

# RESPONSE TO THE TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PLAN – LONG TERM RAIL STRATEGY.

*Version 4. 15.4.18*

## OUR INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

This response is on behalf of Railfuture, and has been developed by our branches (geographical regions) that cover the area of Transport for the North. Railfuture is a membership organisation campaigning for qualitative and quantitative improvements in the GB rail network. Railfuture's membership comprises both individuals and local rail user and development groups. Our comments and recommendations relating to connectivity inevitably overlaps with neighbouring regions/other UK nations, and we assume that there will be close collaborative working between regional/national bodies to ensure the best connectivity for mutual benefit.

Our submission specifically concerns the Long Term Rail Strategy, as that is our area of expertise. However, we would like to emphasise our agreement with the financial objectives shown in the STP, and with the environmentally sustainability objectives shown in the ISAP. We consider a substantial modal shift from road and air to rail is vital in helping to achieve the necessary level of greenhouse gas omissions.

Overall, Railfuture warmly welcomes the Long Term Rail Strategy. It is ambitious, aspirational and long-term. It is based on a strong analysis of the current situation, and we are in broad agreement with your analysis. Our response will therefore concentrate on areas where we consider that the strategy could be improved, on areas where we feel greater emphasis or clarity is needed, and on areas that we feel require need serious review; we also acknowledge that this is a high-level strategy.

**Electrification** could be said to define the north-South divide. We would like to have seen strong emphasis in the strategy on the need for a major electrification programme, because of all the well-known benefits of an electric railway. This should embrace the early electrification of the Midland Main Line through to Sheffield, and beyond to join the ECML at South Kirkby junction and implementing the recommendations of the Northern Electrification Task Force.

We would like the LTRS to have included more about **expanding access to the railway network** by bringing or returning the railway to those towns and large villages currently without a station or a railway, and on which there are sufficient economic or environmental grounds for doing so. We consider it very important that TfN engages with Planning Authorities to ensure that disused trackbeds are protected. Urgent examples here include Leeds CC re the Wetherby trackbed and the East Leeds Orbital Road, and East Riding Council re the Beverley-York line trackbed. Changes to the

environment resulting from climate change and climate chaos means that the resilience of rail routes must be ascertained as part of the LTRS, and where there is concern regarding this, then alternatives should be developed as a priority. One area of such concern is the Selby to Hull line.

We consider that TfN needs to invest early resources into ascertaining the most effective ways to meet the need for new high speed North South (HS2), East West passenger (HS3/NPR), and East West freight railways, including whether HS2 should be routed to the east of Barnsley should a route south of Huddersfield be chosen for the high speed NPR line. We feel that the N-S high speed railway (HS2) and the E-W high speed railway (NPR) should be integrated both with each other and with the conventional railway, and we do not feel that a new high speed (NPR) Leeds-Manchester link via Bradford will meet the Core Cities target of maximum 30 minute rail journeys between Leeds-Sheffield and Sheffield- Manchester. Whilst the planned “T” station at Leeds is a big improvement on earlier proposals for Leeds’s HS2 station, we feel that a major connectivity opportunity is lost if HS2 trains do not use the existing Leeds City station, and urge TfN to revisit the currently planned solution. There is also a need for more detail on HS2/conventional railway and NPR connectivity elsewhere. For instance, do you plan to use HS2 tracks for NPR services to make journeys like Manchester to Crewe quicker or Leeds to Manchester Airport quicker? We also consider that NPR services need to speedily connect key cities/destinations on the West Coast Main Lines north of Wigan with Leeds and Sheffield, to rebalance the fact that HS2 will give such cities much faster journeys to London and Birmingham; this is to aid the core TfN objective of “rebalancing” the national economy to narrow the gap between the north of England and London.

Finally, whilst we recognise that TfN’s remit does not currently include light rail/tram systems (except with regard to multi-modal ticketing, and to inter-modal connectivity), we would like the strategy to include reference to the importance of light rail supplementing heavy rail in the metropolitan areas (and remembering that much of the Manchester and Tyneside systems replaced heavy rail). In the north of England, tram/light rail systems are urgently required in at least Leeds /Bradford and Liverpool, to drive economic development in those cities by providing connectivity between suburbs , the CBD and other employment and leisure zones, and the national rail network.

## **SECTION2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES.**

The LTRS’s Conditional Outputs are divided into five categories – the 5Cs. These appear in both S2 Vision and Objectives and S4 Conditional outputs. We have found it easiest to make our comments in one place, which will be later under S4.

## **SECTION 3. WHY? RAIL IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE.**

### **RAIL’S ROLE IN THE NORTH (3.12 to 3.20)**

**ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND SKILLS/SERVICE FREQUENCY AND JOURNEY TIME.**

We agree about the importance of commuting for employment and educational purposes (3.12), and therefore feel that TfN should emphasise that this need should not be compromised by the need to develop “Rolls-Royce” inter-urban services. The inferior service from May 2018 for commuters from Marsden, Greenfield and Slaithwaite to accommodate a sixth TPE service per hour between Leeds and Manchester is a very real example of this happening.

