

HADRAG

The Halifax & District Rail Action Group

on the Calder Valley Line

Upper Calder Valley Renaissance
Sustainable Transport Group

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Joint response from HADRAG and UCVRSTG to Arriva Rail North consultation on proposed May 2018 timetable

The Halifax & District Rail Action Group (HADRAG) and the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group (UCVRSTG) are campaigning groups with a broad beam of interest pressing for rail service improvement and other sustainable transport development within and through Calderdale district on the Calder Valley Line. Key issues for our groups include developing services for stations such as Sowerby Bridge, a station with a massively underestimated catchment area; improving connectivity within the closer region e.g. upper Calderdale-Brighouse-Huddersfield and developing the Brighouse line including a new station at Elland. Both of our groups are affiliated to Railfuture, a national advocate of Britain's railway and rail users.

This response is in three sections:

- 1 SWOT analysis and Summary – welcoming for headline improvements but highlighting serious concerns over detail for the Calder Valley line ...pages 2-4
- 2 Detailed response to May 2018 proposals – positives, issues, questions and requestspages 5-10
- 3 Looking further ahead – December 2019 timetable and beyond pages 11-13

Appendixes... pages 14-21

- A First and last trains
- B Growth figures for CVL stations
- C Leeds→Calderdale pattern and possible alternative?
- D Extract from section 3 of HADRAG response to Dec'17 consultation, containing detailed arguments for a better service at Sowerby Bridge and along the Elland-Brighouse corridor

speaking out locally for rail improvement

SWOT analysis: Draft May 2018 Calder Valley Line timetable (main focus on Calderdale stations) and beyond

Strengths

Welcome improvement to Blackpool-York service to run fast Leeds-York, and call at Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd

Extension of Calder Valley services to new destinations – Chester, Manchester Airport, Southport (Liverpool from December 2019?)

Modest improvements to Brighouse service:

- Halifax-Huddersfield hourly on Sundays,
- Leeds-Bgh-McV longer hours and fast Rochdale-McV
- Earlier morning services Brighouse to Manchester, Huddersfd (but not Leeds)

Earlier morning and later evening services on York- Blackpool route

Some later night services particularly from Leeds to HFX and CV

Weaknesses – most of the following should be seen as unacceptable.

Sunday services – loss of through services SOW/MYT to/from Manchester (connections unsatisfactory).

Timetable/journey time issues.

- uneven clockface patterns Leeds-Halifax and Hebden Bridge-Leeds damaging concept of 4trains/hr where aim should be as near as possible 15min intervals.
- significantly extended timings Brighouse-Sowerby Bridge, neutralising gain from fast running Rochdale-Manchester, and also Brighouse-Huddersfield.

Upper Calder Valley-Huddersfield connectivity: loss of connections at Brighouse; poor connections at Halifax deterrent to travel.

Still no Sunday service Leeds-Brighouse-upper Calderdale (-Manchester) – missed opportunity to develop leisure market and facilitate Sunday employment opportunities in Manchester.

Still no daytime weekday service Littleboro/Walsden-Halifax/Bradford; still only hourly at Walsden.

First trains: equivalent existing first train Brighouse-Dewsbury-Leeds is missing from draft timetable resulting in significantly later arrival at work for Brighouse-Leeds commuters.

Last trains significantly earlier than present from Manchester to almost all Calderdale stations. Mid/late-evening trains from Manchester not serving intermediate stops e.g. Walsden, Mytholmroyd, Sowerby Bg.

No plan apparent for a Low Moor-Manchester service.

Opportunities

Adjust service pattern so more stations served by the Airport trains e.g. Sowerby Bridge, Littleborough, Low Moor. Chester service could be fast to give best journey time Chester/Warrington-Leeds; Airports semi-fast to maximise local benefits of Ordsall curve.

Sundays Leeds-Brighouse-upper Calderdale-Manchester service?

Dec' 2019 introduction of additional service every hour (MCV-BDI)

- increase service at intermediate stations, not reduce!
- 5 trains/hr HFX-LDS?
- Make most of linespeed improvement and new rolling stock to give 55 min journey time Bradford-Manchester with 4 stops inc. SOW (Network Rail has predicted 53 min with 4 stops) using present rolling stock.

Threats

December 2019 – based on service pattern graphic shown in presentations by Northern – reduction in service frequency at Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd (and possibly Todmorden/Littleborough area):

- 1/hr to Manchester compared with 2/hr now;
- 1/hr to Halifax/Bradford compared with 2/hr from May 2018;
- 2/hr to Leeds compared with 3/hr from May 2018.

See also section 3.

1 Summary – welcome for headline improvements but also serious concerns

HADRAG was formed by a group of environmentally concerned individuals in 1985 and argued for Brighouse line reopening (with success in 2000). We campaign for development along routes through Halifax and Calderdale. A current focus is on the need to improve services at stations considered to have an underestimated catchment area, including **Sowerby Bridge** and **Brighouse** which are also the top two stations on our line in terms of percentage growth in passenger footfall over the last decade (ORR figures – see Appendix B). We also urge the acceleration of progress towards opening a station at **Elland**.

UCVRSTG is part of the Upper Calder Valley Renaissance, a project initiated by Yorkshire Forward. Our interests are sustainable transport and connectivity-related issues in, around and affecting Hebden Bridge, Todmorden, Walsden, Mytholmroyd, Luddendenfoot and the surrounding hilltop villages. Strategically, our major concerns include the need for Sunday services broadly similar to weekdays, and the need for a new direct rail service between the Upper Calder Valley and Huddersfield.

1.1 **We welcome major improvements planned for May 2018**, building on December 2017 changes on which we have already commented:

- improved connectivity for Calder Valley line passengers with **new destinations** - Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport, Chester (via Warrington), and Southport (via Wigan).
- some welcome journey time improvements including the Blackpool-York semi-fast service now to operate fast between Leeds and York with a single stop hourly at Church Fenton (albeit with some extended dwell times in Leeds). At the same time the Blackpool-Yorks will service Sowerby Bridge (and also Mytholmroyd) all day, 7 days/week, a development for which HADRAG has argued for many years.
- on the **Brighouse Line**, limited improvement to the Sunday service (hourly instead of 2-hourly), earlier morning weekday services to Huddersfield and Manchester, and increased hours of operation of the Leeds-Dewsbury-Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester route (with fast running Rochdale-Manchester), although it is disappointing that this service is still not proposed to run on Sundays or in late evenings.
- There are to be later last trains from Leeds to the Calder Valley, including a late evening service going through to Blackburn.
 - Suggestion: we think the new late-evening Blackburn train could adjusted to run via Todmorden (reversing in the station and using the “Tod Curve”) which would give Todmorden as good a late-evening service as that to be enjoyed by other upper valley stations.

1.2 **There are, however, some major concerns, including some quite unacceptable proposals. Amplified in section 2**, these include:

- First and last trains, and evening pattern. The existing service at about 0700 Brighouse-Dewsbury-Leeds is missing from the draft (see 2.4(b)(iv)). Last services from Manchester to most CV stations appear to be significantly earlier than at present – half an hour earlier and as much as 2 hours earlier for Mytholmroyd and Sowerby Bridge. Whilst there are improved evening half-hourly semi-fast services, at intermediate stations such as Sowerby Bridge (a major town), Mytholmroyd and Walsden appear to be considerably poorer than in the present timetable. It would be reasonable to demand an alternate (semi-)fast/stopping pattern in the evening with the last train serving all stations.
- loss of existing connectivity – draft Sunday service Sowerby Bridge/Mytholmroyd discontinues through services to Manchester with inadequate connections at Hebden Bridge.
- loss of existing connectivity upper Calder Valley-Huddersfield with services not connecting at Brighouse and rail connectivity Mytholmroyd/Sowerby Bridge to/from Huddersfield effectively discontinued.

- continuing lack of daytime connectivity, Littleborough/Walsden to/from Halifax and Bradford. Walsden-Halifax trains should be seen as vital because Halifax is the main centre in Calderdale district for local government and for NHS hospital services.
- extended journey times on some sections notably on the Brighouse Line: Brighouse→Huddersfield and Brighouse→Sowerby Bridge. For example Leeds-Bgh-Sowerby Bridge journey time increased from 42 to 44 minutes, with extended journey time Brighouse-Sowerby Bridge cancelling out faster timings Leeds-Brighouse. For Brighouse-Manchester, faster times Rochdale-Manchester are cancelled out by the Brighouse-Sowerby Bridge issue so Brighouse-Manchester, instead of being reduced in journey time, is increased.
- uneven clockface patterns. For example 4 trains/hr Leeds-Halifax bunched in two pairs at 08, 19, 42, 49, and Hebden Bridge-Leeds departures 14, 28, 42, 50 – both examples making a mockery of the idea of a “quarter-hourly service”. This needs to be reconsidered.
- Loss of extra morning service, the present 0728 Halifax-Leeds, reducing frequency and threatening capacity until new trains delivered.

Taken together, the above suggest that a major rethinking of the proposed May 2018 Calder Valley pattern may be required.

1.3 **2019 and beyond.** Whilst this response is primarily related to the proposed May 2018 timetable, we take the opportunity to express concerns and aspirations for December 2019 and further developments beyond. See section 3. A particular concern from information we have seen is the apparent threat from December 2019 to the service level at Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd, and also to Todmorden, in terms of frequency to Manchester, Halifax, Bradford and Leeds. ***We believe that it is reasonable to demand that the December 2019 timetable should:***

- At least maintain service frequencies proposed for May 2018;
- Restore the daytime hourly link Littleborough/Walsden-Halifax/Bradford that was withdrawn in May 2014 and is not proposed for restoration in 2018;
- Provide hourly through service Sowerby Bridge and Littleborough to/from Manchester Airport. (See also 1.5 below.)
- Provide Low Moor with a through service each hour to/from Manchester (and perhaps the Airport) in addition to its present Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield line service.

The above should all be facilitated by introduction of the additional Bradford-Manchester service each hour and by completion of linespeed/capacity improvements, which we believe should allow for an additional stop each hour within the journey time target (see Appendix D).

1.4 **To emphasise: our groups strongly welcome the development of new and extended services to new destinations with improved journey times and eventual Northern Connect branding. However, we believe there should be a principle that this should not be done at the expense of worsening services at intermediate stations serving local communities and indeed towns such as Sowerby Bridge.**

- In terms of potential population served Sowerby Bridge has a catchment area perhaps as great as that of Hebden Bridge and Todmorden combined and serves parts of Halifax as well as the new Copley Valley residential/business development.
- We believe the aim should be to make rail travel more attractive for many more people for a wide range of journey purposes, for cultural and leisure activities, sporting and social opportunities, personal business as well as for commuting and more widely for work. This should mean

improving services for all of the communities along our line. ***It is not enough*** simply to provide more, faster trains linking the “main” stations with the big cities.

- This point is developed further in Appendix D (taken from HADRAG’s submission on the Dec’2017 consultation) justifying a better service at Sowerby Bridge (particularly) in terms of demonstrated growth and catchment area.

1.5 A further related about services via the Ordsall chord to Manchester Airport. Logically we think the Manchester Airport trains should serve more stations rather than fewer. This would allow the benefits of the Airport rail link and the new Ordsall chord to be delivered to a larger population providing additional cross-city connectivity as well as the rail-air link. Obvious candidates to be included in Airport services include Sowerby Bridge, Littleborough and Low Moor. Equally logically, the Chester-Warrington-Halifax-Leeds service will exist to provide a cross-regional fast service and this might logically be the train than runs fast (4 stops only) Manchester-Bradford. We understand there was also a commitment to undertake a study into extending Blackburn-Manchester trains via the Tod Curve to Manchester Airport, but note that from May 2018 Tod curve trains are planned to go to Southport (giving 2 trains/hour Todmorden-Southport via Atherton). We think Southport line users might also prefer a service to the Airport, as would Calder Valley Line communities. We hope these ideas might be considered in time for the December 2019 recast, and that the “Tod Curve” Airport service will go ahead complementing the Bradford-Airport service.

