Meeting	**JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**
Date	**22 March 2013** Agenda item number 8
From	**JOINT OFFICER STEERING GROUP**

RAIL ISSUES UPDATE

Purpose of the report

1. To update the Committee on key rail issues in and into the Nottingham conurbation and rail services across local authority boundaries. The work of the two Councils, although separate, is complementary, and of mutual benefit.

Network Rail Strategic Business Plan (2014-2019).

2. On 15th January 2013 Network Rail (NR) published its Strategic Business Plan for 2014-2019. This sets out (inter alia) how NR intends to deliver enhancements to the rail network over that period.

3. A small number of key enhancements were stipulated by the Government in July 2012 through its 'High Level Output Statement' (HLOS). These included
   - an enhanced layout at Leicester, with 4 tracks between Syston and Wigston, and a flyover to separate the east-west trains from the Midland Main Line (MML) trains, thereby allowing MML trains (including those to/from Nottingham) to travel at optimum times and without having to slow down or be delayed;
   - an enhanced layout at Derby, with extra track and platforms, to raise speeds, increase capacity and reduce conflicting movements, thereby allowing trains to run faster, at optimum times, and without delay; and
   - electrification of the Midland Main Line.

   These 3 schemes are included in the Strategic Business Plan, as the HLOS requires them to be.

4. The Leicester scheme will benefit Nottingham – London trains, and will assist reliable operation and the reduction of journey time towards 90 minutes. The Derby scheme will benefit Nottingham – Beeston – Birmingham trains which should be enabled to be nearly ten minutes faster as well as more reliable (it will also benefit Sheffield – Derby – London trains).

5. The Strategic Business Plan also states that additional capacity interventions required to deliver the Electrification scheme *"are still in development but options may include:*
   - *doubling of the line between Kettering – Corby*
   - *an additional line or loops between Sharnbrook and Kettering*
   - *between Kettering – Wigston, loops or realignment in the Desborough / Market Harborough area;*

- *line speed increases on the slow lines between Bedford and Harrowden, and*
- *remodelling of the Bedford station area".*

All of these would be beneficial, particularly the loops and re-alignment in the Desborough / Market Harborough area, for which the Councils have long campaigned. The need for this was raised at the Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) national workshop about the Strategic Business Plan on 13th February. Officers will continue to liaise with NR and the ORR until approval has been secured for the full works at Market Harborough.

6. The Strategic Business Plan also set out plans for Midland Main Line train lengthening and associated platform extensions to cater for growth in patronage, which is currently around 5% per annum.

7. The Strategic Business Plan lists 8 other East Midlands Enhancement Schemes. These 8 enhancement schemes are not yet funded, but are being developed as candidates for funding from the monies that the HLOS gave for use on whichever schemes NR determines will provide the best value for money. Across England most of these discretionary enhancement schemes have been generated by the rail industry, with only a couple of rare examples of local authority schemes. However, of the 8 East Midlands schemes, 3 are ones which were initiated by the County Council:-

- *"Increase linespeed to 75mph between Lowdham and Newark Castle, to take advantage of passive provision included in the East of Nottingham signalling renewal scheme planned in CP4;*
- *Increase linespeed to 90mph between Netherfield and Allington, to take advantage of passive provision included in the East of Nottingham signalling renewal scheme planned in CP4; and*
- *Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds journey time improvements, to improve the linespeed in the Radford Jn area. More significant infrastructure interventions on the Sheffield – Leeds section of this corridor have been included in the London North East Route Plan".*

8. The Lowdham – Newark scheme is based on the Nottingham - Lincoln linespeed study, and the Netherfield – Allington scheme is based on the Nottingham - Skegness linespeed study, both of which have been briefly reported to previous Joint Committee meetings. It is gratifying that those studies are at last bearing fruit, and that the modest Council expenditure looks poised to trigger a much more substantial NR investment in our local rail infrastructure.

9. The Lowdham – Newark scheme is part of a 5-stage strategy for improvement on the Nottingham – Newark – Lincoln line that would lead to increased frequency (approx. doubling) of service and big reductions in journey times. BUT, the first step in the strategy requires £2.1million in funding over an initial 3-year period to kick-start the whole strategy, and whilst a potential source of funding has been identified for part of this, significant further contributions are required, including from the eastern end of the route.

10. The Netherfield – Allington scheme is also one of a series of measures that the Council is pursuing to allow a significant increase in the frequency of train

service at Netherfield, Radcliffe and Aslockton. It should also allow a reduction in journey time and/or an improvement in reliability between Nottingham and East Anglia (Peterborough, Norwich and Cambridge).

