

Developing the Calder Valley Line train service

— *towards a better deal for Sowerby Bridge, the Brighouse corridor and Calderdale-Bradford stations 2016-24*

Calling for action:

- To increase train frequency at Sowerby Bridge (by 2017, 2019)
- To develop the Brighouse Line service (2017, 2019 and beyond)
- To spread the benefits of franchise promises – including the Manchester Airport service – to more local stations (2019).

— **updated edition, Autumn 2016**

HADRAG:

The Halifax & District Rail Action Group

speaking out locally for rail improvement

Contents

Map, glossary ... *page 3*

SUMMARY ... *page 4-5*

Checklist 1 – reasonable demands in shorter term 2016-19 ... *page 6-7*

Checklist 2 – medium term 2020-24 ... *page 7*

1 Background – evidence of need for better service at two key stations... *page 8*

2 Sowerby Bridge – reasonable demands, feasible action to improve services 2017-2019 ... *page 10*

3 Calderdale-Bradford route – Mytholmroyd, Halifax, Low Moor ... *page 11*

4 The Brighouse Line – short and medium term aspirations for service improvement ... *page 12*

4.1 Obstacles to Brighouse service improvement – what can be done, short term?

4.2 Medium term aims using additional Huddersfield line capacity

4.3 Elland Station

4.4 Mirfield

5 Concluding arguments towards a 2019 service pattern – and beyond ... *page 15*

6 A note on electrification ... *page 17*

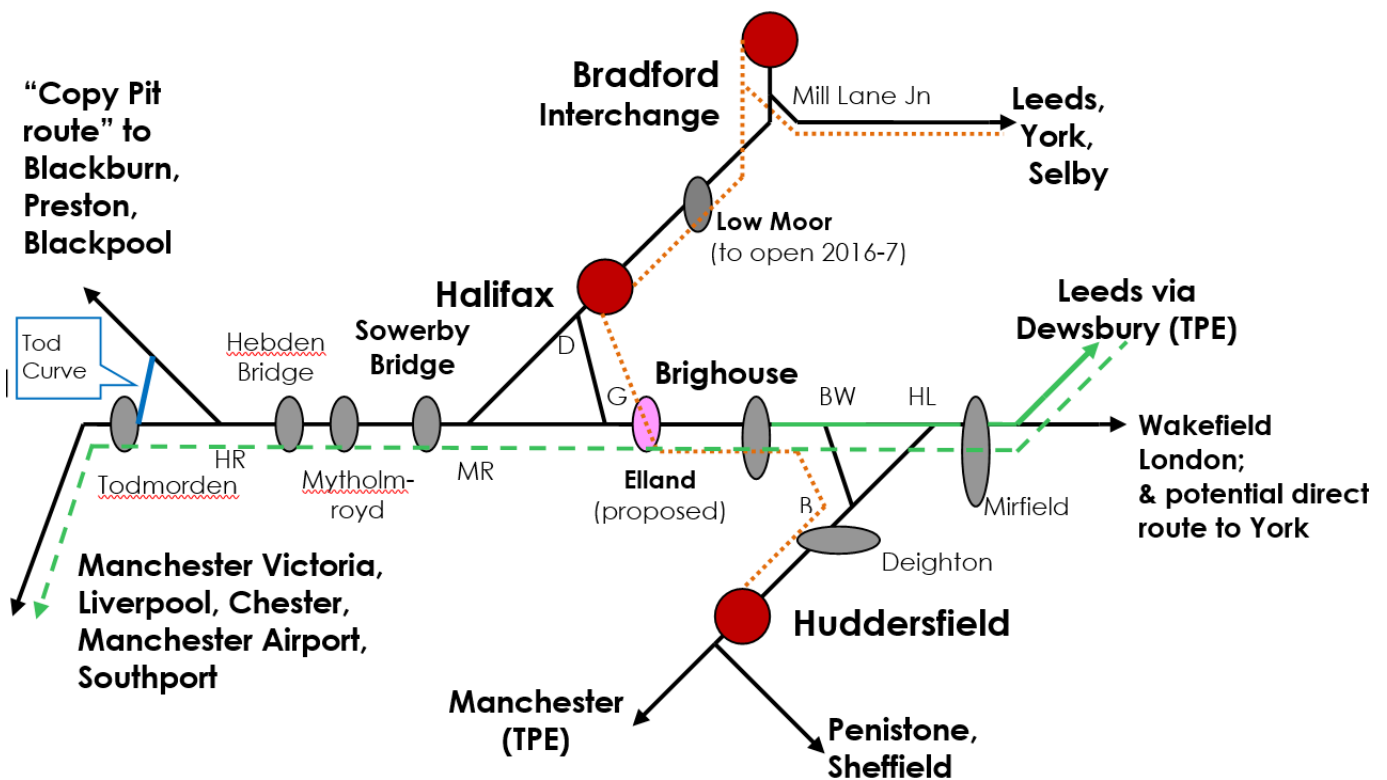
Manchester-Bradford/Brighouse pattern – one suggestion (Dec 2019)				
Service type	From	Stopping pattern		To
NC	Chester	MCV, RCD, (LTL?) TOD, HBD, HFX, BDI Manchester-Bradford journey 52 min.		Leeds
NC	Blackpool	Fast/semifast from Preston	HBD, <u>SOW</u> , HFX, BDI	York – <i>could become fast/semi-fast LDS-YRK</i>
NC	Man Airport	Fast to RCD then all stations to BDI (<i>maximises cross-Manchester connectivity and restores daytime service SMB/LTL/WDN to/from Halifax and Bradford</i>)		Leeds
Local	MCV	Moston, Mills Hill, Castleton		Rochdale “turnback”; see assumption (c) below
NC	Liverpool LS	MCV, RCD, TOD, HBD, (MYT?,) SOW, HFX, BDI Manchester-Bradford journey 54-56 min.		(Bradford or) Leeds
Local	Huddersfd	BGH, ELN, HFX, LMR, BDI. Could run fast Bradford-Leeds to improve BGH-LDS journey time		Leeds or beyond
Semifast	Southport	Fast MCV-RCD; then all stations RCD-BGH except Walsden. Manchester-Brighouse journey 50 min.		Leeds via Brighouse and Dewsbury
Semifast	Man Airport	All stations MCV-RCD; then TOD and main stops to BBN		Blackburn (Tod Curve Service – assumption (d))
Assumptions: as noted in Table 2, page 15				