It is good that you give the Durham Coast route as an example of a service that requires significant speeding up (3.20). We would add here that the planned Northern Connect Stockton- Durham- Newcastle service should be routed via the existing freight “Stillington” line (from Stockton to Ferryhill) as an example of how Tees-Tyne rail connectivity can be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Additionally, connecting services from Darlington to the sub--regional centre of Middlesbrough average only 33 m.p.h. – some way short of the aspirational 40 m.p.h. referred to in at paragraph 2.11.

## PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY.

We support your recognition of the importance of punctuality, and reliability, as well as the importance of connectivity. Whilst we recognise that operational factors do not always allow for optimum connectivity, it is important that journeys involving more than one train are as seamless and fast as possible. It is especially important that timetables are cast so that as far as possible there are no “just missed” connection times in cases where the connecting service is not intensive, and that great emphasis is put on holding connections for late running services, at least where this will have little or no knock-on effect for other services. This is especially true for the last services of the day, and it is unacceptable that, for example, TPE has failed to hold the last York-Scarborough service to await the arrival of a late running connecting service from London. An example of an unacceptably long wait for a connection was that experienced a few years ago at Retford by the lead author of this response, where the service from Lincoln was timetabled to arrive about three minutes after the departure of the hourly EC service to Leeds.

## CROWDING

Whilst the capacity improvements on both Northern and TPE trains up to and including from December 2019 are most welcome, we fear that there will still be unacceptable crowding on some routes and additional investment in capacity (more and/or longer trains) will be required. We also believe that TfN should be concerned about the serious overcrowding on some Cross Country services serving the north, and consider you should strongly seek to have this rectified by DfT when the next XC franchise is awarded. We are glad that TfN plans to have an active role in inputting into the specification of long distance franchises that serve the north of England. One short-term answer may be for XC to acquire more redundant HST 125 (class 43) sets for the Scotland/NE-SW services, and to have these adapted to meet the 2020 Disability Access regulations. (Scotrail and Great Western are already doing this.)

## MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION.

We fully agree that multi-modal integration must be a core aim of the strategy. The train journey is not an end in itself, but part of a journey from home (or hotel etc) to workplace, leisure venue etc etc. Coordination between train and bus/tram services at local stations, and adequate cycle and car parking (complete with electric vehicle charging points) are vital. We do hope that you can quickly succeed in introducing an all-mode Oyster type fare structure and payment scheme across the North of England, although we wonder if this can be all-mode without primary legislation. In the meantime, as a “quick win”, tram/light rail tickets should be available from TOC ticket machines on all stations on routes serving metropolitan areas with such systems, as the need to buy tickets at the system can result in missed connections and late appointments.

## **BUSINESS LINKS WITHIN AND TO/FROM THE NORTH.**

We support the need for new stations, and in some cases, new routes (heavy or light rail) to serve out-of-town workplace locations. The UK’s track record to date on this has been grossly inadequate.

Similarly, we are glad that you have identified the potential for a large increase in rail freight to and from such locations. A feature of many railway routes is the presence of large logistics hubs and factories next to the railway but not rail-served; it is time for the private siding to make a comeback, and for more strategically placed but localised container (intermodal) transfer depots.

## **LONG DISTANCE CONNECTIVITY**

You are right to point out various examples of poor or non-existent direct inter-regional connectivity. Much could be done here using existing lines; these include North East and Yorkshire to Cardiff; ditto to North Wales (and Anglesey - freight for Ireland); NE, York and Leeds to Leicester; NE and Yorkshire to Milton Keynes and Oxford; Liverpool and Manchester to Leicester; Leeds to Lincoln: Leeds to North Lincolnshire (Scunthorpe/Grimsby/Cleethorpes); Liverpool and Manchester to Lincoln; Cumbria and Lancashire to the East Midlands and Lincoln; Manchester and Liverpool to the SW; NE/Yorkshire to SE/Wessex; (Glasgow and) Carlisle to the East Midlands.

We feel the strategy should give recognition to the current and potential future role of Open Access Operators in inaugurating routes either ignored by franchised operators (e.g. Bradford-Halifax-London; and Sunderland-London) or where the franchised TOC offers a very restricted service (e.g. Hull-London).

In freight terms, the current and growing importance of Liverpool Docks for import, export and trans-shipment (Ireland-UK-continental Europe) means that there is a strong need for a new East-West route from Liverpool Docks to Manchester, South and West Yorkshire, the NE, Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and beyond; and for developing the capacity of routes from the port of Immingham. Reopening of the Colne to Skipton route will give enhanced and speeded up freight capability from Liverpool to North and West Yorkshire and the NE.

