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Your Ref

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Dear Mr McMahan

SYPTA RESPONSE TO NETWORK RAIL'S STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to comment formally on the above Business Plan. This response, which will be endorsed by the PTA on 3 January 2008, should be read in conjunction with the joint PTEG consultation response and sets out in more detail additional concerns relevant to South Yorkshire. The SYPTA/E welcome many of the proposals for CP4, especially plans to improve punctuality, capacity and safety. However there are a number of areas where concerns exist, these are set out below:

- 1. Timing of RUSs** - It is unclear how matters arising from the commenced Yorkshire and Humber Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) and the National RUS will be delivered, given they post date the Strategic Business Plan and also the Midland Mainline RUS which is not due to commence until 2008. The Business Plan therefore sets out finance assumptions, without full knowledge of schemes emerging from these studies. How will projects arising from these RUSs be funded? Of especial concern is the lack of detail in tackling congestion and reducing journey speed on the South TransPennine route. Links between Sheffield and Manchester need to be more frequent and faster to enable the Northern Way plans to raise GDP in the north to be realised and the continued economic growth of the Sheffield and Manchester City Regions. The Business Plan needs to be stronger on both types of improvement to guide the Y&H RUS including reference to Yorkshire Forward's "Policy On" growth scenario and the supporting SDG report entitled "Productivity Benefits of Transport Investment in South Yorkshire". Similar concerns exist on the MML and the need for faster and more frequent train services between Sheffield and London.
- 2. Growth Prediction** - My view on growth predictions employed (PDFH) is that they underestimate growth, based on the typical 5-6% growth experienced in South Yorkshire in recent years. However the Business Plan recognised revised growth predictions form part of the Y&H RUS

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workstream. This means the Business Plan may have under estimated both schemes in the Sub-Region and therefore cost. How will this be addressed?

3. **SYPTE Engagement** - I am concerned about the minimal PTE/A engagement in the preparation of the Strategic Business Plan, given we are potential funders of incremental schemes. The plan acknowledges some schemes require joint work, but given the PTE's ongoing strategic work and its published and consulted Rail Strategy, it is disappointing that no detailed discussion took place.

4. **Local Schemes**

- i) Access to Rotherham Central Station - The Strategic Business Plan ignores improvements needed to serve Rotherham Central. This is also an ATOC recognised network pinchpoint. Holmes Chord, Blackburn Chord, Aldwarke and Wincobank junctions need adding and are potential Y&H RUS recommended outputs and form part of the approved South Yorkshire Rail Strategy.
- ii) Rotherham Central Station - It is very disappointing to note no funding is proposed to support Yorkshire Forward and SYPTE works at Rotherham Central Station from the first tranche of funding from NSIP although we understand that it is a potential candidate for investment from the second tranche. This well used station is neither DDA compliant nor attractive to use. The failure of the Rail Industry to commit to fund this scheme will put the £2.5m already on the table in serious jeopardy. ORR support for funding this station in the first tranche, in both the National Station improvement programme and the Access for All programme, is strongly requested. Currently, only Mexborough station is planned for any improvement in South Yorkshire.
- iii) Midland Mainline - Whilst short term proposals propose an 8 minute track and signal improvement in train journey times between the North (Sheffield) and London, it is disappointing to see no greater improvement proposed, especially when compared to the East and West Coast Mainline journey speeds.
- iv) Elsecar Timescales - The proposed timescales to improve line speed enabling the reinstatement of stops lost in December 2004 are unacceptable. The proposals suggest it will be a minimum of 5 years prior to reinstatement of lost stops. This scheme should be a priority in CP3.
- v) Doncaster Station - Whilst mentioning problems at Doncaster with services crossing the East Coast Mainline and local terminating services, it is not clear if these improvements are included in the funding plans. Both the Route 8 and Route 11 plans do not include details.

5. **Route 11 accuracy** - Route 11 plans omit the Sheffield - Pontefract - York Northern Rail service. Does this change any of the conclusions?

I trust the above is of assistance and I welcome your support in securing inclusion of the above changes in the Strategic Business Plan

Yours sincerely



DAVID YOUNG
HEAD OF TRANSPORT INTEGRATION