

HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP - BULLETIN NO 24a.

POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM NORTHERN RAIL MANAGEMENT

I am pleased to report that we have received a prompt and positive response to our recent Bulletin No 24 from Alan Chaplin, the acting MD of Northern Railway. His reply is copied below in full.

I thanked him and requested a copy of the submitted version of the Harrogate Line timetables which I could send out to our members but his reply was as follows:- *"As my note explains, we have submitted our requests via Network Rail. Once we have received confirmation we will communicate the final arrangements and our Stakeholder team will liaise with interested parties as so on as practical."*

Alan Chaplin has confirmed that Rob Warnes, Northern's Performance and Planning Director, will explain the changes and discuss further ambitions for the line at the Chamber's Traffic & Transport Update Meeting on Monday 11th September. The current draft agenda is attached but we are still waiting for final details from Virgin's Commercial Director who is currently on holiday.

If you wish to attend and are already a Chamber Member, just go to the Chamber web site home page and insert your name. Harrogate Line Supporters Group Members should send an e-mail to Transport@HarrogateChamber.co.uk to request a place, indicating the nature of your interest and a business name and address - or if retired, your home address in confidence.

Please continue supporting our campaign for the extra trains - and also for doubling the single line sections between Knaresborough and Poppleton together with new "Parkway" Stations at Leeds Bradford Airport and Flaxby Moor Business Park and additional platforms in Leeds and York Stations.

Regards

Brian L Dunsby OBE
Harrogate Line Supporters Group

----- Original Message -----

From: [Alan Chaplin](#)

To: [Brian L. Dunsby](#) ; [Harrogate Line Supporters](#)

Cc: [Chris Jackson \(Ops\)](#) ; [Rob Warnes](#)

Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2017 8:12 AM

Subject: Re: HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP BULLETIN 24 - Northern's latest timetable proposals are still totally flawed

Dear Brian & Harrogate Line Supporters,

Thank you once again for all your detailed responses to the consultation on our proposals for the May 2018 timetable. We have had many responses to the consultation for May 2018 from across the north and over the last few weeks my planning team have been processing the comments from over 200 individual responses covering many hundreds of issues.

We have, where possible, attempted to take on board these comments where possible and have made changes within the constraints of the infrastructure and our available rolling stock, in addition to making our services fit with other services on adjacent routes and with other operators at key junctions and stations. This all has been done in a way where we remain compliant with the contractual obligations placed upon Northern by the Franchising authorities.

The Harrogate Line is one of the few routes due to benefit from a doubling in off-peak frequency with the introduction of an additional two trains per hour between Leeds and Harrogate for much of the day. We have considered the representations from stakeholders on the route and have enacted a number of changes to the timetable structure originally consulted for May 2018 and these alterations have now been submitted to Network Rail as part of our formal industry submission on the 11th August.

In summary we have worked hard to improve the through journey opportunities across Harrogate without the need to change trains and now the vast majority of services between Leeds and Knaresborough and between Leeds and York will call at all stations on route. The additional services that will operate twice per hour during the day between Leeds and Harrogate will now call at Horsforth and additionally at Hornbeam Park as per the request from stakeholders. It has not been possible to develop a timetable where these additional services can call at more stations along the route because of interactions with existing services on other adjacent routes at the busy junctions approaching Leeds and the platform capacity at both Harrogate and Leeds stations.

We would welcome the opportunity to share our plans for the Harrogate Line at the forthcoming Harrogate District Chamber Meeting on the 11th September and our Performance & Planning Director, Rob Warnes, is happy to accept the invitation and to discuss further ambition for the line in future years.

We understand and share your passion for developing a better rail service on the Leeds – Harrogate – York Line and we view the May 2018 timetable change as a first step on a programme of interventions that will further improve services over the next few years. The team at Northern look forward to working with Harrogate Line Supporters and the Harrogate District Chamber to promote rail services in the area and to secure much needed further investment in the line. We are already working with North Yorkshire Council and Network Rail to develop an infrastructure upgrade that could facilitate the doubling of service frequency between Harrogate and York.

Northern have already invested significant funds improving Harrogate Station and we will be investing in other stations along the route as part of our Station Improvement Fund. From next year we will be improving the rolling stock operating on the line with the introduction of the class 170 trains and by the end of 2019 all trains operating on the Harrogate Line will have been fully re-furbished and the Pacer trains will have been withdrawn.

Kind regards
Alan Chaplin
Interim MD and Programmes Director

----- Original message -----

From: "Brian L. Dunsby" <Brian.Dunsby@HarrogateLine.org>

Date: 13/08/2017 21:48 (GMT+00:00)

To: Harrogate Line Supporters <info@harrogateline.org>

Subject: HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP BULLETIN 24 - Northern's latest timetable proposals are still totally flawed

HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP - BULLETIN NO 24.