The Halifax & District Rail Action Group is an association of rail users, actual and would-be, who mainly live in the area centred on Halifax, Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge in Calderdale, West Yorkshire. The group was founded in 1985 and initially campaigned for reopening of the lines between Halifax and Huddersfield with stations at Brighouse (which successfully reopened in May 2000) and Elland (for which the campaign continues). HADRAG argues for rail development in the interests of people, the economy and the environment. In particular we wish to see use of the Calder Valley Line (CVL) railway routes through our area maximised.

HADRAG: The Halifax & District Rail Action Group, on the Calder Valley Line

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speaking out locally for rail improvement



B	Bradley Junction (Deighton)	HL	Heaton Lodge (E/W) Jns (Mirfield)
BW	Bradley Wood Junction (Brighouse)	HR	Hall Royd Junction (Todmorden)
D	Dryclough Junction (Halifax)	ML	Mill Lane Jn (Bradford)
G	Greetland Junction (Elland)	MR	Milner Royd Jn (Sowerby Bg)

- Operational passenger route
- ... Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield service
- (Southport-)Manchester-Brighouse-Leeds ("valley bottom") service
- Potential fast route Calderdale-Dewsbury-Leeds
(Brighouse-Leeds 17 minutes non-stop; with 2 stops could be 21-22 minutes)

Glossary

CVL	Calder Valley Line
TP, TPE	Trans-Pennine, TransPennine express
WYCA	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Station name codes

BBN	Blackburn	ELN	Elland	LTL	Littleborough	RCD	Rochdale
BDI	Bradford Interchange	HBD	Hebdon Bridge	MAN	Manchester Piccadilly	SMB	Smithy Bridge
BGH	Brighouse	HFX	Halifax	MCV	Manchester Vic	SOW	Sowerby Bridge
BPN	Blackpool North	HUD	Huddersfield	MIA	Manchester Airport	TOD	Todmorden
BYM	Burnley Manchester Rd	LDS	Leeds	MIR	Mirfield	WDN	Walsden
CFD	Castleford	LIV	Liverpool Lime St	MYT	Mytholmroyd	WKK	Wakefield Kirkgate
CTR	Chester	LMR	Low Moor	PRE	Preston	YRK	York

Developing the Calder Valley Line train service

– SUMMARY

In this paper HADRAG, The Halifax & District Rail Action Group suggests short-medium term action to improve the train service at Sowerby Bridge and along the Brighouse corridor of the Calder Valley Line (CVL). Evidence for demand comes from station usage data, recent studies, local observations and potential future development. We want to see the benefits promised by the new franchise spread to more of our stations. Our suggestions are addressed to the train operator, transport agencies and all responsible for decisions about investment and service patterns.

This 2-page summary is followed by a pair of “checklists” as a quick guide to HADRAG’s main suggestions – reasonable demands – both shorter term (2017-19) and medium term (2020 and beyond).

The new Northern rail franchise awarded to Arriva Rail North from April 2016 promises massive benefits. The CVL will gain staff on more stations, Northern Connect express-style services to more destinations, and increased frequencies, with brand-new trains now on order. **HADRAG strongly welcomes these developments**, which demonstrate recognition that the North deserves services as good as those in London and the South East.

The franchise benefits, however, are not uniform. We are concerned about Sowerby Bridge and the line through Brighouse. Growth in footfall between 2006/7 and 2014/15 at Sowerby Bridge (ORR estimate +115%) and Brighouse (+342%) were highest on the CVL. The two stations have potential to attract many more people to rail travel.