Nottingham – Leeds linespeed scheme.

11. The Councils were instrumental in securing a direct Nottingham – Leeds service, which started in December 2008. It filled the biggest gap in the British rail network, and so was very welcome, but it has poor journey times – 2 hours for 80 miles. Since then, and as reported to past joint committee meetings, the Councils have been working to secure a 20 minute reduction in journey time.

12. The railway's Initial Industry Plan (IIP) for 2014 - 2019 was published in September 2011. It was the rail industry's formal assessment of what enhancements the rail industry needs for 2014 - 2019. It "*identifies two exemplar schemes to deliver journey time improvements between regional cities …… identified in response to stakeholder concerns. The two schemes cover the routes between Birmingham New Street and Stansted Airport, and between Nottingham and Leeds".* The IIP did not specify a target reduction in journey time. Nor did it specify what was meant by "*exemplar*".

13. The Strategic Business Plan sets out what is proposed to put the IIP into effect, bearing in mind the level of funding that the Government announced in July 2012. As noted in para 7 above, "*Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds journey time improvements"* is one of 8 East Midlands enhancement schemes included in the Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan, although the Strategic Business Plan does not quantify any particular journey time reduction which it wishes to achieve.

14. An ultimate journey time target for Nottingham – Leeds would be 1 hour 20 minutes, at an average speed of 60mph. This is the target average-speed that has been adopted by Core Cities in the north for their rail inter-connectivity, and for which funding is being made available for an extensive programme of works (known as the 'Northern Hub' scheme). It would require a 40-minute reduction on the current journey time.

15. However, it would be difficult to achieve such a large reduction in one step, hence the Councils' short-term target of a 20-minute reduction which is believed to be achievable within a few years and to provide a worthwhile improvement for a first step.

16. The 20-minute reduction would have a further significant benefit, because it would allow the current level of service – a train every hour – to be operated with 1 less train set, which would produce a significant reduction in operating costs, of over £500,000 per annum. This substantial cost saving should strengthen the business case for whatever infrastructure works are necessary to reduce the journey time by 20 minutes.

17. The proposal in the IIP to develop Nottingham – Leeds as an "exemplar" linespeed/journey time scheme seemed very promising. Unfortunately the

detail in the Strategic Business Plan is rather limited, especially about what might be planned between Sheffield and Leeds, and it is not clear what scale of journey time reduction NR have in mind, nor whether there will be anything to actually make it 'exemplar'. We have therefore written to Network Rail's Director of Network Strategy and Planning setting out the case for the exemplar scheme adopting a formal target of a 20-mimute reduction in journey time – a copy of which is set out in appendix 1. We have also raised the issue with the Office of Rail Regulation, stressing the potential for a 20-mniute cut in journey time to reduce operating costs.

18. In 2011, at the Council's request, Network Rail set up a Stakeholder group for the Nottingham – Leeds scheme. This stakeholder group is proving a useful forum to receive information about the assessment work that Network Rail is undertaking. Network Rail has told the stakeholder group that the GRIP3 assessment work has established that a significant time saving – between 4 and 5 minutes – is realistically achievable between Barnsley and Leeds, with more modest time savings achievable south of Barnsley.

19. In addition, to fit in through congested locations – particularly Sheffield and Nottingham - the trains currently have to wait at a number of locations until there is a free 'path'. The enhancement works to the track at Nottingham this summer should enable trains to run at the optimum time, meaning that a couple of minutes of this spare time (called 'pathing allowances') should be eliminated from the Leeds - Nottingham schedule. Some further time could also be saved if a better 'path' could be found through the Sheffield area for Nottingham - Leeds trains.

20. The scheme referred to in the Strategic Business Plan "*to improve the linespeed in the Radford Jn area"* is being promoted by the Councils. Funding is being provided from the Growth Point for physical works on phase 1, which will be undertaken in 2013/4. The Growth Point is also funding development work on a second phase, which will firmly establish the cost of the physical works, though a source of funding for those phase 2 physical works has not yet been identified.

21. So, journey time reductions could be possible from
    - the enhanced layout at Nottingham station that will be installed during summer 2013,
    - the Growth Point works at Radford junction
    - a better 'path' through Sheffield,
    - the works Network Rail are identifying between Barnsley and Leeds, and
    - works at a few other locations that may be identified by further work

    This combination of measures should produce a worthwhile improvement in the overall journey time.

