

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

No 18 September 2012

railfuture *Yorkshire*

President: Gerald Egan Vice-President: Alan Whitehouse

Midland Main Line Electrification Approved – At last!

Full Northern Hub Goes Ahead

by Graham Collett

The Government's long awaited High Level Output Statement (HLOS) for 2014-2019 - published just before the Parliamentary recess - brought very welcome (and surprising) news. The Midland Main Line (MML) electrification (£800 million) from Bedford to Sheffield finally got the go-ahead. Even more good news was the approval for the remainder of the Northern Hub scheme (£322 million), leading to a double celebration for rail campaigners in Yorkshire, Manchester and the East Midlands. The announcement also included approval for extension of electrification from Micklefield to Selby (with a turnback provided at Micklefield for local trains) and the connection to the East Coast Main Line (ECML), enabling the original GNER plan of an "Electric Horseshoe" (ie Leeds to London by two routes) to be achieved. The Selby electrification is very welcome, but will it continue to Hull? (see page 6 for more on this). Other improvements in Yorkshire include: Huddersfield Station capacity enhancement; West Yorkshire platform lengthening (including Leeds); South Yorkshire platform lengthening, and depot and stabling enhancement for extra trains.



These Class 222 Meridian trains (currently the mainstay of the St Pancras to Sheffield service) are likely to be replaced by electric trains in the next few years (photo: Philip Sangwell via Commons Licence)

Railfuture Branches along the MML had long campaigned for the upgrading and electrification of the route, with strong support from MPs along the route, East Midlands Councils and the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (including a report commissioned from ARUP last November - see YRC17). The approval of the full Northern Hub means that the current pinchpoints at Manchester Piccadilly and elsewhere on the cross-regional routes will be opened up, enabling more frequent services which are needed to meet the ever-increasing demand.

The HLOS announcement covered many other significant schemes, including a ring-fenced fund of £240million for upgrading of the ECML (see page 2 for details), and a Southampton-Midlands/Yorkshire 'Electric Spine', which should enable more through electric passenger and freight services. Chris Hyomes, Branch Chair, welcomed the HLOS: "We are very pleased that the government have recognised the benefit in good, modern electric rail services for helping to boost the much-needed economic recovery. We particularly welcome the approval of the MML electrification, which those of us in the rail lobby have long been pressing for. But it needs to go further - to Leeds and Doncaster - to ensure we make the best use of the new electric spine and to achieve the most efficient operation of the expected new electric trains."

East Coast Outlook

by Graham Collett

New Franchise, New Risks – beware the ides of the West Coast Main Line!

The starting gun for the new franchise has finally been fired and the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on the specification ends on September 18th. It does appear that they intend to adopt the same “write your own timetable” approach as on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and Great Western (GW) franchises. Bidders will be left to propose how many trains they will run and at what times, as long as they provide the minimum number specified and meet first and last train requirements.

They will be asked to consider (among other issues): the Better Railway Stations report; the potential gating of additional stations (not always welcome - Ed); improving passenger information through new technology; how they will keep passengers informed about planned works, unexpected disruption and timetable changes and how they will plan for and provide frequent, high quality, accessible and well-managed rail replacement services during periods of disruption.

Research by Passenger Focus (PF), put punctuality and reliability as the top two priorities for the new franchise. Getting a seat (3rd), journey speed (4th) and frequency (6th) are also all high priorities for improvement. They listed the issues to address as: balancing the needs of end to end passengers with those making long distance, non-London, inter-regional journeys; a higher frequency Saturday service; later evening trains on weekdays (particularly Saturdays – Ed); earlier Sunday morning services into London; and the need for a later train north of Newcastle.

Value for money is also a significant issue - only 57% of passengers are satisfied with the current East Coast fares, despite 50% travelling on advance tickets. Many find the fares structure confusing. PF feel that the cost of flexibility is too high – particularly for business passengers. One issue which tends to be overlooked is the lower walk-on fares offered by our two Open Access Operators – Grand Central and Hull Trains. Reg French of Selby Rail Users Group asked about the position of Hull Trains vis-a-vis the forthcoming franchise at one of the recent DfT consultation meetings. He was advised that the Open Access Agreement extended to 2016, when the position could be considered again.