## **EAST-WEST ACROSS THE NORTH.**

In para 54 about the Trans Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU), you propose high level strategic outputs of six inter-urban services an hour for trains of eight vehicles, and *up to* (our emphasis) two local services an hour, plus one freight path per hour (we are unclear from the wording as to whether or not this dependent on W10/W12 gauging.) In our view the balance is wrong; there must be a **minimum** of two local services an hour on each section of route. Busy local services must not be sacrificed for city to city connectivity.

## **TRU related case-study: Calderdale-Brighouse/Huddersfield-Mirfield-Leeds/Wakefield corridors.**

The section of TransPennine route centred on Mirfield and linked to the upper Calder Valley-Brighouse corridor is an example where capacity enhancements in the TRU should be planned to deliver benefits for local and inter-urban as well as inter-city services. The Brighouse line reopened to passengers in 2000 but its service has always been limited by capacity/pathing issues around Huddersfield/Mirfield. Elland station is expected to open in 2022 and this should be seen as an opportunity to upgrade service along the route. Despite low service frequency and speed passenger growth at Brighouse over ten years to 2016-17 was roundly 390% (calculated from ORR footfall statistics).

Specifically, with Leeds-Huddersfield-Manchester upgrade imminent, and given the vital importance for both inter-city and commuting, we set out our vision of a desired post-TRU service pattern linking the Calder Valley-Brighouse and Leeds-Huddersfield corridors. Local and interurban services, some semi-fast and some stoppers, should include:

- **Halifax-(Elland)-Brighouse-Dewsbury- Leeds** (new service; with fast running Brighouse-Leeds this could reduce Halifax-Leeds journey time from present 36 mins to about 30mins)
- **Manchester-Calder Valley-(Elland)-Brighouse-Dewsbury-Leeds** (existing service which could become one stop Brighouse-Leeds giving potential c13 minute reduction in upper Calderdale-Leeds journey times)
- **Leeds-Huddersfield/Huddersfield-Manchester** serving all stops half-hourly (rather than “stop-hopping” as in the May 2018 TPE pattern)
- **Manchester** (or perhaps **Preston**) - **upper Calderdale stations – (Elland )- Brighouse - Huddersfield**, (new hourly service providing connectivity from Rochdale/East Lancs/upper Calderdale to Huddersfield serving latent demand for work, business, education and other purposes)
- **Leeds-Bradford-Halifax-(Elland)-Brighouse-Huddersfield** stopper (existing hourly service which it is hoped may be increased to half hourly)

A further possibility would be a service from Calderdale/Huddersfield through Wakefield and Castleford to York, a route that could be upgraded for higher speed providing additional capacity and new connectivity avoiding the congested area of Leeds station.

The above should be achievable if TRU results in a mainly four track electrified railway with state-of-the-art signalling and other line speed improvements to increase capacity, allowing parallel movements (for example in the Huddersfield-Mirfield area). We hope that this would provide for six inter-city (TPE) services per hour, but if capacity remains an issue, this could be reduced to 5/hour to accommodate high quality local services. The intercity/TPE pattern could be broadly as now (April 2018):

- Liverpool-Edinburgh,
- Man Airport-Newcastle,
- Man Airport-Middlesbrough,
- Liverpool-Scarborough and
- Manchester-Hull

Five eight-carriage trains an hour would greatly increase current capacity on the Manchester-Huddersfield- Leeds inter-city route).

Through an ambitious TRU, we also hope that a long needed station at Milnsbridge/Golcar could be opened.

Para 3.55. We consider electrification to be essential not just for the Diggle route, but across much of the north in accordance with the justifications outlined in the Northern Electrification Task Force Report, starting with their highest priorities, the Calder Valley routes from Leeds to Manchester and Preston, via the Bradford and Brighouse routes, and the Harrogate Line.

## NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL (HS3)

We agree with the recommendation of the Core Cities report that Manchester should have a 30 minute journey time to both Sheffield and Leeds, and there should be a 30 minute journey time between Leeds and Sheffield. Current thinking seems to be favouring a planned 30 minute Leeds-Manchester journey via Bradford involving long sections of tunnelling, including under the Pennines. Sheffield- Manchester would be speeded up by an upgraded Hope Valley route. However, we are not convinced that this is the best solution due to:

- The nature of the Hope Valley route (two track, sharp bends etc) is such that 30 minutes Sheffield – Manchester is unachievable
- Extra capacity is required on the Hope Valley line to improve the woeful local services
- NPR via Bradford with long tunnelling would be expensive, but of no benefit to Sheffield.

There are other options for NPR including a route across the Pennines somewhere between the Diggle and Hope Valley routes, and heavy engineering (including 4 track) upgrades of the Diggle and Hope Valley routes.

We therefore strongly recommend that TfN/DfT commission a very detailed engineering, financial and impact option appraisal of the possible ways and viability of achieving the Core Cities objective.