22. However, it is not yet clear whether or not it would be sufficient to achieve a 20 minute reduction in journey time. The formal request that we have made of both Network Rail's Director of Network Strategy and Planning and the Office of Rail Regulation (see para 17 above) is that the current development work being undertaken should explicitly address this point.

Ilkeston station

23. Ilkeston has a population of around 40,000, but its stations closed in 1967. The re-opening of the Robin Hood Line to Mansfield and Kirkby has left Ilkeston as the biggest place in the East Midlands, and one of the ten biggest towns in England, without a train service.

24. Since the 1990s Derbyshire County Council has been pursuing a scheme to re-open a station at Ilkeston. A bid to the Rail Passenger Partnership fund in 1999/2000 was unsuccessful. Derbyshire has continued to pursue the scheme, but until recently without any apparent way of funding it in full.

25. The cost is believed to be around £5million. It is estimated that over 120,000 passenger journeys per annum would be made, generating revenue of over £500,000 per annum. The service would be served by the Nottingham - Leeds service, giving 1 train per hour to and from both Nottingham and Chesterfield/Sheffield and the north – plus a couple of additional trains in the morning and evening peak periods.

26. The main benefits for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire would be
    - for travel to&from Awsworth (population 2,600), both into Nottingham and to/from the north, and
    - by taking approximately 50,000 car journeys per annum off our roads, particularly the A6096/A610 and the A609

27. In 2009 the scheme was awarded £1million from the Growth Point fund, leaving around £4million still to be found.

28. On 25th January 2013 the Government announced a £20million 'New Stations' fund, stating that "*Because this fund is designed to support station proposals which are already well developed we expect bids to be received by the end of February 2013 with a recommendation from the panel before the end of March 2013."* Derbyshire has submitted a bid, and it is expected that an announcement will be made shortly as to whether it has been successful.

Rolling Stock

29. Electrification of the Midland Main Line (MML) will require the use of different trains – electric ones instead of the current diesel trains. Which type of electric train is allocated to the MML would make a difference to journey times.

30. Between the rail industry and DfT there is an ongoing debate about the provision of new Inter-City trains. DfT is promoting a new 'Inter-City Express Programme' (IEP) train. DfT is planning to stipulate introduction of the new IEP trains on the Great Western and the East Coast Main Lines by 2020. However, there is much criticism of IEP from within the rail industry, and there is an alternative view that the train operating companies should be free to choose which trains to use, including the re-use of existing trains.

31. Currently 2 types of diesel train are used on the MML
    - High-Speed Trains (HSTs), built in the 1970s, and
    - Meridians, built in 2003 – 04.

    The Meridians are more powerful than the HSTs, and can accelerate more quickly away from station stops and speed restrictions. As a result the Meridians have quicker journey times than the HSTs by a few minutes between Nottingham and London, the exact time difference depending on how many stops a train is scheduled to make.

32. The MML has a relatively high number of station stops compared to other Inter-City routes. The current general pattern between Nottingham and London is
    - One 'fast' train per hour calling at 3 intermadiate stations (East Midlands Parkway, Leicester and Market Harborough), and
    - One semi-fast train per hour calling at 8 stations (including Beeston).

33. On the MML it would be possible to use various electric trains :-
    - the existing electric trains currently used on the East Coast Main Line, once they have been displaced by new trains,
    - new IEP trains, and/or
    - other new electric trains.

34. The displaced East Coast Main Line trains are slightly quicker than the diesel HSTs, but not as quick as the diesel Meridians, so their use instead of Meridians would be retrograde step on the MML. The IEP trains would be quicker than HSTs and the same as or possibly a little quicker than Meridians. Other new trains could have a range of performance characteristics, but in general would be likely to be as good as or better than IEP – and so better than HSTs and a bit better than Meridians. IEP and most other new electric trains will have a top speed (140mph) that is faster than the MML track will be, even after the infrastructure upgrade works.

35. Whilst the decision will be taken by DfT and/or the next MML train operating company, the Councils should request that whatever electric rolling stock is chosen should have the most appropriate characteristics for the MML, with excellent acceleration being more important than the headline top-speed.

36. DfT currently expects the HSTs to be withdrawn, as they will be over 40 years old by the time the MML is electrified. The Meridians will only be halfway through their life, and will almost certainly be re-allocated to another service.

37. Currently most trains on the Cross Country franchise routes between England's Core Cities - except Nottingham - are Meridian type units which go at 125mph. Nottingham's Core City connections are
    - to Birmingham by 100mph 'Turbostars', and
    - to Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool by 90mph Sprinters, and
    - to Sheffield and Leeds by 90mph Sprinters.

