



## The Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities

C/O City of York Council

Directorate of City and Environmental Services  
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Nicola Shaw,  
c/o The Shaw Report,  
Zone 6.03, Sanctuary Buildings,  
Great Smith Street,  
London  
SW1P 3BT

21 December 2015

Dear Nicola,

### **The economic importance of the railway**

As you point out in your scoping report, the UK railway network is important for the economic and social development of our nation. I am sure this fact will be a key consideration as you develop your thoughts on the best structure for Network Rail in the future.

At the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA), we are passionate about the need for investment in infrastructure and services along the East Coast Main Line (ECML) to secure economic benefits for UK plc of up to £5 billion (£9 billion with High Speed 2, *source JMP 2014*). To help deliver this transformational state for the East Coast and other areas of the UK, we strongly request that you include the following characteristics in any future structure for Network Rail:-

1. **A firm, legally-backed commitment to work closely with transport authorities, local enterprise partnerships and enterprise agencies** in developing a better railway. Our member organisations, and their peers throughout the UK, can bring people in their communities together to generate financial, practical and political support for improvements in their role as potential co-funders of rail and rail-related activity. This process need not be cumbersome, but it does need early and effective engagement by Network Rail to work to its best advantage, for example by their understanding of local economic plans and identifying how rail investment can unlock the potential for growth to the benefit of the rail industry, the local community and the country.
2. **A similar legal commitment to work with Community Rail Partnerships** where these exist. We find that there is a great source of experience and community goodwill in Partnerships that Network Rail can tap into and harness to add value to the delivery of infrastructure schemes.

3. Whatever the recommended spatial structure for the future Network Rail, we urge that **there is an underlying principle that existing and potential new strategic main line routes are seen as priorities for investment**, so that they may continue/add to facilitating economic activity at a national, regional and local level. This strategic connectivity needs to be east west across the UK as well as north south, so it is also important that operational matters such as timetable planning, reflect both movements to achieve a seamless journey.

For our part, the 41 members of ECMA are already heavily involved in investing significant sums to achieve economic growth along the entire length of the East Coast Main Line, in partnership with the private sector and others. These regeneration programmes are progressing well and are on course for delivery. Their ultimate success, however, depends on the connectivity that rail services will provide, so any further delay in the delivery of the planned rail schemes that are urgently needed is a cause for concern to us and to our delivery partners. We urge therefore that scheme delivery carries on unabated during any restructure process.

We would emphasise that our ambition for economic growth fits well with the Government agenda, for example as expressed in the Northern Powerhouse. Examples of the regeneration work ongoing along the East Coast include:-

- The £1 billion transformation of Dundee Waterfront including the new Victoria & Albert Museum of Design
- The £200 million Stephenson Quarter mixed use development adjacent to Newcastle station
- The £400 million iPort strategic road rail freight terminal at Doncaster.
- York Central, a major Enterprise and Housing Zone. The zone will deliver quality space for business (over 1 million sq. ft.), 2,000 new homes and an upgraded National Railway Museum.

#### Our evidence for economic growth

We commissioned specialist consultants, Albion Economics and JMP Consultants Limited to evaluate the potential for economic growth from an improved ECML using methodology consistent with that used by the Department for Transport and Network Rail. The research shows a real potential for economic growth based on the agglomeration and labour market benefits of improved connectivity. As above, these benefits are valued at £5 billion for the whole route, with a further £4 billion after the introduction of through HS2 services.

I attach both a copy of the research and a summary brochure to this letter.

#### About the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities

The Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) is a cross-party group of Councils, Combined Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and LEPs throughout the area served from the ECML, who are working together to secure economic growth and

prosperity. We are calling for improved connectivity by rail in an area extending from northern Scotland to London for both passengers and freight.

[Contact details redacted]

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Ferris', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil Ferris  
Executive Group member  
Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities