone Borough.