

**Open Report on behalf of Executive Director for Environment & Economy**

Report to:	<b>Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>13 June 2016</b>
Subject:	<b>Rail Update</b>

**Summary:**

This report updates the Committee on current rail issues. In particular, it outlines the results of a public consultation on the County Council's priorities for the upcoming East Midlands Rail Franchise process. The report also describes recent work commissioned by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP) who engaged consultants to examine the role that rail plays in the GLLEP area and the economic benefits that improvements might bring. Finally, the report also updates the Committee on a recent decision by the Rail Regulator which has positive implications for Lincoln-London direct services.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the report and comment on any issues of concern.

## **1. Background**

### East Midlands Rail Franchise Re-letting

- 1.1 Most rail services in the County are within the East Midlands Franchise (currently operated by East Midlands Trains). The recently revised Department for Transport (DfT) programme now indicates that the process of re-letting the East Midlands Franchise will start in December this year, with the short-listed rail operators being announced in May 2017. An appointment will be made in March 2018, with the new contract starting in July 2018. The re-letting of the franchise provides an opportunity for the County Council and other stakeholders to lobby both DfT and the prospective operators for improvements to Lincolnshire services. A formal DfT consultation is expected later this summer.
- 1.2 To help to inform its views on the new franchise, the Council asked the public and interested organisations for their suggested improvements. Almost 100 replies were received and the responses have been assessed. The findings suggest that the aspirations of the public and stakeholders are

in accord with those of the County Council. Officers will also ensure that all the prospective bidders are aware of the aspirations of the County.

1.3 A summary of the proposed enhancements to be sought by the Council are described below:

Peterborough – Spalding – Sleaford - Lincoln – Gainsborough – Doncaster

- Enhanced all-day, hourly service (0600 – 2300, Mon - Sat)
- Introduction of all-day Sunday services
- Strengthening of peak hour services to 2 trains per hour (tph) into and out of Lincoln and Peterborough
- Improve timetabling to enable more and better connections with ECML at Peterborough and Doncaster
- Consideration of possible direct service linking Skegness, Boston, Sleaford and Spalding to Peterborough and hence on to London
- Consideration of Lincoln – Sleaford – Boston – Skegness service

Lincoln – Newark Castle - Nottingham

- Enhance service to 2 tph all day (if Newark Flat Crossing permits) and recast as 1 stopping train and 1 fast train
- Extend 1 tph (fast) to Birmingham
- Additional stops at Hykeham and Swinderby on appropriate services
- Provide all-day Sunday service

Newark North Gate – Lincoln – Grimsby/Cleethorpes

- Enhanced all-day, hourly service between Newark North Gate and Grimsby, with every other train going on to Cleethorpes
- Improve timetabling to enable more and better connections with ECML at Newark
- All trains to stop at Hykeham
- Provide improved Sunday service all year round

Nottingham – Grantham – Boston – Skegness

- Enhance Sunday services, particularly during winter timetable
- Provide adequate train capacity to meet seasonal demand for travel to and from Skegness, including holiday periods/special events outside of the summer season
- Improve timetabling to optimise connections with ECML at Grantham
- Additional stops at intermediate stations

Overcrowding

- Address existing train overcrowding issues, including :
  - Newark - Lincoln
  - Lincoln - Market Rasen

- Lincoln - Sleaford
- Spalding – Peterborough
- Skegness services (see above)

#### Rolling Stock

- Sufficient rolling stock to be available to meet passenger demands
- All trains to comprise at least two carriages
- Trains to meet DDA requirements and include provision of free wifi and charging points

#### Stations

- Programme of station enhancements to improve station accessibility and facilities, including :
  - additional help points and time table information
  - free wifi
  - parking provision, both vehicles and cycles
  - appropriate platform crossing facilities
- Review of station staffing levels

1.4 These aspirations reflect the economic and social needs of the County and the responses to our consultation. The County Council will meet with prospective bidders for the Franchise before they submit their bids to lobby them to include these aspirations. In addition there is an on-going dialogue with the Department for Transport (DfT) to press them to include our aspirations in the baseline specification for bidders.

#### GLLEP Rail Study

1.5 Since its inception, the GLLEP has identified improving transport links as a priority for enabling the local economy to develop. As part of this process it has received several updates on the actions of the three transport authorities to secure investment in the rail network and in rail services. In early 2015, the GLLEP commissioned a detailed study of the economic development potential of rail investment in the area. The local authorities jointly wrote the brief for the study which was carried out by JMP with North East Lincolnshire Council acting as client. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix A. 1.2. The report was considered by the GLLEP Board on 28<sup>th</sup> January. The minute reads:

- The LEP Board agreed to accept and endorse the Rail Study as a leveraging/lobbying tool, subject to final comment from local authority colleagues by the end of February.

1.6 The key conclusion of the work was that:

“The results of our economic modelling indicated substantial benefits to the economy from improvements in rail services. Merely bringing existing services up to a level that Network Rail would define as a ‘good’ standard nationally could bring about a £34million increase in GDP per year. Improving them to the standard of the best equivalent services in the UK could be worth anywhere between £84m and £167m in extra GDP per year. To put this in context our modelling of the current rail service in the area places their value to the economy at around £161m per annum. The economic prize from enhancing the current level of service is therefore substantial.”