2 Detailed response to May 2018 proposals – positives, issues, questions and requests

	Aspect	Positives	Issues	Questions/requests
2.1	York – Blackpool service	<p>Welcome improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast YRK-LDS (one stop at Ch Fenton) • To serve Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd all day, daily. • The above meet long-standing HADRAG aspiration to see this service develop as fast connection between more Pennine communities and the large towns and cities to east and west, with connectional possibilities at Preston and York. • Serving SOW and MYT will avoid problems with changing at Hebden Bridge specially at times of disruption. 	<p>Extended layover 8 min at Leeds eastbound. We assume this is for pathing behind TPE or Cross Country. May help with punctuality but if late running TPE/CC services continue to delay the Northern train this will cause even greater frustration.</p>	<p>Is there any way this can be avoided?</p>
			<p>Not clear whether layover at York is 1 min or 61 min.</p>	
				<p><i>The principal of this service calling at Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd, where it will significantly develop potential for convenient rail travel, must now be established. It would be unreasonable to take away this benefit at a future timetable change.</i></p>

	Aspect	Positives	Issues	Questions/requests
2.2	(a) New destinations: Man Airport (MIA); Chester (CSR); Southport (SOP)	(i) Improved cross-Manchester connectivity providing new journey opportunities with connections at Manchester Picc, Warrington, Chester, Wigan.	Need to market the extended services to extend benefits of rail travel to more people – not just about work and business!	Will there be fare incentives to encourage use of the new services for example by families on days out?
		(ii) Manchester Airport service – extending the benefits of investment in Ordsall Chord and earlier investment in airport rail link.	We support the view of STORM that Littleborough should be served by Airport trains, as should Sowerby Bridge and perhaps other stations such as the new one at Low Moor. In the May 2018 proposal it is the Chester trains that serve SOW and MYT whilst the Airport trains run fast HFX-HBD. It would seem more logical for the Chester service which is a long-distance route across the North to be fast with the Airport trains serving more intermediate communities, although we can see how the need to accommodate services beyond Manchester might have worked against doing that. People going to the Airport are perhaps more concerned about convenience (i.e. not having to change) than about saving a few minutes of journey time.	Interestingly, in the May 2018 timetable, both the Chester and Airport are shown as taking 61 min Bradford Manchester meaning that for trains not calling at SOW and MYT the time saved is taken up in “padding” along the way. In the opposite direction the difference is only 2 min. Perhaps a stop at Sowerby Bridge and/or Littleborough by Airport services might after all be possible. <i>Could this be considered for May 2018?</i> Failing that, could these points be considered for the December 2019 timetable when the extra train each hour Bradford-Manchester is introduced?

	Aspect	Positives	Issues	Questions/requests
2.3	(b) New destinations: issues with Brighouse/ "Tod Curve"/ Southport/Airport services	Tod Curve service (Blackburn-Todmorden-MCV) to operate through to Southport in addition to Leeds-Brighouse-MCV service running to Southport, both via Atherton route roughly on opposite half-hour.	Limited benefits of Southport trains for Calderdale passengers, and East Lancs passengers unlikely to use this route to get to Wigan/Southport. Southport Line users would also prefer at least 1 train/hr to Man Picc/Airport. If 2 trains/hr Todmorden-Southport it would be more useful if the Leeds-Brighouse-Southport trains ran via Bolton. If Tod Curve service went to the Airport this would help Littleborough area stations.	Franchise commitment to study feasibility of running Tod Curve trains to Manchester Airport should have reported. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was outcome? • Is this proposal stalled because of Man Picc capacity/question over project to provide additional through platforms? • Tod Curve service to go to the Airport from December 2019? (When will this be confirmed or otherwise?)
2.4	(a) Brighouse line West Yorkshire local (Leeds-Bradford-Hud) (linked to 2.6)	Welcome but limited benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hourly (inc. from 2-hourly) on Sundays. • Earlier morning services towards Huddersfield 	Pattern: Leeds-Halifax-Brighouse service overtaken by Leeds- Dewsbury-Brighouse service effectively reducing the service. Journey time Brighouse-Huddersfield shown 19 min (Sundays 17 min). Presumably due to pathing between Bradley Wood-Bradley-Huddersfield; suggests trains will spend up to 9 minutes waiting at signals, giving very poor impression to passengers and failing to encourage greater use of this service.	Is the Brighouse-Huddersfield journey time in the draft correct? Is this acceptable? Can a fix be sought before the May 2018 timetable is introduced? This could be linked to improving the Leeds-Halifax service pattern – see 2.6 below. Our Appendix C may suggest a solution to the journey time issue (though not the overtaking issue which also needs to be looked at again).
2.4	(b) Brighouse line Leeds-Dewsbury-Brighouse-Rochdale Manchester service (linked to 2.6)	Earlier and later operation. Small journey time improvement Leeds-Brighouse. Fast running Rochdale-Manchester but see also Issue (iii).	(i) Last trains (dep. LDS 2022, dep MCV 2037) are still early compared with other routes. (ii) Still no Sunday service on this route, though there is great potential to develop leisure travel along the length of Calderdale district and beyond.	Could LDS-Brighouse-Manchester operate all evening alongside the service via Bradford? Could Sunday operation, at least Leeds-Brighouse-Todmorden be introduced at the earliest opportunity? It can surely be no more difficult to timetable than on weekdays. If full Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester could operate Sundays this would help resolve the issue in 2.5 below.

	Aspect	Positives	Issues	Questions/requests
		Extension to Wigan and Southport gives some benefit in terms of connectivity.	<p>(iii) Journey time issue Brighouse-Sowerby Bridge 15min (present 9min) – pathing. Increases Leeds-Sowerby Bg journey time from 42 min to 44 min. Means Brighouse-Manchester increases from present 59 min to 63 min despite being non-stop RCD-MCV, which seems ridiculous.</p> <p>Note also: 10 minutes Brighouse-Sowerby Bridge is sufficient even including provision for Elland stop.</p>	Can this be looked at along with reconsideration of Leeds-Halifax-CV pattern? If the xx19 Leeds-Hfx-MIA could run earlier this would open a better path for the Leeds-Bgh-Sop train. See also 2.6 issue. Could our suggestion in Appendix C be at least a partial solution?
			<p>(iv) Brighouse line first train to Leeds. At present there is a very popular 0702 train from Brighouse to Leeds arriving 0737 (via Dewsbury). No equivalent to this appears in proposed timetable. 0706 train via Halifax does not arrive Leeds until 0800.</p> <p>If this is correct it is a very serious omission, damaging to the Brighouse line service and grossly inconvenient to its users.</p>	Is this an accidental omission from the draft timetable? Withdrawal of 0702 train BGH-LDS – or provision of replacement at same time or earlier – is surely unacceptable. Needs to be corrected before May'18. Ideally an earlier service from Brighouse to Leeds via Dewsbury is required. Would the very early Bradford-Brighouse train be better running Brighouse-Leeds?
2.5	Calder Valley Sunday service including Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd serious issues	2 trains/hr Leeds-Bradford-Manchester alternately extended to Chester and Manchester Airt. SOW and MYT served by hourly York-Blackpool trains (as weekdays) – welcome improvement BUT...	Both Leeds-Bradford-MCV trains each hour run non-stop Halifax-Hebden Bg, meaning Sunday through service SOW/MYT-Manchester is withdrawn (and connections at Hebden Bridge are poor.	<p>Again, this is surely unacceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please can the timetable be adjusted so 1/hr Bradford-Manchester train stops at SOW and MYT? <p>AND/OR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Sunday service Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester would restore service.

