

## English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)

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### Dossier for Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford Rail Link – by Richard Pill May 2020

<b>Key Factors</b>	<b>Associated Considerations</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)</b>
<b>What and Where</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives</b>
<b>Why and Where</b>	<b>Scope and Benefits</b>
<b>How and When</b>	<b>What needs to be done</b>

#### Introduction: Reopen the Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford Rail Link

The English Regional Transport Association (ERTA) sees a rolling programme of line rebuilds, reopenings and select new builds of conventional 'local' railways as a key element to give choices for people and goods across the English Regions and beyond.

The closures coincided with gradual upgrades of roads and the result is congestion locked-in on a grand scale with land use for parking not being available for much needed housing or employment for example. Pollution and the world crisis on environmental issues abounds with few cures in sight.

We say 'think global, act local'! Rebuilding a new Gloucester-Hereford rail link would enable Reading-Shrewsbury and beyond each end 'not via Oxford/Birmingham' giving freight and passengers and orbital option via some of the loveliest countryside in England, wedged between the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean.

It would serve an immediate as well as re-rail the jewel in the crown 'Ross-on-Wye' (population 10, 000 approx.); but also a 3-5 miles either side of the rail corridor comes to approximately a quarter of a million people plus through use and switch from other modes given choice for example.

**In Brief:** The ERTA have identified the Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford rail link as a missing strategic rail link. It would combine a local, regional and inter-regional sustainable transit corridor for both passenger and freight movements sustainably.

### **What and where**

- To rebuild the Gloucester-Ross-on-Wye-Hereford rail link with possible select intermediate stations
- The line diverges south-west of Gloucester and heads northwards serving a vast area of natural outstanding beauty (ANOB) sandwiched between the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean.
- Current roads of A40, A48, B4224 and A49 for example parallel or criss-cross the railway
- The railway could bring rail services from London and locally Reading, Swindon and Gloucester to the corridor and onwards to Hereford, Worcester and Shrewsbury for example, bypassing and freeing up capacity elsewhere on the rail network, particularly Reading-Oxford-Leamington and enable an orbital link around Birmingham and the West Midlands.
- Free up capacity for more by rail with overall aggregate sustainable transport modal choice and switch.
- Ross-on-Wye is a major tourist location and destination and currently has no rail access, so suffers from land use parking demand, congestion and demand-supply issues; the railway would help alleviate, bring new flows of people, footfall and spend as well as an all-year around feed.

