

## **HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP - NEWS BULLETIN No. 12**

There has recently been a lot of publicity concerning the upgrading rail services across the North of England in general and on the Harrogate Line in particular. The need for a rail link to Leeds Bradford International Airport is being widely recognised with alternative routes now being proposed.

This Bulletin highlights key projects affecting Harrogate District that are currently in the public domain. Other projects are still under wraps but hopefully some will be revealed at our meeting on 10/11/14

For details see attached Agenda or <http://www.harrogatechamber.org/meetingNovember2014.htm>

### **1. HARROGATE & CITY OF YORK COUNCILS JOINTLY ENDORSE ELECTRIFICATION.**

Following discussions between the Leader of Harrogate Borough Council Councillor Richard Cooper and the City of York Council Leader Councillor James Alexander, the two Councils have unanimously approved complementary notices of motion in support of the Harrogate Line as follows:

*"Harrogate Borough Council:*

*(i) notes the economic, social and environmental benefits that would be delivered by electrification of the Leeds-Harrogate-York line, as set out in the Leeds-Harrogate-York Rail line Improvements Outline Transport Business Case,, and calls upon the Department for Transport and Network Rail to make this a priority;*

*(ii) invites the Chief Executive to continue to work with York City Council and other interested stakeholders such as local Members of Parliament, North Yorkshire County Council and local Chambers of Commerce in order to make representations to the Department for Transport, Network Rail and others, particularly the Electrification Task Force, to secure these benefits for the people of Harrogate and York;*

*(iii) notes that Yorks City Council will be considering a similar motion lobbying relevant parties to support electrification of this line."*

In the meeting, Council members from all parties spoke of the potential benefits of electrifying the line and also stressed the need for related improvements in car parking, level crossings and stations. The role of Harrogate Chamber in initiating this work was recognised. The motion was passed unanimously

### **2. LIB-DEM MEETING WITH THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**

Cllr Helen Flynn, Prospective LibDem MP for Harrogate & Knaresborough, arranged a private meeting with Baroness Kramer, Minister at the Department for Transport, at the recent Liberal Democrat Conference. Top of the list was progress with electrification of the Harrogate train line. Baroness Kramer outlined the process that all the northern lines that are proposed for electrification would have to go through. Essentially, the Department has to assess each line on the strength of its business case, as the spending has to be strategic and represent best value for taxpayers' money.

Helen outlined the role that the Chamber of Trade had played in initiating the strong case for electrification of the line, and its continued efforts in championing the cause. The Northern Rail Electrification Task Force is due to produce a report in December this year on the possible schemes to take forward.

### **3. HARROGATE ADVERTISER SERIES – 2-page feature on Harrogate Line**

Each of the newspapers in the Harrogate Advertiser series covering Boroughbridge, Harrogate, Knaresborough, Pateley Bridge, Ripon and Wetherby carried a double page spread "Behind the Headlines" in the issue date 23<sup>rd</sup> October pages 6 & 7. Scanned reduced copies are attached

This report by Dan Windham reviewed the potential benefits of Harrogate Line Electrification Project, the Electrification Task Force, Direct Services to London and Plans to build an Airport Station together with comments from Andrew Jones and two prospective parliamentary candidates, Helen Flynn and David Simister. The report draws heavily on information and comments from Harrogate Chamber.

The full article can be seen on the following web site:

<http://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/news/business/is-harrogate-s-electrification-dream-a-rail-reality-1-6912926>

### **4. NORTHERN RAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION – Stage 2**

As you are aware, the franchise competitions for the Northern and TransPennine Express railway franchises are well underway. The consultation on the franchises has closed and responses are being

considered by the Department for Transport's Rail Executive and Rail North as part of the development of the specification that will form part of the Invitation to Tender. (ITT)

North Yorkshire County Council has kindly given us a copy of their submission to the DfT Stakeholder Consultation dated 18/08/14. This includes several positive references to the Harrogate Line, which they state is top of their list of key priorities within North Yorkshire. They would also like to develop Harrogate and Scarborough Stations as gateways to the towns and look at opportunities with third parties as to the best way of achieving this and regenerating the local economy.

