

Meeting **JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**

Date **12 June 2015** Agenda item number 9

From **JOINT OFFICER STEERING GROUP**

RAIL ISSUES UPDATE

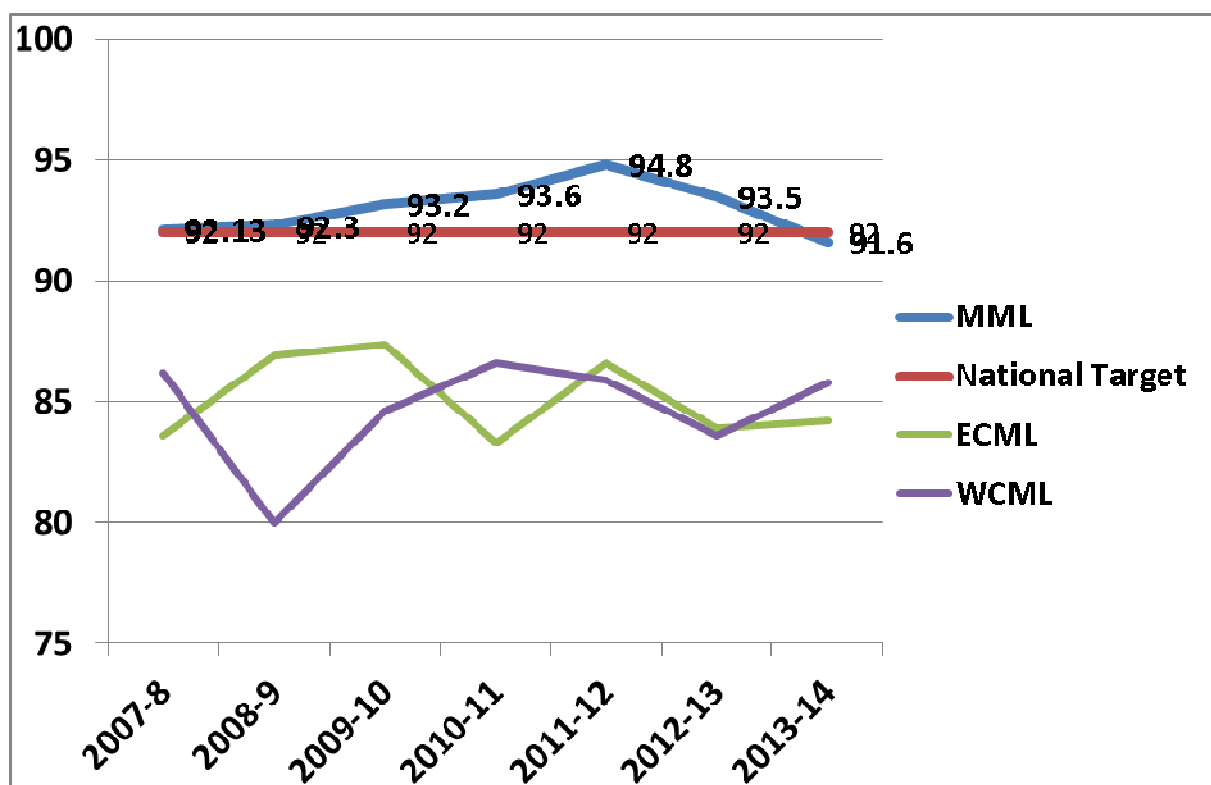
Purpose of the report

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

Midland Main Line

2. The 2 Councils have made a submission to the 2015 National Rail Awards, nominating East Midlands Trains and Network Rail for the main award of the year for the quality of the Midland Main Line: primarily
 - the successful completion of phase 1 of the linespeed works, and the consequent journey time reductions that took effect from 2014; and
 - the fact that, since 2007, the Midland Main Line has been far and away the most punctual Inter-City route in Britain, and that superior reliability applied even whilst all the linespeed upgrade works were being done.

The winner project will be announced in September.



3. Efforts continue to secure funding for the scheme to enhance the Midland Main Line in the Market Harborough area. The 3 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) along the line have all included the MML Market Harborough scheme in their Strategic Economic Plans which were submitted to Government on 31 March 2014, and have also all bid for funding for the scheme from the Local Growth Fund.

