HISTORY LAB

Have we learnt from Beeching?
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Objective:

➢ To decide whether today’s framing of rail infrastructure policy is likely to prove more robust in the long-term than network planning 50 years ago.
Have we learnt from Beeching?:

Case studies:

- Regional links to Bournemouth
  - Bournemouth/Poole to Salisbury/Bristol and to Brockenhurst/Southampton (closed 1964)

- The Varsity route
  - Cambridge to Oxford via Bletchley (partly closed 1967)
Services, which were under consideration in August 1962, and which, in some cases, have already been withdrawn, are included in this map.

BR Proposed withdrawal of passenger services (1963)
Have we learnt from Beeching?


Review the initial policy process and decisions:

- What were the main factors for and against closure?
- Were all the issues given due weight?
- Was the evidence base adequate and time horizons for planning realistic?
- Did ministries work well together?
- How open was the process to outside agencies?
BRB Network for development, 1967
Have we learnt from Beeching?

Task 2: BRB/MoT ‘Network for Development’ (1967)

Think about alternative futures:

- Were there new factors to consider?
  - Or that with hindsight should have been considered?

- Would you have recommended keeping the route(s) open or re-opening them?
  - If not, what would you have suggested doing with the redundant infrastructure?
Ringwood:

- Station: Ringwood.
- Population: 25,000 (Ferndown, including Ringwood).
- Location: 12 miles north east of Bournemouth.
- Catchment area: a station at Ringwood would serve the northern part of the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation spread along the A 31, including Ferndown, West Moors and Wimborne, as well as the rural area to the north, including Verwood and Fordingbridge.
- Current rail access: via Bournemouth or Christchurch, although traffic congestion is a real constraint, particularly in the peak. Alternative access to Southampton Airport Parkway via the A31/M27/M3.
- Proposed link: single track electrified line, using the formation of the former Brockenhurst – Wimborne - Poole line. 10 miles long from Lymington Junction (Brockenhurst). Four level crossings required.
- Formation: intact, but blocked at Ringwood by the A31.
- Indicative capital cost: £70m.
- Train service: hourly assumed for evaluation, provided by a diverted service from Waterloo. Alternatively the Victoria – Southampton service could be extended, with the option to change to fast Waterloo services at Southampton.
- Note: the reinstated line would run through the New Forest National Park.
Have we learnt from Beeching?

Task 3 ATOC, Connecting Communities (2009)/East West Rail/HS2, HS3...

Reflect on the ‘lessons’ for today’s policy processes:

- How far into the future can/should we plan? Do we consider a wide enough range of scenarios?
- What is the appropriate geographical scale for infrastructure policy?
- What should be done with redundant infrastructure?
- What might historians in 2064 make of today’s framing of policy and decision-making? (Be honest!)