Re: Northern Rail timetable changes December 2017 & May 2018 are still totally flawed

With considerable regret we have to report that the Northern Railway management team appear unwilling or unable to make the necessary changes in their draft timetables for the Harrogate Line that are due to come into operation in December 2017 and May 2018.

Contrary to the original intentions and business case, and our collective expectations, and despite extensive campaigning, the extra trains which should double the frequency between Harrogate and Leeds will only stop at Horsforth for most of the day. This significantly undermines the original business case, runs contra to the corridor's needs and is diametrically opposed to the revenue and ridership analysis which clearly supports the provision of a 15 minute interval walk-up service serving most or all stations, which was in line with experience gained across the country regarding benefits and costs. This will leave Burley Park, Headingley, Weeton, and Pannal, without any extra trains whilst Hornbeam Park may be served by only a few of the extra trains during the peak hours and will remain at two per hour for most of the day. Whenever there is an event on at either the GYS or Headingley stadium, users will be pointing the finger of ineptitude at railway management as nearly empty trains pass through these stations and then come to a stand at signals outside Leeds or Harrogate! Meanwhile, when the scheduled stopping trains do arrive at the "missed stations" they will most likely already be full and passengers will be left behind as often happens now.

The initial proposals for May 2018 were even worse with some services running "fast" between Knaresborough and York missing out stops at Cattal, Hammerton and Poppleton and this cross-district journeys could require a change of trains at Harrogate - how absurd!

We have previously circulated Bulletins 21, 22 & 23 highlighting the technical and commercial reasons for the very basic requirement that ALL TRAINS SHOULD STOP AT ALL STATIONS EVERY 15 MINUTES.

We have had two meetings with Northern Rail management to explain the basic requirements of businesses, residents and visitors, without any satisfactory response. They claim that they cannot operate the services we seek due mainly to conflicts with other services at each end of the route. Specifically they say that occurs on the approaches via Wortley and Armley Junctions into Leeds Station and via Skelton Junction into York Station. Hence the Harrogate Line timetable is erratic and not "clock-face" as we demonstrated was both necessary and feasible. There are no changes actually needed between Harrogate and York and as a 15 minute service already exists for Harrogate services in the peaks between Leeds and Horsforth, the above statements cannot be true. It appears more likely that the primary constraints are being caused by the availability of vehicles - insufficient rolling stock resources (as a consequence of the national electrification fiasco caused by Network Rail and the DfT) and other decisions around rolling stock (such as the refusal to allow upgraded class 14X vehicles in the Northern franchise). In the current scenario it would appear that the decision is a complete shot in the foot.

There are also infrastructure constraints at Harrogate station (platform capacity) which none of the railway management parties (Network Rail, franchise operator (Arriva) or DfT) appear to have contemplated in advance, thus bringing into serious question their collective competence to manage the system effectively and efficiently. This latter constraint could be resolved through the provision of a central platform on the through line at Harrogate station, which is already signalled for the required train movements.

Northern have now submitted their "final" timetables to Network Rail who allocate the paths when they consider the total schedules for Northern, Transpennine, Cross-Country and Virgin Trains East Coast. We have not yet been sent these final timetable proposals for the Harrogate Line but we are now very pessimistic. In a feeling of desperation, Brian has sent the following message to the Northern Management Team pleading for better treatment for the Harrogate Line - which they have previously claimed is one of the most profitable routes in the region.

Brian has also invited a Director from Northern Rail to attend the next Harrogate District Chamber Meeting on Monday 11th September to explain their plans for improving services on the Harrogate Line from December 2017. VTEC, LBA and Transdev Senior Executives are also speaking on their transport developments. Guests will be welcome but must pre-book via the Chamber web site.

We are very sorry that all the support and feedback which members have given us has not convinced Northern Rail management to provide the services that this District needs. If you have any senior contacts who may have influence within Northern Rail, Network Rail or Rail North or DfT, please make it clear that the proposed "non-stop" extra trains on the Harrogate Line will not serve around 40% of current users of the line whilst they will not attract many new users if the trains do not stop to pick them up at five out of the six stations between Harrogate and Leeds. Saving a few minutes on the short journey between Harrogate and Leeds by missing out all but one of the stops, whilst also throwing away any notion of a 15" standard "walk-up" interval, does not make sense to our members who have responded to us. It also significantly sub-optimizes the originally projected ridership and revenue expectations that were reliably forecast to be achieved from a 15 minute standard interval "all-stops" service.

Personal comments from:

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COPY FOR INFORMATION OF OUR LATEST MESSAGE TO NORTHERN RAILWAY:

----- Original Message -----

Sent: Tuesday, August 08, 2017 11:01 PM

Subject: Re: Harrogate Line Timetable Meeting - latest proposals are flawed

To: Mark Glenister

Service Development Manager, Northern Railway

Mark

The recent meeting with yourself and the Harrogate Borough Council transport team was very frustrating as it seemed that you had taken very little notice of the extensive submissions made by the Harrogate Line Supporters Group, highlighting the fundamental flaws in your proposed Harrogate Line timetables for December 2017 and May 2018. West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Leeds City Council, Rail Future Yorkshire and numerous local businesses had also supported our strong objections.