NYCC go on to state that *"to achieve the best business case for the Harrogate Line, the service frequency needs to be doubled across the whole route (including weekends), with earlier and later trains and an end-to-end journey time reduction of 15 minutes. NYCC would like to work with the future franchisee to develop and grow the line ahead of any future electrification."*

On the 19 August 2014 the DfT announced the bidders who had pre-qualified for each competition and these bidders are beginning their preparatory work.

The DfT News Release stated that *"Bidders will be expected to show how they will make the most of the government's £1bn investment programme for the rail network in the north of England, which will provide faster, and more reliable journeys, more capacity, better trains and improved connections for passengers across the region."*

We have received a DfT guidance note and this list of stakeholder contacts for each of the bidders:

#### **Northern Franchise competition contacts**

- Abellio Northern Limited; Bid Director: Rebecca McPhee
- Arriva Limited; Bid Director: Philip Heathcote
- Govia Northern Limited; Bid Director: Andy Coulthurst

We intend to arrange meetings with each of the bidders to stress the needs of the Harrogate Line. The first with Arriva Bid Team has just been fixed for Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November. Time and venue to be agreed. Group members representing significant businesses who use the line are welcome to attend these meetings together with the Chamber team. Please e-mail [chiefexec@harrogatechamber.org](mailto:chiefexec@harrogatechamber.org)

The DfT encourages bidders to actively engage with the stakeholders as part of the franchising process. Bidders should mostly be in 'listening mode' seeking to understand the aspirations of the stakeholders so that, where they align with the ITT requirements their plans would meet these as closely as possible. Bidders should not be discussing their own plans nor soliciting your support.

At whatever level the engagement takes place, certain principles need to be adhered to – most notably that of equality of treatment. If an authority is approaching bidders itself it must approach all bidders in the same way (e.g. offering the same number and length of meetings) and must not act in a way that gives a bidder an advantage over the others (e.g. offering funding or other involvement to one bidder which is not offered to the others). It must also convey the same message to bidders wherever possible. All contact should be logged and a note of any meeting retained.

The delay in rail re-franchising means that two Direct Franchise Awards are being made by the DfT: one to cover Northern services, which started in April 2014 and one covering TransPennine Express services from April 2015.

The timetable for the re-franchising process is currently as follows:

- Short-listing announced October 2014
- Final Invitations to Tender issued December 2014
- Direct Award for TransPennine franchise March 2015
- Bids returned mid-2015
- Preferred bidders announced October 2015
- Franchises commence 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016

## **5. LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT PARKWAY STATION PROPOSALS**

During a recent short visit to Leeds Bradford Airport, the new Aviation Minister Robert Goodwill, MP for Scarborough, said that *"a new rail link to Leeds Bradford Airport is obviously desirable"*. We agree!

Harrogate Chamber has long campaigned for a link between the Airport and the Harrogate Rail Line which runs just half a mile from the end of the Airport's long stay car park – and only 1.1 miles from the Terminal Building. Our initial suggestions for a shuttle bus service between the Airport and Horsforth Station were rebutted by the Airport Management on costs grounds, although we do wonder whether the potential reduction in car parking revenue influenced their decision to oppose the idea.

Following detailed study of the terrain, Mark Leving has compiled a four-page paper (attached) setting out proposals for a Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway Station approximately one mile north of Horsforth Station near the southern portal of the Bramhope tunnel. The station would function as a joint Airport and Park and Ride facility achieving two key objectives:-

- Providing frequent direct rail access to the Airport from Leeds, Harrogate and York centres, thereby serving both West and North Yorkshire effectively.
- Providing much needed accessibility and car parking capacity for new rail users in the surrounding areas of Cookridge, Bramhope, Yeadon and Pool, thereby better enabling the rail route to fulfil a much more valuable role in the areas it serves.

