
Cabinet

19 July 2011

Report of the Cabinet Member for City Strategy

High Speed Rail Consultation – The Council’s response to the Government’s consultation

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to present a draft of the Council’s response to the Government’s ‘High Speed Rail Consultation’ on its proposed high speed rail network (HS2) This provides an opportunity for Cabinet to instruct any necessary changes to the draft before the Council’s response is submitted on or before the closing date.

Background

2. A report entitled ‘High Speed Rail’ was presented to Executive on 11 May. This report:
 - i. Advised on the Government’s initiative to create a new company - High Speed Two - to investigate the high speed rail issue
 - ii. Set out the position of the Leeds City Region
 - iii. Advised on the outcome of a review, undertaken by ARUP on behalf of the council, to establish the policy position for York.
3. Executive, on 11 May 2011, resolved:
 - i. That the policy position for York, as set out in the Arup review, be agreed and that further work be focused on:
 - a) reducing journey times between Leeds and York, particularly through the electrification of the line between Leeds and York;
 - b) promoting the benefits of any HS2 [high speed rail] parkway stops being located to the east of Leeds, and
 - c) securing shorter term improvements to the East Coast Main Line (ECML)

- ii. That Members and Officers continue to lobby through the appropriate forums for ongoing investment in the ECML
4. The report to presented Executive also stated that a consultation on the detailed recommended alignment between London and the West Midlands will take place in the autumn [of 2010]. Furthermore, Ministers had also requested High Speed Two undertake detailed work on route options for the lines from the West Midlands to Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds for early 2012.
 5. In February 2011, the Government released its 'High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future' consultation. The closing date for responses to this consultation is Friday 29 July 2011.

City of York Council policy on high speed rail

6. Further to the resolution at Executive on 11 May 2010, the principal reference for Council's policy on high speed rail is contained in the City of York's Local Transport Plan 2011-2031 (LTP3), under the strategic theme of 'Providing Strategic Links' as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Strategic Theme 2 – Provide Strategic Links

| Aims | Objectives |
|---|--|
| S3. Ensuring that York is well connected to the UK National rail network | a. Connectivity with High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) |
| | b. Upgrades to East Coast Main Line |

7. The more detailed interventions related to high speed rail, extracted from Table 5.2 in LTP3, and expected to be delivered from 2015 onwards are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: LTP3 priority measures or interventions relating to high speed rail

| Ref. No. | Priority measure or intervention |
|-----------------|---|
| S3 a | Make best advantage of opportunities in Government's planning / procurement process for ensuring York's connectivity with (anticipated) HS2 |
| S3 b | Make best advantage of opportunities for upgrades to |

Content of the consultation

8. Numerous documents constitute the consultation, including:
 - Consultation Summary*;
 - Consultation Document*;
 - HS2 London to the West Midlands Appraisal of Sustainability Main Report Volumes 1 and 2;
 - HS2 London to the West Midlands Appraisal of Sustainability Non Technical Summary*
9. Although the full range of consultation documents have been made available to view and download on the high speed rail website <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/> it has not been possible to download many of them due to technical problems. The response to the consultation has, therefore, been based on the documents marked thus (*) above.
10. The Consultation summary consists of three main parts:
 - Part 1 – Covers the case for high speed rail
 - Part 2 – Concentrates on the section from London to the West Midlands
 - Part 3 – Describes how to respond to the consultation.

Part 1

11. The Government's focus has been on reviewing the costs and benefits of the key strategic rail options for meeting the future capacity 'challenge'. These include new high speed and conventional lines and upgrades to existing infrastructure.
12. The government favours a 'Y-shaped' high speed rail network, comprising a line from London to the West Midlands and onward legs to Manchester and Leeds. This network would cost around £32 billion to construct. On conservative assumptions, it would generate estimated benefits with a net present value of around £44 billion, plus fares revenues with a net present value of approximately £27 billion. The benefit to cost ratio (BCR) is approximately 2.6.
13. The Government also believes that high speed rail would deliver significant non-monetised benefits, such as its contribution to job creation and regeneration and its potential to promote sustainable and balanced economic growth.

14. The Government proposes that this network should be delivered in phases, beginning with an initial London-West Midlands line. This could be operational by 2026, with the second phase to Manchester and Leeds opening in around 2032-33.
15. The first phase is expected to include a direct link between the high speed rail route and the existing high speed rail route to the channel tunnel (HS1) and a junction to enable a direct link to Heathrow airport. The construction of this link is to be incorporated in the second phase.

Part 2

16. This covers the first phase of the route, which, due to it finishing to the North East of Birmingham (connecting with the West Coast Main Line between Lichfield and Tamworth in Staffordshire), is wholly outside the City of York local authority area.

Part 3

17. The Government is seeking views on the high speed rail strategy and the initial London – West Midlands line through seven questions contained in this part. The first three questions relate to the case for high speed rail and its delivery and the four latter questions related specifically to the London-West Midlands line.

The Council's Response

18. The questions and the draft council's response to them are at Annex A.
19. The key points in the response are:
 - The council supports the proposals for a high speed rail network, particularly the y-shaped extensions to Manchester and Leeds.
 - The council advocates that any resources directed to the proposed high speed rail network must not be to the detriment of existing or future necessary improvement programmes for other routes, such as the East Coast Main Line (including the Intercity Express Programme to replace existing HSTs and Class 91s). This applies not only in advance of the completion of both phases of the high speed network, but also once it is operational.
 - The council broadly agrees with the phased introduction of the high speed rail network, but suggests that the benefit to cost ratio (BCR) should be included, for completeness.

- The council supports the case for a direct connection to the existing high speed rail line (HS1).
- The council believes that the government's strategy for air travel needs to be considered before confirming its view on a direct connection to Heathrow.
- The Leeds element of the Y-shaped network should connect to the East Coast Main Line south of York, rather than north of York.
- The council's comments on the questions relating to part 2 of the Consultation Summary can only be, and are, more general in nature.
- The council acknowledges that the route has been refined to reduce its adverse environmental impacts. However, the impacts of the scheme on the local ecology etc. needs to be balanced with the economic, social and environmental benefits the scheme could deliver. A similar evaluation will need to be undertaken for the second phase of the network, which could (depending on where the connection to the ECML is made) run through the City of York local authority area.
- A new rail route has a lower 'relative' environmental impact than an equivalent new high capacity, high speed road. However the 'absolute' environmental impact still remains to be considered.

Other Responses

20. The Leeds City Region, of which York is a constituent member, has also prepared a draft response to the consultation. Similarities and differences in the LCR response compared to York's, as it relates to each question, is summarised below:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Question 1 | Broadly in agreement with York's response in support of high speed rail (HSR), although more detail is given on economic, carbon reduction and technical issues |
| Question 2 | Broadly in agreement with York's response in support of high speed rail (HSR), although more detail is given on the economic impacts of providing new capacity on the new and existing networks. |
| Question 3 | Seeks a firm commitment to implement the full route (western and eastern parts of the 'Y' beyond Birmingham to be constructed in parallel). Advocates implementing the northern links as soon as possible and bringing forward the legislation to enable this. |
| Question 4 | Broadly in agreement with York's response, adding that shortest journey times should reap the greatest benefits. Supports Heathrow link and HS1 link. |

- Question 5 Stressed the importance of high standards of design to achieve appropriate linespeeds
- Question 6 Supports measures that mitigate the environmental impacts of the scheme
- Question 7 No comments returned

Council Priorities

21. LTP3 is a cross-cutting document that encompasses and contributes to all of the council's outward facing council priorities.

Implications

- **Financial** – None identified at present.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – None identified at present
- **Equalities** – Ensuring York residents have better access to proposed high speed rail links
- **Legal** – None identified at present
- **Crime and Disorder** – There None identified at present
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None identified at present
- **Property** – None identified at present
- **Sustainability** – High Speed Rail Two has completed an Appraisal of Sustainability for the London – West Midlands route. It is expected that a similar appraisal will be undertaken for the second, Y-shaped extension to Manchester and Leeds, phase.
- **Other** – None identified at present

Risk Management

22. In compliance with the council's Risk Management Strategy, the main risk associated with this is failing to submit an effective response to influence decisions on the programmes to improve infrastructure and services on the existing East Coast Mail Line (and other lines serving York) and where the high speed rail network will re-connect with the East Coast Main Line.

Recommendations

23. The Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Note the contents of the report.

Either

- ii) Accept the draft response as council's response to the Government's consultation on a high speed rail network to be submitted.

or

- iii) Direct officers to make necessary changes to the draft response prior to it being submitted as the council's response to the Government's consultation on a high speed rail network.

Reason: To either approve or ascertain the required changes to the draft response to the Government's consultation on a high speed rail network, prior to it being submitted or before the closing date of 29 July 2011.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 23/02/2011

Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*

Wards Affected:

AI
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For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: Draft City of York Council response to the Government's 'High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future' consultation.