

UNLOCKING THE BRIGHTON MAINLINE

- The highly successful Coast to Capital region, which runs from South London to Brighton and across the coast to Chichester, needs significant long-term rail investment to support a growing regional economy and maintain its competitive advantage
- Addressing this strategic issue will protect both the economic potential of the region and the significant contribution that it makes to London's economy
- Network Rail has identified the Brighton Mainline as the single top priority for investment in the region and there is a strong business case for investment
- Proposed upgrades include enhancements to the Windmill Bridge Junction and a major redevelopment of East Croydon Station
- Unlocking this bottleneck will enhance capacity, connectivity and resilience, driving growth and productivity throughout the region. This is vital for links to London, as well as international connectivity.

WHAT IS THE BRIGHTON MAINLINE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE GROWTH CORRIDOR?

With a population of 1.9 million and a contribution of £49.7 GVA to the UK economy, the Coast to Capital area is the 7th largest regional economy in the country. As a key part of the net-contributing South-East economy, the region is vital to overall UK growth and prosperity.

Part of the reason for this high economic contribution is the region's high levels of employment, with around 90,000 businesses offering more than 800,000 jobs to a well-educated workforce (45% of the working age population is educated to degree level or above, compared to a national average of 38%).

Businesses in the Coast to Capital region currently benefit from several competitive advantages. As well as an educated workforce, businesses also benefit from the international connectivity provided by Gatwick Airport, the world's most productive single runway airport. Proximity to London and a mobile population (33% commute over 10k to get to work) also contribute to the region's economic success.

However, recent growth has been slower than other parts of the South East, with 16.5% GVA growth since 2010, compared to 19.5% across the South East. Raising GVA per head from £24,900 to £28,000 (South East average) would add around £5.7 billion to the Coast to Capital (and national) economy. There is strong evidence to suggest poor rail infrastructure is suppressing growth in the region and negatively influencing strategic investment decisions from business.

Therefore, achieving the Coast to Capital region's economic potential depends on securing fit-for-purpose rail infrastructure and services that will drive growth.

Passenger journeys on Southern and Thameslink services have risen by 10% to 105 million per annum in the past five years and Network Rail predict increasingly severe crowding on trains, driven by the region’s growing economy. Commuter journeys have already risen accordingly, to jobs in London (which drives 10,000 commuters per hour on Southern route during weekday peak), but also in Croydon, the Gatwick Diamond and Brighton.

The Brighton Mainline (BML) is central to the infrastructure of the region, with passengers accessing key interchange points, such as Clapham Junction, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Brighton. The line acts as a commuter route, but also as a driver of economic growth for the entire region.

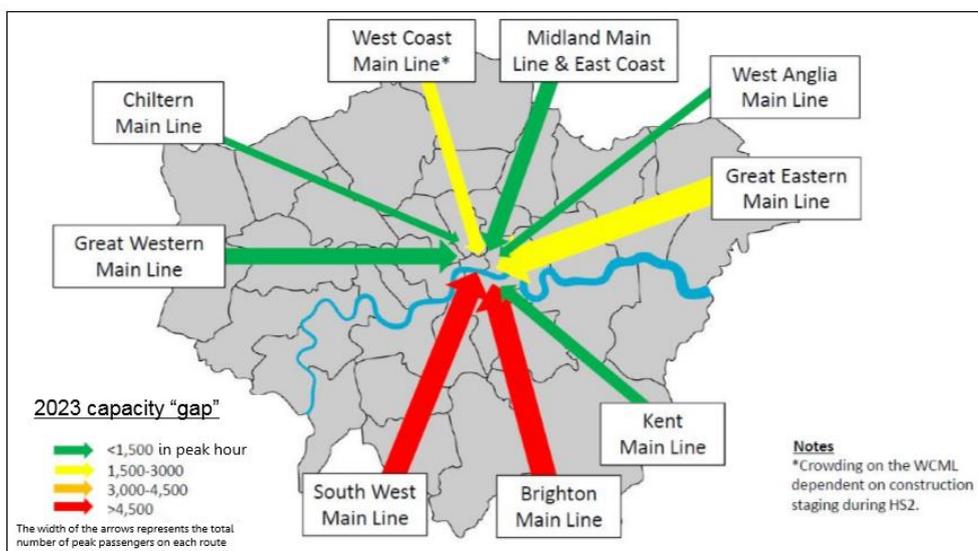
WHY IS INVESTMENT NEEDED?

