



11th December 2014

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS

RAIL ISSUES

Purpose of the Report

1. To report recent developments regarding:-
 - Provision of an enhanced service on the Nottingham – Newark – Lincoln line from May 2015;
 - Proposals to devolve responsibility for the Sheffield – Worksop – Lincoln service and the Nottingham – Leeds service to 'Rail North';
 - The upgrading of the Midland main line;
 - The proposed High-Speed 2 rail network,
 - Development work to assess the possibility of re-opening the Robin Hood Line to Ollerton, and
 - The East Coast MainLine (ECMA) consortium.

Information and Advice

Nottingham – Newark Line

2. Currently services on this line are substandard in a number of key respects:

they are infrequent, with just one train per hour in each direction (plus 1 extra train in the morning and evening peak periods), and

they are slow, average speeds between 29mph and 42mph, depending on the number of stops at intermediate stations.
3. It has been a long-standing aspiration of the Council to secure both faster and more frequent services on the line, and much work has been done by Nottinghamshire County Council, Newark Business Club, Newark and Sherwood District Council and East Midlands Trains to try to achieve this over the last five years.
4. On 29th September the Secretary of State for Transport announced his agreement to an enhanced service on this line, to commence in May 2015. There will be an additional 24 trains per weekday which will result in the following benefits:

between 07.00 and 19.00hrs there will be a train every 30 minutes between Newark and Nottingham with one train an hour running non-stop between Newark and Nottingham with a journey time of 23 minutes;

Carlton will have 36 trains per day, giving a service every hour in each direction for most of the day. It is believed this will be the most frequent train service Carlton will have ever had since the station opened in 1846;

Lowdham, Fiskerton and Collingham will also have over 30 trains per day, generally every hour;

Burton Joyce will have 24 trains per day, generally every 2 hours, but hourly in the morning and evening peak periods; and

Bleasby, and Rolleston will have 20 trains per day.

5. The cost of the additional service is £875,000 per annum. Usually the Department for Transport (DfT) would require that sum to be paid by local stakeholders for each of the first three years i.e. a total local payment of £2.625million between May 2015 and May 2018. In this case, we have been able to persuade DfT to pay £670,000 per annum (77% of the total cost), with nine local bodies making contributions as follows

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
Lincolnshire LEP	£10,000 per annum
D2N2 LEP	£20,000 per annum
Newark & Sherwood District Council	£10,000 per annum
North Kesteven District Council	£10,000 per annum
Gedling Borough Council	<u>£10,000 per annum</u>
Total	£205,000 per annum

Nottinghamshire's £50,000 per annum will come from, and use in its entirety, the rail allocation within the draft Integrated Transport Capital Programme for 2015/16.

6. Subject to the new service being sufficiently well used and passing a business case test that will be undertaken in the winter of 2017/18, DfT should make the service permanent after May 2018, incorporating it fully into the East Midlands franchise with all costs covered by DfT.

Devolution of rail services

7. Since 1969 England's 6 largest conurbations have had Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) which have had some responsibility for local bus and rail services. In March 2012, the Government published a White Paper which proposed the possibility of devolving full responsibility for some rail franchises to local authorities outside of the PTA areas.
8. At the initiative of some PTAs, a group called Rail North is being set up to take forward devolution of rail services across the whole of the north of England which are run by the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchises. Northern runs local services including two in Nottinghamshire so Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council are eligible to join Rail North:

- Nottingham – Sheffield - Leeds, and
 - Sheffield – Worksop – Retford – Lincoln,
9. The Rail North proposals have been worked on since 2012, with some involvement from the Council. The proposals have now reached the stage of being sufficiently developed so that Rail North is being formally constituted and formal membership sought. A separate report will be taken to a future Policy Committee seeking approval for membership of this body.
10. The PTAs are effective in promoting rail services in their areas with generally more investment, services at higher frequencies and lower fares than in non-PTA areas. Rail North offers the possibility of such benefits being rolled out across the whole Rail North area.
11. The Council has long-standing aspirations for improvement of both the potential local Rail North services.

a) Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds

This service was introduced in December 2008, in response to the substantial campaign by Nottinghamshire County Council and South Yorkshire PTA in recognition of which the inaugural train was formally named '*County of Nottinghamshire*'. However, because of various limitations to the infrastructure and timetabling, journey times are extremely slow, with the 81 miles taking 2 hours at an end-to-end speed of just 40½mph, so the Council has been working towards a 2-stage reduction of journey time initially to 1 hour 40 minutes, then to 1 hour 20 minutes, hopefully by December 2019.