2.6	Leeds-Calderdale service pattern: serious clockface issues		<p>Uneven clockface pattern unacceptable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leeds xx08, 19, 42 and 49 to Halifax. The xx19 MIA service is only 6 min behind the xx HUD (via BGH) service at Hfx. Linked to issue of extended journeys on Brighouse line. Leeds xx19, 22, 42 and 49 to Hebden Bridge includes 30 in gap. Hebden Bridge-Leeds pattern 14, 28, 42, 50 includes 24 min gap. 4 trains/hr, yes – but nothing like “quarter-hourly”! 	<p>Could departures from Leeds at xx08 (to BGH, HUD), and xx19 (to MIA) be swapped round? Some further adjustment would be needed in Rochdale-Manchester area. Obviously we do not know if this has already been considered, but Appendix C shows what we think might be done – it is hoped that a full review of this service pattern may be carried out. A move to 5 trains/hr Leeds-Halifax (in 2019?) would help.</p>
2.7	Upper Calderdale-Huddersfield connectivity		<p>Loss of connections at Brighouse. Limited connections at Halifax but rail travel MYT/SOW-HUD effectively becomes impractical.</p>	<p>Can this be improved so that rail travel for which there is clear demand between upper Calderdale stations and Huddersfield is encouraged, not discouraged? Ideally trains should be timed to provide short-wait connection at Brighouse in both directions.</p>
2.8	First trains (see Appendix A)	<p>Earlier trains from most Calderdale stations to Leeds, York and Preston. Much earlier trains Bradford-Brighouse-Huddersfield and Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester</p>	<p>Main issue is missing first Bgh-Dew-Lds train see also 2.4(b) issue (iv) above. First train Todmorden-Leeds is a little later than present. In general, first trains to Manchester are later by 10-15 minutes but in some cases this is compensated by faster journey times. See Appendix A.</p>	<p>First trains to Manchester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> should run earlier, should include earlier service to Manchester Airport benefiting commuters, airport users and those making connections at Piccadilly. <p>Could the 0540 Hebden Bg-York start back from Todmorden?</p>

2.9	Evening services and last trains (see Appendix A)	<p>Later last trains from Leeds, York and Preston.</p> <p>Half-hourly service Manchester-Bradford until late evening.</p> <p>Brighouse gets a later through service at 2037 from Manchester, though this is not as late as might reasonably be expected.</p> <p>New late-evening service WY-Blackburn.</p>	<p>In general last trains back from Manchester are earlier than in the present timetable, some quite significantly so.</p> <p>The late-evening half-hourly Manchester service is all semi-fasts so intermediate stations are omitted; evenings Smithy Bridge and Littleborough served only by the Tod curve trains. Last trains from MCV are 2120 to MYT and SOW, 2037 to Walsden – about 2 hours earlier than present! See Appendix A.</p>	<p>Again, this is surely unacceptable. We request that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • half-hourly evening service be alternately semi-fast and all stations, maintaining hourly service at all stations • last train from MCV should serve all stations • last train from MCV should be at least as late as the present 2321 service • new last service to Blackburn call at Todmorden with reversal via curve.
2.10	Morning peak service Halifax-Leeds		<p>The 0728 Halifax-Leeds, at present formed of a 5-car Grand Central unit, is withdrawn from May 2018, a reduction in service from 5 to 4 trains between 0700 and 0800. Unless there is substantial provision of additional carriages on other services this will lead to even worse overcrowding than we see at present, and there will be a gap of more than 20 minutes between the 0718 and the 0741 from Halifax.</p> <p>We note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the brand-new rolling stock is not due to start until later in 2018 • the present 0728 Halifax-Leeds service which it is proposed to withdraw often has people standing from New Pudsey, despite being a 5-car train. 	<p>Once again, surely this can not be acceptable?</p> <p>Could consideration be given to retaining the GC-operated Halifax-Leeds train at least until all of the new rolling stock is delivered (i.e at least December 2019)? Any alternative to this should maintain frequency and increase capacity using a train of near-equivalent quality.</p>

3 Looking further ahead – December 2019 timetable and beyond

3.1 The threat.

A schematic map that has been shown at presentations by Northern shows an hourly pattern apparently being considered for December 2019 on the CVL. This diagram shows:

- All three hourly Bradford-Manchester trains running non-stop Halifax-Hebden Bridge, cutting service frequency at these Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd stations compared with existing (to Manchester) and proposed (May 2018) to Bradford and Leeds. See also below for details.
- Todmorden frequency reduced from 4/hr to 3/hr (with Chester and Liverpool services not stopping), and also Littleborough and Smithy Bridge reduced to one train/hr. We suspect and hope this is simply an error because we believe it is not compliant with the Train Service Requirement (**TSR3**).
- Airport service to terminate at Bradford and Liverpool service run through to Leeds – would it be better the other way round with Airport trains serving more stations? We have argued that the Airport services should serve more stations not fewer in order to spread and maximise the benefits of the new cross-Manchester connectivity.
- The previous point also suggests the desirable objective of 5 trains/hr Halifax-Leeds (as promised in the news release at franchise announcement in December 2015) has been ignored.

If the Dec'19 timetable is implemented as the diagram suggests the effect in terms of timeline for service frequency at Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd would be as shown below.

