

DRAFT Minutes of the LANRAC MEETING with Network Rail and East Midlands Trains

Thursday 8th September 2016 from 13:00 to 15:00 at East Midlands Trains offices, 1 Prospect Place, Millennium Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8HG.

Attendees:

Cllr Christopher Groome (Chairman) – Northants CC (CG)
Cllr Christine Radford (Vice Chair) - Charnwood BC (CR)
Cllr Terry Holt (LANRAC Secretary & Policy Officer) – Sutton Bonington PC (TH)
Cllr Ron Hetherington – Rushcliffe BC (RH)
Cllr Nigel Lawrence – Rushcliffe BC (NL)
Cllr Michael Tebbutt – Kettering BC (MT)
Cllr Jeffrey Kaufman – Oadby & Wigston BC (JeK)
Spencer Gibbens – Network Rail (SG)
Jake Kelly – East Midlands Trains (JaK)
Steve Jones (Minutes Secretary for this meeting) – Harborough Rail Users and Railfuture East Midlands (SJ)

Apologies:

Cllr Margaret Talbot – Kettering BC
Cllr Graham Lawman – Northants CC
Cllr Jean Douglas – Melton BC
Roger Bacon (Minutes Secretary) - Railfuture East Midlands and TravelWatch East Midlands

1) LINE ENHANCEMENT and ELECTRIFICATION ISSUES

SG from Network Rail gave a slide presentation on the Midland Main Line (MML) Upgrade Programme. This was a generic presentation for local authorities, MPs and other stakeholders and gave the position following the unpausing of the electrification scheme and the Hendy review of Network Rail's enhancement programme. He highlighted the significant growth in passenger numbers since privatisation and the further projected increase, giving rise to the need for capacity and line-speed increases as well as the electrification. In summary:

- The whole MML scheme is budgeted at about £2.5bn
- The phasing is Thameslink upgrade completed by December 2018; St Pancras to Bedford overhead line equipment (OLE) upgrade to happen concurrently with the line-speed enhancement; electrification to Corby, 6 trains per hour (tph) from St Pancras and the Derby remodelling by December 2019; electrification to Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield by December 2023. The December 2019 timetable will allow the splitting of shorter-distance (south of Leicester) and long-distance MML services with 2 fast tph each to Nottingham and Sheffield and 2 tph to Corby. Major risks remain, not least the lack of decisions yet on the rolling stock, which will be crucial to the success of the scheme. Note that the infrastructure works other than electrification are the major enablers of capacity and speed, especially four-tracking between Bedford and Kettering as well as major track works at Market Harborough, Leicester and Derby.

In terms of the following items set out in the agenda:

a) Corby to St Pancras Progress

- i) The redoubling of the line between Corby and Kettering and work on several major structures is in progress. Target completion February 2018, with some blockades of the line plus weekend works on the main line at Kettering.
- ii) Resignalling is being done north of Corby to reduce the current 20-minute headways to 5 minutes.
- iii) Bedford to Kettering four-tracking by September 2019. This is the most important individual scheme as far as EMT is concerned. Electrification by December 2019.
- iv) 'LDHS' (Long-Distance High-Speed) works: This actually means platform lengthening at Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby stations and Bedford Platform 4. There will be a new platform 4 at Wellingborough, with a major upgrade of the station funded partly by Bovis Homes as part of their adjacent 3,000-house Stanton Gate development.
- v) Risks: the implications for the MML of Thameslink's 24 tph through the central core and the need to clear Sharnbrook Tunnel for W12 gauge for 9'6" containers as well as for electrification.

b) Derby Track Remodelling Plans

- i) Scheduled for 2018. NR need to keep lines running, not least for access to EMT's depot at Etches Park. This is a major scheme; in terms of SEUs (signalling equivalent units) it is 30% bigger than the Nottingham rebuild.
- ii) SG also reported on the line-speed improvements north of Derby, especially through the historically important section through Belper and works on the several listed tunnels in that area.

c) Leicester Station Upgrade Proposals

- i) The junctions at the south end of Leicester station are difficult because of the low bridge clearance under London Road, the listed station frontage and the main sewer under the track. Heads are still being scratched about all that.

d) Market Harborough Station Renewal - Financing and Diversion Programme

- i) This £46m scheme now appears to be fully funded, with NR in discussion with the DfT about the previous £9m shortfall. The new car park will be entirely at ground level on the east side of the line. SG felt that a couple of blockades of around 5 days each will be needed; through trains will be diverted via Corby which by then will be double track throughout and resignalled.
- ii) The footpath crossing at Little Bowden is now closed and a planning application for a stepped footbridge is with Harborough DC.

e) Wigston Grade-Separation Approval

- i) This has not been approved yet as it is linked with the proposed Felixstowe to Nuneaton freight enhancements.

f) Track Enhancement – Syston to Wigston

- i) Four-tracking between Syston and Wigston is essential to release capacity for passengers and freight.