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We note that the Bradford route proposals would include a new interchange station in central Bradford. We understand the proposal put forward by Bradford Council includes interchange between NPR and the Calder Valley line. We feel most strongly that if NPR is built through Bradford with a new interchange station, that the joining up of Airedale/Wharfedale lines to the North with the Calder and Pudsey lines to the south must be part of this development. We would go further and state that the joining up of the routes into Forster Square and Interchange **(Bradford Crossrail) should be a TfN (and Leeds City region) priority**, as a key component of Bradford District's economic regeneration. People and businesses to the north, south, east and west of central Bradford (both in the outlying parts of the Bradford Council area and beyond) need rail connectivity with places on the currently separated networks.

We repeat here our view that high speed and conventional services should use the same station in Leeds. Part of any solution would involve less local and longer distance services terminating at Leeds, and ideally four-tracking the railway on the eastern approach to Leeds station.

## **NORTHERN LEISURE AND TOURISM ECONOMY**

### TOURIST DESTINATIONS

We are delighted that finally the importance of good quality public transport to tourist and leisure destinations has been realised. Not only will this encourage day trippers to use rail, but it also opens up many more opportunities for foreign visitors. Both internal and foreign visitor numbers to coastal resorts are increasing, not least due to the weak pound. We feel that the opportunities created should include reopening closed routes that benefit tourism, aid commuting, and/or reduce traffic congestion (e.g. York-Beverley). We also recommend that TOCs should be franchised to operate, as part of the rail timetable, bus services to important destinations currently (and in some cases perhaps forever) either without a railway or whose rail connection is difficult from many points of origin. Malton to Pickering and Whitby, and Penrith to Keswick and the West Lakes are examples. As TFN covers the south bank of the Humber, we would ask that you consider connectivity to Cleethorpes as part of your planning.

### EVENING AND WEEKEND TRAVEL.

This is partially related to the paragraph above. Sunday is now almost as important a day for travelling as the other days of the week. Increasing numbers of people are being employed on Sundays, it is a big day for shopping and sporting fixtures and there are innumerable leisure events taking place. It is also a favoured day for family visits. It is essential that people can travel by train on a Sunday from early morning (say 07.00) to late evening. Similarly, for evenings, the leisure economy means workers need to get home, as do people attending entertainment venues; all local and regional routes should have last trains leaving after 23.00 seven days a week.

ADDRESSING ISOLATION, REDUCING DEPRIVATION AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE. We fully endorse the points made in 3.8 about rural routes, whose timetables are often very similar to twenty or thirty years ago. It is nonsensical that there are three hour gaps between some services (Settle

and Carlisle line, Whitby Line, Bentham Line) with trains timed so as to make commuting by rail into the nearest major employment centre very difficult or impossible (e.g. Bentham line stations to Lancaster). Faster and more frequent services are needed if rail is to meet local travel needs to and from rural and coastal communities.

## FREIGHT (3.74 to 3.80)

As you recognise, the volume and percentage of UK freight carried by rail is low. In particular, the use of rail for freight moving from Northern ports is lamentable. Part of this is due to the financial advantages road freight enjoys (not paying the cost of the damage done to the road network, for example), and we want to see at least a level playing field and preferably one that favours rail-borne freight. We realise that this is a policy decision for Government rather than TfN, but we hope that TfN will make a strong case for Government for this to happen. A significant modal shift from road to rail freight will also help the Government meet its climate change and air quality targets, and in doing so play its part in saving the planet from very grave environmental damage. The low percentage of freight carried by rail is also due to a lack of infrastructure, both at the ports, at inland destinations and *en route*. This must be rectified. New freight routes are needed, and the reopening of Colne –Skipton would greatly speed up freight from Liverpool Docks to Leeds, East Yorkshire and North Yorkshire, including to the Drax power station.

However, that will not provide all the extra capacity needed and **a step change in rail freight capacity across and beyond the southern Pennines is needed**. Such a route could be a combination of mainly existing routes with new connecting lines where needed, and then taking a new line across the Pennines using the former Woodhead route, possibly running parallel to our proposed HS3/NPR passenger line. A new tunnel, to W12 gauge, would be required .

Ideally, and thinking “outside the box”, could a new cross-Pennine route be built to a large enough gauge for lorry piggybacks, and thus obviate the need for constructing a new road tunnel fed by a near motorway standard road in the sensitive Peak District National Park. We request that TfN commissions a research into the viability of this.

The Immingham port area currently accounts for over 20% of the UK’s freight tonnage, and there is considerable scope for significantly increasing this. Indeed, we feel that this should be a TfN target. Gauge enhancements for container traffic, and better use of the he recently upgraded Brigg Line are clearly needed and Midlands Connect have a longer term strategy of upgrading the Immingham to Birmingham route via Lincoln.

We also want to see a return of “**parcels**” to the railway, and we see several potential ways for achieving this.

- Overnight services to city centre termini using converted redundant passenger stock (IC 125 units and suburban/outer suburban electric units)
- Major distribution/logistics hubs rail connected.

