



Report of the Director of City Development

Executive Board

Date: 27 July 2011

Subject: NATIONAL HIGH SPEED RAIL STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Electoral Wards Affected:

None

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the re

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The government launched a consultation on national high speed rail strategy on 28 February last with a deadline for response by 29 July. At the same time the Government preferred "Y" shaped network north of the West Midlands was confirmed.
2. High speed rail presents a unique opportunity for supporting the growth and prosperity of Leeds and the city region through the provision of a modern high speed route, bringing about levels of connectivity already present in South East England and on mainland Europe and which increases the overall capacity of the UK rail system.
3. The Council is working with key stakeholders in the City Region and pan-regionally to promote and strengthen the case for high speed rail and at the 6 April Full Council meeting the Government was asked to reaffirm its commitment by the inclusion of a framework for route to the north of England in their proposed hybrid bill.
4. This report recommends a submission to the Secretary of State for Transport which confirms the Council's support for high speed rail and seeks the best possible solution that benefits Leeds and the city region with high quality services and interchange.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report details the proposed response to the Government's consultation on a National High Speed Rail Strategy.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Government launched the national consultation on its high speed rail strategy on 28 February with a deadline for responses by 29 July 2011.
- 2.2 The consultation confirms the Government's support for a Y-shaped high speed rail network from London to the West Midlands and onwards with separate legs serving Leeds (with stops in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire) and Manchester. The consultation also includes revised proposals for the preferred route from London to Birmingham and for connections from the network to Heathrow Airport and to the existing high speed route from London to the Channel Tunnel. Detailed proposals are now being developed by the Government's high speed rail company (HS2 Ltd) for the routes forming the Y shaped network North of the West Midlands, although consultation is not expected to begin until 2012. The plans are expected to include connections back into the classic routes (i.e. East Coast Main Line) to allow the North and Scotland to gain immediate benefits from the planned network.
- 2.3 The proposed line will have an operating speed of 360 kph with the capability of being enhanced to allow 400 kph later. By comparison the fastest domestic UK services operate at a maximum of 225 kph with significant parts of the inter-city network operating at lower speeds. Journey times of 1 hour 20 minutes London to Leeds compared with 2 hours 20 minutes now are forecast for the new lines. To accommodate services London Euston station would be entirely rebuilt as the domestic high speed rail terminus. The route would be built to the larger international gauge enabling the high capacity trains to operate as in Europe, but trains which are compatible with present "classic" routes would be provided to allow Scotland and the north of England to benefit from the high speed lines. A key benefit of high speed rail will thus be the wider contribution it brings in terms of increasing overall UK rail capacity to meet demand which is expected to grow well beyond present classic route capacity limits over the next 20 years.
- 2.4 The proposed timetable for delivering the network is to introduce a hybrid Bill for the London to West Midlands phase in 2013 with a view to securing Royal Assent in 2015 and subject to consultation to follow this with a further Bill in the next Parliament for the second phase to Manchester and Leeds. On this basis completion to the West Midlands is expected to be in 2026 with the second phase opening in 2032/33.
- 2.5 So far as the benefits of high speed rail are concerned, the Government's own analysis shows that high speed rail would deliver economic benefits worth £44 billion over 60 years. Work undertaken by the Northern Way has demonstrated around £6 billion worth of agglomeration benefits. Work undertaken by the High Speed Rail Eastern Network Partnership (including Leeds, Sheffield, Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley City Regions, and Derby and Nottingham City Councils) shows the total wider economic impacts of the eastern route of the proposed national high speed rail network are estimated to be £4.2bn. Furthermore this work has shown that for the eastern route north of Birmingham whilst 70% of productivity benefits come from faster journeys to London, 30% arise from faster journeys between the city regions outside London.