Railways are always complex pieces of infrastructure, but the service in the Coast to Capital region suffers particularly badly from disruption caused by operational, maintenance and renewal issues. Many of these are detailed in the recent Gibb report including:

- Chronic operational problems caused by industrial disputes
- Operational disruption in recent years from the impact of the London Bridge work
- Ongoing impact of the introduction of a new fleet, new franchise geography and next, a new timetable
- Historic deficit on maintenance, with £300 million recently allocated to fix it.

These are serious problems, but it is important that they do not obscure the need for major long-term investment in the railway to build in the capacity that the region needs to support predicted future growth.

Network Rail analysis confirms that the Brighton Mainline is the commuter route into London which is under most pressure from a future capacity gap.



This map shows that both the South West Main Line, and the Brighton Main Line require significant further work to deliver capacity and resilience for the future. Crossrail 2 is designed to alleviate pressure on the South West Mainline.

Significant work from Network Rail, backed up by independent analysis commissioned by the Government, confirms the **strong business case for investment in the Brighton Mainline:**

- The upgrade programme is the “highest priority investment in the corridor” and should be progressed during a window of opportunity in Control Period 6 (from 2019)
- Central Croydon is developing quickly, and land needed to deliver the necessary scheme is under pressure for alternative development. Without beginning the Transport and Works Act process, it is possible that the land will be lost to developers
- Long lead times for schemes of this nature mean if key decisions are taken now, the main works could commence in the early 2020s
- Increasing demand to travel will exceed capacity of the new rolling stock within 10 years, unless improvements are made. Commuters along the route will increasingly need to stand, and demand will quickly reach 150% of available capacity at key stations in Croydon, Surrey and Sussex.

WHAT WOULD THE UPGRADES INVOLVE?

The fundamental obstacle to increased capacity and resilience on the Brighton Main Line is the bottleneck in the Windmill Bridge Junction area to the North of East Croydon.

With the lines from Victoria and London Bridge joining a number of suburban lines, the complexity of the junctions in the Selhurst triangle area means that trains are often required to stop and wait for each other before continuing their progress. This adds delays to existing services and inhibits the capacity of the whole line.

Therefore, the main focus of the upgrade programme is the Windmill Bridge Junction redesign, which would introduce grade separation (flyovers) for the major junctions and increase throughput and efficiency on the line. Further, the addition of two new platforms at East Croydon will reduce congestion there and provide a major development opportunity above the station.

