

High-speed rail update

By Graham Nalty

graham@grahamnalty.co.uk

Because *Transport Matters* is a new report by consultants Atkins that studies the benefits and costs of building three different South-North high-speed lines from London.

It updates their previous work for the former Strategic Rail Authority during 2001-2003.

It looks at three possible options for high speed, and one for operation at current speeds.

1. A West Coast high-speed line from London to beyond Rugby.
2. An East Coast high-speed line from London to Leeds via Peterborough, Nottingham and Sheffield.
3. A full network option with a high-speed line from London serving both sides of the country reaching Manchester on the West Coast and Glasgow via an East Coast route via Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

For comparison purposes, a conventional 125 mph West Coast new line was examined as it had been put forward by the Department for Transport as a potentially less expensive and more environmentally friendly option.

The report hit the headlines thanks to the massive £63billion gain in economic benefits in the UK over its estimated cost of £31billion for the full network option.

Up and down the country, chambers of commerce are trying to discover how the economic benefits can be delivered in their areas.

The East Coast route (option 2 above) delivers the highest benefit

to cost ratio and this has caused some journalists to suggest that the East Coast option might be built sooner than the West Coast route favoured by Greengauge 21.

However the possibility of overcrowding on the West Coast quickly reaching unacceptable levels may persuade the Government to spurn a notionally higher economic return. After all, as salespeople say, "the avoidance of pain is a far stronger motivator than to buy the opportunity of gain".

The business case for a conventional speed new line to relieve the West Coast is very poor because of high cost of additional train sets needed for longer journey times.

Because *Transport Matters* points out that high-speed rail can deliver substantial improvements in city centre to city centre journey times that cannot be gained through airport expansion or by increasing road capacity. This is a very useful argument for rail campaigners to use.

Because *Transport Matters* is significant. It demonstrates that a high speed rail network can deliver economic benefits to the UK of a level that the Government cannot afford to ignore.

It also shows that the option of building a new route for conventional (125mph) speeds as an alternative to high-speed for relieving congestion and increasing capacity can be safely taken off the agenda.

I would like to congratulate the team at Atkins for their excellent and timely work. From now on, campaigning for a UK high speed network will be so much easier.

Victory over big lorry menace

The Government has rejected trials of 60-tonne 84ft long lorries – as featured in *Railwatch* 114 – on UK roads on economic, environmental and social grounds. Large amounts of freight are more sustainably and more safely carried by rail rather than in ever larger lorries.

Philippa Edmunds, campaigner for Freight on Rail said: "These lorries are not suitable for our congested road network. The British Government has taken the lead in rejecting LHV's and listened to the public. Now we hope that the European Commission will follow suit."

Join Railfuture

You get four copies of *Railwatch* magazine a year and the chance to help make Britain's railways great again

Membership is £21 per year for an individual ■ Family: £21 plus £2 for each extra person ■ Pensioners, students and unemployed £14 ■ User groups, community and parish councils: Please use this form to ask for group rates

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Send to Railfuture, 6 Carral Close, Lincoln LN5 9BD
Please make cheques payable to Railfuture
Tel: 01522 874513 membership@railfuture.org.uk

Yorkshire

By Chris Hyomes

chrishyomes@supanet.com

■ ■ Branch AGM

At this year's well-attended AGM, long-standing branch member and branch secretary for the past 10 years, Chris Hyomes became the new branch chairman. Nina Smith takes on the role of branch secretary.

Following the AGM and annual lunch, Louise Ebbs, strategic planning manager for TransPennine Express, spoke at length on the past achievements and future plans for TransPennine express.

■ ■ Next meeting

The next meeting of the Yorkshire branch is to be held in the church hall in Ilkley on Saturday 21 September.

■ ■ Grand Central

Grand Central apologised for the reliability of its train services in April because of a series of failures of component parts on its refurbished power cars. It said it had hired extra staff to give its trains, below, a thorough "going over" to make them more reliable. It hired an alternative train set of "high quality carriages which though very comfortable, will not offer all the normal Grand Central facilities, but will allow us to run the full timetable albeit with a small amount of retiming."



Grand Central invited people to register support for its plans to run services to Bradford which is dependent on the approval of the Office of the Rail Regulator, Brian Hopkinson, Track Access Executive, Office of Rail

Regulation, One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN.
Email: contact.cct@orr.gsi.gov.uk

According to the Yorkshire Post, National Express East Coast, Hull Trains and Grand Union are all competing to run services from Harrogate, Huddersfield, Bradford and Grimsby into London on limited slots available on the main line.

The managing director of Grand Union, Ian Yeowart, said: "Our plans are far more advanced than those of the other companies. They're fully developed and fully costed. They've been with the rail regulator since 2005 – we've been waiting for the availability of rolling stock since then."

■ ■ Rail services via Brighouse

Northern Rail services via Brighouse resumed on 31 March after Network Rail completed work to stabilise an embankment at Elland, following damage caused during severe weather in January.

Steve Butcher of Northern Rail said: "I'd like to thank passengers for their patience while our temporary timetable has been in operation. In December we introduced more frequent services on the Calder Valley line and we're delighted customers will be able to take advantage of these again from Monday."

Neil Henry of Network Rail said: "This has been an enormous job for our engineers involving a number of challenges, including getting access to the site and battling the elements. I would like to add my thanks to passengers for their patience over the past weeks."