

HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP - NEWS BULLETIN No. 25

TRANSPORT UPDATE – HARROGATE DISTRICT

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1. Harrogate Line rail service improvements – new timetables look better

We have held two intensive meetings with Northern Rail management regarding their draft timetables for December 2017 and May 2018. We submitted many pages of detailed comments and suggestions from our members. I am pleased to report that many of our suggestions have been accepted and will be implemented from May 2018.

The previously proposed changes from December 2017 are unlikely to be implemented due to the delay in cascading and refurbishing the additional rolling stock needed to operate the extra services. It is expected that Class 170 Turbostars will operate the longer distance all-stations services whilst refurbished Class 158 Sprinters will run fast between Leeds & Harrogate, calling only at Horsforth and Hornbeam Park, creating a "turn up and go" service every 15 minutes for these four busy stations.

The Northern Rail management has recently submitted their proposed new timetables commencing May 2018 to Network Rail for approval of the required track paths and Station platform utilisation. Whilst the full timetables are still confidential, the key points were outlined at the Harrogate District Chamber Meeting on 11th September, to which all members of the Harrogate Line Supporters Group were invited. Their PowerPoint presentation can be sent to individual members of the Group on request for personal use only.

The Group Leaders have studied their proposed new timetables and consider they are a great improvement on the earlier drafts. We think that Northern has done a good job by maintaining the current Leeds-Harrogate-Knaresborough-York as all-stations services whilst also inserting the intermediate semi-fast trains between Harrogate and Leeds stopping at Horsforth and Hornbeam Park.

We have submitted 20 detailed comments and suggested minor amendments for some of the weekday services. Our aim is to make the services as uniform as possible by adjusting a few timings to reduce some long gaps. We have also urged Northern to ensure that all trains do stop at Hornbeam Park, and if possible at Pannal as well, in view of the planned business park redevelopment and several major housing developments on the south side of Harrogate.

There will also be some later services between Harrogate, Leeds and York which will be very welcome.

The Sunday services are also a great improvement over the current timetables which only offer an hourly service between Leeds and York via Harrogate. The current intermediate hourly turn-back service between Leeds and Horsforth is going to be extended to Knaresborough in between the York services. This will provide a half-hourly service on Sundays between Knaresborough and Leeds which will be very popular with both residents and visitors. There will also be earlier and later services.

We aim to give Northern Rail maximum positive support for these significant improvements on the Harrogate Line services - as well as the much anticipated improved rolling stock from May 2018.

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2. Chamber Traffic & Transport Update meeting – Air, Bus and Rail services

The recent Chamber meeting also included presentations by Leeds Bradford Airport, the Harrogate Bus Company, and Virgin Trains East Coast. The speakers and main topics covered were as follows:

"Update on growth and development at Leeds Bradford Airport"

➤ **David Laws, new Chief Executive, Leeds Bradford Airport**

- My focus on enhancing the customer journey;
- Route network update and ambitions;
- Terminal developments – current and planned;
- Surface access, an update on road and rail.

"Creating buses that people want to be seen on"

➤ **Alex Hornby, Chief Executive Officer, Transdev Blazefield / Harrogate Bus Company**

- Further enhancements to the 36 Leeds-Harrogate-Ripon
- The UK's first 100% electric town bus network in Harrogate
- Creating a low emission bus town
- Continued investment in a better customer experience, integration and smarter ticketing
- VAMOOZ, the app-driven crowd-funded travel product

"Northern Rail: new franchise; more services, new trains"

➤ **Rob Warnes, Performance & Planning Director, Northern Rail**

- New franchise for Northern Rail network: Transformation of rail services in the North
- May 2018 Timetable: More services to/from Harrogate
- Better trains and better stations for the Harrogate Line
- A longer term strategy for the line between Leeds – Harrogate – York

"Virgin Trains East Coast – transforming the railway between Harrogate & London"

➤ **Paul Smith, Commercial Manager, Central Area, Virgin Trains East Coast**

- The Virgin Trains revolution continues
- Virgin's focus on Yorkshire
- Update on Virgin Azuma
- Two hourly service between Harrogate and London from 2019

A summary of the meeting as published by the Chamber PR Officer in BUSINESS REVIEW is attached to this Bulletin for general information. Copies of the respective presentations can be sent by e-mail on request for personal use only – not for wider publication or distribution.



Speakers and Chamber Officers at Traffic & Transport Update Meeting – 11th September 2017.

Left to right: David Laws; Mike Procter (President) Alex Hornby, Brian Dunsby (Transport Spokesman), Pete Myers, Sandra Doherty (Chief Executive), Paul Smith, Rob Warnes.

