

The Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order
Statement of Case of Huddersfield Unlimited and the Huddersfield Civic Society

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following consideration of the information submitted by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited's (Network Rail) application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 for the Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order, Huddersfield Unlimited and the Huddersfield Civic Society (HU and HCS) wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport to offer support for the scheme.

1.2 The support is offered contingent on consideration being given to several points of concern relating to the proposals at Huddersfield Station.

1.3 Following a response from the Department for Transport which is to be taken as the notice of the intention to hold an inquiry as required by rule 4 of the Transport and Works (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004, S.I. No. 2018, this Statement of Case has been prepared as HU and HCS wish to give oral evidence to the inquiry.

2.0 Main Points of Concern

2.1 This Statement of Case has been prepared by the HU and HCS Transport and Connectivity Working Group and concentrates on the following main points of concern for HU and HCS:

- Lack of connectivity to the west side of Huddersfield Station and the impact on the viability of any future redevelopment of St George's Warehouse;
- Provision of adequate walking routes from all sides;
- Need to take account of emerging Kirklees Council plans for the area surrounding and including the station;
- Lack of adequate car parking provision; and
- Need to incorporate safe, well-lit pedestrian provision under the lengthened rail bridge over John William Street

3.0 Huddersfield Station Access and Connectivity

3.1 The first three bullet points above relate to access and connectivity for Huddersfield Station. Consideration has been given to Document NR15A: Huddersfield Station, Design and Access Statement and to NR13: Planning Drawing, Huddersfield Station – Existing and Proposed Platforms – Plan and Section.

3.2 Section 5.0 of the Design and Access Statement covers the proposals and it noted that the figure on page 29 shows a 'Future Car Park' to the western side of the station (on the area that is currently used for public parking). However, there appears to be no plans to provide any linkage into and out of the station on this side.

3.3 HU and HCS consider that the current plans for the Huddersfield Station should include pedestrian access to and from this area of land and linking to Fitzwilliam Street allowing better connectivity for areas to the northwest of the station.

3.4 The opportunity should also be taken to provide access to the station from Fitzwilliam Street for cyclists as well as pedestrians and the provision of good quality and safe cycle parking / storage on the western side should also be included.

3.5 Kirklees Council has prepared The Huddersfield Blueprint which is a ten-year vision to create a thriving, modern-day Town Centre. The plan focuses on six key areas, one of which is the Station Gateway. Relevant extracts from The Huddersfield Blueprint are contained at **Appendix A**.

3.6 The aspirations of Kirklees Council for the Station Gateway include plans for St George's Warehouse and the provision of a new Station Square on the existing public car park accessed from Fitzwilliam Street. There is the opportunity given the enhanced pedestrian provision within the station to link St George's Warehouse with the rest of the town.

3.7 St George's Warehouse is a Grade 2 Listed Victorian brick-faced five-storey building with a floor footprint of some 50,000 sq. ft (4,600 sq. m) and therefore represents a significant development opportunity. However, whilst the building is visible from both A62 Castlegate (the Ring Road) and from the Town Centre it is seen as being on 'the wrong side of the tracks' due to the lack of convenient linkages to and from the Town Centre and into the station itself.

3.8 There have been several attempts over the years to redevelop the warehouse including with assistance from public bodies and whilst its large floor footprint brings physical and financial challenges, its lack of connectivity with the Town Centre is seen as a significant contributory factor in the failure so far to carry out a comprehensive redevelopment of the building.

3.9 HU and HCS consider that the plans for Huddersfield Station should allow for the implementation of this element of The Huddersfield Blueprint by providing access to and from the western side and allowing through pedestrian movements across the station. These linkages will enhance the viability of a comprehensive redevelopment of St George's Warehouse.

3.10 At its meeting of Cabinet on 22nd June 2021, Kirklees Council resolved to carry out public consultation and make revised applications to West Yorkshire Combined Authority under the Transforming Cities Fund and the West Yorkshire+ Transport Fund for complementary transport infrastructure schemes in the Station Gateway and at Trinity Street. This resolution was made taking into account the plans for Huddersfield Station and therefore HU and HCS considers that the plans need to have regard for these wider aspirations and must ensure they can be delivered.

