

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 27 December 2014

railfuture *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

DfT Want Flexibility Not Cuts

By Mark Parry



Pete Myers, the Stakeholder Manager for Northern Rail, addressed our branch meeting on 20 September in Sheffield.

The Northern franchise began back in 2005 amalgamating the former Arriva and First franchises uniting east and west of the Pennines. This uniting of different franchises created many issues some of which continue today. For example many ticket offices had closed in the east but survive today in the west. The franchise was set up with no increase in ridership predicted, in fact an increase of 49% has occurred! The Government has to find 30% more trains to enable Northern to cope.

Following the controversy over the aborted West Coast franchise award a few years ago, the franchising timetable was delayed. This involved delaying the renewal of Northern's franchise with a "direct award" extension. This is the situation today and as the subsidy has been reduced it is technically a new franchise but with the same companies. The reduced subsidy is being financed by the ending of "off peak" fares during the evening peak – a choice made by the Department for Transport (DfT). This is better for commuters who have experienced less overcrowding but not good for those on a day out. Northern have been able to install customer information screens at a further 100 stations and is improving the resource for revenue protection.

Pete Myers addressing our meeting, photo by Mark Parry

Instead of the department receiving 40% of the revenue, as in the old franchise, they now get a share of the profits; this improves the incentive for Northern to increase the resources for revenue protection. Tickets can now be bought by mobile phone and smart cards may be introduced as they aim to abolish tickets altogether. Cash payments are expensive although they plan to install more machines. *Continued on the next page...*

Two Meetings Coming Up!

Our Annual General Meeting - Priory Street Centre, York. 14:00 hours 31 January 2015

Towards a 21st Century Railway for the North of England - Oxford Place, Leeds. 10:15 to 16:30 hours 7 March 2015

See the flyer sent with this newsletter for further details of both these events

The new franchise is being bid for by Abelio, Govia and Arriva. The franchise area will change with Northern gaining responsibility for some extra stations such as Hull and swapping some routes with TransPennine. The key issue for 2016 onwards is rolling stock. Electrification is on schedule and there is confidence that this will continue to other routes yet to be confirmed. Electric units are lighter, quicker and casualties are only after an average of 45,000 miles compared to 8,000 miles for diesels. However, diesels are still needed, including new units, with the Pacers unlikely to be scrapped according to Pete. Since the meeting there has been much assurance in the news about the demise of the Pacers. Few factories are now building diesel units so we may have units cascaded from the south.

Pete Myer's interpretation of the Department for Transport suggestion that some cuts may be made, is that the DfT wants the flexibility to change.

New Diesels & Skipton-Colne?

by Mark Parry

The Campaign for Better Transport ran a well-attended "Better Railway for the North" conference in the National Railway Museum in York on 19 November, chaired by Stephen Joseph and addressed by Julie Mills of the Department for Transport (DfT), Alex Hynes of Northern, Nick Donovan of TransPennine, David Brown of Rail North, David Sidebottom of Passenger Focus and Chris Dale of Travel watch North West.

Julie Mills said the DfT want to address overcrowding and also the quality of service. A new "Transport for the North" is to be created.

Alex Hynes pointed out that electrification is not happening fast enough to provide new rolling stock, new diesels will be needed. Northern is hoping Skipton - Colne happens and are "up for it!" Also, Northern is reviewing the peak fares situation, but any changes would depend on the extra financial return still being generated.

Nick Donovan pointed out that only London Overground has higher seat occupancy than TransPennine.

David Brown said many of the wishes of Rail North are now being suggested by the Government. The North represents 25% of the UK economy but does not perform well and so investment in transport will help reap economic benefits. Rail North will involve 30 transport local authorities working together.

Andrew Dyson of our own Hope Valley User Group asked about the prospect of us seeing new diesel trains. Julie Mills responded by saying the DfT are currently considering this need.

Dearne Valley Passenger Experience – Friday 17 October

by Graham Collett

I travelled on the 11:06 from York to Sheffield on this date and noted a few points about the journey. From York we departed on time at 11:06 on a 2 car Pacer unit in reasonable condition, lightly filled but carrying a number of through passengers.

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|--------------------|--|--|
| Ulleskelf | Departed at 11:16 on time | No passengers noted |
| Church Fenton | Departed at 11:20 on time | 1 passenger alighted |
| Sherburn-in-Elmet | Departed 11:24 on time | 3 passengers alighted |
| Pontefract Baghill | Arrived 4 minutes early, departed on time at 11:43 | no passengers noted |
| Moorthorpe | Arrived 6 minutes early, departed on time at 11:59 | 2 passengers joined |
| Swinton | Departed on time at 12:08 | 3 passengers joined |
| Rotherham Central | Departed on time at 12:18 | 1 or 2 alighted, about 15 to 20 joined |
| Meadowhall | Departed at 12:25 a minute late | 1 or 2 alighted, 7 joined |
| Sheffield | Arrived at 12:31 3mins early | Couldn't count the passengers |

There is a lot of slack in the timetable, they should be able to reduce the overall running time by at least 10 minutes. It was a quiet time of the day to travel. Given the infrequency of this service, surely the limited number of trains should be run at the busier times of day when demand is highest? A number of passengers making the through journey (including a few business travellers) seemed surprised at the type of stock offered for this 1.5 hour

journey between major cities. This compares unfavourably with the regular Cross-Country service taking less than an hour.

Railfuture Calls for an Early Start to HS3

Branch Press Release

Railfuture, the national campaigning organisation for better rail services, warmly welcomes the Government's support for a high speed rail link between Leeds and Manchester.

Nina Smith, Railfuture's Yorkshire Branch Chair, said that the service should be routed via the old Woodhead route, and should also provide a high speed Sheffield - Manchester service. A delta junction at the eastern side would enable a high speed service between Leeds and Sheffield. Some Leeds services should go onward to Hull, York, Teesside and Newcastle. Some westbound services need to serve Manchester Airport, Liverpool, and possibly Chester.

She said that it is essential that the route is agreed, funding found, and construction started with the minimum of delay. It cannot wait for HS2 to reach Yorkshire. Costs should be kept down by building it as a 125mph route rather than an ultra-high speed line. Early completion is essential not just to join up the "Northern Powerhouse" cities, but also to free up space on both the Huddersfield and Hope Valley lines so that more semi-fast and stopping services can be run to serve the communities along those routes. Freed capacity will also enable a new station to be built at Milnsbridge, and for a semi-fast service to run from the Calder Valley to Leeds via Dewsbury.

Another advantage of a new high speed route will be to use it for fast container and other freight services between Hull, Manchester and Liverpool (and Ireland), thus removing some of the very heavy M62 lorry traffic. The new route will therefore need to be four-track in places.

Issued on 27 October 2014.

Midland Main Line Sparks – Dronfield Impact

by Mike Penney

At a recent meeting instigated by the Friends of Dronfield Station and the Dronfield Civic Society, Network Rail outlined its plans to electrify the rail line between Bedford and Sheffield which would require significant track and lineside changes. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Derbyshire County Council, North East Derbyshire County Council and Dronfield Town Council

Although replacing diesel trains by those powered by electricity is to be welcomed, the medium term impact on Dronfield could be significant as the Lea Road railway bridge (a listed structure) is too low for the new trains to pass underneath. This means the bridge will have to be raised or the track lowered (or both). It could also mean that Dronfield Station will have to be moved some distance away from its present location.

The changes proposed (particularly those to the Lea Road bridge) could cause severe disruption to access routes in and out of Dronfield Town centre. Also the land adjacent to the current station car park, earmarked as an eventual car park extension, will be required for a period by Network Rail as a work site.

The survey work for electrification will start over the next two years with a view to completion of the project by December 2020.

Harrogate Line Latest Progress

Extracts from their Bulletin

Following discussions between the Leader of Harrogate Borough Council, Councillor Richard Cooper, and the City of York Council Leader, Councillor James Alexander, the two Councils have unanimously approved complementary notices of motion in support of the Harrogate Line. In the meeting, Council members from all parties spoke of the potential benefits of electrifying the line and also stressed the need for related improvements in car parking, level crossings and stations. The role of Harrogate Chamber in initiating this work was recognised. The motion was passed unanimously.

Councillor Helen Flynn, Prospective Liberal Democrat MP for Harrogate & Knaresborough, arranged a private meeting with Baroness Kramer, Minister at the Department for Transport, at the recent Liberal Democrat Conference. Top of the list was progress with electrification of the Harrogate train line. Baroness Kramer outlined the process that all the northern lines that are proposed for electrification would have to go through. Essentially, the

Department has to assess each line on the strength of its business case, as the spending has to be strategic and represent best value for taxpayers' money. Helen outlined the role that the Chamber of Trade had played in initiating the strong case for electrification of the line, and its continued efforts in championing the cause. The Northern Rail Electrification Task Force is due to produce a report in December this year on the possible schemes to take forward.

Letter to the Yorkshire Post

by Nina Smith, Our Chair

This is the full version sent on 8 November rather than the edited version that was printed – Editor.

It is truly excellent news that the Prime Minister has stated that all bidders for the next Northern Rail franchise “will be required to propose plans for the removal of Pacers”. All Northern Rail passengers will rejoice! However, the one good thing you can say about a Pacer is that it is better than nothing, and currently there is a significant shortage of diesel trains across the whole of the rail network.

There are, therefore, two key questions to be answered. The first is what will replace the Pacers? The development of electrification in both the North and elsewhere is too slow for all the Pacers to be replaced by more modern diesel trains displaced by electrification. Lines not yet approved for electrification, but crying out for it, such as the Calder Valley, Harrogate and Hope Valley, are most unlikely to be electrified this decade.

The second is that the most important issue for passengers is not the replacement of the Pacers, important as this is, but the need for a large increase in the number of diesel train sets in the region. Overcrowding is so bad on busy period Northern Rail and TransPennine Express trains that passengers are regularly having to stand for significant periods of time. If a train is cancelled – and there have been far too many instances of this recently – the next train is so full that people are being left behind. On some services, for example on the western section of the Calder Valley line, passengers are regularly left behind at some stations because there are not enough train carriages for the number of passengers.

I am led to believe that no new diesel trains will be built, because current designs no longer meet emission standards, and the UK market is not big enough for the development of a new design. Is this really the case? Surely there are emissions compliant diesel engines that can be fitted to the better modern diesel train designs, such as the class 170s that Trans-Pennine will next year be reluctantly forfeiting to Chiltern Rail?

If the Prime Minister really means what he has said, the Government will take urgent steps to order sufficient new diesel trains to address the current critical issues of overcrowded trains, inadequate service levels, the forthcoming loss of the Class 170s, and the replacement of the Pacers. It is the least that Yorkshire and the rest of northern England require.

Selby & District Rail User Group

by Reg & Terry French

The Selby swing bridge major refurbishment was completed on time with very few problems, the main ones being road and not rail related. However difficulties occurred when services returned to normal as the time taken to open and close the bridge was longer than previously, delaying trains for over 30 minutes. This time factor is now being reduced so currently things are much improved.

Meetings have been held to consider difficulties to be resolved to enable the Selby Station area to be electrified. The bridge spanning the major road at the south end will have to be raised by over a metre with the road being closed for at least six months and the consequence of long diversions for road users including bus services. The footbridge between Platforms 1 and 2 will need replacing as will part of the Station roof canopy and this will have to be done in keeping with the Grade 2 Listed Building status of the Station. However there will be a bonus for disabled passengers as it has now been agreed with the Department for Transport (DfT) that lifts will be installed to provide step free access to Platforms 2 and 3.

Onward electrification to Hull and between Selby and Temple Hirst Junction is a live issue with considerable pressure on the Government from ourselves and major players in the Hull area. Additional funding has been sourced and it is felt a decision will be made before the end of the year or shortly afterwards.

In the rapidly expanding areas of Sherburn-in-Elmet and South Milford, improvements are being sought. Agreement has been reached for a help phone to be installed on Platform 1 at South Milford Station and real time information screens will be provided during the winter. The application for a modern Waiting Shelter on Platform 2

is to be included in the “National Stations Improvement Programme” and discussions are taking place with Northern Rail, Selby District Council and the Parish Councils regarding funding for a comprehensive CCTV coverage. A big problem exists in car parking facilities at Sherburn-in-Elmet Station. At present cars are parked on the road leading to the Station causing problems for those living in that area. Network Rail land has been identified for this purpose but funding is not available at present. Further discussions will involve Network and Northern Rail and the local authorities concerned.

Church Fenton Station will also be provided with modern customer information and car parking issues will also have to be resolved.

Network matters are a concern on the York to Hull services. The fifth TransPennine Express path over the Pennines has resulted in large time gaps for Northern service commuters returning home from work and in turn a loss of passengers. A Stakeholder meeting will take place shortly to consider what steps can be taken to resolve this difficulty.

A Selby and District Rail User Group Working Party is to meet the six Companies invited to bid for the Northern and TransPennine franchises. Arrangements are well in hand for these meetings to take place.

Halifax & District Rail Action Group

by Mark Parry

Railfuture’s Rail User Express highlighted the work of this Yorkshire Branch user group on 17 November. The Halifax & District Rail Action Group shared their ideas with Grand Central on how morning trains to London could be speeded up when the Grand Central Railways roadshow visited Halifax to engage with the public.

The Group sent a submission to the Northern and TransPennine franchise consultations, and is putting the group’s aspirations to the shortlisted bidders for Northern. To illustrate their case for better services on the Calder Valley line, they’ve produced a map showing each service as a separate line with the relevant station stops. The group wants to see a new station at Elland station within 5 years and electrification of the whole Calder Valley network by 2024.

The Halifax Group’s Committee discussed its concerns about the evening peak fares with Northern Rail managers, but they are pessimistic that the higher fares will be removed.

Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users’ Association

by Mark Parry

Railfuture’s Rail User Express also highlighted this Yorkshire Branch user group on 17 November. The Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users’ Association submitted their response to the Northern and TransPennine franchise consultations, and contacted all three bidders for the Northern franchise to arrange meetings with them. They are particularly asking for better rolling stock.

The Group is still waiting for new passenger information screens at three Penistone Line stations, they point out that fitting them at all stations is a commitment within the current Northern franchise. They note that the recently-upgraded public address system is working well. They also have an aspiration for the line to be double tracked.

And well done! In the Railfuture User Groups Awards, the Huddersfield, Penistone & Sheffield Rail Users’ Association won the gold award for their “Track Record magazine” – the judges were particularly pleased that it was addressed to the wider community, avoiding jargon.

Campaign for Better Transport meets Cllr James Lewis

by Mark Parry

The Campaign for Better Transport’s West and North Yorkshire Rail Group met with Councillor James Lewis on 3 November. James is now a director of Rail North as well as Charing the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Ticketless travel, evening peak fares, the Leeds HS2 station siting, HS3, electrification and the renewal of the Northern and TransPennine franchises were all discussed. More details will appear in the Campaign for Better Transport’s newsletter their members receive. For more details my contact details are on page 8.

Reducing the Impact of Rail Disruption

National Press Release

Press Release: The pressure group Railfuture is launching a campaign to reduce the impact on passengers when rail services are disrupted. “We all know rail disruption happens, but how it is handled remains the number one concern of rail passengers”. said Chris Fribbins (Head of Passenger Group, Railfuture) “Most passengers will have their horror stories about journeys that went wrong, but they will also have examples of where it went well and the

rail industry must learn from that experience. We want to spread the message of good practice on the railways and demand improvements for our passengers. We have examples of the rail industry getting it right with major projects (both past and current, for example Thameslink) and major events such as the 2012 Olympics, however there are also examples of information breakdown and passengers (and often front line railway staff) not knowing what is going on or what to do.

