

HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP - NEWS BULLETIN 10

5th June 2014

1. ELECTRIFICATION TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Further to the announcement on 13th December (copied below), I have just received details of the membership of the Northern Electrification Task Force established by the Dept for Transport to explore where next for electrification of rail lines in the North.

The Northern Electrification Task Force members will be as follows:

- Andrew Jones MP (Con - Harrogate & Knaresborough)
- Ian Swales MP (Lib Dem - Redcar)
- Julie Hilling (Labour - Bolton West)
- Jo Kaye (Network Rail - Strategy & Planning Director)
- Terry O'Neill (Leader of Warrington Council)
- Dave Green (Leader, Bradford County Council)

The DfT are in the process of arranging a first meeting later this month, where the Terms of Reference and the key milestones for reporting back to the Secretary of State will be discussed and agreed. The Task Force will be supported by a steering group and a stakeholder working group, both of which will work closely with the existing Network Rail Electrification Route Utilisation Strategy Working Group.

The steering group includes representatives from Rail North, Network Rail and DfT. The stakeholder working group is chaired by Rail North and will include representatives from Local Authorities, PTEs, LEPs, Network Rail and DfT.

INFORMATION RECEIVED 04/06/14 FROM:

Julia Christie, Regional Rail Strategy Advisor, Rail Network Outcomes, Rail Executive, Department for Transport.

2. RAIL INDUSTRY DAY PARTICIPATION

This information direct from the DfT followed my participation in the DfT Rail Industry Day in London on 9th April 2014. Introduced by the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, this event provided an overview of how franchising has progressed in the last year, an update on the current competitions, and details of the forthcoming franchises and direct awards that form part of the DfT programme for the next 12 months.

The list of presentations is attached, and the DfT has provided attendees copies of all the PowerPoint presentations which I can provide on request for members interested in the full details. It was an illuminating experience and an excellent opportunity to promote the need for better trains on the Harrogate Line - and more direct trains on the ECML.

During the breaks, I had the opportunity to speak personally to the following senior officials in the Department of Transport's new Rail Executive:

- Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport
- Nick Bisson- Director, Rail Strategy & Funding
- Michael Lee – Project Director, Northern Franchise
- Julie Mills - Project Director, TransPennine Express Franchise

In each case I pressed the need for more Harrogate Trains both locally and to/from London. They all were aware of Harrogate and I gave each of them a copy of our comprehensive reports and recommendations.

3. RAIL EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

I followed up my discussions at the Rail Industry Day with reminder e-mails and electronic copies of our reports. I received encouraging responses from which I have extracted the following quotations:

3.1 Nick Bisson, Director, Rail Strategy & Funding (15/05/14):

The Invitation to Tender for the Intercity East Coast franchise includes a train service requirement giving the minimum level of service. In doing this, we have sought to provide flexibility for bidders to take their own view on how to tailor their train services to best meet the markets they serve or to develop new markets.

For Harrogate, the train service requirement maintains the existing level of service by requiring one train per day to and from London. The requirement to call at Horsforth once daily means that this train is highly likely to be routed via Leeds. As the train service requirement is a minimum it is for bidders to take their own view on the technical and commercial merits of a number of different options for services – and I was simply trying to highlight that Harrogate via York would be one (different) choice.

We have strongly encouraged bidders to meet with local stakeholders on the route to better understand their needs and it is good that you have met with them once already.

In December 2013, the Secretary of State announced that a joint Task Force including MPs, local authorities and the Rail North consortium and rail industry experts would explore where next for electrification in the north, and provide the Government with an interim report within 12 months setting out how schemes could be brought forward and their development accelerated. The All Party Parliamentary Rail Group in the North has been asked to nominate three MPs to sit on the Task Force. We expect the routes to be examined will include Leeds – Harrogate – York.

3.2 Michael Lee, Project Director, Northern Franchise (11/04/14):

It was good to meet you at the Rail Industry Day, and in particular to talk about how we might engage Chambers of Commerce in our thinking. I will consider how we take that forward. Thank you for your mail, which I am copying to Andrew Nock who leads in developing the next Northern franchise specification, and to Roger Jones in respect of the Task Force issue.

3.3 Julie Mills Project Director, TransPennine Express Franchise (19/05/14)

Many thanks for your email and the material, which I have passed on to my colleagues responsible for the specification of both TPE and Northern franchises. It was good to meet you at the Rail Industry Day. We will shortly be publishing a consultation on both franchises so I hope that you will be able to respond to that. The documentation will be on our website within the next 3-4 weeks.

4. PREVIOUS REPORT ON ELECTRIFICATION TASK FORCE

Sent: Friday, December 13, 2013 2:32 PM

Subject: DfT lists Harrogate Line for joint taskforce with Rail North & Network Rail.

GOOD NEWS! The Harrogate Line is listed in the following Department for Transport News Release today.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/road-and-rail-projects-to-boost-local-and-regional-transport--2>

The DfT announced on 13 December 2013 the following measures to improve rail services:

The railway line between Wigan (North Western Station) and Bolton (Lostock Junction) will be electrified, at an estimated cost of £37 million and targeted for completion by 2017. This will enable the conversion of the busy Wigan to Manchester Victoria services and Wigan to Manchester Airport services from older Pacer diesel trains to more modern and higher capacity electric trains.

A joint taskforce will explore where next for electrification in the North. The new taskforce will be made up of experts from Network Rail and the DfT and will involve train operators, local authorities including the Rail North consortium, the supply chain and local Members of Parliament. This group will provide the Transport Secretary with an interim report within 12 months setting out how schemes can be brought forward and their development accelerated.

As part of Network Rail's ongoing work to identify the next generation of schemes that will be electrified as part of the government's continued rail investment, the routes to be examined will include:

- **Leeds – Harrogate – York**
- Selby – Hull
- Sheffield – Leeds
- Sheffield – Doncaster
- East Coast Main Line – Middlesbrough
- Sheffield – Manchester
- Warrington– Chester
- Crewe – Chester

I will keep all our supporters informed when this Taskforce is operational as we may need further evidence of potential demand to justify a high priority for electrification of the Harrogate.

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