It is proposed that the existing car park shuttle bus is extended by 0.5 miles to the new railway station to fully integrate accessibility between the station and the Airport terminal. All local services would call at the station. If rail-airport traffic were to become significant, the potential use of automated people-mover solutions (as used at Gatwick and Stansted Airports) could be explored.

This approach would enable a valuable and cost-efficient means of providing the Airport with a rail link whilst simultaneously and significantly improving accessibility to the rail route, thereby improving its overall economic viability and contribution to the Leeds City Region. It would also encourage significant modal shift from road to rail through improved accessibility for the areas of Cookridge, Bramhope, Yeadon and Pool, thereby relieving the heavily congested A660 and A65 road corridors.

In terms of improvements to public transport journeys to and from the Airport, previous analysis in 2011 showed that the provision of a station would enable reduced access times of over 15% (approx. 15 minutes) with the number of journey opportunities increasing by 200% on average from a selection of key locations within the wider Leeds City Region.

This proposal is complimentary to other potential longer term options, e.g. tram-train and/or spur-end connection from the existing route near Horsforth to the Airport terminal. It is also achievable at significantly lower cost and shorter timescales, with the added benefits of integrating accessibility from both North and West Yorkshire simultaneously and without creating any substantial additional on-cost of operation, which would be a significant feature of any other option. It also addresses some key accessibility constraints to existing train services over the route around the north and west of Leeds.

Andrew Jones MP endorsed our proposal and agreed to present it directly to the Aviation Minister who had appointed consultants to undertake a feasibility study into Improving Connectivity to Leeds Bradford International Airport. Baroness Kramer acknowledged receipt of the Chambers' proposals in a letter to Andrew Jones MP dated 17/09/14. She confirmed that one of the options being considered is a new station on the existing Harrogate to Leeds rail line that would serve LBIA via a shuttle bus link. She added that this option has been short-listed for further testing in the final stage of the study and as such is receiving full consideration alongside the other short-listed options. These include junction improvements, a new link road, express bus services and both short and long term heavy rail options.

The Minister stated that she would ask her officials to make sure that the Consultants are familiar with all the points we raised. In conclusion she hoped that her letter provided reassurance that the proposals put forward by Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce for a new station on the Harrogate to Leeds rail line to serve LBIA are being given full consideration in the feasibility study.

## **6. FLAXBY MOOR PROPOSED PARKWAY STATION & BUSINESS PARK + HOUSING?**

Following the Planning Inspector's recent rejection of Harrogate Borough Council's Sites & Policies DPD, there has been renewed interest in the potential for Flaxby Green Park to make up a large part of the projected short-fall in employment land requirements for the District. This large site could meet the needs of both existing local businesses wishing to grow whilst also offering an attractive environment for inward investment and for an incubation centre, bringing valuable high quality jobs to the District.

Forward Investments Ltd has submitted a pre-planning application for Flaxby Green Business Park located on the A59 junction with the A1(M) Motorway Junction 47. The plans include provision for a new Rail Station on the adjacent Harrogate Line together with a large Park & Ride car park.

Several Councillors have recently suggested that this area might also provide the ideal location of a new housing development, incorporating a school, shops and other community facilities.

A park & rail site at Junction 47 would be very popular with commuters into Harrogate, Knaresborough and York, whilst also serving business and leisure visitors to the major events in the Harrogate International Centre and at the Great Yorkshire Showground – both having stations nearby.

Further details can be provided to interested parties on request to [info@harrogateline.org](mailto:info@harrogateline.org) .

## **7. EAST COAST MAIN LINE FRANCHISE**

As previously advised to all members, meetings took place with each of the three short-listed bidders for the East Coast Franchise – namely, First Group; Keolis and Stagecoach/Virgin.