- Regional DMUs/EMUs designed so that off peak, part of one carriage can be partitioned off for parcels, for end to end journeys.
- IC 125 units converted for the Settle and Carlisle route, configured to include comfortable seating for Standard Class passengers, a small business class, a carriage with foldaway seats that can be used for bicycles and group travel by wheelchair users, and a parcels carriage for Leeds / Skipton –Appleby- Carlisle (-Glasgow) parcels traffic.

We ask TfN to work with parcels companies, TOCs , Rail freight companies and the DFT to assess the viability of these options and how quickly they could be implemented .

## **INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

### **INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT**

We support the need for much greater use of rail freight to and from the North’s ports, including using rail to tranship Irish containers from west to east coast ports. We also support the speeding up of freight routes to increase their time attractiveness and reduced costs to business users.

### **INTERNATIONAL PASSENGER DEMAND**

We are glad you have highlighted the difficulties involved in travelling to continental Europe by rail from the north of England. We recommend that TfN investigates the business case for direct passenger services from one or more cities in the north of England to mainland Europe via the Channel Tunnel and HS1. A benefit of this will be to reduce the demand for air travel, which as we know is proportionately the biggest contributor to CO2 emissions and thus to global warming. Direct train travel has other benefits – more luggage can be carried, attracts those who don’t like flying etc.

Major airports do need excellent rail connectivity, for both passengers and freight. Smaller airports need good public transport connectivity, but heavy rail may not always be the most appropriate way of achieving this.

## **LIMITING FACTORS**

### **INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY**

This section demonstrates admirably the need for massive investment in the north’s rail infrastructure. We will not go into detail here, save to say that Railfuture advocates this investment, as we know that even relatively small interventions such as passing loops can give the railway greater capacity for fast/stopping passenger train and passenger/freight train mixes.

We are concerned by your statement in 3.91 that (because) HS2 may exacerbate capacity challenges in some areas, (this) may lead to difficult decisions between long distance and local connectivity. We reaffirm our view that local/commuter passenger services need to improve, not get worse, and that for most people, their local connectivity is more important than small reductions in long distance journey times. Loss of connectivity may cause a reverse modal shift from rail to cars, and this would have serious repercussions for road congestion, air quality (NO<sub>2</sub>, brake and tyre emissions) and the reduction of carbon emissions. HS2 must complement the conventional railway and improve connectivity, not the reverse.

Re para 3.93, we repeat our view that new routes are needed to increase freight capacity, both routes shared with passenger trains (Skipton-Colne) and an entirely new freight route across the southern Pennines.

Re 3.101-2. **It is essential that the Northern Hub is completed in their entirety as a matter of urgency**, and the limited capacity from Castlefield to Piccadilly and at Piccadilly must be tackled. The Northern Hub plans include additional platforms 15/16 at Manchester Piccadilly and lengthened platforms at Manchester Oxford Road. These were first outlined in 2013 but have yet to be taken forward and we understand that these will now be subject to a “robust business case” analysis at the DfT. We feel most strongly that TfN should be pressing the case for this as it unlocks capacity across the network in the north, not just in Manchester. It will make best use of the significant sum spent on the Ordsall Chord. Network Rail is aiming to get 24 tph through the Thameslink central core, and similar ambition is required in the north.

Re 3.105 The pinch point at Northallerton on the East Coast Main Line is noted. There is already an alternative route, particularly for freight traffic, via Eaglescliffe and Stockton to Ferryhill, 13 miles north of Darlington. This route has a grade separated junction at Northallerton and a distance penalty of just 6 miles. If the line is suitably upgraded with higher line speeds and shorter signalling sections it has the capability relieving congestion and also of improving access to Teesport, which has the greatest draught capability of any east coast port. Reopening of the “Leamside” line north of Ferryhill to Gateshead would provide 4 tracks all the way to the Tyneside conurbation and could also provide useful services from Belmont (East of Durham, where there is a substantial Park+Ride facility – for buses into Durham) and the substantial community of Washington into Newcastle.

Re 3.113-4. Current and latent demand on the Manchester-Huddersfield –Leeds –Selby route is such that we consider it essential that capacity is increased to the maximum realistic level. We consider that one of the key ways to achieve this would be through restoration of the previously four-tracked sections of railway between Leeds and Manchester.

We want to stress the need to capacity improvements south of Sheffield and enabling capacity to be released at Sheffield Midland station. There is huge potential for enhancing rail accessibility and reducing road journeys to Sheffield Midland station by transforming Dore & Topley station into a “South Sheffield Parkway”. Dore & Topley has consistent passenger growth and is used by passengers from across the south and west of the City and north Derbyshire, particularly to access

direct services to Manchester. However, given its very large and significantly middle class catchment area, we feel that its potential is very considerable if it were to get a more intensive and varied train service. Reinstatement of the Midland Main Line platforms would allow direct services to London, the Midlands, East Anglia, the South and the South West. At the same time, construction of a bay platform at the north end would allow local trains from the north of Sheffield to run through to Dore & Totley, thus easing platform congestion at Sheffield Midland. Stations at Heeley and Millhouses could be reopened with these extended trains calling there.

