

Friends of Dore and Totley Station (FoDaTS)

Response to Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy 2018-2040 Consultation

FoDaTS is a group of Friends representing existing and potential users of Dore and Totley Station (D&TS) which is situated in SW Sheffield, South Yorkshire close to the border with Derbyshire. We are also affiliated to the High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership (HP&HVCRP) who we understand may be submitting a separate response to the consultation.

Our local station sits on the southern Trans-Pennine rail route, the Hope Valley line. Whilst situated in a very pleasant, semi-rural location, it is primarily an urban station with a wide catchment area and patronage growing at above the national average (a 5.8% growth from 2015/16 with some 165,000 passengers in 2016/17). It serves all manner of users especially commuters for Sheffield, Sheffield City Region and the Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Regions (and Manchester Airport) as well as being one of the main gateways for South Yorkshire/North Derbyshire to the Peak District National Park: it is without doubt vital to the economic, social, health, educational and recreational well-being of SY and the Region. Set against a backdrop of woodland, some of which carries SSSI status, it operates as a transport interchange for all modes of travel being situated on the A621 primary route with regular stage carriage bus services. We also have a 120 or so space Park and Ride facility with a considerable number parking on surrounding streets. To retain and grow this important facility it is vital that rail services are accessible to all members of the communities which it serves.

Aims and Goals

Broadly we support the laudable Aims and Goals of the City Region Strategy, although more is needed in Chapter 6 about the measures of success and milestones to be achieved along the way. It also lacks how progress towards the Goals is to be managed/monitored and what interventions/actions are to be taken if the objectives are not on track. It would therefore be helpful to see the policy objectives set out in a SMART format.

It is not clear from the Goals what the target date is for the achievement of the espoused objectives (are they all by 2040?) nor indeed what the “area” is that is referred to. Is it the SCR as currently envisaged (indeed what is ‘currently envisaged’?) or just the area covered by the SY Combined Authority? One aspect of the Aims/Goals that appears to have been overlooked, at least as a ‘headline’ objective, is ‘reducing the need to travel’. It should not necessarily follow that people must travel more in order to grow the sub-regional, regional or national economy.

We support the goals/objectives as they relate to heavy rail and it is interesting to note the statistics regarding overcrowding of trains (Sheffield 5th worst of all cities) and the average delay of 15 minutes in 2015 for rail passengers. This highlights the need for significantly more investment in the city and region and might be one of the reasons why rail only has 2% mode share with regard to the ‘travel to work’ trip.

We can find very little, if anything, in the document about the role of ‘smaller’ stations like Dore and Totley (D&TS) and Dronfield. The Strategy quotes a 50% growth in patronage at 7 of the so-called 10 ‘big’ stations in the City Region in 10 years (2005-2015). Between these years, patronage at D&TS has

grown from 60,217 in 2005 to 155,854 in 2015: a growth rate of almost 160%; over 3 times that of the larger stations. One of our straplines is that D&TS is **a little station going places: passenger numbers doubled in last 7 years, trebled in last 12 and quadrupled in last 20**. All this without any significant investment in facilities at the station. It is vital that the role of these more 'local' stations is acknowledged and supported in any strategies/plans. Schemes and projects must be developed, with funding made available to implement, if these facilities are to fulfil their role in helping to achieve economic, social, educational, environmental, leisure, health and well-being for both the local community and the region as a whole.

With regard to integrated ticketing, we feel that this has been a considerable success across Greater London and support your endeavours. It is important this is applied across all modes and geographies and we would like to see an 'Oyster Card for the North' (and N Nottinghamshire. and N Derbyshire) in the not too distant future.

Under Creating Healthy Streets, the plan gives mode share targets for car, public transport, walking and cycling by 2040 but we would like to see the public transport element sub-divided into rail, bus and tram. We feel it important that the current rail mode share (2% of 'commuter' trips) is grown and a specific target would be helpful to monitor progress.

Comments on Policies

Policy 1

Supporting the Northern Powerhouse Rail Plan is very important but there should be specific emphasis on the Hope Valley Route upgrade linking Sheffield, the Peak District National Park and Greater Manchester City Region (including Manchester Airport and indeed Liverpool City Region). We should aspire to a 30-minute journey time between Sheffield and Manchester Piccadilly (less between D&TS and Manchester). The role of D&TS in the Northern Powerhouse Rail Plan and the Southern Trans-Pennine Corridor has to be considered and plans identified and developed (and funded) in any successful City Region Transport Strategy

It is not clear what the "Integrated Public Transport Network Study" referred to is, what its remit is/will be and what role local stations like ours will play. "Intra-regional enhanced capacity for rail" is also referred to but it would seem that this, along with a number of other espousals, are not within the gift of the SCR, being the responsibility in this instance of Network Rail and the franchisees.

