



Friends of Dore & Totley Station

East Midlands Rail Franchise Consultation

The East Midlands (EM) franchise plays a significant role within the Sheffield City Region, incorporating the Midland Mainline (MML) inter-city services to London, and half the current semi-fast service between Sheffield and Manchester.

Many users of Dore & Totley (D&T) station are not local residents, some travelling from as far as Chesterfield and a wide area across South and West Sheffield. 2/3 of commuters are going towards Manchester rather than into Sheffield. The reason is partially due to the sparsity of the commuter service to and from Sheffield as seen in Appendix A below. Our little station is playing an increasing role in the economic development of the Northern Powerhouse, leaning heavily to the west.

Passenger numbers are increasing, having doubled in the last 7 years, that increase showing no sign of abating, see the graph at Appendix B. Brakes on further growth are the lack of stopping trains, the capacity of those that do stop, parking, and limitations of the local road network. D&T is becoming Sheffield South-West Parkway for Manchester bound commuters.

The Northern Hub's delayed Hope Valley Capacity Scheme was originally intended to provide paths for 4 fast trains and a slow train per hour between Sheffield and Manchester. The final plan that went to Public Inquiry in May 2016 was to provide for 3 fast trains and a slow train every hour by December 2018. A decision is awaited but we hope construction can be completed by 2019-20.

We're concerned that no account seems to be taken within this consultation of the increased capacity planned to become available within the next 2-3 years.

Turning now to specific areas within the franchise consultation.

1. The Liverpool - Norwich route

Dore & Totley station users primarily use the section between Sheffield and Manchester, with some travelling to Liverpool and a few to Chesterfield and Nottingham. Few EM trains currently stop at D&T but if the service were to be broken

the preference might be for it to be at Nottingham.

On the Sheffield - Manchester section we'd like to see more trains stopping at D&T - although that would be a mixed blessing for local residents due to parking issues. A 6 minute shorter journey time to Manchester is attractive to those driving to the station from the outskirts of south and west Sheffield where routes into the centre are very congested.

At present EM are providing Class 158 trains, usually with 4 carriages, but often with only 2. Over crowding is a regular feature with standing room only for long distances on many services. We would ask for any new franchisee to provide 6 coach trains at peak times with all trains comprised of 4 coaches.

EM currently provide only Standard class accommodation. TransPennine Express (TP) only provide 3 coach trains at present, but plan to make all 6 coach from the December 2019 timetable. Their Class 185 trains provide a generous First Class provision which is lightly used. We feel that the new franchisee should be able to provide similar First class seating, although not necessarily in as generous proportions. Present take up of First class is light, largely because 2 out of 3 trains each hour don't provide it.

We note that it is possible to walk the length of a Class 158 train, but each Class 185 3 coach unit requires a separate conductor and refreshment trolley. This seems an extravagant use of personnel, so fear a 6 coach TP Class 185 may be run without staff in one unit. We trust that will be covered in the franchise agreement.

We note that in the rail industry planning the Hope Valley route is seen more as a branch line than a mainline. We believe that concept is wrong and the semi-fast service needs to be upgraded to provide services commensurate with express standards.

Any suggestion that the intended third Hope Valley path should avoid D&T and Sheffield would give us concern. Ideally we'd like at least one of the fast services to stop at D&T each hour, but realise that any stops are detrimental to passengers going between Manchester and Sheffield city centres.

2. The London Mainline route

Although all London trains pass through D&T we acknowledge that it is not practical to expect them to stop. Users from our area travel into Sheffield by train, or drive to Chesterfield.

There is no great clamour for dramatically faster services, but frequency of services, the ability to get a seat and punctuality are very important. Once on the train the ability to have space and connectivity to work is essential, particularly at morning and evening commuting times.

Whilst the majority of passengers heading south are going to St Pancras passengers require other destinations, like Bedford and Luton. It is essential that connectivity is maintained with these places from the north, possibly by connecting to a regular semi-fast service from Leicester.