- 2.6 A range of research and promotional work is continuing to develop the supporting case for the high speed rail involving Metro and stakeholders within the City Region as well as through the Core Cities Group and with the Sheffield City Region and East of England high speed rail partnership. The Council has also agreed to contribute to a joint Core Cities public relations initiative to provide co-ordinated support for the high speed rail proposals.
- 2.7 An inquiry into high speed rail has been called by the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee to which a statement was been submitted on 16 May. The Committee has confirmed acceptance of the Council's submission as written evidence.
- 2.8 In view of the contentious nature of the route proposals from London to the West Midlands on the back of which a well organised and influential campaign including local authorities is well underway, it is essential that the City Council is able to firmly endorse a strategic and supportive position on the proposed strategy. It is therefore proposed to make a submission to the Secretary of State, which complements those of regional partners firmly setting out the Council's support.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The proposed submission is appended to this report. As well as summarising the Council's view on high speed rail it responds to the specific questions posed in the Department for Transport's consultation which are briefly:
- Is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of the inter-city rail network?
 - Is the "Y" shaped network the best option for a national high speed rail network?
 - Are the phasing of the proposals for the network right?
 - Is the route between London and the West Midlands the best option?
- 3.2 The key points which it is proposed to make to the Secretary of State are summarised below:
- The high speed rail proposals are to be welcomed for their potential to transform Leeds and the City Region's national connectivity and the major uplift they will provide to our long term economic prospects.
 - The preferred "Y" shaped network which serves Leeds directly from the West Midlands is the right solution for Leeds and the City Region and for a long term national network.
 - The proposed network must be seen in the round as a whole and not by its component parts and the Parliamentary Bill process must reflect this.
 - High speed rail will provide essential additional capacity and opportunities needed to support the development and provision of new regional and local rail services and for the development of the rail freight sector.

- The new network must provide the highest possible level of interchange with regional and local rail networks and with local public transport and as such well sited centrally located stations will be essential.
- If the project is delivered in phases as proposed the programme must ensure the routes to Leeds and Manchester and connections to the North and Scotland are progressed at least in parallel with each other and as soon as possible after the opening for the first section of route.
- Investment in high speed rail must not be at the expense of continuing investment in infrastructure and trains for the existing “classic” rail network, especially the East Coast Main Line.
- A high quality of design throughout the proposals is essential both for the line of route and environmental mitigation and to provide iconic stations which integrate well with local transport networks and the public realm.
- In view of the timeframe to completion of more than 20 years it is vital that the Government expedites planning to ensure that the options for bringing forward delivery of the route to Leeds as soon as possible are fully explored and the issues of blight and uncertainty surrounding such a large project are fully addressed.

3.3 It will be necessary as the Government progresses with the proposals for the city to invest in the time and resources needed to ensure that the best possible solution for the communities and economy of Leeds is achieved. Further development of the Council’s response to high speed rail should therefore proceed in parallel with the Government’s release of information and advice. In this regard the work with Metro, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Core Cities Group and other partners will continue to develop to include a robust and convincing public relations strategy that supports high speed rail both locally and pan-regionally.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 This report does not have any specific implications for council policy or governance at the present time. In due course it is expected that the Government will publish its detailed proposals for the “Y” shaped links to the North which can be expected to raise a range of issues requiring the Council’s detailed consideration and consultation.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 This report does not have any specific legal implications at this stage, however again once proposals are published it will be necessary to review their legal ramifications and the Council’s position and response to the anticipated statutory process.

5.1 As the project develops and ultimately once the detailed proposals are published the Council will wish to influence the final Government decisions of in terms of the scheme as a whole and more specific detail as it may affect Leeds. Given the timescales and early stage of the project it is not possible to anticipate what these will be at this time nor any additional resource implications.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This report has set out the Council's proposed response to the national high speed rail strategy consultation. The project remains at an early stage of development with the release of proposals for our region still a year or more away. An organised campaign against the proposals is well mobilised and it is essential that this is balanced by a strong positive campaign draws in support with a strong and well argued case for this investment. The body of evidence for this is growing and key pan-regional stakeholders are working together to promote and support the case for a national high speed rail network. As the Government's proposals are developed and their response to the consultation submissions is prepared the continued support of Leeds and the city region as one of the beneficiaries of the plans will need to be maintained.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Executive Board are requested to:

- i) Note and comment on the content of this report.
- ii) Confirm their support for the Government's high speed rail strategy and network proposals.
- iii) Approve the proposed response to the national high speed rail consultation appended to this report.