Policy 2

This policy contains many fine sounding words but again, apart from lobbying, it is for others to do and will require heavy investment. In terms of extending the Tram/Train and Tram networks, we consider that there is a case to be made for looking at an extension along the Sheaf Valley Corridor, possibly by utilising some of the existing track bed. We realise that the revised route for part of HS2(b) through Sheffield (Midland) might affect this but with sufficient ingenuity and investment it should be possible. We also support the ambition to upgrade stations to 'Better Station' standards, however again this is for others to do. The Strategy refers to multi-modal key route improvements to the top 20 corridors forecast to experience delay. In this instance, how is delay defined and will it refer to vehicle or people delay? In any event, we recommend that you look carefully at the A621 Abbeydale Road/Abbeydale Road South corridor in SW Sheffield and the role D&TS can play to achieve improvements. As an

example, the bus services in the vicinity, although frequent, can take some 35 to 45 minutes to access the city centre. By contrast, the train from D&TS has a 7 minute journey time to Sheffield (Midland) (and the single fare is marginally cheaper). The downside of course is that there is often a 2 hour gap between stopping services. There has to be great benefit in lobbying for more stopping trains to and from Sheffield (and beyond). Finally, in Policy 2 the document refers to exploring options for Park and Ride. This must include the current P&R facility at our station which is overcapacity at all times during the working week and plays a significant interchange role at weekends.

Policy 3

You refer to 7 Housing Growth Areas but we cannot find where these are so cannot comment on their likely impact, particularly whether they will influence D&TS and rail travel generally.

Policy 4

This refers to “Healthy Streets”. Not all highways are streets and a road hierarchy should be developed in order not to introduce conflict with the objectives of Policies 1 and 2. ‘Investing in the Public Realm’ is also mentioned. The remit should include interchanges and local stations. “Major segregated cycle routes into main urban centres will be identified” must include the Sheaf Valley Corridor into and out of central Sheffield.

Policy 5

Sustainable Transport should specifically mention the importance of rail and also the requirement to reduce the need to travel. Investing in “Main Transport Hubs” should include stations other than just the stations in central Barnsley/Doncaster/Rotherham and Sheffield. We support your aspirations to invest in walking and cycling and would reiterate the importance of the Sheaf Valley Corridor and the role stations like Dore and Totley could play as cycling and walking hubs.

Policy 6

This refers to improving access to green and recreational spaces. D&TS is an important gateway to and from Grindleford/Hathersage, the Hope/Edale Valleys and the Peak District National Park. There are also a number of public rights of way in the vicinity of the station and investment is needed to improve/maintain these to afford better access to and from places like Ecclesall and Lady’s Spring (SSSI) Woods and Poynton/Hutcliffe Wood as well as the nearby Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet and Millhouses Park.

Policies 7 and 8

We support the ambition for zero emissions from public transport especially if this includes the withdrawal of highly polluting diesel trains although this again is for others to do and will not be achievable without significant investment.

Policies 11 and 12

We support innovative technical solutions like SMART North and would ask that updated smart technology be implemented at stations like Dore and Totley. One of the reasons patronage on rail is increasing despite the higher than inflation fare increases is that more people, particularly the younger generation have found that they can utilise IT for a variety of purposes like work or leisure. It is envisioned that this will continue and indeed grow over the life of the Strategy. Although Policy 11

mentions an 'inclusive transport service', we feel the Strategy is generally light on the 'Accessibility for All' agenda. It is acknowledged that this is can be a conundrum but it is very important that no members of our communities are excluded from the opportunities that the Strategy espouses to bring. The Strategy would be improved if this aspect was made more prominent.

Implementation Plan

We appreciate that it is difficult to be specific but the implementation plan elements in the Strategy are very general in nature and are not explicit about who does what, where and by when. From our point of view, we would like to see more about what is planned for the future role of stations like Dore and Totley and Dronfield.

The Strategy and IP contain a lot of words like 'work with', 'pursue', 'encourage', 'support', 'develop', 'explore', 'review', 'examine', 'encourage', 'map out', 'seek support' etc. but little about committed schemes and projects, funding, measures of success and milestones along the way.

Concluding Remarks

Our comments have largely been confined to the area around, and role of, our station. Patronage at D&TS has grown rapidly over the last couple of decades and will continue to increase as existing services are improved. Furthermore, it has finally been announced by the Secretary of State that the Hope Valley Capacity Improvement Scheme Transport and Works Act Order has been approved which will allow, amongst other things, a dualling of the track through the station and another platform for westbound passengers.

We believe there is also an opportunity to utilise part of this new platform to create a bay 'Platform 3' by providing a short 'cul-de-sac' link to the main line into and out of Sheffield between the two sets of dual tracks. That would allow improved services to the north and east which are currently not available from the station without interchange e.g. Dore and Totley to Meadowhall/Doncaster/Leeds. At present there is a connection every 2 hours through Sheffield station giving a journey time of 22 minutes to Meadowhall. (A few of the hourly TPE trains stop at Dore & Totley, taking only 13 minutes to Meadowhall.)

This constructive suggestion would have the additional potential benefit of freeing up congested platform space at the north end of Sheffield station.

We are also aware of a feasibility study by SYPTTE which has looked at the possibility of re-instating the platforms on the Midland Mainline (services were withdrawn in the 1960s and the platforms removed in 1985) and again stopping some trains. The conclusion was that this was achievable and there was a positive economic case for such a proposal but that further detailed work was needed on this and the associated traffic and parking issues that such an expansion would create.

We believe D&TS is fast becoming a Parkway station for South and West Sheffield and parts of North Derbyshire and the issues highlighted above will put further pressure on the infrastructure and environment in our area. It is vital that a clear plan of action is developed and included in investment plans.

Friends of Dore and Totley Station look forward to developing these proposals further with the City

Council, City Region and the local community.