



**North Yorkshire County Council
Harrogate and Knaresborough Constituency Committee – 07 November 2019
Harrogate Line Update**

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Harrogate York railway improvement project.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Harrogate Line project is a long standing piece of work undertaken by the County Council. The desired outcome of the project is to increase the frequency of rail services from 1 train per hour to a reliable 2 trains per hour in each direction between Harrogate and York
- 2.2 In May 2013 the Executive agreed to submit a bid to the NY Local Transport Body for funding for improvements to the Leeds – Harrogate – York railway line. In 2013, the improvements were estimated to cost in the region of £12.5m and looked at doubling significant lengths of the track to enable the desired increase in the frequency of services. This bid was successful with the allocation of £9.6m. Due to changes in the way Government allocated this funding the responsibility for this funding has now passed to the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership
- 2.3 Following agreement of the funding by the Local Transport Body the County Council working with Network Rail undertook a series feasibility studies to seek to determine the exact details of the necessary infrastructure
- 2.4 Initially this involved the standard Network Rail scheme development procedure (known as GRIP 1 & GRIP 2) which concluded that double tracking is not required and a series of signalling and line speed interventions between Knaresborough and York will enable a reliable 2 trains per hour service to operate between Harrogate and York.
- 2.5 The details scheme are now being refined through the rail industry GRIP 3 and GRIP 4 stages (essentially preliminary design) and will increase operational capacity of the railway infrastructure by replacing Victorian era token exchange signalling with track circuit axel counters, increasing train speed on the points between single and double track sections and increase the overlap distance at the points at Cattal.
- 2.6 More recently in 2018, NYCC presented a report to the York North Yorkshire East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNER LEP) infrastructure board seeking to reaffirm approval of £9.6 million funding to NYCC to deliver improvements to the rail infrastructure to enable two trains per hour to operate between York and Harrogate.

2.7 Funding from the LEP was approved but subject to a series of conditions, which have not yet been met. As a result, the scheme will be presented to the LEP infrastructure board in December 2019 for final consideration, further details on this will be discussed within the report.

3.0 Current Work

3.1 As stated above at the current time Network Rail are unable to provide absolute certainty that the investment will be able to guarantee that 2 trains per hour can operate successfully between Harrogate and York. This is due to the uncertainty of the capacity of the East Coast Main Line north of York.

3.2 In order to determine the capacity of the East Coast Main Line (ECML), Network Rail and industry partners need to complete an extensive piece of timetable modelling work which will generate a proposed future timetable for the East Coast Main Line. The work will be completed by a Network Rail Event Steering Group (ESG) and is due to be complete at the end of November / early December. Once this piece of work has been complete, it will provide Network Rail with suitable outputs to determine whether the Harrogate Line scheme can deliver the required 2 trains per hour outcome.

3.3 Despite the uncertainty around the future East Coast Main Line timetable, work has continued to progress on the scheme. Should the outcome of the ECML timetabling work confirm the 2 trains per hour can operate this will enable the Harrogate Line project to remain on schedule to deliver within the funding timescales (31 March 2021).

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Once the East Coast Main Line timetabling work is complete in December 2019, Network Rail, Northern and North Yorkshire County Council will present the results to the LEP infrastructure board in December for a final decision on the £9.6million funding.

4.2 Should the ECML timetable work confirm that the required outcome of 2 trains per hour is deliverable the County Council will commission the next phases of the scheme development and deliver (GRIP 5 to GRIP 8) from Network Rail in January 2020. Should the scheme continue it is anticipated that the desired 2 trains per hour service between Harrogate and York will commence as part of the December 2020 rail timetable changes.

4.3 Should the required 2 trains per hour outcome not be achievable the Local Enterprise Partnership is likely to withdraw its funding offer and the project will cease. Should this be the case arrangements are in place to minimise the impact of abortive expenditure on the County Council. These are however subject to commercial confidentiality arrangements.

5.0 Starbeck Level Crossing

5.1 The stated aim of the project is to deliver a doubling of frequency of trains to two trains per hour between Harrogate and York will not have any impact on the number of closures of Starbeck Level Crossing. Currently services from Leeds to Harrogate actually terminate and turn around at Knaresborough and as such already run through Starbeck Level Crossing. The desired increase in services from Harrogate to York will therefore be achieved by continuing these trains that currently terminate at Knaresborough through to terminate at York station

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The project is anticipated to cost £12.6 million, made up of £9.6million Local Growth Funding, and £3.0million from North Yorkshire County Council.
- 6.2 All development works to date have been financed by North Yorkshire County Council.

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equalities impacts arising from the recommendations of this report. As this report is for information only it is the view of officers that the recommendations do not have any adverse impacts on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010 and that no equalities scoping assessment is required. However, it is worth noting that fully developed schemes will require a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 As the report is for information only there are no legal implications associated with the recommendations.

<h2>9.0 Recommendations</h2>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">9.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report. |
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DATE: 22 October 2019