

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE****21 JANUARY 2014****RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - HIGH SPEED RAIL :
INVESTING IN BRITAIN'S FUTURE****Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services****1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To agree the North Yorkshire response to the High Speed Rail Consultation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that in July 2011 a report was considered by the Executive Members (BES) which set out the councils response to the consultation on the proposal for High Speed rail, phase two (HS2). This was a proposal for the continuation of a high speed network north of Birmingham and serving Manchester and Leeds.
- 2.2 Our view at that time was one of support in principle, but that we felt it important to emphasise that HS2 should not prevent continued investment on the classic network, principally on the East Coast Mainline.
- 2.3 Previously in September 2009, the North Yorkshire and York Transport Member Board considered a report into the debate around HS2 and to formulate a response from the Board.
- 2.4 This was followed in July 2010 with a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport from Cllr Claire Wood as Chair of the North Yorkshire and York Transport Member Board backing the initiative and supporting the Leeds and Sheffield city regions call for a Y shaped network serving this region.
- 2.5 In November 2013 a statement of support and 5 point plan was prepared by Leeds City Region leaders and presented to an HS2 taskforce which was meeting stakeholders in the region.
- 2.6 The County Council position remains one of support for HS2 to Leeds and York, with the caveat that it shouldn't replace investment on the current network, in particular the East Coast Main Line.

3.0 HIGH SPEED RAIL

- 3.1 The current consultation High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future was launched in July 2013 and remains open until 31 January 2014.

- 3.2 It is primarily concerned about the proposed route for the line beyond the midlands to Manchester and Leeds, and the connections to the West and East Coast Main Lines, but also seeks views on how the extra capacity that will be released on the current network could be used.
- 3.3 A draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 1. The following provides a summary of the main points:
- Build from the North to ensure maximum benefit for our area;
 - Invest early and maintain investment for existing network, in particular East Coast Mainline to enhance services and reliability;
 - Address concerns about the route, in particular the impact on local communities where HS2 joins and travels along the classic network;
 - Ensure compensation arrangements properly compensate residents and businesses that are affected;
 - Keep control of costs and bring the project in on time and on budget.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any financial implications arising from the recommendation. It is the view of officers that the recommendation will not have any direct financial implications.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any legal implications arising from the recommendation. It is the view of officers that the recommendation will not have any legal implications.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That the response set out in appendix 1 is submitted as the response of North Yorkshire County Council.

DAVID BOWE
Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

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Background Documents: Consultation response on the route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond – July 2013

Appendix 1

The following is the North Yorkshire County Council response; we have responded to the relevant structured questions within the document and have also taken the opportunity to provide a more wide-ranging response relevant to North Yorkshire..

North Yorkshire County Council supports the HS2 initiative and is keen to engage in a productive way, with HS2 and DfT officers over issues raised in our response. In particular we would welcome discussion about the connection to the classic network, the alignment through North Yorkshire and the impacts of HS operations on the classic network through Northallerton Station

Consultation questions

- (i) *Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposed route between the West Midlands and Manchester as described in Chapter 7? This includes the proposed route alignment, the location of tunnels, ventilation shafts, cuttings, viaducts and depots as well as how the high speed line will connect to the West Coast Main Line.*

There are no issues for North Yorkshire.

- (ii) *Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposals for:*

- a. *A Manchester station at Manchester Piccadilly as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.8.1 – 7.8.7)?*

There are no issues for North Yorkshire

- b. *An additional station near Manchester Airport as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.6.1 – 7.6.6)?*

There are no issues for North Yorkshire

- (iii) *Do you think that there should be any additional stations on the western leg between the West Midlands and Manchester?*

No

- (iv) *Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposed route between West Midlands and Leeds as described in Chapter 8? This includes the proposed route alignment, the location of tunnels, ventilation shafts, cuttings, viaducts and depots as well as how the high speed line will connect to the East Coast Main Line.*

The current preferred route North of Leeds and the proposed connection at Ulleskelf have a significant impact on the local community, especially visually. We believe that the route should be modified to reduce the visual impact and that everything is done to ensure that there is the minimum negative impact on the communities in North Yorkshire. We would welcome further dialogue with HS2 on this issue.

(v) *Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposals for:*

a. *A Leeds station at Leeds New Lane as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.8.1 – 8.8.5)?*

North Yorkshire County Council is concerned with the distance between New Lane station and the current Leeds station. The distances and time taken to connect between the two stations, will impact on North Yorkshires connectivity with HS2. If the station is to remain at New Lane we would want to ensure that the access between the two stations is seamless, uses the latest people mover technology, that it is covered, accessible to all, built for growth and easy to use with luggage. The distance from train to train and the time this will take needs to be minimised.

b. *A South Yorkshire station to be located at Sheffield Meadowhall as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.5.1 – 8.5.8)?*

This is located in the right area as the station and its close proximity to the Motorway network will provide quick road access to HS2 from some parts of North Yorkshire. It is imperative that the interchange between road and rail are optimised. The location also minimises the journey time penalty from a Sheffield Station stop.

c. *An East Midlands station to be located at Toton as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.3.1 – 8.3.6)?*

Yes this will provide a faster link from North Yorkshire to the Nottingham area as well as improving international connectivity with East Midlands Airport. The location also minimises the journey time penalty from an East Midlands Station stop

(vi) *Do you think that there should be any additional stations on the eastern leg between the West Midlands and Leeds?*

No

(vii) *Please let us know your comments on the Appraisal of Sustainability (as reported in the Sustainability Statement) of the Government's proposed Phase Two route, including the alternatives to the proposed route as described in Chapter 9.*

NYCC service areas that have contributed to this response include: Landscape; Ecology; Planning; Public Rights of Way; Archaeology; Flood Risk. Individual responses are set out in a separate document. Below is a summary of main considerations:

- Landscape: It is evident that parts of the final section of the Proposed Route would need to be elevated. It is likely that sections of viaduct would be considered preferable to embankment since viaduct sections enable the retention in part of longer-distance views. This matter would form part of more detailed discussions with HS2.

- Ecology: Haighs Grass Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) lies in proximity to the Proposed Route; impacts to SINC's should be avoided. Haighs Grass SINC is classified for its hay meadow, a habitat which is considered irreplaceable. Whilst loss would have to be mitigated in full, replacement of habitat has a poor record. Several other SINC's lie within 1km of the Proposed Route. The Proposed Route also passes through plantation woodland known as Middle Fox Covert; this should be retained. If this is not possible, mitigation / compensation for loss and degradation would need to be provided.
- Noise: The consultation document seeks to give some idea of noise impacts and how these might be perceived by communities, including post-attenuation. It is nevertheless difficult to assess the potential effects at this stage and NYCC will be keen to understand the exact extent, particularly post-attenuation – and what the latter would entail.
- Minerals: The Proposed Route crosses no areas that are currently safeguarded. NYCC is however working towards defining minerals safeguarding areas as part of the preparation of the Minerals & Waste Joint Plan.
- Waste: The County Council notes a landfill site at Copley Lane Quarry (GR 448323 435103). Discussion with the County Council would also be advised in order that surplus materials from the construction of HS2 could be disposed of.
- Public Rights of Way: One public footpath (35.4.5/2 – Barkston Ash) would need diverting, and one unsurfaced unclassified road would need to be stopped or otherwise accommodated.
- Archaeology: Desk-based assessment, survey and trial trenching would be required. These would determine impacts and potential mitigation strategies.
- Flood Risk: A Flood Risk Assessment would be required.

In summary NYCC would encourage engagement with HS2 on how impacts can either be avoided or mitigated. Avoidance would form the basis of further investigation with HS2 on the potential for minor alterations or realignments to the Proposed Route.

(viii) *Please let us know your comments on how the capacity that would be freed up on the existing rail network by the introduction of the proposed Phase Two route could be used as described in Chapter 10?*

There should be no detrimental impact on frequency, journey times or connectivity to any of the rail services that serve North Yorkshire in the lead up or as a result of the introduction of HS2. For North Yorkshire the links across the North whether city links or local services are as important as our links to London and these must be maintained and improved. The major rail

investment planned in the years up to HS2 need to ensure that connectivity with HS2 is optimised.

There must be continued investment in the East Coast Main Line to ensure that it continues to develop and grow and be seen as part of the overall option for rail journeys in the future. The East Coast Main Line must also still serve those communities that are not served directly by HS2 maintaining high quality service and connectivity they expect. The importance of direct trains to London for communities cannot be underestimated and we would encourage HS2 to stop some trains at Northallerton.

As HS2 releases further capacity along the East Coast Main Line, this released capacity should be seen as an opportunity to open new markets such as Harrogate / Scarborough – London, or to grow existing markets with direct train or increased frequencies.

The East Coast Main Line is an important long distance rail network linking many towns, cities and communities along its route and should continue to receive investment for growth and reliability.

At Northallerton both the residents and rail industry have concerns about operations and safety at this station, especially if higher speeds and longer trains are introduced. We would welcome an early opportunity to discuss impacts of HS2 at this station.

(ix) *Please let us know your comments on the introduction of other utilities along the proposed Phase Two line of route as described in Chapter 11?*

There is nothing that North Yorkshire County Council is aware of at this time.

Further comments from North Yorkshire County Council

- Build from the North – given the long timelines, and especially the late start date (2027) of the Leeds phase, bringing forward the Northern route would have additional economic benefits in frontloading construction jobs and delivering the benefits of HS2 sooner.
- Review compensation arrangements: local communities stand to lose out as a result of the current approach to compensation. This is something we need the Task Force to recognise and engage with more proactively, using local authorities to facilitate further conversations with communities.
- Keep close control on costs to ensure HS2 is delivered on time and within the budget.
- York station will be a major hub for rail and it is vital that there is no impact on how the station operates for local, national and potentially international services. Many North Yorkshire residents will use York station to join the HS2 network and the passenger facilities need to be brought up to the standard of the new build HS2 stations.