As if the uncertainty for rail users - and concerns over who might win the franchise – were not enough, the outcome on the WCML (announced on 15 August) made us all sit back in our (reserved) seats. Whilst we all expected the incumbent Virgin Trains to carry on after 15 years of mixed blessings (high fares and crowded trains but many more of ‘em and a major infrastructure upgrade), First Group triumphed with a higher (and many feel unrealistic) bid.

And we all know what happened (twice) on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) with unrealistic bids! We know the country is in a poor economic state and getting more cash in HMG’s coffers is key, but it does look as though those greedy guys at the Treasury got a little enthusiastic when they saw the money mirage. Combine this with some much-needed through services from London to Bolton, Blackpool and Shrewsbury, new electric stock for the Birmingham to Scotland services and planned cuts in standard anytime fares and the DfT just had to go for it. But to be fair, the First bid was only £700 million more than Virgin’s, despite earlier leaks suggesting it was much higher. So, would-be ECML franchisees, think long and hard and make sure your forecasts are realistic before you enter the fray!

Infrastructure Upgrade – but what about the Overhead Line Equipment and Grantham to Doncaster?

The good news in the HLOS statement was the ring-fenced £240 million enhancement of the ECML. The Peterborough bottleneck - combined with much needed extra platforms and enlarged entrance (funded through a separate scheme)- is at last to be tackled, together with four tracking from Huntingdon to Fletton and a new bay platform and improved (and much welcome) track capacity at Doncaster. No mention though of the work needed to upgrade the overhead line equipment to make it more robust. Or of improving capacity on the two track section between Grantham and Doncaster where more cross-overs or more bi-directional running/capacity are surely a must-have if contingency planning is to be a reality. The current arrangements when single-line working is needed can cause huge delays – as some of us know to our cost!

Goodbye to the HSTs and Hello to the IEPs

The new Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains, will replace the all the Intercity 125 trains (High Speed Trains or HSTs) on the East Coast Main Line by 2018. This was announced by the Transport Secretary, Justine Greening on 25 July when she approved a £4.5bn contract with Agility Trains to supply 596 carriages under this programme. (continued on page 4)

Branch Key Contacts

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Branch Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/RailfutureYorkshire>

(NB you don't need to be a Facebook member to access this site)

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Chairman's Column by Chris Hyomes

Yes, it's all been happening in Yorkshire since the last edition of YRC!

Shortly after publication of the June issue, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced a £58 million scheme for the Tram-Train trial in South Yorkshire, linking Rotherham & Sheffield (see July Railwatch - Ed); this was followed by the announcement in July that Leeds was to receive funding of up to £173.5 million for a New Generation Transport scheme (ie a Trolleybus system).

Two weeks later on July 16th saw the publication by the DfT of the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) for Control Period 5 (CP5) covering 2014 to 2019, outlining spending of £ 9.4 billion on our railway system. Approximately half of this is for schemes already committed, eg North Transpennine, NW Lancashire and Great Western electrification. The two schemes to come out of the HLOS to benefit the Yorkshire region are Midland Main Line electrification (at last!) and extension of the North Transpennine to Selby - yes Selby! What on earth are the DfT thinking of not taking the wires out to Hull? (see also page 6 - Ed) In my mind it is rather like building a house and not putting the roof on! I am currently trying to ascertain if the wires will be continued through to Leeds. The HLOS makes no mention of it but the Initial Industry Plan for CP5* (see page 6), indicates that costings are/were being prepared for additional route options, including Sheffield to Doncaster and Sheffield to Leeds.

While all the recent announcements are excellent news for the public transport users of Yorkshire, these schemes barely scratch the surface of what is required and I personally am not convinced that trolleybuses and Tram-Trains are the future. However, I will watch their development and comment accordingly.

While the DfT may be moving in the right direction when it comes to transport investment, sadly some of our MPs are seeing things differently. A West Yorkshire MP has recently (on BBC Radio Leeds) called for a bypass, possibly a tunnel under Saltaire as the only answer to the problems of the Saltaire roundabout. Meanwhile two MPs (one from Manchester and one from Derbyshire) are calling for a new transpennine motorway linking the M1 in South Yorkshire to the M60/M67 in Manchester, possibly using one of the Woodhead tunnels to minimise environmental impact. Railfuture will be keeping a watchful eye open for further developments.