b) Sheffield – Worksop – Retford – Lincoln,

The existing service consists of 1 train an hour throughout the day plus 1 additional service between Sheffield and Worksop in the morning and evening peak periods. This is far lower than on equivalent services in PTA areas, where at least 2, and often 3 or 4 trains per hour throughout the day is standard. Because trains call at 5 intermediate stations between Worksop and Sheffield, including Shireoaks in Nottinghamshire, average speeds are very low, with the 15¾ miles between Worksop and Sheffield taking 30 minutes at an average speed of just 31½mph. The Council therefore has an aspiration to have 2 trains an hour throughout the day between Worksop and Sheffield, and to have significantly quicker journey times with one non-stop train per hour taking just 20 minutes (47mph); and one train per hour calling at the intermediate stations taking around 25 minutes (38mph).

12. The Council has done a lot of detailed work towards its aspirations for these two services. Some investment in the infrastructure would be required to enable higher speeds and so quicker journey times. Crucially, making the services faster would make them cheaper to operate, as the service would need fewer train sets and train crews to operate (because each train set and crew could operate more trips each).
13. At present the detail of the capital works required has not been determined, nor at what cost, to facilitate the higher speeds, quicker journey times and cheaper operating costs. The Council has been proposing for several years that a study should be undertaken to formally assess the costs and benefits of this on both of these lines.
14. As a result of this initial feasibility work by the Council, the Nottingham – Leeds scheme was included in 2011 in the Initial Industry Plan for 2014 -19 for development as an "exemplar" scheme, the exemplary element being the fact that, unlike most improvements, this scheme would have cheaper operating costs. However, nothing was then done to take it forward.

15. Until recently such a study had been resisted by DfT. However, the Council continues to encourage DfT to change its position, and DfT is now supportive of taking this forward as an exemplar i.e. with the intention of seeing whether its benefits could be applied on other routes, such as Sheffield – Worksop – Retford – Lincoln.
16. Development of the Nottingham – Leeds line-speed scheme as an exemplar had also been resisted by Rail North, despite it fitting with the Long-Term Strategy that Rail North had developed. Rail North also disagreed with the urgency of taking the exemplar scheme forward, and it had wanted to change the Liverpool – Norwich service so that it operated in 2 parts: Liverpool – Nottingham, and Nottingham – Norwich. That would have led to a reduction in the number of passengers who currently undertake a journey without having to change trains, which would have been detrimental to the business case of the exemplar scheme.
17. Following representations from the Council, Rail North has now changed its position so that it supports taking the Nottingham – Leeds line-speed scheme forward at the earliest opportunity, and also supports retaining Liverpool – Nottingham - Norwich as a through service thereby maximising the number of passengers that use it and so strengthening the business case for the Nottingham – Leeds line-speed scheme. The Council received written confirmation of that welcome change of Rail North’s position on 14th November.

Midland Main Line

18. As has been reported previously, the first phase of works to increase line speeds on the Midland Main Line was completed last winter, and as from the December 2013 timetable journey times from Nottingham to London were cut from 1 hour 38 minutes to 1 hour 31 minutes for the morning peak express train (departing Nottingham 07.55); and from 1 hour 45 minutes to 1 hour 42 minutes for the fast train every hour for the rest of the day.
19. The scheme was significant because these were the first journey time reductions on the Midland Main Line for 30 years, and the lack of improvement prior to December 2013, had meant that Nottingham had the slowest InterCity speeds to London of any core city.
20. These journey time reductions were achieved mainly by upgrading and improving the track over large sections of the Midland Main Line and included raising the speed limit to 125mph (from a mixture of 100 mph and 110 mph) over approximately 50 miles. These works were undertaken between 2010 and 2013 at a cost of around £70 million.
21. The new quicker journey times also took advantage of the improved, faster layout that was installed at Nottingham station in summer 2013, including £11.6 million of funding which was secured by Nottinghamshire County Council.
22. The Council has an objective of reducing the Nottingham to London express journey time to 90 minutes every hour throughout the day i.e. 8 minutes quicker than the current standard time (and 14 minutes quicker than it was until the phase 1 works were completed in 2013). As members will recall from previous reports, the Council has done a lot of work over the past three years with Network Rail, East Midlands Trains and East Midlands Councils to secure funding for a second phase of line-speed works to achieve that objective. That work has been successful in securing £190 million for works 2014-2019 between Wigston and Syston; and at Derby (which will also substantially benefit trains between Nottingham, Beeston and Birmingham).