SOW and MYT Mon-Sat daytime frequencies to/from:	Present trains/hour	May 2018 trains/hour	Dec 2019 trains/hr
Todmorden, Rochdale and Manchester	2	2	1
Halifax and Bradford	1	2	1
Leeds	2	3	2
York and Preston/Blackpool	Infrequent (peak hours only at SOW)	1	1

Whilst the introduction of an hourly service from Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd to York, Preston and Blackpool is extremely welcome, in other respects what is given in May 2018 appears to be taken away in December 2019. And the service from SOW/MYT to Manchester would be worse than it is now. This seems to be allowed by the TSR but is the opposite of what might reasonably be expected, and can not be acceptable.

3.2 The opportunity in 2019

The principle must be established that whilst the timetable must continue to develop with attractive longer-distance services, existing or May 2018 service frequencies at intermediate stations must not be reduced. The franchise must not be seen to be giving only to take away a year or so later. This would create a negative image for the railway in local communities and considerable anger.

In December 2019 an additional service every hour is expected to be introduced between Bradford and Manchester, a Northern Connect service running through to Liverpool. In addition it is hoped that (subject to feasibility study) the Blackburn-Manchester “Tod Curve” service will run to Manchester Airport. These innovations should be seen as an opportunity to improve services at and between local stations, not just provide even more fast services.

We have argued strongly (see also Appendix D) that

- Sowerby Bridge station (SOW) has a catchment area that is underplayed by existing and proposed service levels, broadly covering two council wards, Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn, a population of 23300 (ONS mid-2014 estimate) and increasing, similar to that of Hebden Bridge and Todmorden combined. A major part of Ryburn ward is a wealthy commuting area. SOW is less than 1.5km from the new Copley Valley business and residential development, and is also is an alternative railhead for south-west Halifax (Skircoat, King Cross) especially since car parking at Halifax is limited.
- Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge are the top two Calder Valley line stations in terms of ten-year percentage growth in usage. Similar catchment area arguments apply to Brighouse as to Sowerby Bridge.
- The investment in providing the infrastructure for services to Manchester Airport including the Ordsall Chord (and the earlier investment in the airport link itself) should be exploited by train services to yield benefits for the maximum number of people. People travelling to the airport are less interested in saving a few minutes of journey time than in having convenient services without need for changing. We have supported the view of STORM that Littleborough should be served by trains to the Airport.
- Capacity and linespeed improvements on the Calder Valley Line will allow journey time improvements by the end of 2018. In addition the new rolling stock to be introduced by the end of 2019 will have higher performance than existing enabling faster acceleration and ability to attain the enhanced linespeeds. Network Rail has predicted a 53 minute Bradford-Manchester journey

time with four stops (including dwell times and allowances). The TSR requires 55 minutes by roughly 2 trains/hour. A 55 minute timing should be possible with 5 stops.

On the basis of the above opportunities, and taking on board local aspirations, we hope that the December 2019 timetable will include the following features:

- Sowerby Bridge and Littleborough to be served by trains to the Airport (in the case of Littleborough that could be the Tod Curve service)
- Service frequency at Sowerby Bridge, Mytholmroyd and stations in the Todmorden/Littleborough area should, as a minimum, be retained at the level set in May 2018 to Bradford, Leeds, York, Manchester and Preston/Blackpool.
- Improved service at Low Moor (an hourly Manchester service is essential, and twice-hourly to Leeds)
- Restoration of hourly daytime service Littleborough-Halifax/Bradford
- Bradford-Manchester journey time max 53 minutes (4 stops), 55 min (5 stops)
- It is logical for the Chester service to achieve the fastest timing as it will serve a greater number of longer distance users. So this service could make 4 stops (perhaps only 3) Bradford-Manchester and achieve a 50-53 minute timing. The new Liverpool service could be four stops and we hope the Airport service would call at Sowerby Bridge, Mytholmroyd and perhaps Low Moor. It would be acceptable for 1 train/hour to omit Todmorden, provided Todmorden retains evenly spaced 4 trains/hour overall.
- We would like to see Leeds-Halifax increased to **5 trains/hr** (as promised in the news release at the December 2015 franchise announcement). However, if one service is to start/finish at Bradford this should be the Liverpool rather than the Airport service, allowing Bramley and New Pudsey to benefit from through trains to the Manchester Airport.
- Provision in Brighouse-Halifax/Sowerby Bridge timings for a future stop at Elland by all trains currently serving Brighouse.

3.3 Medium/longer term aspirations – should focus on development of the Brighouse Line beyond 2020 and benefit from capacity improvements which we hope will take place in the Huddersfield/Mirfield area (as part of TransPennine Route Upgrade):

- **Elland station.** This project has recently taken a major step forward with proposed funding from WYTF and is expected to open by 2022.
- **Upper Calderdale-Brighouse-Huddersfield service** (a through service will avoid the difficulty of getting connections right at Brighouse). This could start in East Lancashire or Rochdale and continue beyond Huddersfield; or it could be circular service Manchester-Rochdale-Todmorden-Huddersfield-Manchester linking a large number of Pennine communities.
- **Fast service Upper Calderdale-Elland-Brighouse-Leeds via the Dewsbury route, aiming at a Brighouse-Leeds journey time of 20 minutes or less.**

Appendix A – First and last through services (Mon-Sat)

	From	To	Present	May'18			To	From	Present	May'18
	First trains	HFX	LEEDS	0605			0556	LEEDS		HFX
BGH		0702(via Dew)		0706 (via Hfx)	BGH	2308 (via Hfx)	2308 (via Hfx)			
SOW		0558		0549	SOW	2235	2349			
MYT		0552		0543	MYT					
HBD		0549		0540	HBD					
TOD		0612		0621	TOD					
WDN		0639		0618	WDN					
LTL		0619		0612	LTL					
SMB		0615		0608	SMB					
HFX		MCV		0544	0554	MCV				HFX
BGH			0658	0551	BGH			1926	2037	
SOW			0550	0606	SOW			2321	2120	
MYT			0556	0611	MYT				2120	
HBD			0559	0607	HBD				2257	
TOD			0607	0615	TOD				2305	
WDN			0610	0625	WDN				2037	
LTL			0616	0632	LTL				2305	
SMB			0619	0634	SMB				2305	
HFX			YRK	0649	0556				YRK	
HBD		0634		0540	HBD	1918	2312			
HFX		PRE	0629	0624	PRE		HFX	2056	2146	
HBD			0646	0641			HBD	2056	2146	
HFX		HUD	0820	0548	HUD		HFX	HUD	2228	2256

