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## BEXHILL RAIL ACTION GROUP

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Network Rail Connectivity Study Consultation, January 2015

Email: [improvingconnectivity@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:improvingconnectivity@networkrail.co.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam

Bexhill Rail Action Group (BRAG) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to improvements in Rail infrastructure and journey times from Bexhill-on-Sea, and its environs. Bexhill is on the edge of the NR Kent and Sussex route areas, with local services provided by two train operators - Southern/GTR and Southeastern. The Committee welcomes this opportunity to respond to those aspects of this consultation relevant to local rail users.

BRAG would identify the following as our priorities for improving connectivity – 1-3 are **infrastructure projects**, while 4- 6 primarily require **timetable solutions**:

1. **THE MARSHLINK LINE FROM HASTINGS TO ASHFORD**. As is currently being evaluated, BRAG wishes to see **the upgrade and electrification** of this route to facilitate **the introduction of High-Speed Javelin services from Bexhill/Hastings/Rye to London St Pancras via Rye and HS1**. This would reduce the journey time from Bexhill to London from approx 2 hours via Haywards Heath to just **78 minutes** via Ashford. This project is currently being assessed by Network Rail and East Sussex County Council, and would also clearly meet broader regeneration objectives.
2. **THE WILLINGDON CHORD**. Construction of this short piece of track would enable certain trains **to avoid reversing at Eastbourne**, shortening journey times by up to **16 minutes**.
3. **BRIGHTON**. The current track layout at Brighton inhibits through working between the East and West Sussex Coastway. The need for the **Greater Sussex Coast** to be considered as a single **strategic route** has been identified by BRAG and other rail groups as a priority in the Sussex Area Route Study.
4. **ST LEONARDS WARRIOR SQUARE**. This station offers an interchange between the Hastings – Charing Cross line and the East Coastway. This is currently a somewhat **uninviting and insecure environment**, and timetabling late at night is tight between arriving Charing Cross trains and departing East Coastway services - which is off-putting for lone-travellers in particular.
5. **GATWICK/REDHILL**. Connections on 'down' services between Reading – Redhill – Gatwick trains and the Eastbourne/Ore service are generally **poor**.
6. **TONBRIDGE**. Connections between Hastings line trains and Tonbridge – Redhill services have historically been **poor**.

I hope this is of assistance.

Yours faithfully

Richard Madge  
On behalf of the BRAG Committee  
January 2015