

4 August 2021

To Northern Trains (cc WYPTE).

Dear friends, the following are as submitted online:

1 Comments on proposed Calder Valley (CV) timetable (May 2022)

1.1 We understand that May 2022 will be in effect an interim timetable, with limited changes from previous. We assume changes arising from the Manchester Rail Recovery Task Force (MRRTF) work will follow in December 2022 and comment further on this below.

1.2 A number of problems that we have mentioned to Northern on several occasions since the Dec 2019 timetable was first published remain in the proposed May'22 timetable. These include the following which we hope may see some improvement in May'22 if not before:

(a) **Sowerby Bridge (SOW) and Mytholmroyd (MYT) stopping pattern.** Note particularly that SOW serves a population comparable with Hebden Bg and Todmorden combined but has little more than half the service frequency of these stations.

- i. 2-hour gap in eastbound evening services calling at SOW and MYT. MCV dep 2121 then 2319, with 2 trains from Manch'r and one from Blackpool running non-stop Hbd-Hfx in between. This evening gap can surely be fixed.
- ii. Poor peak-hour service particularly at MYT to/from Leeds.
- iii. Sundays no trains MYT to/from Manchester – no obvious reason for this.
- iv. Blackpool trains call at SOW and MYT **on Sundays only**. No Blackpool service Mon-Sat (apart from 3 evening-peak calls at SOW). → Every Blackpool service should call, at least at SOW, as they did from May'18 to Dec'19. Present timings appear to make that possible.
- v. We believe every CV Manchester (as well as every Blackpool) service should also call at SOW.

(b) **Pathing of nominally fast services westbound towards Manchester behind freights.** Several "1Jxx" services' which do not call at SOW and MYT, have significantly extended timings between Bradford and Manchester: see for example deps from Leeds at 0712, 1712, 2112 and 2212.

(c) **There are also irregularities in the timing of westbound services from Man Vic.**

2 Suggestions/aspirations for future timetable changes

2.1 MRRTF – Dec'2022 and beyond.

We understand a timetable "Option B+" is likely to operate from Dec'2022 and expected to retain the hourly through CV service to Warrington (useful for West Coast Main Line connections) and Chester (for Wales). This should now be seen as an established link.

We await progress on extension of another hourly Calder Valley service to Manchester Oxford Road (as operated from Dec'17 to May'18), Piccadilly and the Airport. This is important for employment,

educational, NHS, cultural and leisure destinations, and for onward connections, as well international air travel.

2.2 Issues in present CV timetable (1.2 above) need to be dealt with by next timetable recast (i.e. Dec'22 if not May'22), i.e.

- Resolution of illogical and inconvenient stopping patterns.
- Full service frequency for Sowerby Bridge (catchment area equalling Hebden Bg + Tod) on both Manchester and Blackpool routes. Sowerby Bridge is potential interchange.
- Better deal for Mytholmroyd with its enlarged car park
- Sensible arrangement of timetable to accommodate freight service without making nonsense of "fast" passenger. The provision of an Up passing loop near Hebden Bridge may help this.

2.3 "Taktfahrplan Calder Valley" – a regular coordinated timetable Bradford, Halifax, upper Calderdale, Elland and Brighouse, with additional connectivity by changing trains

The proposed May'22 timetable has from Halifax to Hebden Bridge at 17, 27, and 44 min past each the standard hour, in the reverse direction from HBD at 27, 42 and 50: three trains in less than half an hour than nothing for more than half an hour. Clearly not ideal.

The Brighouse route will have a new station opening at Elland, we hope by late 2022. Like Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse and Elland each serve a population equivalent to about 2 council wards, i.e. as many potential passengers as Todmorden and Hebden Bg combined. The present hourly service on two separate routes is inadequate.

We suggest, as an unfinished idea:

Minimum trains/hr:

East-west via Bradford, Halifax and Hebden Bg
York/Hull/Leeds-Hfx-Blackpool/Manchester etc

4 (could be 3 west of Hfx if evenly spaced)
Blackpool, York, Hull, Chester, MIA each 1/hr

East-west via Brighouse and Hebden Bg

2

Could be present Wigan-Leeds, plus additional train Preston-Burnley-Leeds or to York via Wakefield, Castleford. Or possible Bradford-Brighouse-Wakefield-York service. Pending completion of TRU Mirfield area enhancement service to Wakefield/York could be more

North-south Bradford-Huddersfield

2

Could be present Bradford-Hud shuttle doubled (2nd could be Hull-Hfx extended to Hud)

Connections between N-S and E-W routes at Brighouse/Elland (or Halifax) enabling half-hourly link to Huddersfield from upper Calderdale, Lancashire and Rochdale.

Sunday services should evolve towards weekday off-peak frequency.

3 HADRAG would welcome the opportunity to discuss the above ideas in more detail.

JSW,

4 August 2021