23. However, some elements of the phase 2 works are not yet funded, and the Council is continuing to work with Network Rail, East Midlands Trains and East Midlands Councils to secure the necessary funding, in particular works through Market Harborough and between Trent junction and Nottingham.
24. This first phase of the Midland MainLine line-speed scheme is exceptional in all key respects and for a scheme of its nature the Midland MainLine scheme was incredibly low-cost, at just £70 million. The previous inter-city route upgrade was on the West Coast MainLine, where the cost was around £10,000 million (i.e. £10billion), albeit for a scheme about three times the scale of the Midland MainLine scheme. Both throughout the works and since, the Midland MainLine has been far more reliable than any other InterCity route in Britain, with over 93% of trains arriving on time.
25. In recognition of the excellent implementation of this first phase of the Midland MainLine scheme, it is proposed that the Council should put it forward for the forthcoming national rail award as the 'Rail project of the Year'. The scheme undoubtedly justifies submission to this award, but it is unprecedented for a local authority to make a nomination - normally it is all done by self-submission by rail industry companies. The benefit of the Council making the nomination is that it will associate the Council with the excellence of the scheme, which is appropriate given the positive supporting role that the Council has played. It may also highlight to government (DfT & BIS) the benefits and confidence of delivery in allocating the funding for the final elements of a 2nd phase of the works which are currently unfunded.

High-Speed 2

26. 27th October saw the publication of a report 'Rebalancing Britain' by Sir David Higgins, Executive Chairman of HS2 Ltd. The report confirmed again the case for a 'Y'-shaped network with an eastern leg from Birmingham to Yorkshire passing through the East Midlands, with an 'East Midlands Hub' station. The report raised two issues of particular relevance to Nottinghamshire. Firstly the proposed location for the East Midlands Hub station, either Toton as originally proposed, or to the west of the M1. Secondly it raised the importance of fast east-west rail connectivity. The Council's aspiration for the midlands are similar to the planned £6bn - £7bn of investment on east-west rail connectivity in the north. It is recommended that the Council's aspiration is reconfirmed for a direct city-centre to city-centre service from Nottingham and Beeston to Birmingham with a journey time of just 30 minutes to deliver a transformational economic growth benefit for both East and West Midlands; and for a connecting service to Toton direct from Mansfield and Kirkby
27. An 'Eastern Network Partnership' (ENP) has been established for all authorities on the eastern (i.e. Birmingham - East Midlands – Sheffield – Leeds/York – Newcastle) leg of the proposed route. The purpose of ENP is to represent a collective view re HS2 on matters of common interest.
28. The Council's rail officer has been attending officer meetings of the ENP, which have been very helpful. It is useful to have the backing of a large group of authorities for those HS2 issues which we have in common. The administrative work and most of the cost of ENP is being borne by South Yorkshire PTE, which chairs the officer grouping.

Robin Hood Line

29. During 2012 and 2013 the Council commissioned a study from Network Rail, costing £59,924, of what works would be required to re-open the freight line from Shirebrook to Ollerton to passengers. The initial study was stage 2 (out of 8) of Network Rail's standard

process for scheme development. The Council is just about to commission the next stage (3), at a cost of around £70,000.

30. The Council, and the Council alone, has paid for all the work that has so far been undertaken in trying to develop this scheme.
31. The biggest difficulty facing any aspiration to re-open the line is the need for revenue subsidy. The subsidy requirement was originally around £1million per annum, but previous work initiated by the Council has managed to reduce that to around £½ million per annum – but there is no source for any such subsidy. The Council continues to actively explore ways in which it might be possible to reduce the cost of a re-opened service.

East Coast Mainline Authorities consortium (ECMA)

32. At the instigation of York City Council, a consortium of Local Authorities has been established to lobby for improvements on the East Coast Main Line. The East Coast main Line serves Newark and Retford, providing connections to/from both south and north to London, Yorkshire & Humberside, the North-East and Scotland. Very substantial improvements to both reliability and journey times are badly need, and the collective strength of all ECML local Authorities ought to maximise the chances of securing the improvements that are required.

Statutory and Policy Implications

33. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

34. It is recommended that Committee notes the report.
35. It is recommended that Committee supports HS2 connectivity that can deliver a Nottingham city centre to Birmingham city centre journey time of 30 minutes or less.
36. It is also recommended that the Council submits phase 1 of the Midland Main Line linespeed scheme to the forthcoming National Rail Awards

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SJE – 03/12/2014)

37. This decision falls within the Terms of Reference of the Transport & Highways Committee to whom responsibility for the exercise of the Authority's functions relating to the provision of passenger transport services, including rail initiatives, has been delegated, though, as set out in the report, the Council's Policy Committee is responsible for approving the future appointments to outside bodies.

Financial Comments (GB - 03/12/14)

38. The contribution from Nottinghamshire County Council is already included within the approved capital programme. Further financial implications are set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

Background Papers

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All