



Network Rail East Coast Main Line 2016 Capacity Review – Draft for Consultation August 2010

Response from Transform Scotland

Tuesday 26th October 2010

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This response is primarily focussed on Anglo-Scottish passenger services although we do also touch on wider issues, in particular the needs of freight.
- 1.2 When considering connectivity between Scotland and England it is essential to understand the existing levels of car and plane travel, in particular from Central Scotland to London and the North and Midlands of England. The need to offer rail as a viable passenger alternative clearly assists with climate change targets. However, it also help to reduce oil dependency and assists in urban regeneration in that rail serves town and city centres and links well with existing public transport hubs.
- 1.3 Purely in terms of the potential for modal shift from air to rail there is a large market to target – as currently around 77% of journeys from Central Scotland to London are by air. It is simply not acceptable to wait for a future High Speed Rail route - even current plans for a Y shape route to the North of England envisage a journey time of 3 hrs 47 mins to Edinburgh some time during the 2030s.

2 Specific responses

2.1 Journey Times and Journey Opportunities

- 2.1.1 The ECML is a key artery between Scotland and England and there is a pressing need to reduce journey times and increase journey opportunities between Scotland and the North and Midlands of England and London. The existing 225 train fleet is already capable of running at 140mph and it is important that future plans allow this potential to be realised on the ECML.

2.2 Electrification

- 2.2.1 The aim should be to maximise the use of electric traction on the ECML as this will improve journey times and reduce emissions and oil dependency. Currently large distances are being run by diesel traction on routes serving such as Aberdeen, Inverness and Cross Country routes through the North and Midlands.
- 2.2.2 A wider strategy is needed to ensure infill electrification of such routes and it is simply unacceptable to imply – as is done elsewhere – that through services north of Edinburgh may be terminated.

2.3 Freight

- 2.3.1 We welcome the strategy of developing diversionary routes to accommodate additional freight traffic but would wish to see this further developed to maximise this opportunity.

2.4 Socio-Economic Analysis

- 2.4.1 We note in 3.2.2 the benefits that Government gains through Socio-economic rent and specific mention is made of reduced environmental damage through a switch from road to rail. However, it appears that a similar switch from air to rail is not considered. We believe this to be a serious omission and are concerned to read that this is not currently considered in DfT/Transport Scotland appraisal criteria.

2.4.2 Given the level of internal flights between Scotland and England we believe that this issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and would refer specifically to the 77% of traffic currently on air routes between Central Scotland and London.

2.5 Methodology Used and Economic Assessment

2.5.1 We believe that the approach used is a rational way to assess and understand the relative merits of the various proposals for additional services. However, we have serious reservations about the economic models - they appear to us to undervalue the broader contribution to Government objectives that will be gained by a shift from car and plane to train.

2.6 Scenarios Outlined

2.6.1 We welcome the proposals for additional Long Distance High Speed services south from Edinburgh and the hourly inter-regional service from Edinburgh to Newcastle (Scenario D).

3 Conclusions

3.1 In summary, Transform Scotland wishes to see Network Rail strategy for the East Coast Main Line to focus on delivering:

- Reduced journey times
- Better journey opportunities to North and Midlands
- Infill electrification and further use of electric traction.

3.2 Furthermore, we require Government to:

- Amend its appraisal methodology in order to better value the contribution of rail to Government objectives.

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Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

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