Private meetings were arranged for each bidder with a group of Chamber Officers and several senior local business owners/managers. In addition to explaining the unique characteristics of Harrogate and our need for more regular direct London services, each bidder was presented with our Information Sheets HT401 and HT424 plus a portfolio of letters from local businesses and members of this group.

None of the bidders were permitted to say what they were planning – or to make any commitment on the specific proposals that we put to them, but they did recognise the needs of Harrogate businesses.

The DfT are due to make an announcement about their chosen bidder in mid-November. We will then seek a further meeting with the successful bidder to influence their service pattern if possible.

## **8. HS3 – High-speed from Hull to Liverpool**

There has been a lot of comment in the media about the plans for HS2 and the mythical HS3. I was invited to have dinner with the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, Dr Vince Cable, in Harrogate on 27<sup>th</sup> July. He agreed with me that HS3 needs to be a coast-coast line from Hull to Liverpool, and not simply a Leeds to Manchester line as it was first mentioned by the Chancellor.

This possibility was actually announced formally by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor during a meeting with Civic Leaders and Rail Executives in Leeds on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October. The official DfT Press Release includes these key paragraphs:

*As part of the government's long term economic plan for the north, the Prime Minister and Chancellor yesterday gave their backing to develop HS3 – a high speed rail link connecting the north's great cities which could significantly reduce journey times across the region.*

*The Prime Minister and the Chancellor were responding to a report published by HS2 Chairman Sir David Higgins which sets out proposals for how to maximise the benefits of HS2 in the north and how transport links can be improved in the north of England more widely. In the report, Sir David identifies the vital importance of improving east west connectivity across the north and considers the central role a high speed rail link could play. He concludes that with a high speed link the journey time between Leeds and Manchester could be cut from around 55 to between 26 and 34 minutes.*

*The Prime Minister and the Chancellor have also welcomed Sir David Higgins' recommendation that co-operation on transport issues should be formalised in the north. In response the Chancellor announced the creation of a new body called Transport for the North made up of the main northern city regions. This body will work together with other authorities and stakeholders and allow the north to speak with one voice on the big decisions to benefit the region as a whole.*

*The government, working with Transport for the North, will now produce a comprehensive transport strategy for the region. This will include options, costs and a delivery timetable for a HS3 east west rail connection. An interim report will be produced next March.*

*By combining the strengths of the north's great cities, the government believes that the proposals will help transform the economy of the north of England and play a key role in delivering a northern powerhouse.*

*The government is also launching a review into the costs and time it takes to build high speed rail, drawing on international experience to find ways to bring down the costs of Phase Two and future high speed rail projects.*

*The report from Sir David Higgins also gives strong backing to the case for Phase Two of HS2 and sets out proposals to maximise its benefits. His proposals include bringing forward plans for a hub station at Crewe to 2027 and a fundamental review of the right solution for Leeds station to allow connections between HS2, existing rail services and improved east west connections. The government will set out its detailed plans for Phase Two in 2015.*

*Prime Minister David Cameron also said:*

*Improving connectivity and reducing journey times between our great northern cities is a crucial part of our long term economic plan for the north to boost businesses and create more jobs and security for hardworking people. That's why we are backing HS3.*

*I welcome Sir David Higgins' report which will help our work to create a northern powerhouse and ensure that HS2 delivers the maximum economic benefits.*

In a personal article published in the Yorkshire Post on 27/10/14, David Cameron reiterated the points made above and also added a brief reference to the Harrogate Line as follows:

*"And the recommendations say Leeds Railway Station – already the busiest in the North – should be overhauled as part of the wider city regeneration. Along with electrification of the North Transpennine*

*route, doubling of a section of the Harrogate line and brand new stations at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge, this forms the biggest investment in the railways since Victorians."*

We hope that the Prime Minister soon goes well beyond doubling of one section of the Harrogate Line – as he surely ought to actually endorse the excellent business case for electrification of the whole line!

