

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 8 March 2010

railfuture *Yorkshire*

Northern Hub Proposals to Benefit Yorkshire Rail Users

by Graham Collett

The announcement by Network Rail of a major rail development scheme based on a Manchester “hub” has delighted rail users across the North. These proposals – which are aimed at resolving the major bottleneck of lines in the Manchester area - include significant improvements for Yorkshire passengers :

- Six trains every hour from Leeds and Huddersfield to Manchester
- Direct trains from Bradford Interchange and Halifax to Manchester Airport and Liverpool
- Faster /more frequent trains from Hull and York to Manchester and Liverpool, with better connections to other destinations across the North
- Two more trains every hour throughout the day and quicker journeys from Sheffield to Manchester and Liverpool
- Electrification of the Midland Mainline
- New sections of railway between Sheffield and Manchester at Chinley, Grindleford and Dore Junction to allow faster trains to overtake stopping services

Chris Hyomes, Branch Chairman, said “We warmly welcome these proposals, which will bring long overdue improvements for passengers at a time when the demand for rail travel across the region is at an all-time high.”

Press Date for May 2010 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material to: Graham Collett (YRC 9) 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe York YO23 3RY collettgh.@talktalk.net by **Saturday 8th May.**



Bradford Interchange Station, which could benefit from direct trains to Manchester Airport/Liverpool (photo courtesy Creative Commons CC-BY 2.5)

The full report is available at:

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/6474.aspx>

Forthcoming Railfuture Events

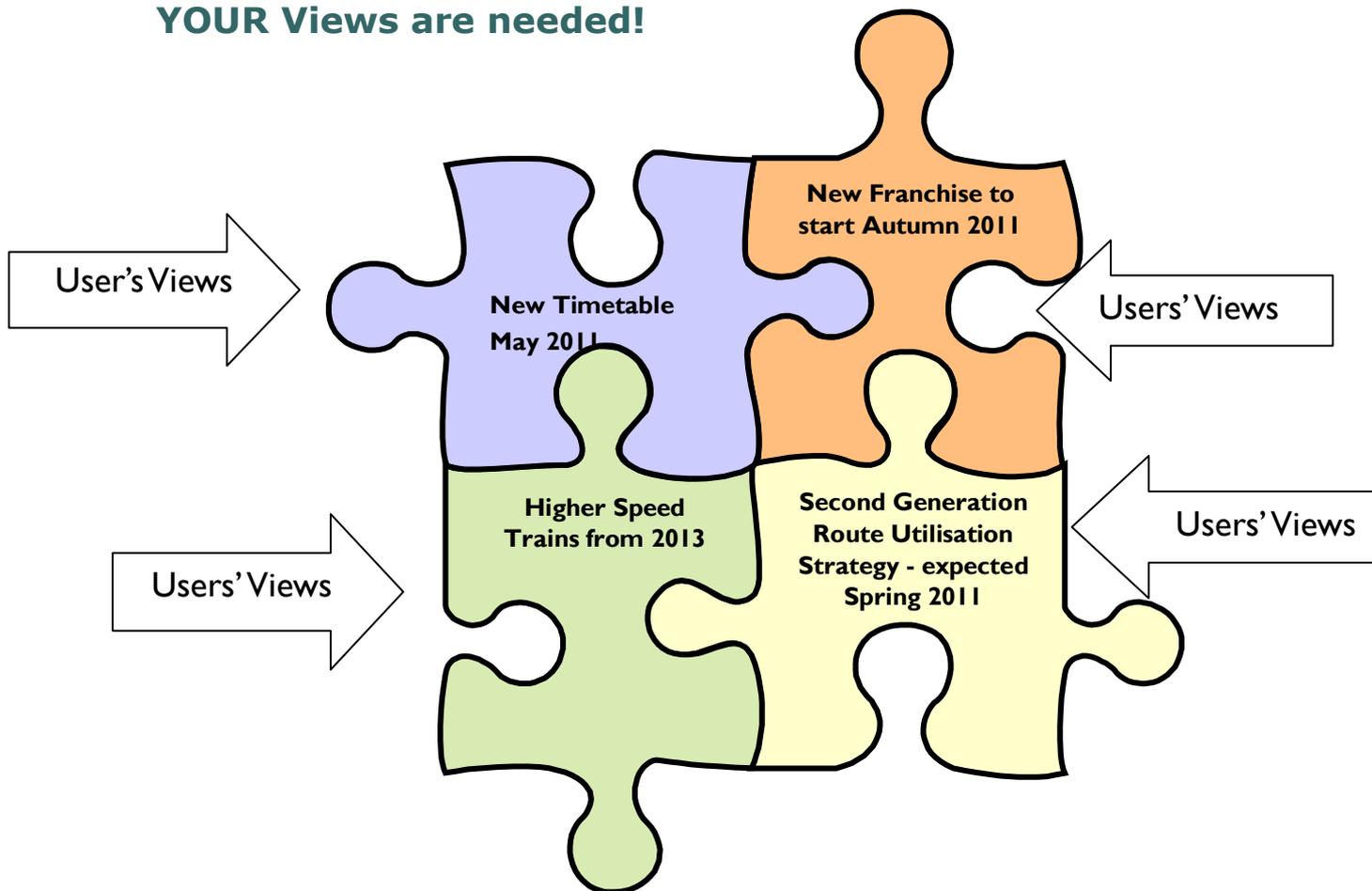
Saturday 13 March: **Branch AGM and Lunch, Knottingley** with guest speaker Alan Whitehouse (BBC Look North) – see supplement inside – **bookings deadline 10 March**