We submitted a detailed portfolio of evidence by post and e-mail to the Northern Railway Management Team on 7th July comprising Harrogate Line Supporters Group Bulletin 22a (ref HT452 plus 7 appendices) This followed our previous Bulletin on 6th June (ref HT466) TOTAL 30 PAGES.

We have suggested an alternative timetable which would overcome the main problems in your scheme, using the same rolling stock.

I am therefore just summarising below the key objectives which we consider are vital for this line to serve both the business and residential communities and also attract more visitors - which are in turn vital for the potential profitability of this line.

1. FREQUENCY, DURATION & TIMING

The services between Harrogate and Leeds should operate every 15 minutes from say 06.30 until at least 21.30. Extra services should operate every 30 minutes early morning until late evening - say from 05.30 to 06.30 and from 21.30 to 00.30 on weekdays and Saturdays.

All services should operate on a uniform clock-face timetable departing from Harrogate, except during the peak periods when extra services may be needed. This would provide a genuine "turn-up-and-go" service with maximum connectivity to other services from Leeds and York.

It is most important that the early morning and late evening services synchronise with the early and late London services and if possible the Cross-Country to Birmingham and the TPE Services to Manchester Airport.

2. STATIONS

Ideally all trains should call at all stations so that all residents and businesses can benefit equally from the services. Skip-stopping is not justifiable for the small time saving on a relatively short journey time.

The current Knaresborough and York services must call at all Stations in order to maintain the current connectivity along the line.

Your latest proposals show during most of the day, 50% of the trains will be running between Leeds and Harrogate stopping only at Horsforth, leaving potential passengers standing on the platform at the other five intermediate stations - namely Burley Park, Headingley, Weeton, Pannal and Hornbeam Park. This is simply to save 6 to 8 minutes off the journey time for those who are going all the way.

The ORR statistics show that currently 40% of passengers use these intermediate stations, so no more than 60% of potential passengers will benefit - and it will no longer be the 15 minute "turn up and go" service which we all expected, and on which the Business Case for electrification was based.

This schedule will leave Burley Park, Headingley, Weeton, Pannal and Hornbeam Park with no more than they get now - a train every 30 minutes, whilst every 15 minutes as "fast" train will fly past not stopping to pick up about 40% of passengers on the line who rely upon these intermediate stations to get on or off the train.

If we have to have some non-stop trains then these must connect conveniently with stopping trains at Harrogate, so that indirect journeys such as from Burley Park or Hornbeam Park to Knaresborough or York are easy.

3. ROLLING STOCK

We understand that the Harrogate Line will be served by a mixture of refurbished Class 150 series DMUs and cascaded Class 170 Turbostars from ScotRail. Whilst both are welcome, it is important that the faster Class 170's serve all stations between Leeds, Harrogate and York, with the extra "non-stop" trains being operated by the Class 150 units, if all-stations services cannot be ensured.

4. TRACK SPEED LIMITS

Most of the line is limited to 60mph or less which is acceptable for Class 140 series Pacers, but not for the planned faster rolling stock. So Network Rail should be pressed to identify and several upgrade sections of the track where current speed limits are well below the potential running speed for Class 150 and Class 170 series diesel multiple units.

5. CAR PARKING

In order to get more paying passengers on to the extra trains it is vital that additional car parking is provided at most if not all of the Stations along the line. Those who can walk or cycle to a station no doubt do so already, so extra passengers need to be attracted out of their cars on to the trains which will only happen if they can park close to a station - and that all the trains stop at that station!

6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The planning of these services should take into account expected developments along the line such as:

- 6.1 Planned direct London Kings Cross-Harrogate services via Leeds every two hours from 2019
- 6.2 Re-signalling of the line between Harrogate and York with improvements to level crossings
- 6.3 Additional Platform Zero at Leeds Station backing on to Platform 1
- 6.4 New access track via the freight line to a new Platform 12 at York Station
- 6.5 Proposed new stations at Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway and Flaxby Moor Business Parkway
- 6.6 Aspirations for a 30 minute frequency service Harrogate - York
- 6.7 Potential for reinstatement of previously connected routes to Otley, Ripon & Wetherby
- 6.8 25kv Overhead Line Electrification of the whole line between Leeds, Harrogate, Knaresborough and York.

ACTION PLAN:

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF ALL OF OUR DETAILED SUBMISSIONS AND CHANGE BOTH THE DECEMBER 2017 AND MAY 2018 DRAFT TIMETABLES ACCORDINGLY.

Thank you.

Brian L Dunsby, OBE, Transport Spokesman
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