Although there has been a rapid growth in use of technology (web, Twitter, Facebook, Smartphone applications and customer information screens), passengers may not know about them. This information can be incomplete and contradictory, although it is often ahead of what the front line staff know, but there are still a significant number of passengers that rely on face to face contact with staff and use public, rather than personal, sources of information. We also know that passengers hate bus replacement services, so we want to ensure that these are kept to an absolute minimum. Our challenge to the rail industry is to tell us what you are doing about the problems and involve passengers in the solutions.”

Railfuture is seeking input from across the rail industry and from rail passengers. Both are invited to log their experiences on www.railfuture.org.uk/disruption or contact the project by email disruption@railfuture.org.uk. A draft report will be produced in February 2015 and a final report in July 2015.

The Minster Line Reinstatement

by David Pennie

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council's draft Local Plan published earlier in the year recognises the benefit that the reinstatement of the Beverley to York line could bring to the wider area in the longer term, and commits the Council to working with neighbouring authorities, partners and funding bodies to explore opportunities to promote the reinstatement. The Local Plan does not however protect from development the routes identified in the 2005 feasibility study round three areas where the original line has been built over, because the Council considers that the project is not deliverable by 2029 (the timeframe of the Local Plan) and therefore that protection of these parts of the route should not be included - which would put at risk any future reopening. Minsters Rail Campaign officers challenged the soundness of the Local Plan in this respect at the public examination of the Plan before a Planning Inspector on 14th October. The outcome will not be known for some time.

In the meantime Minster Rail Campaign officers hosted in York on 5th November the first ever meeting of representatives from all the local authorities along the whole route - Hull, East Riding, Ryedale, North Riding and York, plus also Network Rail - to try to garner support for the reinstatement. Chairman Peter Hemmerman said he believed there had never been a better time to examine the case for improved rail provision in the region, but a united front was needed to take forward the case for this reinstatement, which would be a major contribution to sustainable transport in the area. He said the East Riding of Yorkshire Council supported the line in principle but had concerns about whether the cost would ever be affordable, while representatives of York, North Yorkshire and Ryedale agreed that a viable business case needed to be made, but said this would have to go through all council leaders and the Local Enterprise Partnerships for funding bids.

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

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| Aire Valley Rail Users' Group | www.avrug.org.uk |
| Bradford Rail Users' Group | www.brug.org.uk |
| Halifax and District Rail Action Group | |
| Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group | Email: hlrug@live.co.uk |
| Harrogate Line Supporters' Group | www.harrogatechamber.org/harrogateline.htm |
| Hope Valley | www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk |
| Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users' Association | Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com |
| Hull and East Riding Rail Users' Association | www.hullrailusers.co.uk |
| Minster Rail Campaign | www.minstersrail.net |
| Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group | www.lasrug.btck.co.uk |
| Selby and District Rail Users' Group | www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/ghost-page/selby-district-rail-users-group/ |
| Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the | www.foscl.org.uk |
| Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group | Email: nhrawsons@googlemail.com |

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Branch Chair's Column

by Nina Smith

Northern Rail franchise and overcrowding.

By the time this issue of the Yorkshire Rail Campaigner is published, the Department for Transport (DfT) may have published its Invitations to Tender for both the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express franchises. The past few weeks have been hectic for me, trying to get Railfuture Yorkshire Branch's and user groups' views across. It would be inappropriate to say much more at this stage, other than one of the six bidders has been far more pro-active than the others in engaging with Railfuture and user groups.

The Prime Minister's statement in early November that the bidders for the Northern Rail must say how they plan to replace the Pacers is most welcome. However, the one good thing that can be said about the Pacers are that they are trains that run and carry passengers. There is one issue of even greater importance. How is the considerable number of EXTRA carriages/units that the franchise urgently requires to be sourced? Northern Rail peak period passengers are sick of overcrowded trains, and of disruption and cancellations caused in part by ageing units developing mechanical problems. It has been widely reported that no new diesel units will be built for the GB market as there is insufficient demand for a new design that meets emissions standards. Really? Despite agreed and likely electrification, there are a significant number of routes in the north that are unlikely to be electrified before the late 2020s, and others not at all.