Saturday 8th May: **National AGM at Wrexham Football Club** 11am start (see Railwatch for details)

Saturday 19th June: **Branch Meeting in Hebden Bridge** – details in next newsletter

Saturday 3rd July : **Railfuture Summer Conference in Taunton** (see Railwatch for details)

Fitting it all together on East Coast Main Line Services – YOUR Views are needed!



Karen Boswell, Managing Director of East Coast, firing the starting gun for the race to finalise the new timetable for the East Coast Main Line (ECML) with a lively presentation at York's Park Inn Hotel on 1st February. The new timetable, which will involve the biggest change to services on the line for 20 years, is planned to be introduced - subject to final agreement within the rail industry – on 22 May 2011. East Coast (EC) are promoting the proposals through the use of the Eureka! sub-brand with its own website www.eastcoast.co.uk/eureka and leaflets, posters etc.

The increased clock-face services (including new London to Lincoln through trains) and faster journey times will be a great step forward and should ensure the ECML keeps its reputation as the premier route. However, there are concerns about poor connections, reduced calls at some stations and lengthened journey times for passengers using Hull Trains and Grand Central services. There will also be a reduction from six EC trains per day from London to Glasgow to only one, with the other five trains switching to Arriva Cross-Country (XC) and only serving EC stations from Doncaster or Leeds northwards.

Consultation on the new timetable seems to be largely confined to EC's efforts (rather than led by Network Rail or the Department for Transport as we might have expected) and this has created the impression that the interests of passengers who use other ECML operators or connecting services have been overlooked. So full marks to Northern, who have confirmed that they will be adopting a similar consultation process to the one they carried out for the major changes that resulted from the new West Coast Main Line timetable. Other operators (eg XC) may also be undertaking their own consultations at certain locations.

A separate consultation is also taking place on the ECML franchise, with a closing date of 19 April, so don't miss a second opportunity to influence future services <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/2010-08/>

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Yorkshire Rail Campaigner on the Web

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-index.php?page=Yorkshire%20Branch>

Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

Two years ago this month at a cost of £30 million, passenger trains returned to the 18 mile Ebbw Vale to Cardiff rail line and despite the recession the hourly service has carried twice the anticipated number of passengers. Now a £33 million scheme to build on its success has been outlined.

So why start my Chairman's piece talking about a line in Wales? Because it is a good example for us to use here in Yorkshire where we have a number of lines screaming to be opened eg Woodhead <http://savethewoodheadtunnel.blogspot.com/>, Spen Valley, Harrogate-Ripon, York-Beverley <http://www.minstersrail.org.uk>, as well as some rail lines where the service is virtually non existent eg Sheffield-York, Leeds-Goole. The Skipton – East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership (SELRAP) <http://www.selrap.org.uk> have achieved so much in their attempt to re-open the Skipton to Colne line, so it was disappointing to learn that the Ripon Railway Re-Instatement Association had folded after they had worked so hard over the last few years.

As I write this report, I have been asked if Railfuture Yorkshire will coordinate the various groups campaigning for improvements on the Leeds – Goole line. I am only too happy to do this because only by speaking with one voice will we be able to campaign effectively and ultimately achieve our aims.