g) Road Bridge Upgrade Issues, including Meadow Lane, Loughborough - Pedestrian Access

- i) See also item h) below. NR's policy is to replace bridges, station facilities, etc., 'as is', subject to compliance with modern regulatory standards. Enhancements need to be separately funded and the local authorities have a major role in this. For example, if new housing development means that a new or wider footpath is needed over a railway bridge, the local highway authority needs to take the lead, perhaps using s106 contributions from the developer. Meadow Lane is currently under discussion between NR, Leics CC and Nicky Morgan MP. RH commented that this work and that on Nottingham Road bridge needs to be coordinated to minimise traffic disruption; in other words, complete Meadow Lane first.

ACTION: TH to contact Nicky Morgan MP about Meadow Lane Bridge (Now done: response awaited)

- ii) MT commented that the North Northants Core Strategy is now essentially in place and will be a big help in similar issues in that area.

h) Bridge Reconstruction Closure Consultation

- i) Though it may be attractive to work on several bridges during one line possession, NR is sensitive to community severance and therefore seeks to phase works accordingly. Bridge reconstruction and other works such as vegetation clearance can be locally controversial. Similarly, piling work is noisy and often has to be done at night so as to minimise disruption to rail traffic. TH commented that residents affected by bridge closures had been assured that they would benefit from the experience gained during the last consultation prior to the pausing of the earlier scheme. There had been little evidence of this, as initial consultation this time appeared to severely underestimate the range of the local residents who would be affected by the disruption. Hopefully this has now been resolved by submitting more information into parish newsletters as well as the local press. However, recommendations regarding the pairing of certain bridges in order to minimise disruption had regrettably not been taken forward. However, EMT and Network Rail should be commended on the excellent way that they handled the service disruption and emergency repair following the partial collapse of the bridge at Barrow upon Soar in August.

i) Electrification Stock Procurement for post-2019 (Corby), 2020 (HST Non-Compliance), 2023 (New Stock)

- i) Decisions remain to be made about the electric rolling stock; nothing has yet been ordered and time is running out. Economic changes mean that new stock is no more expensive than refurbished older stock, so we are seeing massive orders for new trains. The constraint then becomes the supply industry's ability to deliver. There is little existing stock available that has the speed and acceleration characteristics needed to maintain the projected post-2019 timetable. The HSTs have to be withdrawn by the end of 2019 because of PRM TSI requirements but in any case, they are becoming life-expired.
- ii) JaK anticipates 'Hendy 2' as even the revised national enhancements programme is proving difficult to deliver. Further slippage is likely and the possibility of re-routing HS2 via Sheffield adds further risk to the 2023 MML target. DfT decisions are expected in October and will be influenced by politics; the East Midlands

region is at risk of losing out to other more politically influential areas. EMT are speaking to MPs and others along the MML and the local authority groups such as EMC have a role here too. MT asked about this and the view is that Midlands Connect and others could play a stronger role. JaK commented that the current train service 'is not a disaster' and as such there may seem to be less urgency about improving it, but it is crucial that the new rolling stock is of the right kind. SG added that we effectively have a new government and therefore a new team to influence regarding the East Midlands. He commented that Chris Grayling does appear to be seeking greater collaboration and less fragmentation across the rail industry. NR's new strategy for capacity in the East Midlands is due to be launched next week at the Rail Forum East Midlands. Further discussion with LANRAC about this at a future meeting would be worthwhile.

ACTIONS:

- **LANRAC lobbying of MPs about the importance of rail investment in the East Midlands.**
- **LANRAC contact with EMC and Sir Peter Soulsby about lobbying for rail investment in the East Midlands**
- **Further discussion with Network Rail about the EM capacity strategy.**

- iii) As a result of the above, bi-mode trains as now ordered for Great Western are a likely outcome for the MML, especially as the MML's diversionary routes are not being electrified. CG asked whether the franchise change will affect rolling stock procurement. JaK said it need not; EMT's sister company SWT are introducing a new fleet of Class 707 trains despite only having a few months left of their franchise. JeK asked about the effects of Brexit on procurement; JaK said that the fall in the value of sterling has made new trains and their components more expensive.
- iv) There was discussion about the proposed electric train depot at Kettering. JaK is sceptical about the need and location for this. A final decision is awaited and will be associated with the re-franchising.

j) Protection of Knighton North Junction access to MML for possible reinstatement for Passengers or Freight

- i) The need for this is noted but it is difficult to promise that e.g. electrification gantries will not be in the way as the design of any reinstated curve is not yet known. It need not necessarily be on the original trackbed and tram-train technology with street-running in Leicester may be appropriate for local passenger services.

ACTION: Network Rail

In addition:

- i) SG reported on the Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges: at Hemington, near the airport (East Midlands Gateway), this has planning permission; near the Toyota factory on the Derby – Stoke line; the Marks & Spencer site at Castle Donington (which is likely to operate in association with EM Gateway), plus the long-running plans for Radlett. All this requires W12 gauge clearance.
- ii) Collaboration between all relevant parties can deliver huge benefits; Loughborough station is a good example where NR, EMT, the DfT and the local

authorities and others worked together to produce a very good result. Other examples are Corby, Sheffield 2 tph, and the Newark Castle Line improvements.

- iii) JeK asked about open access on the MML, as happens on the East Coast. JaK replied that open access causes great difficulties for the financial arrangements between franchisees and the DfT because of revenue abstraction. However, it is only really possible when a line has spare capacity; the MML is full.

2) FRANCHISE ISSUES

For reasons of time, there was limited discussion of these. More detailed discussion will be needed at a future meeting.

CG reported that a potential bidder had offered to give a presentation to LANRAC. LANRAC would want to give all potential bidders the same opportunity to present their plans and aspirations, including Stagecoach as the incumbent as it is expected they will also want to bid. A joint session with TWEM may be the best way to organise this, after the DfT prospectus for the EM franchise has been published in December 2016.

a) Possibility of East Midlands Franchise Definition including Birmingham – Stansted

- i) TH raised this, with a view to enhancing the regional airport connectivity. The present Cross Country service is something of a misfit in their portfolio especially as EMT manages several of the stations. JaK reported that the DfT is seriously considering it.

b) Retention of Meridians for Non-Electrified Services in the East Midlands

- i) The Norwich – Liverpool route is widely seen as a good home for the Meridians post-electrification. However, JaK said they are not ideal for the route as their capacity is limited vis-à-vis platform lengths. Additional refurbished Class 158s cascaded from other areas would be a better option.

c) Later Saturday Evening Departures from St Pancras

- i) This was raised by CR and others. The MML compares unfavourably with the ECML. Similarly, train services to airports can be limited in the early morning or late evening. Overnight infrastructure work and train maintenance is the main reason for the MML's relatively early close. SG commented that once the Corby line is completed, that will provide a suitable, albeit slow, diversionary route for any works on the main line via Market Harborough.

d) Half-Hourly Northbound Service from Kettering

- i) This is a severe limitation with the current service, as are the poor connections off the Corby service. The new timetables provide the opportunity to address it.

e) Later Weekday Departures South from Derby

- i) Held over to a future meeting. However, there was some comment about northbound services from Leicester and Nottingham generally. JaK said that with the possible exception of a Leicester to Manchester service, there was no real prospect of through services to other destinations beyond Sheffield. Part of this is because existing connections with Cross Country trains at Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield are very good.

f) Possible Melton/Oakham/Corby Direct Service to St Pancras

- i) This was a possible option, especially given the sizeable combined population of Melton and Oakham. A circular service via Leicester has been mooted but is limited by very tight track capacity at Leicester. SJ commented that it would give one option for reopened stations at Desborough and Kibworth, which are seeing major housing growth; SG said that it would be disproportionately expensive to provide for these stations. An extra station south of Wellingborough to serve Rushden may be more viable with the reinstatement of the slow lines. JaK said we first need to see how Thameslink settles down after 2018.

g) Resolution of current Overcrowding Problems

- i) JaK said that if various decisions including rolling stock for the MML go as hoped, there should not be a problem on the MML. However, the EMT regional services are full. The new franchise specification therefore needs to ensure that additional regional capacity is mandated. Cascaded rolling stock would do this.

h) Robin Hood Line Extension to Ollerton and Edwinstowe

- i) Held over to future meeting.

i) Continuation of current excellent Special Needs Service

- i) Held over to future meeting.

j) Will EMT be hosting a Roadshow promoting their case for retaining the Franchise?

- i) See introductory paragraph above.

CONCLUSIONS

LANRAC Actions:

- 1) TH to contact Nicky Morgan MP about the Meadow Lane bridge in Loughborough (Now done: response awaited) (agenda item 1(g))
- 2) LANRAC lobbying of MPs about the importance of rail investment in the East Midlands (agenda item 1(i))
- 3) TH to contact East Midlands Council about LANRAC and its activities (agenda item 1(i))
- 4) TH to contact Sir Peter Soulsby, Leicester City Mayor, about LANRAC and rail in Leicester and the region (agenda item 1(g) and (i))
- 5) Further discussion with Network Rail about the EM capacity strategy after launch in September 2016 (agenda item 1(i))
- 6) Joint 'beauty contest' to be arranged with TWEM and possibly Railfuture for potential EM franchise bidders after DfT prospectus issued in December 2016 (agenda item 2)

The meeting finished at 15:05.

Steve Jones, Minutes Secretary for the 8th September 2016 meeting of LANRAC
(pp Roger Bacon, Minutes Secretary)

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LANRAC campaigning for the midland main line

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