### **Why and where**

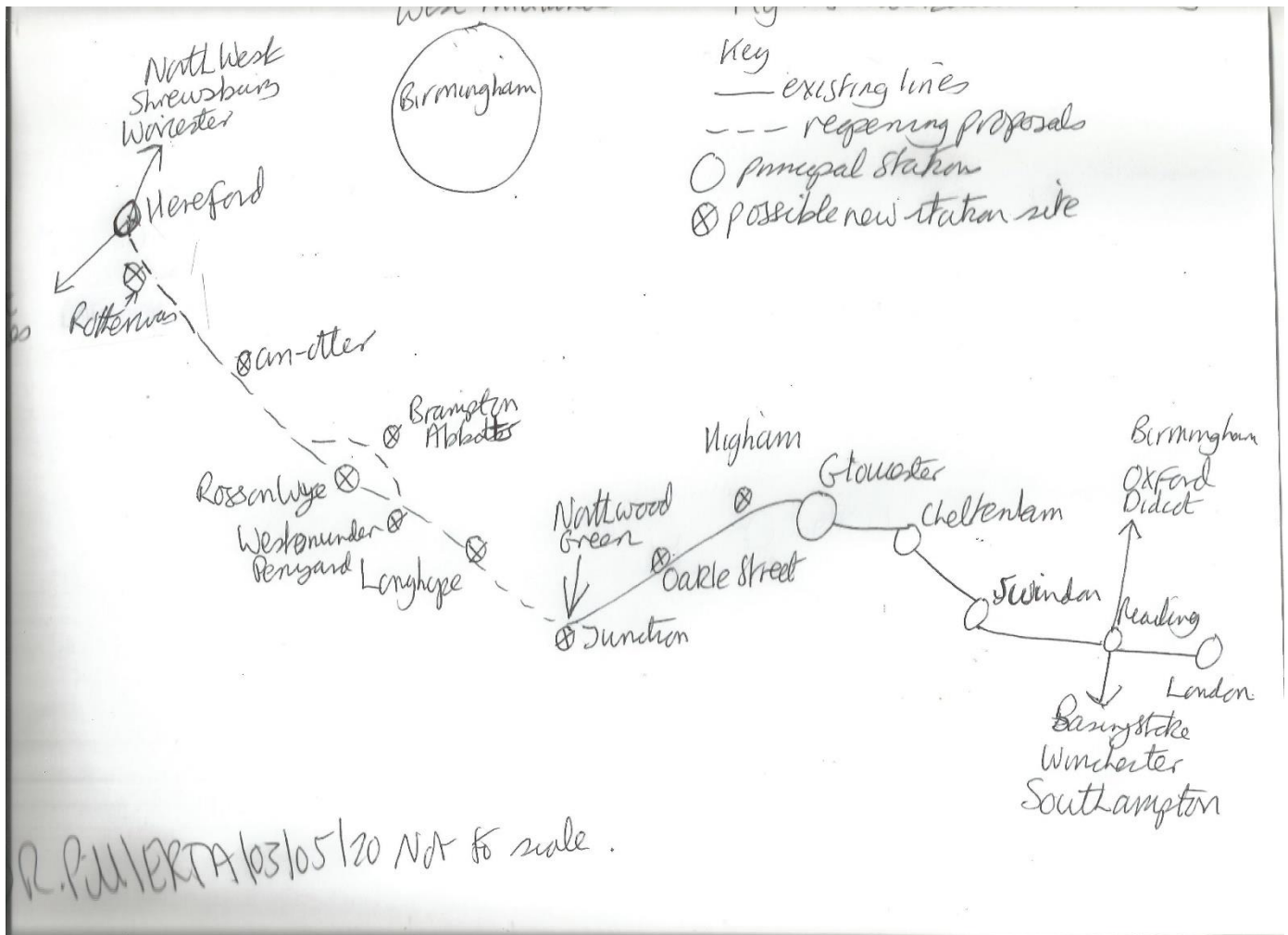
- Open up a large currently unserved area by rail from a variety of north and south portals
- Scope of reach and range by rail is London/Southampton through Reading, Swindon, Stroud and Gloucester to Hereford and thence places like Worcester, Shrewsbury and the North West 'not via Birmingham' and all in between for passenger and freight use.
- The line may have potential to source lineside freight in or out be it aggregates, farming, bulk, warehouse and other distributive services.
- It would be useful to have a local commute service serving new stations including Ross-on-Wye to places like Gloucester, Hereford, Cheltenham and further afield as well as a cross-country or London Open Access or variety thereof services utilising the same tracks.

### **How and when**

- What is required is firstly to try and get local councils to see the principal outline benefits from re-railing and to have them in turn support it in principle together with any other relevant quangos and parties.
- For a study to be commissioned to examine further the business case, environmental impact, engineering and overcoming options where any encroachments or blockages exist. Government funds are available to draw down upon towards costs of studies.
- Once case is made and agreement to support it further and as a coalition grows, to get Department of Transport (DFT), Network Rail GRIP and other support and permissions to proceed with building it. Ideally a 10-year timescale should be the maximum timescale from conception to delivery and reforms at all levels are being sought for by ERTA and others to make the processes and delivery schedules more in-keeping with the need for modal shift, environment benefits and a Climate Emergency.

Fig 1 Shows population distribution within 3 miles of the rail corridor. Not exhaustive, but the line would serve approximately just over a quarter of a million people and in addition regional and inter-regional through traffic bet end to end and beyond, switch from road to rail and wider London-North West not via busier routes.

Place	Population	Place	Population
Gloucester	129, 285	Bridstow	859
Highnam	1, 936	Peterstow	444
Churchham	655	Brampton Abbotts	322
Minsterworth	470	Upton Bishop, includes Phocie Green	602
Elmore Back	219	Foy	158
Bulley	166	Kings Caple	331
Huntley	1000	Ballingham	181
Northwood Green, Blaisdon and Westbury on Severn are together	1, 792	Bolstone	34
Chaxhall on A48 (Gloucester-Lydney) Included with Newham on Severn	1, 296	Fown Hope	1, 000
Longhope	1, 487	Holme Lacy	466
Mitcheldean	2, 783	Dinedor	328
Lea, Herefordshire	673	Mordiford	527
Hope Mansell	259	Hampton Bishop	505
Pontshill	6, 000	Rotherwas and Hereford combined	60, 415
Weston under Penyard	1, 007		
Ross-on-Wye	10, 700		
Sub Total	159.728	Sub Total	66, 172
Total for both columns	225, 900	Source of populations: Wikipedia and Google Search. 03-05-2020. Where uncertain, in some cases figures have been rounded up.	



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