4.0 Lack of Adequate Car Parking Provision

4.1 Huddersfield Station currently has a car park of some 28 spaces with 4 accessible spaces available which is operated by APCOA on behalf of TransPennine Express. The car park is located on the northern end of the station frontage access from St George's Square.

4.2 Inadequate parking is currently a major barrier to rail travel from Huddersfield yet there are no plans to increase the amount of parking in the proposals for Huddersfield Station

4.3 Consideration has been given to Document NR4: Statement of Aims which states at para. 2.1.1 that *"The purpose of the Scheme is to increase capacity, improve journey times, and improve the reliability and resilience of passenger train services that serve both the Scheme Route and the Transpennine route between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York."* Works to Huddersfield Station is part of the Scheme.

4.4 NR4 also notes that, following discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) , and Network Rail, it is anticipated, and to be planned for, that rail passenger numbers and demand will

return to pre-COVID-19 levels, and continue their original growth trajectory once the crisis of the pandemic is passed. It, therefore, follows that passenger numbers and subsequently demand for car parking will grow.

4.5 The Rail Delivery Group whose purpose is to provide a high-level industry leadership forum on stations published in October 2015 its 'Vision for Stations – Nine Principles for the future of Britain's stations'. The principles that are most relevant here are:

- P3: Seamless journey experience – Ensure stations are fully integrated with rail services and onward travel modes (including walk, cycle, bus, car, tube, transit, metro, air, ferry or ship);
- P4: Reflect local needs and opportunities – Tailor stations to reflect local needs and characteristics while still being part of a recognisable national network; and
- P6: Entrepreneurial spirit: View stations as potential catalysts for innovation and entrepreneurship, and thereby enhancing the railway and local communities.

4.6 Extracts from 'Vision for Stations' are contained at **Appendix B**.

4.7 In February 2018, the Rail Delivery Group published its 'Station Car Parking Good Practice Guide'. The guide references the 'Vision for Stations' and notes that *"Whilst station car parks are most closely associated with supporting the principles of a 'seamless journey experience', all of the principles are relevant to how station car parking is planned, designed and managed."*

4.8 At Section 2.1 the guide sets out why station car parking is important and states that:

"Station car parks are part of customers' end-to-end journey experience. They are the first and last contact with the railway – not just for car users but for many others. Often the station car park is also the station access for cyclists, pedestrians, and other customers and visitors.

- *A station car park should reflect the quality of the station it is part of, and the train services it connects with.*

It is important to prioritise and encourage use of sustainable modes to reach stations but the railway still needs to cater for customers who use the car-especially if this avoids a longer car trip."

4.9 The provision of adequate (and well-designed) car parking at stations is therefore clearly a main focus of the Rail Delivery Group.

4.10 HU and HCS believe that additional car parking should be provided as an essential element of the works at Huddersfield Station to cater for current and increasing passenger demand.

5.0 John William Street Bridge

5.1 The John William Street Bridge is the first span of the Huddersfield Viaduct and is to be altered as an integral part of the overall station improvements as the platforms are to be extended over the bridge requiring it to be widened.

5.2 The environment for pedestrians on John William Street under this span of the viaduct is currently uninviting particularly during the hours of darkness and results in severance of parts of the Town Centre. This situation will worsen with the widening of the bridge.

5.3 NR15A: Huddersfield Station, Design and Access Statement states that the design & access statement is also applicable to the bridge but it does not appear to consider the environment below the bridge and no improvements are proposed.

5.5 HU and HCS consider that the environment below John William Bridge should be improved as part of the Huddersfield Station improvement scheme. An example of a scheme to consider is the improvement works carried out on Neville Street in Leeds under the railway station (the 'Dark Arches') where enhanced lighting and cladding has been provided.

6.0 Summary

6.1 This Statement of Case sets out the matters that HU and HCS wish to be considered at the inquiry into Network Rail Infrastructure Limited's (Network Rail) application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 for the Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order.

Appendices

A – extracts from Kirklees Council's 'The Huddersfield Blueprint'

B – extracts from The Rail Delivery Group's 'Vision for Stations'