Appendix B: Growth figures for CVL stations – HADRAG calculations for based on ORR station usage estimates

CVL station usage statistics: entries and exits (extracted from Office of Road and Rail station usage estimates, December 2016 - growth calculations added for HADRAG by JSW)					Year on year growth		Growth over 10 years	
	2005-06	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	13/14- 14/15	14/15- 15/16	05/06-15/16	Mean/y
Brighouse	72,229	371,666	384,922	416,094	3.6%	8.1%	476.1%	19.1%
Sowerby Bridge	168,942	351,652	383,844	391,766	9.2%	2.1%	131.9%	8.8%
Bramley	154,249	317,132	305,580	315,342	-3.6%	3.2%	104.4%	7.4%
Halifax	978,225	1,912,798	1,935,764	1,982,148	1.2%	2.4%	102.6%	7.3%
Hebden Bridge	385,768	739,112	764,354	756,508	3.4%	-1.0%	96.1%	7.0%
Todmorden	311,986	548,152	563,920	585,310	2.9%	3.8%	87.6%	6.5%
New Pudsey	475,591	763,666	844,046	891,062	10.5%	5.6%	87.4%	6.5%
Rochdale	641,487	1,059,282	1,098,630	1,134,418	3.7%	3.3%	76.8%	5.9%
Littleborough	223,821	368,598	380,786	391,896	3.3%	2.9%	75.1%	5.8%
Castleton	85,695	143,506	148,596	148,262	3.5%	-0.2%	73.0%	5.6%
Mills Hill	183,853	302,726	313,536	310,032	3.6%	-1.1%	68.6%	5.4%
Mytholmroyd	107,107	156,704	171,704	164,742	9.6%	-4.1%	53.8%	4.4%

CVL station usage statistics: entries and exits (extracted from Office of Road and Rail station usage estimates, December 2016 - growth calculations added for HADRAG by JSW)					Year on year growth		Growth over 10 years	
	2005-06	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	13/14- 14/15	14/15- 15/16	05/06-15/16	Mean/y
<i>Continued from previous page:</i>								
Smithy Bridge	98,319	146,980	144,206	149,152	-1.9%	3.4%	51.7%	4.3%
Moston	52,205	125,902	82,486	71,732	-34.5%	-13.0%	37.4%	3.2%
Bradford Interchange	2,482,799	2,990,294	2,922,956	2,993,340	-2.3%	2.4%	20.6%	1.9%
Walsden	132,703	94,332	93,942	102,324	-0.4%	8.9%	-22.9%	-2.6%
CVL totals	6,554,978	10,392,502	10,539,272	10,804,128	1.4%	2.5%	64.8%	5.1%
National	1,601,494,732	2,665,123,512	2,785,070,620	2,938,358,550	4.5%	5.5%	83.5%	6.3%

Appendix C: Leeds → Calderdale May 2018 proposed pattern and a possible alternative?

Leeds-Calderdale May 2018

Westbound

Consultation pattern (10xx as sample hour):

	from	BBN	RCD	LDS	LDS	LDS	RCD	LDS	YRK
Leeds	a		stopper				stopper		10.44
Leeds	d			10.08	10.19	10.22		10.42	10.49
Mirfield				↓	↓	10.43		↓	↓
Bradfd I	a			10.29	10.39			11.02	11.08
Bradfd I	d	↓		10.33	10.42	↓		11.04	11.12
L Moor				10.40	↓	↓		↓	↓
HFX				10.48	10.54			11.16	11.24
BGH				10.58	↓	10.51		↓	↓
HUD	a			11.17	↓	↓		↓	↓
SOW					↓	11.06		11.24	11.32
MYT		Via			↓	11.11		11.29	11.38
HBD		Tod Cv			11.07	11.15		11.32	11.41
TOD		10.55			11.15	11.22		11.39	
RCD	a	11.08			11.25	11.38		11.49	
RCD	d	11.09	11.14		11.26	11.39	11.42	11.50	↓
MCV	a	11.24	11.34		11.43	11.54	12.02	12.05	
MCV	d	11.25	11.36		11.47	11.56	12.08	12.07	
	to	SOP	Clithro	HUD	MIA	SOP	BBN	CSR	BPN

Is the following or similar a possible alternative?

- Improves spacing Leeds-HFX/HBD.
- Improves timings BGH-HUD and BGH-SOW-MCV.
- Adds SOW (and possibly LTL) stop to Airport service by taking out slack in timings HBD-MCV.

Assumes Leeds-Mirfield times and York-Blackpool times can not be altered.

	from	BBN	RCD	LDS	LDS	LDS	RCD	LDS	YRK
Leeds	a		stopper				stopper		10.44
Leeds	d			10.09	10.19	10.22		10.42	10.49
Mirfield				↓	↓	10.43		↓	↓
Bradfd I	a			10.29	10.39			11.02	11.08
Bradfd I	d	↓		10.34	10.42	↓		11.04	11.12
L Moor				↓	10.49	↓		↓	↓
HFX				10.46	10.57			11.16	11.24
BGH				↓	11.07	10.51		↓	↓
HUD	a			↓	11.19	↓		↓	↓
SOW				10.53		11.01		11.24	11.32
MYT		via		↓		11.06		11.29	11.38
HBD		Tod Cv		11.00		11.10		11.32	11.41
TOD		10.55		11.07		11.17		11.39	
RCD	a	11.08		11.18		11.33		11.49	
RCD	d	11.09	11.12	11.19		11.34	11.42	11.50	↓
MCV	a	11.24	11.32	11.35		11.49	12.02	12.05	
MCV	d	11.25	11.36	?		11.56	12.08	12.07	
	to	SOP	Clithro	MIA	HUD	SOP	BBN	CSR	BPN

Appendix D:

Extract from section 3 of HADRAG response to Dec'17 consultation, containing detailed arguments for a better service at Sowerby Bridge and along the Elland-Brighouse corridor