8.0 Background Papers

8.1

- i) Appendix A: Submission to the Government's consultation on a national high speed rail strategy.
- ii) High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future, Department for Transport

APPENDIX A

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON A NATIONAL HIGH SPEED RAIL STRATEGY

Leeds City Council has welcomed the Government's proposals for High Speed Rail which it considers if delivered as suggested in the consultation proposals offers the potential for a one-off opportunity to transform inter-city travel in the UK.

The proposals for a high speed rail network are considered to offer major economic benefits for the Midlands and the North and an opportunity to address the economic imbalances that exist between the South and the North. For Leeds and the Leeds city region which represents 5% of the overall UK economy as a unique economic opportunity, the proposals will address the growing pressures on the capacity of the classic rail network, especially the East Coast Main Line. As such the Council supports the "Y" shaped network as proposed.

It is considered that the development of a high speed network will offer the one-off opportunity for a transformational change to the rail network, including connectivity to international networks, in a way which does not seem feasible for the classic network. This potential for releasing capacity on the classic network for essential local and regional services is considered an integral element of the high speed rail case and will need to be supported by parallel investment to meet demand and develop services during the likely 20 year plus period in which the network to Leeds is developed.

The timing and delivery of the network are critical matters and the City Council believes that it is essential that the proposed routes to the North should be developed in parallel so as to maximise the overall benefit to the Northern economy and progress expedited to minimise the timeline between completion of the Birmingham phase and subsequent phases. It is also noted that evaluation shows the potential benefits of completing the route to Leeds and connection to the North and Scotland first.

The City Council's responses to the specific questions posed by the Government follows.

Detailed comments

- 1 This question is about the strategy and wider context: Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network to support economic growth over the coming decades?**
 - 1.1 Leeds Metropolitan District sits at the heart of the 11 local authority areas which together form the Leeds City Region and forms basis for the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership. Leeds' population of 800,000 makes up over a quarter of the city region population of nearly 3 million and the city contributes around 35% to the overall city region economy of £51 billion GVA, which represents 5% of the overall UK economy. Transport is therefore a vital part of maintaining a competitive economy.
 - 1.2 The LCR is host to a number of major businesses and outside London, Leeds is the primary financial and business services centre employing 95,000 people in Knowledge Intensive Businesses. As well as this the City Region has significant strengths in existing and emerging sectors, particularly environmental sciences,

electrical and optical equipment, bioscience, health and medical research, and digital and creative industries and the highest concentration of universities outside of London, and one of the largest clusters in Europe, providing over 36,000 graduates per year. Some 36% of the research produced by these higher education institutions is deemed world class and 10% is deemed world leading. National and international transport links are therefore critical to the success of Leeds and the City Region.

