



# Department for Transport

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Roger Jones  
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Dear Chris

The Department is grateful for the work undertaken by Network Rail in developing options for an initial capacity strategy for the Brighton Main Line (BML) for railway Control Period 6 (2019-2024).

We note the finding that the main constraints to capacity on the BML are the flat junctions and the number of fast line platforms at key stations. Specifically, you found that the most heavily utilised flat junctions, platform faces and plain line sections are in the inner area of the route (from Stoats Nest Junction) inwards to London. On that basis, you have concluded that these locations are acting as a bottleneck for the whole route and recommend a focus on efforts in this area during Control Period 6.

We also note your finding that that large scale investment in alternative routes in the outer area of the BML would likely to be of very limited value in the short to medium term – this finding is applicable to the re-instatement of the Lewes-Uckfield line. However, the Department agrees with your recommendation that Lewes-Uckfield re-instatement could make a longer term contribution to capacity on the Sussex Route and that as such the alignment should continue to be safeguarded.

The Department would now wish to see the findings of the report contribute to the development of the Sussex Route Study, which you are already undertaking. This will ensure that capacity across the route is considered strategically and holistically.

We are today publishing the report and this letter on the Department's website.

I am copying this letter and the report to current freight and passenger operators on the BML as well as short listed bidders for the TSGN franchise. I am also copying to Charles Hendry MP; Norman Baker MP; East Sussex County Council and key delivery partners for the Thameslink programme.

Yours sincerely,

**Roger Jones**