    Nottingham is the only Core City not to be connected to other Core Cities by Meridian type 125mph trains.

38. There would be a very strong case that the Meridians displaced by MML electrification should be re-allocated to Nottingham's Core City services because

- About half the Nottingham – Birmingham route (the bit west of Derby) already has a linespeed of 125mph so it is one of a few routes where the re-allocated Meridians could go at their top speed;
- The Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds line could also have the linespeed raised to over 100mph over some sections, possibly as part of the Nottingham – Leeds exemplar linespeed scheme; and
- The Meridians' high power means that they climb hills very quickly, which would save time Chesterfield – Sheffield – Wakefield on the Leeds services, and across the Pennines from Chesterfield to Manchester.

39. To give an idea of the scale of the benefit from linespeed works plus trains that can take advantage of the higher linespeed, it is instructive to compare the 2 current East Midlands – Leeds services

	Derby - Leeds	**Nottingham - Leeds**
Linespeed	110, 100 or 90mph	80 or 75
Type of train	Meridian	Sprinter
Top speed of train	125mph	90mph
Distance	76	82
Journey time	**1¼ hours**[i]	**2 hours**

40. Linespeed works and Meridians could allow very substantial reductions in journey times from Nottingham,

- To Birmingham in under an hour (20 minutes faster than at present),
- To Leeds in 1 hour 20 minutes (40 minutes faster than at present), and
- To Manchester in 1hour 25 minutes (30 minutes faster than at present),

though it would depend a lot on the number of intermediate stops.

41. However there will be a number of other routes across Britain on which they could be used, so the Councils will need to be proactive in raising the issue and requesting that the Meridians be re-allocated to Nottingham's Core City services.

<u>Nottingham Station Hub scheme</u>

42. Construction work commenced on the main station redevelopment in October 2012 with the main focus of early activity being around the partial demolition of the British Transport Police building and ground works in the South Concourse area. Erection of the Structural Steel frame for the new South Concourse is anticipated to commence in April 2013. Within the main station buildings strip out of the old travel centre and retail area is now complete and works to establish a new floor slab in the Porte Cochere have commenced. The contractor took possession of buildings on platform 4/5 in early March to enable building and canopy refurbishment works to progress. An additional £700,000 has been secured by East Midlands Trains through the Cycle Rail Integration Fund to upgrade and expand the Milk Dock cycle storage facility

and provide cycle hire complementary to other upgraded station facilities. Overall completion of the station redevelopment is anticipated in spring 2014.

43. In summer 2013, Network Rail will be undertaking major re-signalling works in and around Nottingham station to both improve train reliability and increase capacity. This will cause significant disruption to journeys between 20th July and 25th August. There will be no trains arriving or departing Nottingham Station to regular destinations including London, Leicester, Derby, Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Worksop, Mansfield and Matlock. On certain days there will be limited services leaving Nottingham Station to Newark (for Lincoln) and Grantham (for Skegness). Arrangements for bus replacement links to East Midlands Parkway, Derby, Beeston, Mansfield/Worksop, Newark and Grantham are in preparation. Train operators are working with other key partners to minimise inconvenience to rail users.

RECOMMENDATION

44. It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report.

Contact Officers

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Appendix 1

Request to Richard Eccles, Director of Network Strategy and Planning , Network Rail, 22/2/13

Dear Richard,

Thank-you for our quick discussion last week at the ORR about the Nottingham – Leeds scheme. Given that the Council is asking for something substantial, I thought I ought to properly set out the Council's view and the reasons for it, and to address the points that you raised when we talked.

The Council has a long-standing concern that its Inter-City rail connectivity between Nottingham and Britain's other big cities is poor. Our speeds/journey times and frequencies to London and the other 'Core Cities' (Core City being the Government designation for the 8 largest English city conurbations) are far below that which is already enjoyed by the other Core Cities, yet the plans for improvement for Nottingham are less than for the other Core Cities. In a comparison of Core City connectivity, not only does Nottingham start as last-placed, but under current plans it will fall even further behind all the others. This matters for all the well-established reasons – from Eddington onwards - of the crucial importance of agglomeration of Britain's key centres of economic activity.

Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds is a crucial corridor. It connects 3 of the 8 Core Cities (5 in railway terms, as it also includes the Nottingham to Manchester and Liverpool rail service). And it parallels the northern half of Britain's motorway number1, which carries well over 100,000 vehicles per day/ 50million people per annum. By any standards it is a big, important piece of railway. The Government has recognised the importance of this corridor with repeated allocations of funding, amounting now to around a billion pounds, to progressively enlarge the M1 between Nottingham and Leeds.

Nottinghamshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) – i.e. our formal statement of transport policy – sets out our aspirations for improved journey times to Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester in particular. In adopting the targets we tried to mirror the methodology adopted for the Northern Hub, as set out in the Northern Hub Conditional Output Statement, to give us parity of connectivity & agglomeration benefits with those enjoyed by other Core Cities. i.e. "There are no absolute cut-offs or thresholds which define acceptability for the key journey times: quicker still, will always be advantageous. However, based on the need to achieve regular interval city centre to city centre times that are recognisably faster than by car, (we are) adopting 60 miles per hour as a benchmark …… to the principal *adjoining city regions"*[ii]

However, 60 mph would require Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds in 80 minutes, compared to the 120 minutes (=40mph) now, and we recognised that there would be large practical difficulties in achieving that in one step. So, in an attempt to temper our aspirations with 'realism', we adopted the 'Northern Way' speed as a medium-term aspiration, but have set a compromise interim target of Nottingham – Leeds in 100 minutes (=48mph). We recognise that this less ambitious interim target would leave our economy at a connectivity disadvantage compared to the other Core Cities. (It is in fact the average speed achieved from Machynlleth to Shrewsbury over a curvaceous, steeply graded route, but at least it beats current average speed of 40mph which Nottingham – Leeds currently shares with Inverness – Wick/Thurso !!!)

This interim target had the significant advantage that it would, in theory, enable the current hourly service to be operated with one less unit, and thus at considerably lower operating

cost. This is perfectly in furtherance of the McNulty imperative to find ways to reduce the operating costs of the railway, although the Council accepts that when we adopted this it was before the McNulty report.

Over the years we have fed all this into all the formal process at every opportunity that we have had – DfT's Regional Planning Assessment and its DASTS process; the various RUSs (E Mids, Yorks & Humber, North West); franchise consultations etc. We have also raised it repeatedly – ad nauseum, I suspect it feels to some people – at any other forum we can think of: through the erstwhile RDAs; Network Rail stakeholder events, TOC stakeholder events, various DfT events, the Northern Rail summit, regional economic forums, the debate about Northern rail devolution etc.

Some years ago a GRIP1/2 study was undertaken of the Meadowhall – Leeds section. Unfortunately, that study was conceived of initially as being only of local (i.e. Yorkshire) interest, so Nottinghamshire only became aware of it towards its end. It was at that point that we first formally requested of Network Rail that an assessment should be done as to what works would be needed to enable a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time and for the service to be operated with one less unit.

We offered then – and have repeated the offer subsequently – to contribute towards the costs of such an assessment, subject of course to what the cost might be (we could not undertake to cover any cost until we knew exactly what that cost might be). We have also offered to contribute towards the costs of development work for various individual elements of work that would contribute towards the overall scheme. Richard Thompson thanked us for our initial offer but said that it was too late for the GRIP2 study. We discussed the possibility of the Council commissioning a separate GRIP study, but Richard advised against that, as he felt it would be much more efficient to consider it as part of the next stage of work that was expected to happen, and we agreed to abide by Richard's guidance.

Subsequently Network Rail has done further development work, to GRIP stage 3, as we understand it, to inform input into CP5, which led to Nottingham – Leeds being included in the IIP as an "exemplar" scheme. As part of this Network Rail has set up a stakeholder group including Nottinghamshire County Council, for which we are grateful. The Council has already put on record its appreciation of the manner in which this stakeholder group is being conducted, and we are happy to do so again here. It is genuinely inclusive, with good sharing of information and a palpable openness to genuinely consider points raised by stakeholders. For the avoidance of any doubt, nothing in this e-mail should be taken as criticism of the manifest good faith and genuinely collaborative manner with which the stakeholder group is operating.

The Council pressed for the earliest possible initial meeting of the stakeholder group at which we requested that the development work should include an assessment as to what works would be needed to enable a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time and for the service to be operated with one less unit. We raised the issue again at the subsequent meeting. However, unfortunately in answer we were told that the remit for the development work had already been set and that it did not specifically include assessment of what works would be needed to enable a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time and for the service to be operated with one less unit. On Wednesday you asked whether an explanation hadn't really been given. As I trust my explanation makes clear, we have been given a procedural explanation but not a substantive reason i.e. the development work was authorised without exploration of a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time being part of the remit - which explains that it doesn't form part of the work currently underway, but not why it doesn't form part of it.