- 1.3 The case for major investment in the UK rail network is considered to remain very strong with a continuing growing demand for rail travel both for local journeys and for longer distance travel that is generated by a modern economy and lifestyles which place a high value on good mobility. The completion of the first high speed line (HS1) from London to the Channel Tunnel has underlined the need to extend UK connectivity into the wider international high speed networks that have been spreading across Europe for several decades.
- 1.4 Improving journey speeds and hence connectivity alongside the release of capacity on the classic network is the main driver for the creation of a high speed network. The initial forecast journey times Leeds to London which knock off around one hour (or 60%) from the present journey time will be transformational in comparison to previous route modernisations. What is also significant is the much improved connectivity from Leeds to Birmingham and the West Midlands where present journey times would be halved. These changes will have a major impact on connectivity to Leeds and are considered to justify the choice of 360 kph network with the ultimate potential for 400 kph.
- 1.5 In terms of economic benefits the Government's own analysis shows that the proposed "Y" shaped network delivers an estimated £44 billion of economic benefits over 60 years. Work for the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions indicates potential wider economic benefits over £2 billion and the Northern Way has estimated the economic agglomeration benefits to the North at over £6 billion. Sustaining strong and growing economies in the face of international competition and climate change requires a new approach to long distance travel.
- 1.6 The creation of a new network rather than further route modernisation will deliver the transformational change needed for the UK's railways. Whilst it may be possible to increase the capacity of the existing main line routes serving the North, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East Midlands, the completion of the West Coast Main Line modernisation programme at a cost of nearly £9 billion and a timescale of 9 years to completion shows the very significant costs incurred by the "on-line" route improvements. Although this route has created new capacity forecasts suggest that by the 2020's this will have been used up. Similarly, whilst maximum speeds of 125 mph have enabled journey time improvements, this has only delivered top speeds which have been the norm on significant lengths of the East Coast and Great Western main lines for several decades.
- 1.7 The West Coast Main Line illustrates that modernising live railways, often on historic alignments passing through heavily built up areas is a major and disruptive undertaking carrying significant management and operational costs. It is also difficult to significantly future proof classic routes for further development, for example in terms of increasing train speeds. This suggests that without a major step change of approach a transformational approach to the country's inter-city networks is going to become increasingly more difficult. Therefore the City Council believes that the proposals for a purpose built high speed rail network are a one-off opportunity for the

UK rail network to be brought to a standard that matches those routes already established in Europe.

1.8 The City Council sees an urgent need to plan for tackling deficiencies in the existing “classic” rail network. For example on the East Coast Main Line the rolling stock is between 20 and 30 years old and has an infrastructure that has seen a fraction of the investment made in the West Coast Main Line and similar could also be said of the Midland Main Line. Therefore the Council is firmly of the view that the development and progression of High Speed Rail proposals ultimately should provide for a durable and flexible “once and for all” solution. But in the meantime this should not be at the expense of this much needed investment in the classic routes, such as the Intercity Express Project to modernise the train fleet and investments in line speed and capacity enhancements.

1.9 High speed rail, by ‘freeing-up’ capacity on the classic rail network, will provide opportunities to utilise their capacity to provide better services for centres not served by the new routes. This additional capacity should also enable greater provision to be made for growing the role of rail freight.

1.10 What is less well quantified in the present work and will need to be understood better from experience elsewhere is the undoubted potential for transformational change to those centres through which the route will pass. Again the City Council recognises this potential opportunity and is working to understand what it will mean for the city and city region.

2. This question is about the case for high speed rail: Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

2.1 It is the City Council’s view that the “Y” shaped network offers the optimal and future proof solution for providing the basis for a network that can properly serve the North of England. By passing to the East and West it enables the route to become accessible to the majority of the population of England and as well as Leeds brings the East Midlands and South Yorkshire directly within the catchment of the network.

2.2 The “Y” option also allows, in a way which the alternative reverse “S” shaped network did not, for the North East of England and Scotland to share in the benefits of the network initially through a direct connection into the classic East Coast route and with the potential to extend the high speed route. This also preserves options for longer term incremental development of the high speed network as well as ensuring that the network is less London focussed by catering better for intermediate “cross-country” journeys.

3 This question is about how to deliver the Government’s proposed network: Do you agree with the Government’s proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and to the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

3.1 Whilst costs, logistics and industry capacity may well make it inevitable that a national high speed rail network will need to be delivered in phases, it is important that

the full network is delivered at the earliest possible timescale and that every step is taken to minimise the time between the opening of the Birmingham route and completion of the wider network. In this regard it is particularly important that both legs of the 'Y' to Manchester and Leeds are delivered in parallel to ensure the economic and transformational advantages expected to be brought about by the arrival of the high speed route can be shared. In this regard it is noted that previous work by HS2 indicated a potentially higher benefit cost ratio for the Eastern leg which suggests a strong case for the early progression of this section of route.