D1 This section is primarily about HADRAG's campaign to improve the train service Sowerby Bridge station and on the Brighouse line. Referring to the data in **Appendix B**, Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge stations can be seen to have the highest growth in passenger footfall out of all CVL stations over ten years. They continue to grow annually. There is also pressure to increase the service at Littleborough, not least, from HADRAG's point of view, to restore the daytime Littleborough-Halifax/Bradford link that was withdrawn at the May 2014 timetable change. In quantitative terms:

- Between 2005/6 and 2015/16 Brighouse footfall grew by 476%, Sowerby Bridge by 132%. This compares with the following figures for the four stations served by the fast service: Halifax 103%, Hebden Bg 96%, Todmorden 88%, Rochdale 77%.
- Brighouse has an annual footfall of about 416,000. Sowerby Bridge and Littleborough each have annual footfalls of about 392,000. Although this is somewhat lower than Todmorden (585,000) it must be noted that Todmorden has a much more frequent service generally 4 trains/hr compared with 2 trains/hr for Brighouse, Sowerby Bridge and Littleborough.
- It is instructive to calculate the quotient (annual footfall)/(daytime trains per hour) as a rough indicator of relative number of passengers generated as a function of service frequency. The figures thus calculated are: Brighouse (2 trains/hr) $416,000/2 = 208,000$; and Sowerby Bridge or Littleborough (2 trains/hr) each $392,000/2 = 192,000$; Todmorden (4 trains/hr) $585,000/4 = 146,000$; Hebden Bridge (4/hr) $757,000/4 = 189,000$. This gives a rough picture of the success of each train per hour in generating passenger usage.
- In terms of catchment area or population served, Brighouse station serves more than two local government wards (Brighouse, Rastrick and part of Elland ward). Sowerby Bridge station also serves at least two wards (Sowerby Bridge and Ryburn wards plus parts of Skircoat, Warley and Luddendenfoot). By comparison two stations served by the fast services, Todmorden and Hebden Bridge, serve less than three wards between them (Todmorden and Calder wards and part of Luddendenfoot ward). ***This suggests that with a better service Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge could achieve passenger figures close to if not greater than those for Hebden Bridge and Todmorden stations.***

The above points add weight to the view that Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge stations, and also perhaps (though outside HADRAG's area) Littleborough justify a service level closer to that enjoyed by users of Hebden Bidge and Todmorden stations.

D2 Effect of linespeed improvements implemented 2016-2018: argument for Bradford-Manchester fasts to make 5 intermediate stops instead of 4.

Consider the following logic:

- The Train Service Requirement (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501852/arn-tsr-schedule-7-journey-times.pdf) states that 25 ["fast"] trains each day should do Bradford-Manchester in 55 min or less in the December 2019 timetable. The requirement broadly equates to 2 trains/hr meeting this target as part of a wider commitment to 40 trains in 60 min. (For Dec'2017 the requirement is 30 trains with a journey time of 65 minutes.) The TSR service frequencies table for 2019 at

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501849/arn-tsr-schedule-5-tsr3-weekdays.pdf) implies that these fast trains should make 4 intermediate stops between Bradford and Manchester, i.e. HFX, HBD, TOD and RCD.

- Network Rail has stated that after the current programme of speed enhancements (which are complete now on the West and will be on the East side by October 2018) journey time Bradford-ManVic with 4 stops will be 53 or 53.5 minutes. Clearly this is less than the journey time required by the TSR by an amount approximately equal to that required for an additional stop (for example at Sowerby Bridge).
- The NetR journey time estimates are based on existing Class 158 trains. It is a reasonable expectation that the new CAF rolling stock (Class 195) will be higher-performance (it is now known that the 195s will have 50% more powerful engines) enabling faster acceleration away from stops and restrictions and potentially reducing sectional running times.
- **Furthermore, HADRAG's information**, based on recent actual journeys made with already increased linespeeds west of Littleborough, is that fast trains are already able to do Rochdale-Manchester in a minute or two less than Network Rail's **new** predicted running time. Current WTT running times Rochdale↔Manchester Vic are 13min (down), 12½ min (up). Network Rail's running time under the new speed limits is understood to be start-to-stop Rochdale↔Manchester Vic 12 min (down), 11.5 up. As stated these predicted timings are based on Class 158 trains, 90mph "Express" types. Our information is that even existing trains are already able to do Rochdale to Manchester in less than these times.
- An obvious conclusion is that one additional stop could be accommodated on the "fast" schedule without going over the 55 or even perhaps the 53 minutes; i.e. 5 stops instead of 4 would be feasible whilst still enabling a headline Bradford-Manchester journey time of noticeably less than an hour.

D3 STORM's Littleborough proposal. Based on current running times experienced between Rochdale and Manchester following recent raising of linespeeds, our colleagues in STORM, the users group based around the line through Rochdale, have proposed that one of the 2/hr daytime Mon-Sat Bradford-Manchester services in December 2017 should call at **Littleborough** (currently these trains are non-stop TOD-RCD). It is believed this could be done without increasing overall journey time. HADRAG supports the view on that an additional Leeds train each hour should serve Littleborough, because we believe the daytime link between Littleborough and Halifax/Bradford, which was broken at the May 2014 timetable change should be restored benefiting passengers on both sides of border.

D4 A strategy for improving service frequency at Sowerby Bridge. We believe this has two feasible elements, the first of which could be implemented at the December 2017 timetable change. Neither proposal requires any additional resources:

(a) All York-Blackpool trains (or nearly all) to call at Sowerby Bridge (SOW) starting December 2017.

How this would work:

- In the current timetable (in effect the timetable introduced in May 2014) a small number of peak hour York-Blackpool trains call at Sowerby Bridge, eastbound morning peak, westbound evening peak. The remainder of these trains run non-stop between Halifax and Hebden Bridge.
- On Mondays to Fridays there is very little difference in timings Halifax↔Hebden Bg whether trains stop at SOW or not. The working timetable shows that trains that do not stop at SOW have 1½ min performance allowance inserted into the schedule, which is effectively almost the time required for the train to stop. On Saturdays trains not stopping at Sowerby Bridge do have a shorter time Halifax↔Hebden Bg but the slack seems to be taken up in increased dwell time in Leeds station.