Northern Rail currently has only 270 diesel train sets (DMUs) to cover all its non-electrified routes. In total, there are 536 carriages of varying capacities. I don't know what the peak period requirements are but observation of overcrowding suggests that another 200 carriages are probably required, plus more to allow for increased passenger numbers. Given that Northern's fleet comprises 102 Pacers, which are the first priority for replacement, plus 58 class 150s and 7 Class 155s which surely should go by 2025, and 42 class 156s, 45 class 158s and 18 class 153s which will be around 40 years old by 2030, **there is clearly a strong case for the early acquisition of 200 new diesel multiple units to cater for current overcrowding and pacer replacement. The Government should fund them.** After the electrification of the busier Northern Rail routes, they can be used to replace older Sprinter units, and thus provide modern rolling stock on non-electrified routes. There is also, of course, an urgent need for more trains across the national network including the south west, Wessex, East Anglia and south Wales.

However, even if a new production line can be started, deliveries will be at least 2-3 years away. Something needs doing sooner than that. A small number of units will be displaced in 2015 by the North West electrification and will be cascaded to other Northern Rail routes, but there is an urgent need for further extra carriages now. The Invitation to

Tender should encourage the next franchisee to hire or acquire surplus Mark 3 coaches , Driving Van Trailers (DVTs) and diesel locomotives to replace DMUs on key long distance routes – Leeds - Settle - Carlisle, Leeds - Harrogate(-York), Blackpool - York, Chester – Knutsford - Manchester, and Newcastle - Carlisle are routes that come to mind for conversion. As well as increasing capacity, these would result in a step change in journey comfort and quality. And because the need is so urgent, the DfT should fund Northern Rail to hire this rolling stock now! The need is now!

Cross-Country (XC).

Arriva's Cross Country franchise will run until 2019. In their latest stakeholder newsletter, XC state

“We will begin a programme of consulting stakeholders across the areas we serve in the New Year to learn their aspirations for CrossCountry. In the meantime, if you have anything you would like us to be aware of then do get in touch.”

Railfuture is to make an early response to XC, coordinated by Dr Steve Wright, National Liaison Officer with XC. Steve.wright@railfuture.org.uk Please contact Steve with any issues you would like him to raise. These may include:

- The reservation system that allows seats to be reserved up to 15 minutes before departure from intermediate stations, that is whilst those previously unoccupied seats are occupied by fare paying passengers.
- Overcrowding – more carriages are needed. Is XC's High Speed Train (HST) fleet used to the maximum? Meridians and HSTs should be cascaded to XC as soon as they are freed by electrification elsewhere.
- The recent abolition of the Quiet Coach.
- Catering services being withdrawn in the early evening.
- In the longer term, the Voyagers should have an internal refit with more comfortable seats, more legroom, more tables and more luggage space (more table seats helps here, as luggage can go between the seats).

Membership News:

Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

Please welcome new members: Mr Robert Nicholls of Sheffield & the Hope Valley Rail User Group.

Railfuture would wish to pass on their condolences to family and friends of member Graham Davies who died recently.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 28**) will be out late February 2015. If you would like the work of your group to be included please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 31 January 2015**. Alternatively call or text 07981 339558.

Diary

- **14 December 2014:** National Rail Timetable Change.
- **31 January 2015:** 14:00 Branch Annual General Meeting, Priory Street Centre, York. See flyer for more details.
- **7 March 2015:** 10:15 to 16:30 Railfuture Northern Conference, Oxford Place Methodist Mission, Leeds LS1 3AX. See flyer for more details.
- **Campaign for Better Transport Rail Meetings:** Please contact the editor for the 2015 dates. Held in the Grove Pub in Leeds, next to Bridgewater Place.