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Dear Valentina,

Nottingham City Council's response to the Periodic Review 2013: Draft Determination of Network Rail's outputs and funding for 2014 - 19

We welcome the opportunity to input into an important process which will define the level of investment and many of the schemes, which will be delivered over the next five funding year period. The consultation document shows that the industry is listening to stakeholders and is actively working to ensure resources go into enhancing customer markets, which is essential in order to support economic growth.

During this same process ahead of Control Period 4, we welcomed and supported the work which is now well underway on the Midland Main Line. Nottingham City Council lobbied for additional funds to be invested in the track and signalling in and around Nottingham Station. In the last few days this work has successfully been completed and we, along with the rail industry would agree the improvements are essential for the long term viability of the Midland Main Line and to support Nottingham as a Core City, in helping to grow the national economy.

Midland Main Line

In the summer of 2012 Nottingham welcomed the Government's High Level Output Statement, announcing the provision of funding for the upgrade and electrification of the Midland Main Line. We now look forward to working with the industry to ensure that 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. This will help drive growth and business competitiveness.

We are strongly supportive of the plans to electrify the route and support the ORR in the acceleration of the works programme to allow full delivery of the

scheme in CP5, to both Nottingham and Sheffield. However the essential enhancement works to deliver a faster line speed and greater capacity must 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 document.

However, it is our understanding from talking to Network Rail that if the Midland Main Line is to achieve its full potential, further work is required in the Market Harborough area. This key element of work does not currently have a defined funding commitment. This should therefore be included as an additional scheme within the final determination, as it will ensure the Midland Main Line delivers complementary growth in both the passenger and freight sectors.

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 and the Midland Main Line receives the level of investment needed to ensure it can continue to grow the passenger market.

Once the CP4 schemes are complete we would expect 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 on services throughout the day.

Rolling stock

The Midland Main Line is not currently included in the published IEP programme, but there is a commitment to electrify the route, we would therefore welcome a dialogue with the Government and the rail industry over the future rolling stock which will be deployed on the line.

The process should also look at how best to utilise any displaced rolling stock from the Midland Main Line onto other routes, such as the Norwich – Liverpool that connects four Core Cities but currently has a poor level of service.

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 between the two cities and it makes the journey by rail 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

The City Council is actively involved in the Nottingham – Lincoln Stakeholder Board which is lobbying for improvements to 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.

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.

We will continue to work with Network Rail to secure funding for these schemes and the benefits they will bring to the East Midlands economy.

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. Tram train could help fill gaps in the transport network. We would welcome discussions as to how the development fund can be used to help progress the delivery these future schemes.

There are proposals for a large scale electrification programme. It would make sense that this forms a rolling programme and progresses onto other routes. In doing so it will 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 Draft Determination contains many positives for Nottingham, but it is clear there is still a lot of work for the industry to do in order that it can effectively deliver the schemes within the funding period. We welcome the opportunity to work with Network Rail and the train companies to ensure the schemes deliver the best outcome for our citizens and businesses.

Yours sincerely,



Sue Flack
Director of Planning and Transport