This year is the 21st anniversary of the Branches Annual Luncheon and for the first time this is being held in Knottingley. I am very pleased to tell you that our very first Guest Speaker - BBC Look North Transport Correspondent Alan Whitehouse - has kindly offered to address us. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on March 13th.

Rail User Group Updates

Harrogate Rail Users remain bitterly opposed to the proposal to run tram-trains on their line and have written to Leeds City Council's Core Strategy Team to express their concerns. They feel that the line would be lost as a heavy rail route and would require closure of the line for up to 2 years for conversion as is happening with the Oldham line in Greater Manchester. Branch Chairman Bill Tymms points out the Yorkshire and Humber Rail Utilisation Strategy identified a need for extra services to Horsforth, with new signalling and a turnback facility at the station.

Selby Rail Users won a battle with Hull Trains over the re-routing of the first Sunday service to London via Goole, instead of Howden and Selby. After very lengthy representations to the ORR and Passenger Focus, Hull Trains agreed, two days before the revised service was due to commence, to provide bus connections from Howden and Selby. This attracted considerable favourable publicity for the Group in the local and regional press. (Well done! Ed)

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Second Generation Rail Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the North of England

by David Mawdsley - Skipton East Lancs Railway Action Partnership

In December 2009, Passenger Focus organised meetings in Leeds (attended by Branch Chairman Chris Hyomes on behalf of Railfuture) and Manchester to discuss the proposed 'Second Generation' RUS for the North of England. Those invited to the meetings were Rail Users' Groups, most of whom were primarily concerned with the improvement of existing services, rather than the re-opening of former lines. Both meetings reached similar conclusions about future priorities. I attended the Manchester meeting.

Network Rail (NR) outlined the purpose of the Second Generation RUS, which is only intended to address those gaps identified in the original RUS studies where there has been some change in circumstances since the original study was published. The second generation RUS is intended to address the next 30 years (from 2014), but is primarily targeted at the period 2014 to 2024.

A number of changes which the second generation RUS will need to address were identified by NR. These include the announcements by the DfT in relation to electrification, the Inter City Express concept, and the development of the Strategic Freight Network. No indication was given as to what else NR have in mind for the second generation RUS. Indeed, the purpose of the meeting was to ask the rail users' groups to identify the gaps and issues which that RUS should address, solutions to those gaps and issues, and (in order of priority) the three top priorities for action.

Those attending were divided into three groups to discuss these issues. There was a surprising degree of consistency in the responses: capacity, improvement of stations, improvement of rolling stock and electrification. In presenting the views of "my" group, I emphasised trans-Pennine capacity and the need for a gauge enhanced trans-Pennine freight route.

The draft second generation RUS is likely to be published for consultation in Summer 2010, with the final document appearing in Spring 2011. No indication was given that there would be an opportunity to make submissions before the draft is published, but we need to watch out for any announcement inviting comments. (Our thanks to David for this helpful report – Ed)

Rail User Group Updates (continued from page 3)

Halifax and District Rail Action Group (HADRAG) will be holding their 25th Anniversary AGM in Brighouse on May 15th. The meeting will coincidentally be celebrating 10 years since Brighouse station reopened. Stephen Waring, HADRAG Chair writes "We shall be inviting representatives from the various rail businesses ... for what should be an interesting discussion about issues affecting our line and the very strong prospects for further development." He adds "We are looking forward eagerly to the start of Bradford-Halifax-Brighouse-London trains in the next few months."

Hope Valley Railway Users' Group was reactivated at the end of 2008 with a new committee. Chair is now Sarah Roberts and Secretary Kath Checkland. Former Chair Peter Fox is now responsible for technical support.

A major problem is the lack of any evening peak local service out of Sheffield on Mondays – Fridays between 17.14 and 19.14. This severely restricts possibilities for commuting by rail between the Hope Valley and Sheffield. After examination of the freight working timetable to ensure a path was available, and examination of current DMU diagrams, a detailed proposal was developed to enable the 18.54 Chinley–Manchester Piccadilly to start back from Sheffield at 18.14, thus plugging the gap. Following lobbying of Northern by the Chair, this proposal has been accepted and is, the Group hope, to be implemented in the December 2010 timetable.

Further good news is that Dore & Topley station is to have calls inserted in two evening TransPennine Express services, the 18.55 and 19.55 from Manchester Airport to Cleethorpes and Sheffield respectively.