

## **RAILFUTURE RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS SERVICES BETWEEN LIVERPOOL LIME STREET/MANCHESTER PICCADILLY AND HULL/SCARBOROUGH**

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### **Introduction**

1. Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a bigger and better railway network for passenger and freight users. This response draws together the views of Railfuture branches and affiliated Rail User Groups, as authorised by Railfuture's national Board of Directors.

### **Background**

2. TransPennine Express has proposed to swap destinations on the Liverpool Lime Street–Scarborough and Manchester Piccadilly–Hull routes, to operate Liverpool Lime Street–Hull and Manchester Piccadilly–Scarborough from the December 2022 timetable.

### **General Observations**

3. Railfuture broadly welcomes TransPennine Express' proposals to switch destinations for this pair of services. Shorter journey times between Hull and the major cities of the North West will be of particular benefit to Hull, a city that has long suffered poor rail connectivity with other towns and cities in the North of England.
4. The loss of through services between Scarborough and Liverpool Lime Street may cause some minor hardship for through passengers and a slight reduction in passenger numbers, but we believe such reduction will be more than offset by the benefit of new through journey opportunities between Liverpool Lime Street and Hull. Similarly, the loss of through Liverpool services at Seamer and Malton will be more than equalled by corresponding introduction at Brough and Selby. Using ORR station footfall figures from 2019-20, Hull (2,382,772), Brough (457,598) and Selby (674,836) have a combined footfall of 3,515,206, while Scarborough (973,424), Malton (348,866) and Seamer (148,088) have a combined 1,470,378. Using the idea that passenger traffic potential for a station has some correlation to its existing traffic, would tend to suggest that new traffic brought to Brough and Selby with direct services to/from Liverpool would be more likely to be higher than that lost at Malton and Seamer.

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5. We welcome the proposed additional services for Scarborough from May 2023 but we are concerned that the intention is to develop and introduce *"a limited number of additional seasonal services"* on the York–Scarborough route. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, plans were well advanced for Northern Trains to provide an all-day hourly service on this route, to complement the TPE service and to provide a two-trains-per-hour service all day. Scarborough, as a prominent East Coast resort, generates much seasonal traffic and, prior to Covid, many trains were overcrowded. We consider that a minimum two-trains-per-hour service should be provided all year round, either by TPE alone or split between TPE and Northern. If the OLR-managed Northern operator will no longer be fulfilling the previous franchise commitment to run an all-day, seven days a week, hourly York–Scarborough service, we consider that TPE should instead be doing so from May 2023 or earlier. Infrequent additional services, whilst better than nothing, are not an adequate substitute for the fully enhanced service previously proposed. It is also essential that the intermediate stations at Seamer, Malton and Haxby (proposed) are served by all services.
  
6. We are very concerned that the December 2022 timetable proposes to perpetuate the inadequate service levels currently provided at intermediate stations between Huddersfield and Stalybridge. The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 states: *"Electrification from Manchester to Huddersfield and beyond, coupled with improved local train service frequency, is a priority for Greater Manchester on this route."* Electrification notwithstanding, the opportunity to address deficiencies in local train service frequency is being missed:
  - a. Most recent footfall levels at the four intermediate stations are as follows.

Annual Footfall	2019-20	2020-21
Slaithwaite	225,942	55,108
Marsden (Yorks)	174,974	40,000
Greenfield	432,830	84,746
Mossley	327,738	76,552
Source: ORR		

- b. Were the stations not situated on a congested main line, it is highly likely the Train Service Requirement would be set much higher already. Prior to the pandemic it was not uncommon for stations with annual footfall of 50,000 passengers to command a two-train-per-hour service all day, so we find it particularly disappointing that plans for these, considerably busier stations, include only hourly services outside the traditional peak hours.
  
  - c. We also note that the indicative hourly calling patterns supplied with the consultation would seem to allow for additional stops in Scarborough–Manchester Piccadilly services on this section of route. The indicative Hull–Liverpool Lime Street service is timed to take 18 minutes between Huddersfield and Stalybridge westbound, and 17 minutes eastbound. The indicative Scarborough–Liverpool Lime Street is timed to take 28 and 25 minutes respectively. We strongly urge that this situation is revisited.

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7. From December 2022, passengers travelling to Manchester from Hull, Brough, Selby, Scarborough, Seamer and Malton, will arrive at a different Manchester station to that currently used, a problem that happened to passengers from Slaithwaite, Marsden, Greenfield and Mossley in December 2018. This may cause hardship where a change of destination is introduced to longstanding travel patterns, notably for regular travellers accustomed to using a particular Manchester station. We believe the potential for mitigation of this problem through efficient interchange opportunities at Huddersfield and Stalybridge should be explored as a matter of urgency.