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14th February 2013

Dear Valentina Licata,

Nottingham City Council's comments to the ORR on Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for Control Period 5

We welcome the opportunity to respond and input into a process which will see a significant and positive investment into the national rail network. From reading the document it is clear that the industry is listening to stakeholders and is actively working to ensure resources go into enhancing customer markets.

The Business Plan which has been put forward by Network Rail is a positive document which makes a clear case for the need to enhance and support our railways over the next five years and beyond. We support the significant investment in the national infrastructure and welcome the inclusion of schemes that will support Nottingham as a Core City to help grow the national economy.

Midland Main Line

During this same process ahead of Control Period (CP) 4 we welcomed and supported the work which is now underway or programmed to go ahead on the Midland Main Line. The line speed improvements and the track and signalling enhancements in the Nottingham Station area are essential to the long-term future of the Midland Main Line and will provide a sound footing for the further enhancements planned for CP5. Once the CP4 schemes are complete we would want to see a full timetable recast to ensure the full benefits of the Government's investment can be realised and achieve a Nottingham to London journey time of 90 minutes throughout the day.

In the summer of 2012 Nottingham welcomed the Government's High Level Output Statement (HLOS), announcing the provision of funding for the upgrade and the electrification of the Midland Main Line for delivery in CP5. Now that further details of the scheme have been released by Network Rail we look forward to working with the industry to ensure the best possible outcome for Nottingham and the Midland Main Line can be achieved.

During the East Midlands Trains franchise the Midland Main Line has become a reliable railway, we now want to see better journey times, including a regular journey time of no more than 90 minutes between Nottingham and London throughout the day, to help drive growth and business competitiveness through agglomeration.

We are strongly supportive of the plans to electrify the route but the essential works to deliver a faster line speed and greater capacity should be delivered ahead of electrification. This will ensure the railway can deliver its full potential both now and in future years, as well as offering the best value for money on the investment. It is therefore extremely pleasing to see the Leicester capacity scheme included as a named scheme within the HLOS.

We recognise that part of the business case for the proposed improvements is driven by the rail freight market. We support the growth in rail freight as it is a relatively sustainable method of transporting large quantities of goods, which are important to our local and national economies. We also support the jobs it provides, in particular in the East Midlands. It is however important to ensure that passenger services are not adversely affected by freight improvements.

It is our understanding from talking to Network Rail that a key scheme without a definite funding commitment is in the Market Harborough area. We would therefore request that this is included as an additional scheme within the final determination as it will help the Midland Main Line deliver complementary growth in both the passenger and freight sectors.

Rolling stock

The Midland Main Line is not currently included in the published IEP programme. Now that there is a commitment to electrify the route, we would welcome a dialogue with the Government and rail industry over the future rolling stock which will be deployed on the line, including how best to utilise any displaced rolling stock onto other routes.

Core city connections

As a Core City Nottingham will support national economic growth, but fast reliable connections to other economic drivers is essential to both Nottingham and the Core Cities we do business with.

We are therefore strongly supportive of the Derby Station remodelling, as this will greatly enhance our links to Birmingham and the south west. Currently it takes 1 hour 15 minutes to get to Birmingham from Nottingham, which is unacceptable considering the distance involved and it is uncompetitive with the car.

Nottingham – Sheffield – Leeds is another important market, but in the past it has been neglected by the rail industry. Passenger numbers between Nottingham and Leeds could be grown substantially, relieving pressure from the motorway network. It currently takes over two hours and the direct service is slower than the option of changing trains. Network Rail has an

enhancement scheme, which has been held up as an exemplar in terms of what it will deliver, for the cost, but it is not currently funded. We would want to see greater recognition of the importance of this route and for funding to be in place in CP5.

Local services

There are two schemes listed within the document that will allow further benefits to be gained and enhance the investment of the East Midlands resignalling scheme. We would want to see both of these funded in the final determination.

The City Council is actively involved in the Nottingham – Lincoln Stakeholder Board which is lobbying for improvements in journey times and rolling stock on the line. As a result of the resignalling renewals, line speeds between Lowdham and Newark Castle can be increased. This scheme is listed within the document but is not currently funded.

The second scheme which would deliver substantial benefits through line speed increases and a reduction in journey times, making rail much more competitive than the car is the Netherfield - Allington line speed improvements. This again is listed in the document but without a specific funding source.

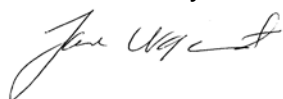
CP6 Development Fund

Tram train is something of great interest to us. If the trial proves that this form of transport is economically viable we would want to work with Network Rail to deliver tram train to Nottingham. We already have an expanding tram network, development and housing strategies in addition to a proposed High Speed Rail Station and tram train could help fill gaps in the transport network.

There are proposals for a large scale electrification programme. It would make sense that this continues to other routes to save the industry money and help reduce emission levels. Routes from Nottingham to other Core Cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds could benefit from a wider programme.

The Business Plan provides many positives and we will work with the industry to ensure the best and most efficient investment is delivered. We would also want to work with Network Rail and the train companies to ensure that our citizens are kept up to speed with the developments to ensure any disruption caused by the substantial investment is seen as a positive, for the benefits it will deliver.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jane Urquhart

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation