York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Local Transport Plan

Submission by Railfuture Yorkshire

1. Railfuture Yorkshire (RFY) welcomes the publication of the draft Local Transport Plan for the Combined Authority (CA). We also welcome the work which the Low Traffic Future alliance (www.lowtrafficfuture.org.uk) has undertaken on preparing a joint response to the draft[1] and its 'Better Journeys for North Yorkshire' campaign bringing together national and local environmental, health, road safety and sustainable transport- groups, including ourselves, to press for clean and healthy transport options in the LTP.

General Comments on the Rail Proposals

2. We are pleased to see certain rail proposals listed as **Emerging Strategic Interventions**, including:

a) promoting the clear benefits of filling the 'gaps' in the electrified rail network in our region
b) enhancing national connections and ensuring adequate capacity at York station for future service increases
c) line speed and capacity enhancements on the York to Scarborough and Leeds / York to Selby routes
d) providing a high-quality rail alternative to the private car to make rail a more attractive choice for longer distance journeys and act as a feeder connection to major hub stations.
e) enhancements at key stations such as Harrogate, Northallerton, Scarborough, Selby, Skipton and Thirsk, plus selected new stations such as Haxby
f) promote the clear benefits of filling the 'gaps' in the electrified rail network in our region to help transform rail journeys between important centres.
g) continue to invest in our existing local rail lines, such as the Esk Valley Line and promote selective new rail connections and re-openings.

Several of these interventions are included in our proposals below.

Specific Rail Commitments

3. However, whilst we welcome these proposals, we are concerned that they lack specific commitments or timescales; this is surprising given that the plan is intended to cover the period up to 2050 and will have "a transport network which enables people to choose how they move around, wherever they live and whatever their needs, with better, easier and more efficient access to jobs, appointments and leisure." Many of these journeys – especially for employment and education – will involve journeys into neighbouring authorities, yet there is little reference to such journeys, with the exception of the Leeds/York to Selby lines. This is very surprising, given the number of cross-border journeys into West Yorkshire or Lancashire that are made on a daily basis.

Governance and accountability

4. It is essential – given the travel needs of the many of the CA's population – that the authority should strengthen regular formal engagement between operators, other Combined Authorities, Railfuture Yorkshire and Rail User Groups (several of the CA's stations are on routes which originate in, or operate into, the adjacent authorities' area). It should also encourage the government to ensure the planned new devolved rail powers enable **all** Yorkshire's Combined Authorities to commission and fund local improvements.

1https://lowtrafficfuture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/2611_RG-for-YNY-groups_LTP-joint-response_con.pdf

Passenger Service Proposals

5. The following shows our proposals for passenger service improvements - including those by Rail User Groups – for all lines and stations in the CA area. In addition, we strongly support the

Line	Stations	Proposal	Justification
East Coast Main Line	York, Thirsk, Northallerton	Provide a regular stopping service between York and Newcastle	Work, education and other essential journeys which were much reduced by the December 2025 East Coast Timetable
York to Scarborough	York, Malton, Scarborough	Half-hourly service throughout the day, also serving the new station at Haxby. Increase the current bus service from Malton station to Pickering and Whitby to hourly, and discuss with GBR and Transdev Coastliner the feasibility of the service being timed to connect with trains at Malton.	Growing demand for both work and leisure journeys, with reduced waiting time for connections. Current rail and bus service not designed to connect, with long waits.
Yorkshire Coast (Scarborough to Hull)	Seamer, Hunmanby, Filey	Increase service frequency to twice per hour during the summer months	Extra capacity needed for summer visitors
Harrogate Line	Poppleton, Hammerton, Cattal, Knaresborough, Starbeck, Harrogate, Hornbeam Park, Pannal, Weeton	See also List A below. The proposed Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway station will also be of importance to the whole route, especially including York.	See also Annex A below.
York to Leeds	Ulleskelf, Church Fenton	See Annex B below	See Annex B below
Leeds to Selby and Hull	Sherburn-in-Elmet, South Milford, Selby	See Annex B below	See Annex B below
Esk Valley	Great Ayton, Battersby, Kildale, Commondale, Castleton Moor, Danby, Lealholm, Glaisdale, Egton, Grosmont, Sleights, Ruswarp, Whitby	Increase frequency with longer trains	Current service severely limits opportunities for work, education and leisure travel. Capacity on weekend services inadequate for visitors to Whitby.

Airedale (Bradford and Leeds to Skipton)	Cononley, Kildwick & Crosshills, Skipton	Restore frequency of Bradford to Skipton to the pre-Covid 2tph service using surplus electric units	Poor connections at Shipley with inadequate waiting facilities and no toilets open in the evening
Leeds to Morecambe	Gargrave, Hellifield, Long Preston, Clapham, Bentham	Review timetable to better meet users' needs; increase frequency – particularly for when the new Eden Project (North) opens in Morecambe. Extend a peak hours Manchester to Clitheroe service to Hellifield and provide an off-peak shuttle between Clitheroe and Hellifield.	Current service limits use – especially for leisure travellers. Enable work/education/leisure journeys from Ribblesdale to East Lancashire and Manchester
Leeds to Settle and Carlisle line	Hellifield, Long Preston, Giggleswick, Settle, Horton in Ribblesdale, Ribblehead and Garsdale	Review timetable to better meet users' needs; increase frequency and provide longer trains. Improve reliability; consider case for long distance service and increase in line speed; increase capacity at peak periods; improve integration with other modes to permit access to the Yorkshire Dales National Park; improve accessibility at all stations	Current timetable is suboptimal for Leeds commuters; improve resilience of infrastructure; the line has inadequate capacity for leisure travellers; the S&C is a strategic transport asset not currently fulfilling its long distance potential; currently only 2% of visitors to the National Park access by rail; accessibility at many stations is poor
York to Beverley route	York, Stamford Bridge, Pocklington, Market Weighton, Beverley	The CA should support the retention of the former route of the York to Beverley line within the CA area and work with the East Riding of Yorkshire and the Minsters Rail Campaign to encourage and facilitate the development of a full Business Case for the reopening of this line.	Serious traffic congestion on the A1079 with long queues to/from the York Outer Ring Road. The A1079 regularly features in the Road Safety Foundation's reports on Britain's most dangerous roads.

Skipton to Colne route	Manchester, Colne, Skipton, Leeds	We would like to see a commitment to work with the Skipton East Lancashire Rail Partnership (SELRAP) and Lancashire Council to work towards reopening the Skipton-Colne line, ideally as double track and electrified.	The economic and social case for delivering the Skipton to Colne rail link has been proven and the Rail Minister this year confirmed that it has a strong strategic case. See also Annex C below for SELRAP's specific recommendations
Very Light Rail System for York area	City of York area and beyond	An investigation of the potential for such a system should be carried out.	Extensive new housing planned in several outer areas to the east and north of the city, causing serious traffic congestion if there is no frequent and reliable public transport alternative. **Forwards York: Forwards Yorkshire (FYFY)** has drawn up proposals for an integrated transport network for York and the surrounding region. See Annex D.

Ticketing

6. There is a crucial need for through and intermodal ticketing. We welcome and applaud the initiative by Northern Rail to offer through intermodal tickets from stations on their network through to Hawes and Ingleton, albeit with sometimes awkward or not well promoted connections. With thanks to Dalesbus and Action for Yorkshire Transport for their input and support for this submission.

Rail Freight

7.. We are very pleased to see that the authority recognises the importance of rail loading gauge enhancement, to allow modern containers to use the rail network to access the region's growth hubs and international gateways (particularly between Leeds and York, as well as Northallerton to Middlesbrough / Teesport). We agree that this is crucial to reducing the volume of HGVs on our main roads, as well as encouraging a range of business investment in our region. We urge the authority to encourage the large companies based in the region to maximise their use of rail, as their contribution to reducing congestion and improving the environment for all those living or working close to large industrial or distribution sites. This could include a transhipment terminal in the Scarborough area to reduce the number of heavy lorries using the A64.

Annex A: Harrogate Line Supporters Group (HLSG) Proposals Supported by Railfuture Yorkshire

(a) A Funded Electrification Programme for the Harrogate Line

We call on the Government to commit to a fully funded, timetabled programme of electrification for the Leeds–Harrogate–York route, as part of a wider electrification strategy. The Harrogate Line was afforded Tier 1 Priority in the Northern Electrification Task Force report published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 5 March 2015. We further call on Great British Railways (GBR) to align its strategic planning with this commitment.

We appreciate, however, that with increased range of battery technology on trains the Harrogate Line is becoming increasingly attractive for a cheaper solution with Bi-mode battery electric trains. With new bi-mode trains and some strategic OLE along the route (probably at Harrogate) and re-charging at Leeds and York. Another benefit of a battery/electric solution is much faster completion and less passenger disruption e.g. weekend closures, bus substitutions etc.

Collaboration with the WYCA, as mentioned in the Draft Local Transport Plan, is therefore vital for the York-Harrogate-Leeds railway, as is recognition of the importance of Leeds as a major transport hub for the Harrogate line (and for many other parts of North Yorkshire).

(b) Five New Evening Northern Services

The Harrogate Line Rail Users' Group have identified the specific additional services required to provide a 30-minute frequency, 7 days a week evening service on the Harrogate Line: We ask that colleagues at Northern Trains and West Yorkshire Combined Authority work with us to support this proposal to enable delivery of these services.

(c) LNER improve service levels for direct trains

We call on LNER to deliver on their commitment of an extra evening 18:39 northbound direct service from King's Cross seven days a week, to restore the Sunday services to their previous level and to introduce an earlier morning 05:28 direct service to King's Cross on Monday to Saturday.

(d) Restart work on the Third Line at York

We call on Network Rail and Great British Railways to review and reinstate the case for a third line at York station, recognising that infrastructure investment is a prerequisite for service improvements on the Harrogate Line and across the region, such as service increases planned as part of the Trans Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU). There are frequent delays at this junction while Harrogate trains wait for up to 10 minutes for a path into York station.

(e) Re-signal the line between Harrogate and York.

We call on Network Rail and Great British Railways to recommit to the improvements between Harrogate and York planned in 2017, but cancelled, in order to improve reliability of our service and allow earlier and later trains on this section of line with the attendant benefits which that will provide.

Annex B: Selby Rail Users' Group Proposals Supported by Railfuture Yorkshire

(a) Station Improvements/Upgrades

Completion of Selby Station Upgrade and Selby Gateway Scheme as soon as possible

Church Fenton - Station Upgrade needed following completion of TRU work in this area, with improved waiting facilities and departure displays on each platform

Sherburn – Platform extension with accessibility improvements to enable Manchester to York via Castleford services to stop

b) Service Increases/changes

Spacing out of services to York from Hull / Leeds to give half-hourly timetable.

South Milford – half-hourly service to Leeds needed to meet increased demand for commuting and leisure travel

Sherburn-in-Elmet – half-hourly York-Hull / Bridlington needed to meet increased demand for commuting and leisure travel - especially to increase access and reduce car use to the Sherburn Industrial Estate

Ulleskelf - increase in services to hourly – important because there are no direct bus services to either Leeds or York and the current service is very restrictive for both commuters and leisure travellers. if there's space for a good-sized car park, it could be renamed Tadcaster Parkway and Ulleskelf. Tadcaster is 4 miles away and currently depends on the Coastliner bus service for journeys to York and Leeds.

Hensall and Whitley Bridge - hourly service to Leeds / Goole needed as the current service is extremely restrictive for both commuters and leisure travellers.

Annex C SELRAP Recommendations Supported by Railfuture Yorkshire

a) A new prosperous future for the Craven area of North Yorkshire and East Lancashire and the Craven area is possible but only if Y&NY urgently brings forward, in conjunction with neighbouring authorities, strategic transport schemes such as Skipton to Colne.

b) SELRAP therefore recommends that the need for the Skipton-Colne rail project is more clearly articulated, and the need for it fully recognised in the final version of the LTP.

c) SELRAP recommends that an immediate action within the next phase of the LTP programme i.e. the Implementation plan is the preparation of a Y&NY rail vision / strategy. SELRAP recommend that the Skipton to Colne rail project is treated as a base scheme within this vision.

d) Much work has already been undertaken on developing the scheme. Further development work is required, SELRAP recommend that such work is prioritised within the Implementation plan for the LTP. Given the economic imperative for this scheme work this should commence in early 2027.

Annex D Forward York, Forward Yorkshire Proposals

Forwards York: Forwards Yorkshire (FYFY) has drawn up proposals for an integrated transport network for York and the surrounding region, including: trams to the hospital and stadium; regional bus services that integrate with rail or tram services; high-quality disabled- friendly networks for walking and cycling; and new housing that supports and is supported by these sustainable transport networks, enabling more people to make day-to-day journeys without feeling that driving is their only option - see https://fyfy.org.uk. FYFY's own response to the LTP consultation is available at https://fyfy.org.uk/assets/consultation.pdf.

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