## ROLLING STOCK

We greatly welcome the new rolling stock ordered as part of the TPE and Northern franchises. Whilst the new trains are much needed, we feel that there needs to be a rolling programme of train orders to cope with remaining overcrowding, rising demand and the need to replace the class 15x units, especially the class 150s, as they become increasingly old – hopefully with electric units if the Electrification Task Force recommendations are implemented.

We stress that passenger comfort (seat design and legroom) is critical if people are to use the railway for optional journeys. It is important for people's health (risk of back pain, cramp and Deep Vein Thrombosis -DVT), as well as for their comfort. We very much welcome some of the innovations by the TOCs, in particular the improved comfort in refurbished TPE trains and the increased legroom in some refurbished Northern trains. Our biggest current concern is seat comfort. Many trains are uncomfortable, and an uncomfortable environment can cause discretionary passengers to choose another mode. Whilst Northern expended some effort in seat design with customer try-outs at various stations, its final design was an amalgam of the three prototypes rather than the one most preferred by members of the travelling public. The lead author of this response recently travelled in a class 155 unit (155 345) fitted with the new seats and found them to be very uncomfortable, with the bottom of the seat back pressing into the small of her back. We urge TfN to use their influence with TOCs to ensure that new seat design prototypes are properly tested in service and approved by ergonomists before final designs are chosen. We also urge TfN to seek cooperation between TOCs so that good seat designs can be shared; Northern Connect passenger comfort should be of the same level as TPE seat/legroom comfort. Other comfort problems on trains in the north of England (Pacers excepted) are as follows:

- The three- abreast airline seats in the class 150s, which are very difficult to egress and exit (although it appears that Northern is converting the formation to seats facing each other, which we very much welcome.
- Lack of legroom, especially on class 150s and 155s, but to a lesser extent in 156s and 158s. However, the first refurbished 155 has noticeably better legroom, which is most welcome.
- Northern's new seat, as fitted to the refurbished 155 (345) is very uncomfortable (digging in to the small of the back) and we fear these will become Northern's standard seat.

- The seats in the new GWR class 800 have been severely criticised. If the seats and layouts of the VTEC Azumas are the same, then the quality (comfort) of the London services will nose-dive.
- The XC Voyagers have not particularly comfortable seats, limited legroom and are noisy. By contrast, their HSTs are very comfortable, but on few services. XC First Class service is currently inadequate in quality and not available throughout the length of routes, nor at all times of the day.

Train types serving the region that currently provide acceptable or higher levels of seating comfort include TPE class 185s; VTEC HSTs and class 91s; Open Access class 180s; ATW class 175s; XC and EMT HSTs; and Northern loco hauled Mark 2s on Cumbrian coast services. There are mixed views on VTWC Pendolinos.

We would like greater consistency between TOCs regarding First Class provision on longer distance express/limited stop services. TPE trains between Sheffield and Manchester have First Class, but the EMT trains do not even though they are on a six hour journey from Norwich to Liverpool; the EMT franchise renewal is imminent and we recommend TfN to recommend that the class 158 units currently used on this route are replaced by new and longer units suited to a long distance journey. We would also like the quality of all First Class catering to be raised to the level of VTEC and VTWC. EMT services from Sheffield to London offers a full breakfast service, but only light refreshments for the rest of the day. XC offers a limited range of hot food for part of the day. TPE doesn't offer hot food at all and doesn't offer any catering on some of its services (e.g. Leeds-Hull). Catering provision across the north in the evening (after about 19.00) is erratic to nonexistent, and this includes on many stations with catering outlets.

## STATIONS

We advocate minimum standards for stations, split into categories dependent on size and footfall, but with certain minimum standards for all relating to dry and wind protected waiting areas and to passenger information.

We know there is a need for new stations. Whereas some (e.g. Elland) will be major structures incorporating bus interchange and a significant amount of car parking, there may be other cases where a fairly simple, but accessible, station is required and we would hate to see such stations delayed or not built because of the cost of building one to an unnecessarily high standard.

## FARES AND TICKETING

We agree that fares and ticketing needs simplifying. We do hope that you can succeed quickly in introducing an all-mode pay-as-you-travel Oyster type scheme across the North of England, valid on all trains, trams and buses.

In the meantime, tram/light rail tickets should be available from TOC ticket machines on all stations on routes serving metropolitan areas with such systems, as the need to buy tickets at the system can

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result in missed connections and late appointments. Indeed, why do through tickets that require a change of stations (e.g. Manchester Victoria to Piccadilly) not automatically include the tram?

It is also important that TfN tackles the unattractively high fares for some journeys that deter people from using the train, instead using cars for their commute. These are typically across local government boundaries. An example is Hebden Bridge to Burnley, where a peak time ticket for the 24 mile return journey costs approximately 34p/mile (£8.20); the petrol or diesel cost in an average car would be in the region of £3-4. That equates to approximately £1000 p.a. penalty for using the train. Another example concerns the Buxton-Manchester service; considerable numbers of passengers drive from stations east of Hazel Grove to Hazel Grove to take advantage of much cheaper Greater Manchester fare, in the process adding to the heavy congestion on the A6; this also happens on other routes that cross into PTE areas.

## INFORMATION

Information provision throughout the journey often does not meet expectations, particularly at times of disruption. The situation is complicated by the number of different organisations involved. All TOCs and Network Rail Station Managers need to ensure that their staff are trained to provide clear information as soon as possible at times of disruption. For disabled passengers, anyone suffering with health issues, or using the Assisted Travel Scheme, it is even more important that the information is provided by more than one method.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

It is important to improve safety and security - particularly during the evenings – by the provision of CCTV, improved lighting, and emergency help points both on-train and at the station. Staff should be present at all times on trains and at larger stations and maintain a high public profile, following the example set by London Overground. For passengers using the Assisted Travel Scheme, this is essential.

## CHAPTER 4. CONDITIONAL OUTPUTS.

### THE FIVE Cs

As stated earlier, our comments here relate to content in both S2 and S4 of the LTRS.

### CONNECTIVITY.

There needs to be more emphasis on the importance of the commuter railway, to get people to and from work; we fear this is taking second [place to very frequent city to city travel (the May 2018 timetable changes between Huddersfield and Stalybridge are a case in point)

The connectivity between the various towns north of Newcastle on the East Coast main line is poor. Morpeth, Alnmouth for Alnwick and Berwick upon Tweed each have a reasonable spread of services to Edinburgh and Newcastle across the day, but connectivity between them is poor with most trains

calling at only one of them. Morpeth is the location of Northumberland County Council, yet it has no northbound service to Berwick between 11:49 and 20:51 (May 2018 timetable weekdays). There are similar large gaps in the service to Alnmouth. The lesser stations only have the morning and evening stopping trains from Newcastle to Chathill and back. There is a need to liaise with Transport for Scotland for a regular stopping service between Newcastle and Edinburgh. If 100 m.p.h. EMUs were used, pathing problems would be mitigated although it would still probably need to be overtaken at some point by LDHS services, and thus new passing loops may be needed.

Passenger service connectivity in South Humberside (population c300.000) is generally poor and much in need of improvement. There is the hourly South Trans Pennine service along the Hope Valley from Cleethorpes to Manchester Airport, and it is important that this is not compromised by the plans for additional services along this route between Manchester and Sheffield. We have already had the experience of TPE cancelling our direct services and forcing a change of trains at Doncaster so that the North Trans Pennines could run and not be affected by the resignalling at Huddersfield. This involved our users in a very long walk from the remote platform 0 to the main platforms and a long wait as there was no connection between the trains.

There is the rather random Newark -Grimsby service running at approximately two and a half hour intervals which provides an all stations stopping service to Grimsby, the hourly service between Barton on Humber and Cleethorpes providing an all stations service and the hourly service from Scunthorpe to Doncaster (platform 0 so no easy interchange) again an all stations service. The TPE provides an express service from Cleethorpes stopping at Habrough (alternate hours), Barnetby, Scunthorpe to Doncaster. This means that people west of Scunthorpe wishing to travel east further than Scunthorpe have a 40 minute wait at Scunthorpe when travelling to/from Cleethorpes. This is a deterrent for the leisure traveller and also for those needing to access NHS facilities. We see this as an increasing problem as NHS closes local facilities and concentrates them in larger units.

At the other end of the line those living eastwards from Habrough have to travel further east to Grimsby to travel west to Scunthorpe and beyond. They can use the Newark service to Barnetby and join the Trans Pennine there but the connections are not good and most of the stations are unstaffed with very poor waiting facilities. There is also the "parliamentary" service on the line through Brigg, three trains each way on Saturdays between Sheffield and Cleethorpes on the former main line

We suggest that east west connectivity would be much improved by

1. Extending the Scunthorpe –Doncaster service to Cleethorpes to provide an all stations service,
2. Replacing the "Parliamentary" service with a 7 day service Nottingham – Worksop - Cleethorpes for better inter regional connectivity
3. Raising the line speeds (at present in spite of £100M spent on the South Humberside resignalling 18 miles Cleethorpes to Wrawby Jn max 60 mph, 27miles Wrawby Jn to Hatfield

and Stainforth max 55 mph and lower for freight. Hence 3 hours for the 124 miles from Cleethorpes to Manchester Airport.

4. Reinstating the up slow line between Barnetby and Brocklesby
5. Reinstating the double track between Grimsby and Cleethorpes

On Sundays across the TfN area, it is not just an increase in the number of trains that are needed, but a lengthening of the operating day, to be more akin to Saturday.