1.7 In essence the report reiterates the existing approach of the three Councils within the context of the GLLEPs strategic role. The County Councils priorities are placed within this context and therefore have the endorsement of the LEP. This provides important support for the Council in its role campaigning for improved services and infrastructure investment.

1.8 The document emphasises the importance of ensuring that committed schemes are delivered by Network Rail (NR) and the Train Operating Companies. The commitments within the County Council area are shown below.

- Lincoln – London two hourly service (from 2019)
- Lincoln – Newark – Nottingham service enhancements (implemented from May 2015)
- Lincoln – Sheffield journey time reductions as part of new Northern franchise (which will also see vastly improved Sunday services)
- Replacement of Pacer trains and major refurbishment of other rolling stock operated by Northern Rail by 2020

1.9 The report identifies a range of incremental schemes which may be delivered relatively quickly perhaps as part of new franchise agreements. Of relevance to Lincolnshire are:

- All year round and all day Sunday services including on routes that presently have no Sunday service (*subsequently included in new Northern franchise for Lincoln-Sheffield services from 2017*)
- Upgrade Lincoln – Sheffield to “Northern Regional” service (*subsequently Lincoln-Sheffield-Leeds services included in Northern Connect express services within new Northern franchise*)
- Improvements to stations and introduction of a Community Rail Development Fund
- Journey time improvements on the Joint Line taking advantage of line speed improvements

1.10 In addition, the JMP report highlights potential service improvements linked to the new East Midlands Rail Franchise due to start in March 2018 including :

- Development of hourly Lincoln – Birmingham service operated either by Cross Country or EMT. Depending on the commercial case this service may be additional to the existing service
- Clockface half hourly Lincoln – Newark service
- Extension of Newark – Grimsby service to Cleethorpes and introduction of two hourly service, rising to hourly. Also introduce journey time improvements subject to infrastructure improvements
- Two hourly clockface Lincoln – Doncaster service, operating all day, rising to hourly if Robin Hood Airport station opened
- All day hourly service between Sleaford and Lincoln
- Hourly Sleaford – Peterborough service operating all day with potential for peak additional services between Spalding and Peterborough
- Development of an integrated timetable maximising connectivity across Lincolnshire, through interchange at key nodes such as Lincoln and Sleaford

Finally, the report includes a table of longer term "transformational" larger scale infrastructure schemes, including:

- Grade separation of Newark Flat Crossing – increasing ECML capacity but also removing planning constraints on the Nottingham – Lincoln line
- Significant line speed enhancements on key routes, notably Lincoln – Nottingham, Doncaster – Cleethorpes and Sheffield – Lincoln to reduce journey times
- Line speed increases Nottingham – Grantham – Sleaford – Skegness
- Electrification of Nottingham – Lincoln line
- Development of stations at Littleworth and Robin Hood Doncaster Sheffield Airport

1.11 Of the proposals identified above, the JMP report identifies the following priorities as being considered to deliver the most economic benefits, but also being realistic objectives for delivery :

- Development of a direct service between Lincoln and Birmingham, either by amalgamating the Lincoln – Nottingham and Nottingham – Birmingham service or by introducing a new service
- Frequency enhancements across the EMT Lincolnshire network to fill anomalous gaps in services, and provide a minimum of a two hourly service on routes that do not currently achieve this (Lincoln – Doncaster and Lincoln – Grimsby) and a minimum of an hourly service on other routes (Lincoln – Sleaford – Peterborough, Nottingham – Skegness and Lincoln – Nottingham).

- Linked to the above, introduce regular clockface departures ultimately working towards the development of an integrated timetable to maximise connectivity across the network
- Improve Sunday services by providing year round services on routes that do not presently have Sunday services and enhance Sunday services on other routes
- Develop the case for a South Humber Bank – London service and for improvements in connectivity from the South Humber bank to other key centres across the north

1.12 The Economic Scrutiny Committee was also consulted on these issues in May and any key comments will be reported to this Committee.

### Lincoln-London Direct Services

1.13 In respect of proposed Lincoln-London direct services included in the new Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) East Coast franchise, it should be noted that the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has now made a decision on competing access rights on the East Coast Main Line. The track access rights for the proposed Lincoln-London direct services have been granted

1.14 The County Council, together with Karl M<sup>c</sup>Cartney MP and other local stakeholders have lobbied the ORR to make this decision. It is important that the Council and stakeholders now work with Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) to ensure that the services are delivered and successful. The Council will now seek to support and enhance the VTEC marketing of these services to maximise the patronage from their commencement in 2019.

## **2. Conclusion**

The re-letting of the East Midlands Rail Franchise is an opportunity to campaign for improvements in local and regional rail services. The approach taken by the Council has been informed by the public consultation that took place earlier this year.

The GLLEP Rail Study identifies a broad range of priority improvements to deliver economic benefits cross the area. These are supportive of the County Council's own developing aspirations for DfT's new East Midlands Rail Franchise due to commence in March 2018.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

N/A

#### **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Greater Lincolnshire LEP Rail Study - January 2016

#### **5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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