See: <http://www.wymetro.com/harrogate/> Then you can download the full Business Case (88 pages)

## **9. RAIL IN THE NORTH - Long Term Rail Strategy**

The establishment, objectives and composition of Rail North was reported in Bulletin 11, Section 1 published at the end of July. In August Rail North published their long term rail strategy – a 104 page report outlining their vision, although there are very few references to Harrogate.

The opening paragraphs of the Foreword summarise their aspirations as follows:

*We want rail in the North to grow. The reason for this is simple: growing rail will support a growing economy. More than this, a growing rail network will help the North's economy meet its full potential.*

*This Long Term Rail Strategy sets out how rail can support the growth of the North of England's economy over the next twenty years. It demonstrates how this can be done by improving connectivity for passengers and freight across the North, while at the same time providing a better customer experience and delivering a more efficient and cost-effective railway. Delivering the Strategy creates an opportunity to increase the North's economy by up to £50bn over a 60 year appraisal period, equivalent to an annual benefit of £900 million. The North's railway has more than just an economic function; it has a social function too. As well as supporting economic growth, the Strategy sets out how rail's contribution to the North's social progress can be grown and enhanced.*

The Executive Summary includes the following ways to achieve the Vision

*Sustainable economic growth will be supported by improving connectivity:*

- *Between the cities of the North;*
- *By expanding commuter networks;*
- *Connecting areas of economic disadvantage with areas of economic opportunity;*
- *Providing capacity to accommodate the expected growth in freight by rail;*
- *Addressing the differing needs of the North's evolving and rebalanced economy; and*
- *Providing direct and efficient links to London, the other major centres of Great Britain*
- *and international airports and to ports and freight terminals.*

*A fundamental requirement will need to be met which is to ensure that there is adequate provision of capacity across the North. It is a core customer requirement to have a reliable service and not to be forced to use overcrowded services.*

*There will be a transformation of quality leading to a more coherent network achieved through a focus on an easy-to-use network, integrated across the modes, with a connecting timetable of local and express city to city services and a transformed fares system.*

*The planned electrification of key northern routes will be used to trigger the achievement of a consistently good standard of train quality and, to ensure that antiquated rolling stock does not damage the perception and appeal of the North's new network.*

*Together these measures will support a doubling of the forecast rail market share by the mid-2020s.*

*Cost-effectiveness will be improved and efficiencies will be delivered through:*

- *Network Rail's on-going investment programme, especially in signalling and electrification;*
- *Exploring alliancing and other means of better industry cooperation;*
- *The creation of cross-city services, with the goal of enhancing fleet utilisation;*
- *Fine-tuning services to match demand and facilitate better integration with bus and tram;*
- *Electronic ticketing with reduced retailing costs and simplified fares;*
- *Revised operating practices, more closely attuned to customer service and using new technologies; and*
- *Reducing costs per seat by, for example, deployment of longer trains and through revised approaches to train procurement*

Rail North's full Long Term Rail Strategy (104 pages) can be downloaded from their web site:

<http://www.railnorth.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/LTRS-Final-August-2014.pdf>

## 10. ACTION NEEDED

This comprehensive Bulletin is being sent to about 200 members of the Harrogate Line Supporters Group. Please feel free to forward it to interested parties and then encourage anyone who uses Harrogate Line to send me an e-mail expressing their views and requesting to be added to the mailing list in future. Please send me details of any relevant news or views concerning the Harrogate Line.

Thank you for your vital support for this voluntary effort to influence the future of the HARROGATE LINE, led by Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce and Harrogate Line Development Ltd.

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### Enclosed:

Meeting 10/11/14 *Rail & Air links – improved connectivity for Harrogate & Yorkshire - world-wide!*

Harrogate Advertiser series 23/10/14 – *double page article on Harrogate Line Electrification etc.*

*Harrogate Chamber Paper HT470 – LBIA Airport Parkway Station + Benefits for Leeds City Region*