

**City of York Council's submission of evidence to the
All-Party Parliamentary Group for High Speed Rail, rail Capacity Inquiry**

How do you view the current capacity situation on Britain's Railways?

1. The latest passenger figures produced by the industry ticketing database LENNON suggest that the total number of passengers reached about 1.4 billion last year. This level of use has not been seen for nearly 90 years and may be close to achieving an all-time record.
2. York benefits significantly from being in a strategic location on the UK's rail network. It was known as a railway city due to its long history with the railway. It has access to several high quality long distance networks and operations that serve the rest of the country.
3. Some train operating companies, with services running to or through York have experienced passenger growth in the order of 9% in recent years (e.g. First TransPennine Express +8.8% and Northern Rail +8.1% 2008/09). More particularly, between 2002 and 2008 patronage at Church Fenton and Northallerton increased by at least 60%
4. This level of growth is outstripping the capacity (or increase in capacity) of the network. Consequently many trains from York are already or close to being overcrowded, particularly local stopping services as they approach Leeds.
5. The East Coast Main Line (ECML) 2016 Capacity Review (as an addendum to the ECML Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS)) stated that an 'analysis of the aspirations for paths on the ECML against the available capacity on completion of Control Period 4 (CP4) infrastructure schemes has shown that the demand for paths exceeds the capacity available... The section between Northallerton and Newcastle is already approaching full capacity.'

What Capacity do you believe Britain's Railways will require in the future?

6. There is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network because:
 - Demand forecasts, produced by Network Rail, suggest long distance rail demand using the East Coast Main Line (ECML), North TransPennine and Cross Country Routes will increase by 1-2% per annum to 2036. East Coast rail, which has its company headquarters in York, plan to grow its rail operation by 40% over the next 10 years.
 - The Yorkshire and Humber RUS predicted that the total number of passengers travelling to York will increase by 41% (3.4% per year) over the next 12 years.
 - Rail is a more sustainable form of transport than road transport or aviation for longer-distance inter-city travel
 - Technological advances (e.g. Broadband) enable good communications between London and cities in less prosperous areas of the country, thereby, enabling these cities to transform their economies by generating new businesses within them or attracting businesses to them whilst

maintaining essential links with the UK's Capital city. However, even with this improved communication technology, there will still be a need for personal contact to conduct business, and business travellers from the north eastern cities would benefit from a fast, frequent and available rail service to travel to the Capital and beyond.

- The Eddington Study on transport and economic productivity advocated improvements to the existing rail network.
- There is an identified need to strengthen the rail links between the wider Leeds City Region area and other destinations including Manchester, Birmingham and the East Midlands.

7. More capacity is needed in the regional cities outside of London and the south-east to realise their economic potential. The Northern Hub (in Manchester) is an example of an economic (growth) argument for major investment in the rail network serving a regional city, which has been backed by national government. The Yorkshire Rail Network Study (due to be reported shortly) is expected to demonstrate a similar economic case for establishing 'conditional outputs' for improvements in the rail network serving the regional cities of Leeds and Sheffield (and their hinterlands) and their connections with Manchester.

What is the best way of providing capacity and future-proofing Britain's rail network?

8. The construction of HS1 has not only resulted in the completion of a high speed rail link between London, Paris and Brussels, but has also increased capacity of the rail network serving Kent, including the provision of domestic higher speed 'Javelin' services. Constructing the full 'Y' shaped HS2 route should:
 - Provide a High speed connection between regional cities in the North and London (and beyond to Europe via HS1)
 - Release capacity on the East Coast and West Coast Main Lines
 - Complement and provide sufficient connections to other routes.
9. It is unlikely the high speed rail network will serve Yorkshire before 2025, so it will be important to deliver improvements to existing routes in the short to medium term to support economic growth. In considering the continued investment in the UK's rail network overall, 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) and the electrification of the Midland Main Line from Bedford to Sheffield to relieve capacity pressures on the ECML. This applies not only in advance of the completion of both phases of the high speed network, but also once it is operational.
10. Careful consideration should be given to the power generation, transmission and feed technology for HS2. The highest level of flexibility and capacity to adapt to different technologies, particularly power generation by renewable sources, should be in-built.

11. The economic benefits will be increased if high speed rail is planned in conjunction with regeneration and development projects in the areas next to the high speed rail stations.

What will the effects of providing extra capacity be, beyond addressing journey supply? What would be risked by failing to provide that capacity?

12. As well as improving access to London, high speed also would bring together large concentrations of population and jobs in the Midlands and North to create a more coherent non-London economic zone. An onward connection to the East Coast Main Line would spread the benefits to York and the North East
13. It has been estimated that by boosting business connectivity, high speed rail services to Leeds and Sheffield would attract up to 50,000 jobs to the region. A high speed rail network would accommodate the combined projected business and leisure demand for rail travel down the east coast, to the Capital, Heathrow and mainland Europe.
14. The 'Y' route to the East of the Pennines would deliver an estimated £2.3 billion of productivity benefits.
15. Failing to provide the capacity will undermine the ability of regional cities and the areas around them to transform their economies through attracting significant inward investment in areas outside London and the south east that would otherwise have a fast, frequent and available rail service to travel to the Capital and beyond.

More specifically

16. A key reason why extra rail capacity is required is to realise York's economic growth potential in the North of England. York has significant economic potential to be both a nationally competitive and internationally leading city. The Centres for Cities, Cities Outlook 2011 identifies York as the second fastest growing city in the country. Over a number of years, York has successfully reinvented itself from a railway and confectionary manufacturing city into an international destination and hub for science and technology, a national centre for financial and business services. We have just issued our draft York Economic Strategy for 2011-2015. One of our key ambitions is for York to be a world class place.
17. With the recent global recession and associated credit crisis, the international economy has become increasingly competitive – for individuals, for business and for governments around the world. Economic growth has slowed and there is less public money available. The result is an uncertain and volatile economic climate with increasing competition between cities around the UK and globally for investment, talent and jobs. As the second fastest growing city in the country and one of the most attractive places to live and visit, York has the potential to be both a nationally competitive and an internationally leading city economy. The city now supports more than 80,000 jobs and contributes £3bn of value to the national economy.

18. York also offers a quality of life and place that is distinctive and unique – with unprecedented heritage assets and a cosmopolitan retail and leisure offer that attracts 7 million visitors a year. However, current growth forecasts show the city growing at a much lower rate than pre-recession, and it is clear that the city is “punching below its weight” both nationally and internationally. In fact, according to the Huggins Competitiveness Index 2010, the city ranked only 145th out of 380 local authorities on a score of overall competitiveness. This relative poor performance on competitiveness is due to a number of factors:
 - With a higher than average proportion of residents employed in the public sector (33% of total employment), the city could see unemployment rise as public budgets become increasingly constrained.
 - The city has a lower than average rate of business start-ups, which means our business base is growing slower than other cities. Further, productivity of existing businesses is lower than average.
 - Physical space for commercial activity remains at a premium, and sustainability in development is increasingly challenging.
 - Whilst the city is aiming to reduce carbon emissions by 20% by 2020, current projections show that in actuality it is likely to experience a 31% increase in carbon emissions by 2050.
 - Although the city is one of the most equitable cities in the country, the city still has pockets of deprivation, with some residents unable to enjoy the benefits of its prosperity and success. Current economic conditions could make this problem grow.
19. These issues present a challenge to the city to “raise its game” – to not only tackle the issues, but to work across sectors to build on what we have to become an internationally leading, enterprising and competitive city.
20. The economic strategy has been developed by the York Economic Partnership (YEP) as a new and different approach to unlocking the full economic potential of the city. Unlike our previous economic development strategies, it is not for any one organisation alone to deliver but is about businesses, residents, partners and the City of York Council working together to a common vision and strategy.
21. Our simple economic vision is for the City of York to become an international and enterprising city, and in time, the most competitive city of its size, not only in the UK but globally, leading to increased growth in the overall economy and jobs. Improving rail capacity will be critical to unlocking this growth potential.