

HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP BULLETIN No 21

+ Northern Rail Management & Council Officers

To all concerned with improving rail services on the Harrogate Line

Serious flaws in planning and consultation with key Stakeholders

We are very concerned to see that the current Northern Rail proposals for extra trains on the Harrogate Line between Leeds and Harrogate will not meet the expectations and the practical needs of the many businesses, students and residents in Harrogate and north-west Leeds. Northern have failed to consult the key stakeholders in the Harrogate District.

The four trains per hour promised for the Harrogate line was always presumed to be a 15 minute interval walk-up service all day, with all trains stopping at all stations just like the London Overground. This is the key to getting people out of their cars because there is no requirement for a timetable and the perceived wait time is no more than about 10 minutes.

However it now appears that the management of Northern Rail think this should be a two-tier service providing two virtually separate independent services over the corridor as follows from December 2017- i.e.

1. A half-hourly Leeds-Harrogate-Knaresborough service serving all stations - as now
2. A new half-hourly overlay service operating fast between Harrogate, Horsforth and Leeds only. (Approx 6-7 mins faster Leeds-Harrogate than the "all stops"

What is now being proposed by Northern does not provide a 15 minute interval walk-up service. We ask what is the real benefit of saving the 6 or 7 minutes for passengers travelling directly between Leeds and Harrogate when it omits a significant and large section of the underlying demand by missing out intermediate all station stops except Horsforth?

This approach immediately removes around 35% of the route's regular users at Burley Park, Headingley, Hornbeam Park and Pannal stations from benefiting from any of the additional services. (See attached Passenger Usage analysis HT465)

It appears that some of our key planners and decision makers simply do not understand how to maximize value from the services and infrastructure we collectively possess, nor, in the case of the Harrogate line, do they understand some of the fundamentals of urban transport planning and the route's wider regional value and potential. With the proposed Parkway station at Leeds Bradford Airport now being progressed, the value and importance of the standard consistent interval of 15 minutes serving all stops should not be underestimated.

This situation has we feel developed due to a total lack of consultation with key stakeholders in the Harrogate District. Neither Harrogate Borough Council, nor the Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce, nor the Harrogate Line Supporters Group, nor the Harrogate Line Rail Officers Group have been consulted by Northern Railway staff before publishing their proposed December 2017 Timetable – or the very recent draft May 2018 Timetable, which in many ways is even worse.

A detailed paper highlighting the failures in consultation is available on request. (Ref HT466)

We trust you share our serious concerns and will support our call to combine forces in arguing for a much needed injection of common sense. Please send your comments to info@HarrogateLine.org by 31st May 2017

Reference Information attached:

HT463 - Serious flaws in Planning & Consultation - May 2017 - by Mark J Leving & Brian L Dunsby

HT464 - Proposed Harrogate Line timetable from December 2017 – by Northern.

HT465 - Harrogate Line - Station Usage Statistics 2007-2016 – by Brian L Dunsby

HT467 - Suggested 2017-2018 Timetable with Extra Trains - by Mark J Leving

Paper drafted by Mark J Leving, Director, Harrogate Line Development Company Ltd

Edited by Brian L Dunsby, Transport Spokesman, Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce and issued in the public interest to Northern Rail Management and all members of the Harrogate Line Supporters Group, including relevant Councillors and Council officials.

PLEASE SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO INFO@HARROGATELINE.ORG BY 31ST MAY 2017