- D2N2 LEP £5 million,
- Sheffield City Region LEP £5 million,
- and the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP £3 million,

which would make a combined contribution of £13 million to this scheme, the total cost of which is estimated at around £48million. Network Rail is willing to commit £26million to the scheme, leaving £9million currently unfunded. The current estimated total cost of £48million includes circa £11million allowance for contingencies. The more detailed assessment being undertaken by Network Rail (see para 5 below) will assess the costs more precisely, and it is hoped that it will be possible to significantly reduce the sum needed for contingencies, which should reduce (or eliminate) the £9m currently unfunded.

4. On 29th January (2015), the Government (BIS) announced a round of 'Growth Deals' with LEPs. For the D2N2 LEP, additional funding of £22.2million was awarded, itemising 7 projects that this new tranche of funding "will....deliver", including

"Midland Mainline Market Harborough Improvements – Improving the journey time for non-stop passenger and freight train services on the Midland Main Line, through the realignment of the rail infrastructure at Market Harborough, in conjunction with Leicester and Leicestershire and Sheffield City Region LEP"

Unfortunately, the £22.2million allocated to D2N2 was less than the total costs of the 7 named projects for which it was allocated, and it is not yet clear how the shortfall to the LEP will be dealt with between the 7 D2N2 projects.

As a result of the January 2015 funding, D2N2 LEP has written to Network Rail stating that

"D2N2 is very supportive of the development and wishes to provide full support in assisting the delivery where it is affordable and possible"

5. A formal stakeholder group has been set up by Network Rail, encompassing the train operating companies, local Councils and the LEPs. Network Rail is undertaking a more detailed assessment of the work required, and a refinement of the likely cost. A meeting of this stakeholder group is scheduled for Thursday 4th June and a verbal update will be given at the joint Committee meeting.

Nottingham – Newark – Lincoln Line

6. It has been a long-standing aspiration of the Councils to achieve a comprehensive upgrading of the service on this route. This aspiration is shared by Newark and Sherwood District Council, Gedling Borough Council, Newark Business Club and East Midlands Trains, and the relevant Lincolnshire bodies. East Midlands Trains has established a 'Stakeholder Board' for the line, which has been chaired by its Managing Director, David Horne.
7. A 5-stage strategy to comprehensively upgrade the line has been adopted by the Stakeholder Board. Stage 1 of the strategy involves running an additional train

every hour between Nottingham and Newark. Stages 2,3 & 4 are enhancements to the infrastructure so that

- all services become much faster; and
- the second train per hour extends to Lincoln and (in the other direction) to Birmingham.

8. In September 2014 a funding package was agreed to implement stage 1 on weekdays:-

• DfT	£665,000 per annum
• Nottinghamshire County Council	£ 50,000 per annum
• Lincolnshire County Council,	£ 60,000 per annum
• Nottingham City Council,	£ 25,000 per annum
• Lincoln City Council,	£ 10,000 per annum
• Newark & Sherwood District Council	£ 10,000 per annum
• North Kesteven District Council	£ 10,000 per annum
• Gedling Borough Council	£ 10,000 per annum
• D2N2 LEP	£ 20,000 per annum
• Lincolnshire LEP	£ 10,000 per annum

These funding arrangements will apply for 3 years i.e. May 2015 – May 2018

9. This additional 'stage-1' service commenced on Monday 17th May. It is formed by extending the hourly Matlock – Nottingham service to Newark, serving the intermediate stations.

- Carlton, Burton Joyce, Lowdham and Fiskerton every hour, and
- the other stations at approximately 2 hourly intervals.

Thus,

- Newark has a doubling of frequency from 1 train per hour to 2 trains per hour. The 2 trains are evenly spaced at 30 minute intervals throughout the day;
- The existing hourly Lincoln - Newark - Nottingham - Leicester service no longer needs to serve the intermediate stations and can therefore run non-stop between Newark and Nottingham, thereby cutting the Newark - Nottingham journey time; and
- Carlton, now has an hourly service through the day to Nottingham; to Beeston for the enterprise zone; to Derby; and in the other direction to Newark.

There are also benefits in Lincolnshire :-

- a reduction in journey time to Nottingham, because the trains would run non-stop between Newark and Nottingham; and
- a doubling of frequency at the expanding Lincoln suburb of Hykeham

10. The Stakeholder Board is reviewing and refreshing the strategy to determine how best to put into effect stages 2-4, and secure the further improvements, particularly faster journey times. The outcome of this review will be reported to the December Joint Committee meeting.