- 3.2 Leeds City Council at its Full Council Meeting on 6th April 2011, recognised the critical importance of the timing of project's delivery when the following resolution was passed:

That this Council expresses concern that the Government's proposed hybrid bill relating to High Speed Rail will only adopt legal and planning powers for a route from London to the West Midlands. This Council therefore calls on the Government to reaffirm its commitment to bringing the social, economic and environmental benefits of High Speed Rail to Leeds by expanding the detail of the upcoming hybrid bill to include a framework for the north of England.

- 3.3 Since the full high-speed network is not expected to be completed until 2032/33 it is important that investment in the classic network continues in the short to medium term. Such investment will not only sustain vital inter-city services on the East Coast main line but will also allow the continued development of regional and city region rail networks in order that the benefits of high speed rail for the classic network can be realised across the widest possible area. It is considered especially important that good connectivity from centres not on the high speed network is provided and that therefore modernisation of local rail networks alongside or ahead of the project is very important. There as well as the East Coast route investment in the key Trans-Pennine routes (both via Huddersfield and also the Calder Vale – Bradford/Halifax - Line) and local networks in West Yorkshire will be important to ensuring the widest possible inclusion of communities in the benefits of high speed rail.

- 3.4 The decision to include provision for links to Heathrow Airport and directly to join the High Speed One route to the Channel Tunnel are also to be welcomed. It is considered that these additions to the route will improve its usefulness by the potential it offers for rail-air interchange and for the connectivity into the European high speed rail network. Having recognised this opportunity it is important as the project develops to formulate realistic plans for capturing the benefits of this link to connect the North to Europe with direct services.

4. This question is about the specification for the line between London and the West Midlands: Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?

- 4.1 The City Council is agreement with the underlying principles used for the London to West Midlands route which seek to secure the optimum route for high speed running with a built-in future proofing for higher speeds should that prove to be feasible.

- 4.2 The principle of focussing on longer distance journeys focussing on direct connections between larger markets using a route which maximises segregation from classic routes is supported as providing the best possible transformational service. In this

regard, however, the Council is very firmly of the view that this approach must be fully complemented by the highest standards of integration with the classic rail network and other public transport networks to ensure that the full benefits and catchment of the high speed network is made as wide as possible without dependence on the private car.

4.3 The City Council has not taken a view on the specifics of route selection other than to note the process and range of options considered such that it would be expected that a similarly exhaustive process would be followed to demonstrate and justify the making of sound route decision for subsequent phases of the scheme.

5 This question is about the route for the line between London and the West Midlands: Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?

6.1 The City Council has not taken a view on the specific details of this route. However, it is clear that the Government has gone to some lengths to mitigate unwanted impacts that may arise from the proposed route whilst retaining the high speed specification that is critical to the success of the project. Careful and sensitive design are key principles for such a major piece of the national transport infrastructure.

6.2 The construction of HS1 through Kent has already demonstrated that it is possible to build such a route within all the constraints of the dense urbanisation and precious countryside that UK conditions present. As such it is expected that the lessons learnt from the delivery of this route and the planning of the Birmingham route can be brought to bear in the development of the legs to Leeds and Manchester and any future extensions that may be considered.

6 This question is about the Appraisal of Sustainability: Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

6.1 The City Council has no views on the Appraisal of Sustainability at this time.

7 This question is about blight and compensation: Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?

The City Council is of the view that the project needs to be progressed in a timely fashion which must be aimed at reducing the uncertainty and blight that can be caused by such a large long term project. Particularly where lines are likely to run through dense urban areas and city centres it is important that the proposals work with rather than against the grain of development to reflect the energy and resource being put into regeneration and redevelopment.

It is vital that the project does not, over the short to medium term, have the perverse effect of reducing inward investment and investor confidence. For this reason the publication of complete proposals for the network at the earliest time would be highly beneficial. In this regard the compensation scheme needs to provide the necessary reassurance needed to maintain investment and development.