

Meeting **JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**

Date **20 September 2013** Agenda item number

From **JOINT OFFICER STEERING GROUP**

## **RAIL ISSUES UPDATE**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To update the Committee on key rail issues in and into Greater Nottingham and rail services across local authority boundaries. The work of the two Councils, although separate, is complementary, and of mutual benefit.

### **Nottingham station re-signalling**

2. The track and signals at and around Nottingham Station were installed in 1969. They had become life-expired and in need of complete renewal. The renewal required every piece of track and all the old signals to be stripped out, with 6 miles of track and 143 new signals installed.
3. In 1969 there were 173 trains per day, and the station layout was designed for that level of traffic. However, rail use has virtually doubled to over 6 million passengers per annum at Nottingham, and the number of trains has more than doubled to over 400 per day, making the 1969 layout severely congested. This is why so many trains were halted just outside the station, waiting for another train to clear the track or platform.
4. Since all the old track and signals were being removed, this offered an ideal opportunity to install the new track in a much improved layout that has much greater capacity. All tracks have been signalled to allow trains to run in either direction, with more crossovers between tracks to allow greater flexibility. Speed limits have been raised. These enhancements have produced a layout with greater capacity, and improved reliability. More trains will be able to run, more reliably, more quickly and without delay.
5. The additional cost of the enhanced layout is £11.6million, funding for which was secured by the Councils in 2008. The closure would have been for the same length of time – 37 days – whether or not the old layout or the improved layout was installed.
6. The work was done between 20<sup>th</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> August and necessitated the complete closure of the station and replacement bus services. The work was completed on time and the station has now re-opened.
7. Works continue on the complimentary scheme to comprehensively upgrade the passenger facilities at Nottingham Station, as reported to previous joint committee meetings. These works will continue until Spring 2014.

## **Devolution of 'Rail in the North'**

8. As reported to the June 2012 Joint Committee, the Government is considering devolving responsibility for rail services in the north of England to a consortium of Integrated Transport Authorities (formerly Passenger Transport Authorities) – provisionally called 'Rail in the North'.
9. The service affected in the Joint Committee area would be Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds, plus Retford – Worksop – Sheffield in the north of Nottinghamshire.
10. Extensive discussions are underway, in which the Councils have been involved. As part of those discussions a preliminary submission has been made about the train service improvements that we would seek.
11. For the Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds service, the preliminary submission restates the longstanding aspirations of the Councils for improved journey times - to be progressively reduced to:
  - 100 minutes (49mph) as from April 2016, with a Sheffield – Nottingham journey time of no more than 50 minutes ;
  - 90 minutes (55mph) from 2018, with a Sheffield – Nottingham journey time of no more than 45 minutes; and
  - 82 minutes (60mph) at the earliest opportunity, but no later than 3 years after it has been applied to services between the other Rail North Core Citiesplus a way in which those aspirations could be achieved.
12. It also restates the Councils' longstanding commitment to a reduction in the Nottingham – Manchester journey time to 90 minutes after completion of the 'Northern Hub' enhancement works which are within the 'Rail in the North' area – expected to be from 2017. As reported to the June 2012 Joint Committee, the Government is considering devolving responsibility for rail services in the north of England to a consortium
13. For the Retford – Worksop – Sheffield service the preliminary submission calls for
  - a doubling of frequency between Worksop and Sheffield, from the current 1 train every hour to a train every 30 minutes throughout the day, with 1 train running non-stop; and
  - cutting the Worksop – Sheffield journey time to 20 minutes – a reduction of 9 minutes on the current time.
14. A long-term rail strategy is being drawn up by 'Rail in the North' which will set out whether and how these aspirations (and aspirations of other Councils across the 'Rail in the North' area) will be taken forward. The treatment of these enhancements is an acid test of whether 'Rail in the North' would be beneficial to Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. The draft long-term rail strategy is planned to be available for comment in October, and how it treats our aspirations will be crucial factor in determining whether or not we should support such devolution of rail services.

## **Ilkeston Station**

15. Ilkeston has a population of around 40,000, but its 3 former stations all closed by 1967. The re-opening of the Robin Hood Line to Mansfield and Kirkby left Ilkeston as the biggest place in the East Midlands, and one of the ten biggest towns in England, without a train service. Since the 1990s Derbyshire County Council has been pursuing a scheme to re-open a station at Ilkeston.
16. It is estimated that over 120,000 passenger journeys per annum would be made, generating revenue of over £500,000 per annum. The service would be served by the Nottingham - Leeds service, giving one train per hour to & from both Nottingham and Chesterfield/Sheffield and the north – plus a couple of additional trains in the morning and evening peak periods.
17. The main benefits for Greater Nottingham would be:
  - for travel to & from Awsworth (population 2,600), both into Nottingham and to/from the north, and
  - by taking approximately 50,000 car journeys per annum off our roads, particularly the A6096/A610 and the A609
18. In 2009 the scheme was awarded £1million from the Growth Point Fund, leaving around £4million still to be found.
19. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013 the Government announced a £20million ‘New Stations’ fund, stating that “*Because this fund is designed to support station proposals which are already well developed we expect bids to be received by the end of February 2013 with a recommendation from the panel before the end of March 2013.*” At the last meeting it was reported that Derbyshire had submitted a bid.
20. On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2013, the Secretary of State, Patrick McLoughlin, announced that DfT had awarded £4.5 million towards Ilkeston. This should allow construction to start later this year, with opening in December 2014.

## **High Speed 2**

21. The Government published for consultation a formal proposal for the route, including station locations, in July. The consultation runs until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. A draft response to this consultation will be reported to the December Joint committee meeting.
22. The Councils have commissioned a study from consultants Volterra into the economic benefits of a station at Toton to help inform responses to the forthcoming consultation.
23. Following strong objections from Leicestershire County Council, and a potential developer, the Government has announced a change of the proposed alignment just to the west of East Midlands Airport. The initial

preferred route would have seen the new rail line cross the site of the proposed Strategic Rail Freight Terminal, which has the potential to create 7,000 jobs in the region, and threaten the feasibility of the proposed development. After discussion with the developers the government has now published a revised option involving extending the proposed tunnel under the East Midlands Airport, avoiding the majority of the proposed SRFI site.

24. HS2 Ltd is the company established by the Government to take forward its plans for a high speed rail network. HS2 has established working groups to consider:
- the question of access and other issues relating to the proposed station at Toton; and
  - the practicalities of how it should conduct localised consultation with people directly affected along the line of route, and meetings have commenced.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

25. It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report.

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