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3. Virgin Trains East Coast – direct Harrogate-Kings Cross services from 2019

At the recent Chamber Meeting, Paul Smith, Commercial Manager for the Central Area of Virgin Trains East Coast, highlighted the many improvements to their East Coast services between Kings Cross and Scotland via Yorkshire, encompassing the entire journey and including the following key elements:

- Inspiration and realisation - Help me to make the best decisions for my trip ahead
- Booking and preparation - Help me make the right choices and feel prepared before I travel
- Journey to station - Help me feel relaxed and in control as I travel to and arrive at the station
- At the station - Keep me comfortable, alert and prepare me for the journey
- Boarding and settling in - Help me board and get to my seat
- The on-board journey - Give me the space to do what I please
- Arrival & onward journey - Prepare me for my onward journey and guide me to my destination
- Keeping in touch - Keep me front of mind and let me know you still care
- Total overhaul of existing trains and station waiting rooms
- New ticketing options – Book up to six months in advance – or on the day
- New responsive multi-channel website with leading innovations on-line
- SEATFROG - World first... an awesome new app for bidding on last-minute seat upgrades
- Half-hourly service between London and Leeds - now six days a week

The new Virgin Azuma trains currently being built by Hitachi start to arrive in 2018, meaning:

- 65 trains, comprising 42 electric, 23 bi-mode
- Increase from 155 to 205 services per day
- London - Leeds up to 37 per day
- London - Newcastle up to 44
- London - Edinburgh up to 27
- Direct trains every 2 hours to Harrogate, Bradford, Lincoln & Middlesbrough

From 2019, the Harrogate-Kings Cross services will be dramatically improved in frequency and speed:

Current services:

- 1 service per day north & south
- Northbound: 2 hrs 52 mins
- Southbound: 3hrs 01mins

Access Rights from May 2019 for...

- 7 services per day north & south
- Northbound: 2 hrs 37 mins
- Southbound: 2 hrs 48 mins

The new AZUMA trains are currently under construction at Hitachi's factory in Newton Aycliffe as part of the £5.7 billion Intercity Express Programme. A recent letter from the Rail Minister Paul Maynard in reply to my enquiry via Andrew Jones MP is attached for information.



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4. Harrogate Station named medium station of the year in National Rail Awards

The National Rail Awards, organised by RAIL magazine, were presented on September 21 at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London, in front of an audience of nearly 1,200. The official citation follows:

"Harrogate Station has been transformed into a classic medium-sized station that sits in the heart of a famous historic town. Opened in August 1862, it was designed by Thomas Prosser and was the first building in the town to be constructed using brick. It had two platforms and was lengthened 21 years after it opened. More platforms were opened, but these closed in the 1960s when the station was rebuilt.

Today it offers a modern concourse and friendly ticket and information service. The ticket office is staffed seven days a week except late in the evenings. Ticket machines are also available.

There are retail facilities include a newsagent and café. Transport information has been significantly upgraded in recent years according to National Rail Awards judges who note that the staff have added their own personal touch in the shape of window boxes, while they have also filled the waiting rooms with books and photographs.

Today there are three platforms at the station, although only two are in use. Full step-free access is available, and a footbridge links the platforms along with a lift.

There is a regular service to Leeds in one direction and York in the other. The Leeds service doubles in frequency at peak-time to reflect the commute nature of the route.

Paul Barnfield, Regional Director – East at Northern Rail said this was "A fantastic and well deserved accolade for the station. Nothing further to add to what is in the Rail article in terms of judges comments, they commented particularly on the hand that our people had in being part of the improvements, citing the waiting room pictures etc. and also focused on the quality that was contained within the improvements - again the waiting rooms were cited amongst other areas of the station."

More details available on www.northernrailway.co.uk



Harrogate Station Platform 1 – courtesy of Northern Rail

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5. No 36 Bus Service – Leeds-Harrogate every 10 minutes each way all day!

At the recent Chamber Transport Update, Alex Hornby, CEO of Transdev Blazefield, highlighted their network coverage across the Borough, 7 days a week from early until late.

The Company is well established and well known in the community, with a relentless focus on quality, comfort and innovation. They are also investing millions in new and refurbished buses on other local routes, aiming to make Harrogate a zero emissions town by 2018.

All routes will have been boosted with better buses by 2018. There will be lower emissions with a new electric fleet in 2018. Enhanced information and technology is being used to deliver more on-time buses and better value ticketing.

The Harrogate Bus Company is also creating partnerships with other transport operators to offer low cost add-on fares to Leeds City Centre or to Leeds Bradford Airport. They are also offering integrated ticketing with National Coach's Megabus.com to over 100 UK destinations. Likewise with National Rail.

Transdev announced that their No 36 flagship service between Harrogate and Leeds will soon operate every 10 minutes for most of the day – instead of the current 15 minute frequency. This will be a real "turn up and go" service.