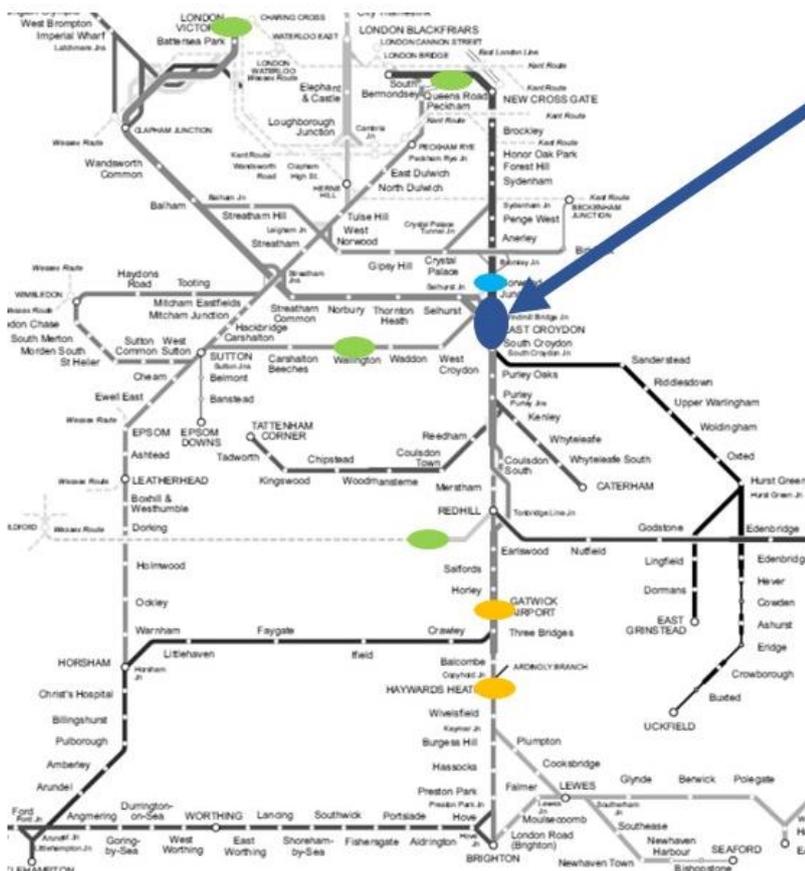


Congestion at the Selhurst triangle means trains are required to stop at peak times, resulting in delays along the entire line

Fixing the Croydon bottleneck and removing operational constraints, including:

- **Windmill Bridge Junction Enhancement** – grade separation of the multiple flat junctions in the Selhurst triangle, to reduce delays and allow more trains to run
- **East Croydon Station Redevelopment** – two extra platforms, a greatly enhanced station concourse and a major oversite development (this would take 8 years in total, but benefits would start to be seen four years after it starts)
- **An Additional Platform at Reigate** – to allow Thameslink services to run there
- **Other Track Layout Improvements** – to allow more trains to run, specifically at Gatwick (which would complement a separate station enhancement project), Norwood Junction (which would allow extra trains to call), Haywards Heath and Wallington
- **Additional Train Stabling Capacity** – in the London area
- **Associated Works** – such as power supply and signalling upgrades
- **Rollout of the Digital Railway** – to optimise performance utilising the latest Traffic Management technology.

A series of subsequent works will help maximise the capacity potential of the line all the way to the South Coast.



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Proposed Infrastructure:

- Advance works for specific local issues
- Norwood Junction track layout capacity
- East Croydon expansion, grade separation etc.
- Later elements to optimise benefits

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

The benefits of upgrading the BML will be felt by everyone who uses it. This includes those living and working close to the stations on the line, but also much more widely across the region.

Without the upgrades outlined in the BML Upgrade Programme, the region will not feel the full benefits of the £6.5 billion Thameslink Programme, which will deliver some additional capacity and reliability from 2018.

The direct benefits of upgrading the line:

Capacity

- More trains per hour at peak time (From 36 today increased to 42-44)
- A significant capacity increase at peak times

Connectivity

- Opportunity to run new services
- More options in timetable development

Resilience

- Increased service reliability, addressing the “poor and unreliable condition” of the network as identified by the Gibb report.

Productivity

- Value for money (estimated benefits of £2.40 to every £1 spent)
- Commercial opportunities to redevelop stations, particularly at East Croydon
- Encouraging balanced economic growth by bringing businesses out from London

WHAT NEXT?

Network Rail is currently in the process of developing designs further, so that costs, timescales, risks and opportunities can be finalised. Government will need to allow Network Rail to begin the stakeholder consultation process for the Transport and Works Act. This will safeguard the land needed for development. Government will then need to fully commit to funding the project.

Coast to Capital LEP intends to bring together businesses, education representatives and politicians from across the region to make the strongest possible case to Ministers in order to prioritise investment in this vital piece of regional infrastructure.

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