We are pleased to note that all York-Blackpools to serve Sowerby Bridge and Mytholmroyd from May 2018. This must become the established pattern. (Comment added June 2017).

- Note that the performance allowance mentioned above applies to off-peak services which are less likely to be delayed by large passenger volumes, rather than to peak service that one would expect logically might require it. This suggests that the 1½ min is simply “padding” to ensure that trains take the same length of time between York and Blackpool whether or not they stop at SOW.
- Overall times Leeds ⇄ Blackpool appear to be independent of whether or not the train stops at SOW. Westbound most take between 129 and 132 minutes. Some trains that stop at SOW have an overall faster journey time than some that do not. Some slightly longer journey times are due to extra stops in Lancashire or timetabling west of Preston, for example the 0557 LDS-BPN takes 137 minutes because it makes three stops between Blackburn and Preston whilst most of these trains run that section non-stop. Eastbound the Blackpool-Leeds journey time is generally 131-132 minutes, again independent of stopping at SO or not.
- The TSR journey time commitment shown online https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501852/arn-tsr-schedule-7-journey-times.pdf shows Leeds ⇄ Blackpool as 135 minutes (December 2017) coming down to 130 min in December 2019. The faster timing should be helped by improved performance of the new rolling stock and by the improved linespeeds to be implemented between Hebden Bridge and Bradford by October 2018.
- **IN CONCLUSION**, whilst it is realised that it is often prudent for the railway to include some “slack” in the schedule, the “padding” in the timings of trains running non-stop Halifax-Hebden seems illogical. **Therefore it seems reasonable to suggest that all Mon-Sat York-Blackpool services should call at Sowerby Bridge without unreasonably threatening performance or journey time targets.**
- On Sundays there does not appear to be the extra allowance between HBD and HFX but the overall journey times are not very different and we therefore hope the Sunday trains might also stop at SOW.

(b) in 2019 (Mon-Sat – probably at an earlier date on Sundays) an additional Bradford-Manchester train is to run each daytime hour. This should call at Sowerby Bridge, giving the station a faster service to Manchester and, we hope, a through service to Manchester Airport.

How this would work:

- See 3.2 above.
- With five stops between Bradford and Manchester, namely HFX, SOW, HBD, TOD and RCD, a journey time of 55 minutes, possibly less, should be possible. This meets the TSR journey time commitment for December 2019.
- It would be possible still to have a headline Bradford-Manchester journey time of 53 minutes – or quite feasibly less – if one train per hour made just four intermediate stops. Logically this might be the Chester service.
- We would like Sowerby Bridge to be served by the hourly Manchester Airport service by the end of 2019 if possible.
- The aspiration for one of the fast Bradford-Manchester services every hour to stop at Sowerby Bridge need not affect the objective of providing an additional stop at Littleborough by a train every hour via Bradford (which could start Dec’17).
- There are alternative service-pattern solutions that could deliver the above outputs.

The above (a) and (b) combined together with the two services via Bradford and via Brighouse would give Sowerby Bridge 4 trains/hr to Leeds, 3/hr to Manchester and 1/hr to Blackpool. Such a service level seems appropriate to this large urban area and a station with remarkable growth in usage as referenced in 3.1 above and in the Appendix.

D5 Brighouse/Elland line: We understand why the train operator has been unable to offer a generally increased service on the Brighouse line as part of the 2017-19 enhancements. Expanding on the summarised points in 2 we believe the following could be an initial part of the strategy to improve the Brighouse line service:

- (a) We hope the franchise commitment to an hourly **Sunday** service on the Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield route will be implemented by May 2018 if not December 2017.
- (b) It is disappointing that there is apparently no plan, as yet, to operate the **Leeds-Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester hourly service on Sundays**. We hope this might be done when rolling stock becomes available, initially perhaps as a short working Leeds-Brighouse-Todmorden. A Sunday service on this route could be marketed to attract leisure travel along the length of the Calder Valley providing a tempting alternative to car journeys. There should be no obstacle in terms of pathing between Mirfield and Leeds because the TransPennine Express frequency is no greater than during the week. TP Express does, indeed, set an example of planned Sunday service improvements.
- (c) **Improvements to the Monday-Saturday Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester service.** We are pleased to note that a start has been made with some of these trains running non-stop (or one stop) Manchester↔Rochdale around the peaks (M-F), reducing the journey time eastbound to a little under an hour (slightly longer westbound).
 - We hope that between now and 2019 all of these trains will be altered to run non-stop over this section (or semi-fast Todmorden-Manchester).
 - We understand also that this service is planned to be operated in due course by Class 170 “Turbostar” trains which have a higher performance. It is hoped that this happens by 2019 and that significant journey time improvements will be possible.
 - In the longer term we hope this service may become fast Brighouse-Leeds (perhaps with one stop). We realise that this is unlikely to happen before completion the TransPennine Route Upgrade, a project which we hope will not only increase Huddersfield Line capacity but enable more trains through Brighouse, improving Calderdale-Kirklees connectivity. We still hope it may be in the latter part of the current franchise.
- (d) **Elland station.** We hope the train operator enthusiastically embraces the proposed station to serve Elland. This is not the place to enlarge on the campaign for Elland, other than in the context of train timetables. The present Bradford-Halifax-Huddersfield timings contain adequate slack for an additional stop in both directions. We realise that timings are tighter between Sowerby Bridge and Mirfield on the Manchester route. However:
 - the speeding up of Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester trains at the Manchester end (3.5(c)) should make it easier to introduce an additional stop, and enhanced signalling in the Calder Valley should ease pathing in the Milner Royd Junction area.
 - Clearly there are going to be potentially a further two major recasts of the timetable between now and 2019 and we trust that the train operator will work with Network Rail to devise the new timetables with adequate allowance for all trains the currently call at Brighouse also to call at Elland so that Elland has a minimum of 2 trains/hr.

D5 Finally, we hope an early opportunity will be taken to improve the service at the new **Low Moor** station **opened** Spring 2017 with just one train hourly on the Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield service. Low Moor will need a service to Manchester. We also hope opportunity will be taken as soon as possible to improve the service at **Mytholmroyd**.

(Extracted from HADRAG submission on Dec’17 timetable consultation, February 2017 – JSW)