* Initial Industry Plan England and Wales - Proposals for Control Period 5 and beyond September 2011
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/IIP.aspx>

Membership Matters by Paul Colbeck

There have been no new members since the last newsletter, therefore please can you help the branch generate new ones. Again thank you to the four people who have agreed to convert to e-mail. The postage and printing costs saved will be re-invested into ideas to increase membership within the Yorkshire branch and the greater Railfuture.

Wanted - a Deputy Editor for Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

With the expansion of the newsletter to 6 pages (and possibly 8 pages in future), help is urgently needed to collect material and edit it. Journalism and (ideally) desktop publishing experience is desirable, but not essential. Please contact the Editor as soon as possible if you can help.

Railfuture Yorkshire Autumn Meeting

Saturday 22nd September at 2 pm

in the Terrace Room, Hebden Bridge Town Hall HX7 7BY

https://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&q=Hebden+Bridge+Town+Hall+HX7+7BY&ie=UTF-8&ei=HLonUI6wAoOt0QXkuIHoCQ&sqi=2&ved=0CDcQ_AUoAg

starting at 2pm

Directions from Hebden Bridge Station: Hebden Bridge Town Hall is about half-a-mile (10-15 minutes walk) from the station.

Leave the station building and turn right. Follow the footpath across the river bridge. Then cross the road and walk down a footpath (a car park is on your right) to the park. Walk along the park roadway, keeping the skate park on your left., and then bear left with the sports courts on your left. Cross the canal by the light coloured bridge and walk through the Memorial Gardens. Turn left on leaving the gardens and then cross the main road at the traffic lights. Walk along Bridge Gate (Holt's greengrocers is on the corner) and turn left immediately after the Shoulder of Mutton pub into St George's Street. The Town Hall is on your left immediately across the river bridge. You can get a bus from the station to the town centre (but not all the way to the Town Hall). This is a one stop journey. Bus A leaves at xx38: bus B at xx58: bus E at xx08: bus 500 at xx10.

Railfuture Branch and National Events Diary

Saturday 22nd September: **Branch Meeting, Hebden Bridge Town Hall** – see page 4 for details

Saturday 29th September: **Wensleydale Railway will host the UK Book Launch of Tim Fischer's "Trains Unlimited in the 21st Century."** – for details http://www.wensleydalerrailway.com/html/trains_unlimited.html or ring their Information Line on 08454 50 54 74 (NB advance booking needed to reserve signed copies of the book)

Saturday 3rd November: **Rail Users' Conference, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham** – details at: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/> or see Railwatch

Saturday 10th November: **HPSRUA/Penistone Line Joint Meeting, Methodist Church Hall, Silkstone Common 10.15** – for details contact Rowena Chantler penistoneline@gmail.com Tel 07912 753817

Monday 12th November: **SELRAP Open Members Meeting, New Road Community Centre, Earby 19.00**
For details <http://www.selrap.org.uk/> or ring Andy Shackleton on 01282 814358)

Monday 14th January 2013: **SELRAP Open Members Meeting, Herriots Hotel, Broughton Road, Skipton 19.00**
For details <http://www.selrap.org.uk/> or ring Andy Shackleton on 01282 814358)

Saturday 19th or 26th January 2013: **Branch Meeting in Harrogate** – details in YRC 19

Saturday 23rd March 2013: **Branch Meeting - Herriot Hotel, Skipton (including guest speakers to mark 50 years since the Beeching Report)**

Beeching Report 50th Anniversary – March 2013

To mark this event we are planning to produce a special supplement to YRC No 20 (which will also contain details of the 2013 AGM). Were you involved in saving a line or service that was threatened by Beeching's proposals? If so, we would like to know about it! Please send your (or your RUG's story) to the Editor at the address below as soon as possible, to enable planning of the supplement.

Press Date for January 2013 issue

Please email (preferred) or post material, news, feedback etc to:

Graham Collett (YRC 19), 16 Wilstrop Farm Rd Copmanthorpe York YO23 3RY

graham.collett@railfuture.org.uk to arrive by Saturday 8th December 2012.

Please note corrected email address

Goodbye to the HST and Hello to the IEP (continued from page 2)

Financial close has been reached for IEP Phase 1, which covers the provision of 369 electric and bi-mode (diesel/electric) vehicles for GW services. Commercial close has been reached for Phase 2 which covers 227 vehicles (60 electric and 23 bi-mode units) for ECML services, with an option for a further 270 vehicles (30 electric units). Financial close on Phase 2 is expected in 2013 (our thanks to *Railway Gazette International* <http://www.railwaygazette.com/> for these details). According to the DfT, journeys between London and Newcastle (where HSTs are currently used on some services to make up for the lack of electric trains and for Inverness and Aberdeen workings) will potentially be reduced by 13 minutes by the use of the IEPs. So the HSTs will finally be replaced – at least on the new franchisee's services – but there is no news yet on Grand Central's or CrossCountry's HST replacement plans or any indications of what will happen to the surplus East Coast HSTs (but see also Nina Smith's article on page 5).

SELRAP - Where Next for the Campaign?

With support and guidance from Network Rail, SELRAP has prepared a remit for the GRIP3 study that is pivotal to progressing the reinstatement of the Skipton-Colne rail line. Putting the remit out to tender, and sourcing an estimated £250,000 funding to pay for it, is the next crucial step. If you can help, or would like more details please visit <http://www.selrap.org.uk/> or call 01282 814358.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Graham,

I live in Knaresborough and would be greatly pleased to see the Leeds Harrogate York line (much used) with better rolling stock, one or two new stations (a second one at Knaresborough is mooted but hasn't become a serious possibility yet; increased housing on the south-east side of town will make it more viable) and electrification.

Very partisan views I know but one has to start somewhere.

Nicholas Evens

(thanks Nicholas, great to have your comments. We hope that the new station at Knaresborough will go ahead soon and the campaign by the Harrogate Chamber of Commerce for electrification will be successful - Ed)

Don't Scrap the HSTs!

by Nina Smith



More HSTs are urgently needed to increase capacity on Cross Country services (photo: Peter Skuce)

The welcome order for bi-mode IEPs and the electrification of the Midland and Great Western Main lines will displace most of the HST fleet. What will happen to them? They are too good to be scrapped en masse. They are many (most?) passengers' favourite train. Yet we are hearing ominous put downs about "40 year old trains".

Also displaced will be the Meridians working the Midland Main Line (although this assumes that the much rumoured addition of a power car doesn't happen).

Here's what I'd like to see happen:

- HSTs to take over all workings on the Cross Country (XC) franchise except for those shorter journeys worked by Class 170 diesel units. They would displace the loathed Voyager trains.
- Other HSTs, some shortened (with the spare carriages being used to lengthen some XC sets), could be transferred to other long distance services including some Scottish services, Chiltern Rail's Marylebone – Birmingham service, Arriva Trains Wales' (ATW's) long distance routes (Manchester – South Wales and Cardiff-Holyhead), East Midland Trains' (EMT's) Liverpool- Norwich service and Northern's Leeds – Carlisle service.
- Surplus Meridians and Voyagers (re-seated) should be used for replacement of Class 158 diesel units on middle distance regional routes e.g Cambrian Coast, the Wessex services, Newcastle – Carlisle, and to supplement Class 175 diesel units on the Manchester – North Wales services; the excellent 175s could then run in pairs to ease overcrowding.
- Both HSTs and Meridians/Voyagers could also be made available to open access operators running on non-electrified routes.

Nina Smith is Vice-Chairman of Railfuture Yorkshire, but the above article is written in a personal capacity

The Important Role of our Rail User Groups

Rail User Groups (RUGs) are the eyes and ears of the rail user across the rail network. We are lucky to enjoy a particularly strong coverage of the rail lines in our Branch area, with more than 20 groups keeping a watch over the services and station facilities provided by the train operators and Network Rail and suggesting improvements to these where needed. Over half of these groups are affiliated to Railfuture Yorkshire, and we are very grateful to them for keeping us in touch with local developments. We included a directory of Yorkshire RUGs in YRC 18. Any corrections and additions to this - especially missing website addresses - would be appreciated.