3. Sheffield Station

Passengers from D&T for onward journeys change at Sheffield where Northern local services usually terminate in Platform 2c. That's well out of sight beyond the main station canopy with a most basic shelter. We hope the new franchisee will be able to improve the distant platform, and also the signage leading to it.

Since a rebuild of the cross station footbridge a few years ago passenger numbers have grown very strongly and continue to grow. The bridge now needs to be much wider (like that at Derby), possibly with escalators as well as lifts. Combining external foot traffic across the station with rail passengers makes it very congested. For revenue protection purposes the two classes of users should be kept apart.

We note that many local train users have become used to avoiding payment of fares. We would suggest that a ticket machine is installed on both the island platforms to make it easier for those alighting from trains to purchase further tickets for the next stage of their journey without having to go to either side of the station site.

We hope the new franchisee will work with Sheffield City Council to improve the approach to the station by car, paying attention to short stay parking and the congestion of taxis.

4. Fare structure

We are concerned that advance fares can be available from Sheffield to Manchester that are cheaper than from D&T for a shorter journey on the same train. This may be replicated for other journeys. We'd like to be assured that such anomalies can be resolved, particularly the nonsensical situation where some savvy users are purchasing tickets for several short hops rather than one for the whole journey.

Summary

Dore and Topley station serves a much wider area than the leafy suburbs in which it is set. It has seen rapid growth in passenger numbers in recent years. It is likely to

see that growth continue, especially if more trains stop there to Sheffield and Manchester.

Our prime concern is to retain and increase the numbers of trains stopping at D&T, providing better service levels in both directions.

We also wish to see better rolling stock fit to provide a faster, frequent and reliable express service between Sheffield and Manchester.

With foreseeable track and train improvements a journey time between Dore & Totley (in the city of Sheffield) and Manchester of as little as 40 minutes could soon be possible, not so far from the 30 minutes aspired to between cities with HS3.

Chris Morgan

Chairman

Friends of Dore & Totley Station, FoDaTS

9th October 2017

Appendix A

Table to illustrate the irregular frequency and timings in the Weekday service to and from Sheffield and Manchester for passengers using Dore & Totley (from 11th December 2017).

Timings between Dore & Totley and Manchester

TOC	Sheffield	Dore & Totley	Manchester	Journey time
TPE	6.09	6.15	7.02	0:47
EM	6.18	6.26	7.34	1:08
Northern (N)	7.12	7.20	8.35	1:15
EM	7.32	7.39	8.36	0:57
TPE	8.04	8.10	9.03	0:53
N	9.14	9.21	10.34	1:13
N	10.14	10.21	11.34	1:13
N	12.14	12.21	13.34	1:13
N	14.14	14.21	15.34	1:13
N	16.14	16.21	17.31	1:10
N	17.14	17.21	18.31	1:10
N	18.14	18.21	19.35	1:14
N	19.14	19.21	20.35	1:14

N	20.35	20.43	22.05	1:22
N	22.48	22.55	23.59	1:04

TOC	Manchester	Dore & Totley	Sheffield	Journey time
N	5.46	6.49	6.57	1:03
N	7.08	8.24	8.32	1:16
TP	7.20	8.04	8.10	0:44
EM	7.42	8.27	8.34	0:45
N	8.49	9.58	10.06	1:09
N	10.49	11.58	12.06	1:09
N	12.49	13.59	14.06	1:10
N	14.49	15.58	16.06	1:09
N	15.49	16.58	17.06	1:09
EM	16.43	17.31	17.39	0:48
N	16.49	18.00	18.08	1:11
TP	17.18	18.04	18.10	0:46
EM	17.43	18.40	18.48	0:57
N	17.50	18.58	19.08	1:08
TP	18.20	19.04	19.10	0:44
N	18.49	19.59	20.07	1:10
TP	19.18	20.02	20.09	0:44
TP	20.20	21.04	21.12	0:44
N	20.45	21.53	22.02	1:08
EM	22.28	23.28	23.35	1:00

Appendix B

Passenger growth at Dore & Totley