Network Rail has shared with stakeholders the results of the GRIP3 work. We readily acknowledge that Network Rail is being much more ambitious in the GRIP3 work than was

the case with the GRIP2 study. Rather than limiting ambition to a pre-determined outcome speed of 70 or 75mph (as the GRIP2 study seemed to do), the GRIP3 study is considering how far the Linespeed could be raised without incurring excessive cost, and it appears that 90mph is achievable over significant sections. The Council strongly supports this positive approach, which we note applies to an increasing number of other schemes in the SBP, and which we would ask should be applied to all LSI schemes henceforth.

Network Rail has told the stakeholder group that the GRIP3 work has established that a significant time saving – between 4 and 5 minutes – is realistically achievable between Barnsley and Leeds, with more modest time savings achievable south of Barnsley.

We are aware from Kerry Collingwood that funding approval has been given for work to raise linespeeds on a section of the Erewash valley during 2013/4 (which we understand has a very strong BCR). The Nottingham resignalling will both reduce SRTs and, according to the TOCs, should reduce but not eliminate the need for recovery time on the approach to Nottingham. It will also ease pathing constraints at that point. And the scheme that the Council is funding at Radford junction could also reduce SRTs, now that NR has corrected the estimates given in the GRIP2 report to a level that makes work at Radford affordable.

Taken together, all this could reduce the Nottingham – Leeds SRT & dwell times (excluding pathing allowances, which are currently very substantial) from circa 105 minutes at present to circa 95 minutes, which, with 5 minutes for pathing, might give the desired 1 hour 40 minute journey time. It should also produce some worthwhile benefit for the Nottingham – Sheffield – Manchester – Liverpool service.

And, of course, during CP5 the Northern franchise will be re-let, and there will be a large cascade of diesel units following TPE electrification, so that by 2019 Leeds – Nottingham fast trains may be operated by rolling stock with better performance characteristics (acceleration, hill climbing etc) – class 185, or 170, or re-engined 158. And perhaps electric trains not too long afterwards ?

However, all this merely indicates a potential – it does not firmly establish whether or not 1 hour 40 is possible, nor whether or not the service could be operated with less rolling stock. It would be far better if the actual facts could be assessed and firmly established, so that there can be a properly informed discussion about how best to proceed, rather than relying (as at present) on assertion of what seems likely. It is for this reason that the Council would wish this to be formally assessed, preferably as part of the ongoing development work.

The Council recognises that this may incur some additional development cost, and we would be willing to contribute some (or possibly all) of that additional cost - we would need to know exactly how much it was before we could make a firm commitment.

We have been told that in the case of the MML LSI, the likely saving of a Meridian (from the Sheffield semi-fast service) was not included in the business case. In the case of Nottingham – Leeds, operation with one less unit could generate a substantial saving and significantly strengthen the business case for measures that reduce the journey time to our interim target. You will understand why we are anxious that this potential positive factor should not be omitted from consideration in the Nottingham - Leeds case.

So, thank-you very much for saying last week you would have a look at this issue. I fully understand that your offer contains no commitment as to whether or not there will be exploration of a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time, merely that you will consider whether it might be explored. But we trust that you will see why the Council believes that there is very strong reason to assess what works would be needed to enable a 100 minute Nottingham - Leeds journey time and for the service to be operated with one less unit.

Our understanding is that this would be compatible with Network Rail's emerging long-term planning process wherein the Core Cities such as Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds are taken to justify connectivity of at least 60mph. We recognise that what we are asking for at present would fall well short of this LTPP target, but it does produce a significant shorter-term benefit and moves towards ultimate fulfilment of the LTPP target – and anyway, it is unlikely that fulfilment of all the LTPP targets can happen at once and likely that they will take some time to bring about. But, even if it isn't all we want (and that Nottingham needs), at least it would be a big improvement in its own right that would contribute towards the LTPP end point. And of course it is 100% in compliance with the McNulty imperative to reduce the costs of operating the rail industry.

I can, if you wish, let you have copies of the extensive e-correspondence with NR (and others), when we have raised this issue, and our various requests and offers to financially contribute. However, I have tried to cover all salient points here and so make this e-mail self-contained (hence its length), so I suspect that there is no point in drowning you with historic stuff – but .just ask if you have any queries or if you need any more information.

Thank-you for considering all this. The Council looks forward keenly to receiving your response in due course.

Thanks

Jim

[i] Leeds depart xx.11, Derby arrive x1.25