Penistone Line Users battle on for Nirvana of Half-Hourly Service

Twenty-four years after an hourly service was introduced on the line, the Huddersfield, Penistone Sheffield Rail Users Association (HPSRUA) is still battling on for a half-hourly frequency. Yet despite population growth and housing developments over the last 24 years, and increased passenger use (up by nearly 6% in 2011) they may still have to wait until 2020 for their half-hourly timetable! For more information contact Andrew Oldfield (address on page 3).

Electrification Plans for Yorkshire & Humberside

by Tony Ross

In issue 701 of RAIL magazine, which I received Sat 21st July, there is a map showing "Electrification on Britain's railways", colour-coded into 5 categories:

- (1) Existing electrified network: Overhead line.
- (2) Existing electrified network: Third rail.
- (3) Routes committed for electrification (as per the recent HLOS, but still not absolutely guaranteed, as I understand it).
- (4) Routes proposed for electrification in the September 2011 Initial Industry Plan (IIP).
- (5) Route for conversion from third rail to overhead.

Midland Main Line, and Leeds to Colton Junction (ECML) and Micklefield to Selby are shown under (3), by their inclusion in the current HLOS (3).

Selby to Hull, Selby to Temple Hirst Junction (ECML), Sheffield to Doncaster and Swinton to South Kirkby Junction (on the Doncaster - Wakefield Westgate electrified section) are shown under (4).

The IIP (around 170 pages of it) came out at the end of last September. See:

<http://www.atoc.org/clientfiles/File/Final%20IIP%20EW.pdf>

Under paragraph 10.1 (Developing HLOSSs) (p151) it says "The industry does not believe all these outputs (listed under the start of paragraph 10) should necessarily be specified in the HLOS" (they weren't), and later under paragraph 10.1.7 (Journey time) it says "During the coming years there will be opportunities to review and where possible improve journey times. Some of the key drivers will be 'further electrification'" (e.g. towards Hull, Middlesbrough). York - Scarborough was conspicuous by its absence from the IIP.

The Midland Main Line and North Trans-Pennine electrification schemes were covered under paragraph 8.2.3 (p106ff) but I haven't been able to track down any specific reference to electrification north of Sheffield.

There was also a mention of modernising the section between Ferriby and Gilberdyke under paragraph 9.4.6 (renewal-led opportunities) (p142/3).

I don't know of course if the lobbying of Transport Minister Teresa Villiers by Selby MP Nigel Adams (assisted by Reg French of Selby Rail Users' Group) contributed to the promotion of the Micklefield to Selby electrification from Category 4 to Category 3. But it looks as though Selby - Hull (including Selby - Temple Hirst) and Middlesbrough (from Northallerton), and the in-fill bits north of Sheffield may have to wait until CP6 (post-2019).

There is considerable concern from the business community about the omission of Hull from the Selby scheme. The Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce have stressed the need for urgent improvements to the existing rail infrastructure and pointed out that these are essential for the wider economic growth and prosperity of the Hull & Humber region. The Humber Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have expressed their disappointment that electrification would stop 30 miles from Hull and are looking forward to seeing Network Rail's business case that justifies this decision. They will work with our MPs to lobby Government to include Hull in its proposals. The *Hull Daily Mail* (17/07/12), under a heading "Fight is on after city rail link snub", vigorously backs such a lobby and says that under the new proposals, Hull would be the largest city in the UK without electrified railways.

It isn't clear whether electrification north of Sheffield would include the loop through Rotherham Central. But the announcement of the Rotherham tram-train project in May this year complicates matters. From a point near Meadowhall, a new section of track will connect the tramway to the 'heavy rail' freight only section (Woodburn Junction, Sheffield, to Rotherham Central Junction) and then on the Rotherham Central passenger loop to a new tramway station at or near Parkgate Shopping Centre, north of Rotherham. 'Supertram' uses 750v DC electrification, so that would presumably leave the Rotherham passenger loop off a future 25kv AC electrification.