New technology will enable contactless bank card ticketing and real time bus tracking with a new App. More details available on www.harrogatebus.co.uk

6. Railfuture – Yorkshire Rail Campaigner – Airport Parkway Station debate

The latest issue of the Rail Future Yorkshire Rail Campaigner carries a six-page Supplement on the Leeds Bradford Airport Station Debate. This includes the following articles with contrasting views about the proposed Parkway Station on the existing Harrogate Line to serve both Airport Passengers and also commuters into Leeds and Harrogate.

Page 7 – Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway Station by Mark Leving & Brian Dunsby, Harrogate Chamber.

Page 9 – Why a New Station south of the Bramhope Tunnel is untenable by Tony Plumbe, CBT

Page 11 – The Missing Link by Steve Brady, Railfuture Yorkshire Branch, Technical Engineering Officer

Feedback from members of the Harrogate Line Supporters Group on these and any other issues concerning the Harrogate Line would be welcome. Please send by e-mail to: info@harrogateline.org or by post to Harrogate Line Supporters Group, P O Box 888, Harrogate HG2 8UH

7. References:

Letter from Dept for Transport Minister Paul Maynard to Andrew Jones MP for Brian Dunsby - Attached Harrogate District Chamber Business Review September 2017. See this Web-link:

<http://harrogatechamber.co.uk/docs/downloads/review/1709%20Review%20September%202017.pdf>

Railfuture "Yorkshire Rail Campaigner No 38 – See pages 7-12. See this web link:

Web link: www.harrogateline.org/RailfutureYorkshireRailCampaigner38

NEWS BULLETIN COMPILED BY

Brian L Dunsby OBE,
HARROGATE LINE SUPPORTERS GROUP.
P O Box 888, Dept T2, HARROGATE HG2 8UH
Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025 Mobile: 07836 537512
brian.dunsby@harrogateline.org
www.harrogateline.org

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ANDREW JONES MP
Harrogate & Knaresborough



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Brian Dunsby OBE
8 Fulwith Avenue
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG2 8HR

1 September 2017

Dear Brian

Further to our correspondence regarding the AZUMA trains issue, I have received a response from Mr Paul Maynard, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport. Please find enclosed a copy of that response.

I hope you find this information useful. Please do let me know if I can be of any further assistance to you on this matter.

Many thanks again for your email.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Jones".

Andrew Jones MP

www.andrewjonesmp.co.uk
@AJonesMP

Constituency office: 57 East Parade, Harrogate, HG1 5LQ
01423 529614
andrew.jones.mp@parliament.uk

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**Department
for Transport**

Andrew Jones MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Paul Maynard MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: paul.maynard@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/203154

24 AUG 2017

Dear Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 24 July, on behalf of your constituent, Brian Dunsby OBE, Transport Spokesman for the Harrogate and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce, 8 Fulwith Avenue, Harrogate, HG2 8HR about the planned delivery of the new AZUMA trains from Hitachi for operation on the East Coast Main Line.

I can confirm that the decisions on electrification taken in the past month do not impact on the testing and introduction of the Intercity Express Programme trains on the East Coast.

The Azuma test train is currently supporting Hitachi's test programme on both the East Coast and Great Western main lines. The Newton Aycliffe facility is at full production capacity and is due to commence building the Azuma fleet this autumn ready for introduction into passenger service from 2018.

The investment being made through the £5.7billion Intercity Express Programme will see one of biggest fleet upgrades in a generation, marking a step change for passengers on the route with greater capacity, connectivity and reduced journey times. It will offer more seats into London Kings Cross in the morning peak, more trains to Edinburgh and Leeds and offer new through services without the need to change trains due to the bi-mode train design.

With the expanded Virgin Trains East Coast timetable, there will be increases in the services run to existing routes such as Harrogate and Lincoln whilst also bringing new and faster direct services to destinations such as Middlesbrough and Huddersfield, offering new business and growth opportunities.

The arrival of Azuma fleet will mark another milestone on our journey towards transforming travel for our customers and we continue to work towards getting the vital work done with our partners ready for introduction from 2018.

Finally, for clarification on our wider investment programme we are investing over £40 billion in Network Rail, including around £15 billion of rail upgrades across England and Wales. In November 2015, Sir Peter Hendy set out his proposal for how the rail upgrades programme could be carried out, which the Government subsequently accepted following a consultation. Sir Peter Hendy's re-plan will deliver the biggest programme of rail modernisation since Victorian times. We are committed to ensuring that maximum value is derived for passengers, freight users and taxpayers and as such the programme of railway upgrades will continue to be subject to ongoing assessment and investment decisions.

I hope Mr Dunsby is reassured by this update and our resolve to ensure this government delivers to passengers and taxpayers.



PAUL MAYNARD