Nottingham – Sheffield - Leeds

Rail North

11. As reported previously (June 2012 & June 2013), the Government is considering devolving responsibility for rail services in the north of England to a consortium of City and County Councils and Integrated Transport Authorities (formerly Passenger Transport Authorities). The basic purpose of Rail North is to secure growth of rail across the whole of the Rail North area through substantial improvements to services, and the primary way this will be achieved is through exercising significant influence (and ultimately complete control) of the next Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises that will be let in 2016
12. The service affected in the Joint Committee area would be Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds, plus the Retford – Worksop – Sheffield service in the north of Nottinghamshire. For the Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds service, the Councils have a longstanding aspiration for improved journey times (see paragraphs 14-18 below).
13. Extensive discussions, in which both Councils have been involved, have been underway about the service enhancements that Rail North would pursue for 2016 and thereafter, and for the structure of rail North, including ensuring that overall control is shared between all 30 members Councils. After 2 years of development, Rail North was formally constituted in April 2015. Both Councils have joined and are now formally members of 'Rail North'.

Journey time

14. The Nottingham – Leeds service is currently slow, taking 2 hours for 81 miles. The Councils' aspiration is for that to be progressively reduced to:
 - 100 minutes (49mph) as from April 2016, with a Sheffield – Nottingham journey time of no more than 50 minutes ;
 - 90 minutes (55mph) by 2020, with a Sheffield – Nottingham journey time of no more than 45 minutes; and
 - 82 minutes (60mph) at the earliest opportunity, but no later than 3 years after it has been applied to services between the other Rail North Core CitiesThe Councils' also wish for an additional train per hour to be introduced between Nottingham – Sheffield, which could allow the Nottingham – Manchester train to cut its journey time by 20 minutes by no longer stopping at Sheffield but running directly from the Manchester line onto the Nottingham line 5 miles south of Sheffield.
15. Extensive discussions have been held over the past 5 years with
 - Network Rail;
 - the Government's Department for Transport (DfT); and (more recently)
 - Rail North; and
 - 2 of the 3 bidders for the forthcoming Northern franchise.particularly about cutting the Nottingham – Leeds journey time.
16. The County Council has commissioned, at a cost of £30,000, a study of the locations at which time could be saved, and would need to be saved, to reduce the Nottingham – Leeds journey time by 20 minutes. The study is due to be

completed by July 2015, to enable it to inform the bids for the forthcoming Northern franchise.

17. As a result of the Councils' work

- Nottingham – Leeds was identified in the 'Initial Industry Plan' for 2014-2019 for development as a "national exemplar" journey time reduction scheme; and
- DfT has included a requirement for faster journey times in the specification documents given to bidders for the forthcoming Rail North franchise
"We received detailed proposals from Nottinghamshire County Council about their ambition for faster services between Nottingham and Leeds and elsewhere, including details of how this could reduce costs and release rolling stock by enabling the service to be run with one less train set and crew. Bidders will be expected to identify and lead the implementation of journey time reduction opportunities in conjunction with Network Rail and other operators, both as part of their submission and during the franchise"

There is therefore the very real prospect of a substantial reduction (of around 20 minutes) in the Nottingham – Leeds journey time as from April 2016.

18. DfT will evaluate the bids over the next few months, and expects to announce in "late 2015" the winning bidder and any enhancements to services.

Radford junction

19. At Radford junction, the Leeds line diverges from the Robin Hood Line, with the Leeds line curving off to the west. A speed limit of 35mph has applied for decades both through the junction and around the curve to the west. That speed limit has meant the trains take longer to pass through Radford than if the speed limit was faster. Raising this speed limit is one of the things that would enable a reduction in the Nottingham – Leeds journey time.
20. A contribution of £350,000 from the Greater Nottingham Housing Market Area Growth Point fund was used to attract a similar matching sum from Network Rail to commission a scheme to raise the speed around Radford curve from 35mph to 50mph. The works were undertaken in November 2014, and the speed limit has duly been raised around the curve. The funding available in 2014 was sufficient for works on Radford curve, but not through Radford junction which retains the old 35mph speed limit. It is hoped that works through Radford junction will be included in the plans for the 2016 northern franchise.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Contact Officers

Jim Bamford, Communities Department, Nottinghamshire County Council

Tel: 0115 9773172

E-mail: jim.bamford@nottscc.gov.uk

Chris Carter, Development Department, Nottingham City Council

Tel: 0115 8763940

E-mail: chris.carter@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
