

Office of Road and Rail - Periodic Review 2018

Draft Determination Consultation Response

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority works to ensure that our region is recognised globally as a strong, successful economy where everyone can build great businesses, careers and lives. We bring together local councils and businesses to achieve this vision, so that everyone in our region can benefit from economic prosperity and a modern, accessible transport network.

The Combined Authority welcomes the changes proposed by the ORR especially in relation to increased spending on renewals, recognising the importance attached to the running of a railway that residents can rely on.

Network Rail in its Strategic Business Plan for CP6 stated that 'performance improvements desired by our East Coast Main Line (ECML) customers and stakeholders would require a significant programme of renewals beyond baseline funding'. The Combined Authority is particularly concerned about the reliability of the East Coast Main Line, which is of national strategic importance, connecting economies that contribute over £300bn to the UK economy. It provides for the Leeds City Region's main rail links to London and the South East, North East and Scotland.

In its draft Strategic Business Plan, Network Rail has set out a compelling case for additional renewals expenditure on the East Coast Main Line in the East Coast Supplementary Plan to drive up the reliability of the increasingly tired infrastructure on this route. The Supplementary Plan indicates that there is strong value for money case to support additional renewals investment.

The Combined Authority notes that the West Coast Main Line was substantially renewed in the 2000s, and the Great Western Main Line is currently subject to a programme of substantial renewals and enhancement. By contrast, the East Coast Main Line has not seen substantial investment in renewals for over 30 years, which is increasingly reflected in the reliability of the infrastructure.

The Combined Authority therefore strongly supports the case set out in the East Coast Supplementary Plan, and sees this as a priority for the allocation of the £1billion Sustainability Fund being proposed by ORR in its draft determination.

The Combined Authority also supports increased funding in timetabling systems and improved monitoring of Network Rail with regards to performance and efficiency.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 30 August 2018