We are very glad that you recognise (2.11) the importance of “good connections” between rail services and other transport nodes. The train journey is not an end in itself, but part of a journey from Home (or hotel etc) to workplace, leisure venue etc etc.

## CAPACITY

Whilst adequate standing room is important for short distances on commuter routes, there must be sufficient seating for normal and anticipated demand for greater distances (20 minutes plus). Targets should be set for increases in passengers’ satisfaction re comfort (seat design and legroom) and ambience (noise levels and temperature/air quality).

More track capacity is vital on many routes. An aspirational policy requires line speed improvements, shorter signalling blocks, passing loops, and double/quadruple tacking where operationally required.

The panel on “Desirable Minimum Standards” (p.63) shows that inter-urban services should achieve average journey speeds of at least 60mph and local and commuting services an average journey speed of at least 40mph. Many of the lines served have the same maximum line speed as in the 1950s, despite track improvements (e.g. continuously welded rail), new signalling and improved braking performance of the rolling stock used. It should be a target that local lines should have a line speed, where possible, of at least 75mph and inter-urban lines 90mph. The minimum standards stated will otherwise be unattainable. We suspect that, in many cases limits could be raised without significant infrastructure expenditure, particularly if differential limits for DMUs are used.

## CUSTOMERS

We have already commented on station standards and on ticketing.

## COMMUNITIES

There needs to be more than encouragement to achieve significantly greater use of the rail network. Linking to the wider transport strategy, cities need to seriously consider implementing congestion charges and/or workplace parking levies. TfN should advocate such income being hypothecated for public transport improvements (including lower fares). This needs to be done in tandem with better access to rail stations (public transport connectivity and adequate car parking) and sufficient train capacity to meet latent demand.

Paragraph 2.21 is important, and the need for better access to employment and education hubs for socially deprived areas cannot be emphasised enough. As one example, Pendle is desperately crying out for better connectivity to Leeds, Bradford, Skipton and Manchester, and probably Huddersfield and Halifax as well, as well as an enhanced service to Preston. Similarly, Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle, and Skelmersdale to Kirkby (for Liverpool +Wigan and Manchester).

Furthermore, we consider that there are other, not necessarily deprived, communities currently without a railway or tram system that have a strong case to have heavy rail restored or light rail/tram provided, whichever is more appropriate. It is essential that TFN uses its influences with local Planning Authorities to preserve trackbeds from any encroachment or development. We consider the following routes are amongst those that should be considered for the provision or restoration of a passenger service (some of these routes\* are extant for freight traffic). Some of these are likely candidates for early reopening, whilst others are longer term propositions for whom it is important that there are no further incursions onto trackbeds.

Ashington-Blyth-Newcastle\*

Stillington Line\* (Stockton to Ferryhill for Stockton-Newcastle express services)

Skelmersdale-Kirkby (for Liverpool)

Colne to Skipton

Sandbach-Middlewich-Northwich \*

Sheffield-Oughtibridge\*-Penistone (Don Valley)

Clitheroe – Hellifield\*

Burscough chord (to enable Preston-Southport)

Beverley to York

Leamside Line

Otley (link to Bradford, Leeds and Harrogate)

Spenn Valley

Wetherby- Leeds (possible light rail/tram train)

Penrith to Keswick (and westward)

Harrogate-Ripon – Thirsk or Northallerton

Barnsley – Wath/Dearne Valley- Doncaster (probably light rail/tram train/tram)

Paragraphs 2.22/3. We are glad that you recognise rail's role (and we would add that of public transport as a whole) in helping to tackle environmental degradation and especially CO2 emissions. We would stress the importance of electrification in this regard (as well as its several other benefits) and would like TfN to actively seek the implementation of the Electrification Task Force report, as well as strongly advocating the electrification of the Huddersfield main line and the Midland Main Line. We also feel that in the Communities section, TfN should stress how the whole community benefits from modal shift from car to public transport (and active modes), and also freight from road to rail and water, not just from a pollution perspective but also through easing congestion and reduced road traffic accidents.

## **COST EFFECTIVENESS**

Looked at from the perspective of a sustainable planet and a pleasant local environment, TfN should recognise that there needs to be an increase in income to the railway from sources other than fares and car parking charges. We consider that walk-on fares are generally too high, and need to be reduced if significant modal shift is to be achieved.

## **CHAPTER 5. HOW? DELIVERY.**

As a voluntary organisation representing the interests of passenger and freight customers (current and potential), we do not feel able to contribute meaningfully to this section, other than to say that the weaknesses and potential solutions that you have identified, and on which we have commented, need to be delivered competently, and as quickly as possible.

## **RAILFUTURE –INPUT FROM YORKSHIRE, NW, NE AND LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCHES, AND NATIONAL CHAIRMAN.**

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**THIS SUBMISSION CAN BE PLACED IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.**