- Sowerby Bridge is earmarked as a “Northern Connect” station, but it is not yet clear whether there is to be any increase in Monday-Saturday train service frequency.
- Brighouse gets an increase in Sunday trains and earlier morning services during the week but there seems to be no immediate prospect of an increase in general frequency, probably because of capacity limitations on the Huddersfield Line. This is a poor deal for a town of established commuting significance and local development potential.

HADRAG suggests that the following improvements are feasible in the shorter term (2016-19) and do not (with one exception) require additional resources beyond what is already committed by the franchise.

- (a) **Sowerby Bridge:** aim should be to broadly double existing service frequency by 2019, providing, over and above the present service, daytime hourly services to York, Preston/Blackpool and Manchester Airport. The following outline solution is suggested:
- All York-Blackpool services to call Sowerby Bridge from Dec’2017 timetable if not before. Consideration might also be given to some additional calls at Mytholmroyd.
 - When the additional Northern Connect Bradford-Manchester(-Manchester Airport) service is introduced each daytime hour from December 2019, this should also call at Sowerby Bridge.
 - Any additional Sunday services on the Manchester-Bradford route should call at Sowerby Bridge.
- (b) **The Leeds-Dewsbury-Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester service**, currently a Mon-Sat all-stations “stopper”, expected to be extended to Southport, could, we hope, be improved as follows:
- to become semi-fast at least between Todmorden and Manchester with the aim of reducing Brighouse-Manchester time from 60min to 50min. We hope this can be done by the December 2017 timetable. At the same time this would allow daytime services between intermediate stations in the Rochdale area and Bradford to be re-established.
 - if possible Manchester-Brighouse-Leeds operation to be extended to later evening and Sundays. This would require additional resources beyond the initial franchise commitment but we hope it might be considered.

- Introduction of Class 170 trains with superior acceleration on this service is expected in 2018-19. We hope this will allow further improvement, possibly linked with better pathing through the Mirfield area to improve the Leeds-Brighouse journey time.
- In due course this service should become fast Brighouse-Leeds, the aim being a Brighouse-Leeds journey time of 20 minutes. This may have to follow the TransPennine Route Upgrade (which includes Huddersfield Line electrification). See also medium term aims below.

(c) **Reasonable additional demands for other Calder Valley stations by 2019.** HADRAG believes that the benefits of the increased service frequency on the Calder Valley Line promised by 2019 should be spread to as many stations as possible, whilst maintaining the aim of attractive fast/semi-fast journeys between main centres. All trains should stop at Bradford, Halifax, Hebden Bridge/Todmorden, and Rochdale. The new Manchester Airport service to be introduced by 2019 will improve connectivity to the south side of Manchester and the benefits of this should be enjoyed by as many Calder Valley stations as possible. In particular, additional to the improvements demanded for Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse, we believe the needs of the following two stations close to HADRAG's core area need to be given due consideration:

- (i) **Low Moor.** The new Low Moor station will be served initially only by the hourly-Huddersfield-Bradford-Leeds service. The aim should be 2 trains/hr. Logically:
 - the second train serving Low Moor each hour should be a Manchester service; ...
 - ideally Low Moor this should be the Manchester Airport train (from 2019), ...
 - ...implying that the Manchester Airport train should run through beyond Bradford to Leeds.
- (ii) **Mytholmroyd** station is about to gain much improved and extended car park and has potential to relieve Hebden Bridge, given an improved service.

The Manchester Airport (MIA)-Bradford service, together with the "Tod Curve" service to Burnley and Blackburn which is also expected to serve the Airport, could give most if not all Calder Valley line stations an hourly service to MIA. A possible service pattern is shown in Table 2 in para. 3.1.5 (page 11).

Our understanding is that there is a franchise promise to increase **Halifax-Leeds** service frequency to 5 trains/hr, though this is not clear from the train service requirement (TSR). We trust this will happen in 2019 when the Airport service is introduced, implying that all three hourly Manchester-Halifax-Bradford trains should run through to Leeds. In the event of this not happening it should be the Liverpool services that terminates at Bradford, not the Airport service.

In the medium term (beyond 2019) we expect further attention to be given to developing the quality and quantity of train service over the Sowerby Bridge-Brighouse corridor and beyond, including Elland station. The TransPennine Route Upgrade (Huddersfield Line electrification by 2022) needs to provide extra capacity to benefit the Brighouse corridor prior to eventual electrification of the Calder Valley Line itself.

- We hope the above will allow more trains through Brighouse to Mirfield/Huddersfield with better journey times upper Calderdale-Brighouse-Mirfield-Leeds, and new services possibly linking Lancashire or Rochdale and upper Calderdale with Huddersfield – flows for which we believe there is significant latent demand. A service running fast from upper Calderdale to Leeds via Brighouse and Dewsbury could potentially reduce journey times to Leeds by 10-15 minutes. Other possibilities include service linking Calderdale with Wakefield or York (via Castleford).
- As a first step the present Manchester-Brighouse-Dewsbury-Leeds service, which we have already suggested could become semi-fast Manchester-Todmorden by 2017/2019, should become fast Brighouse to Leeds, enabled by the Leeds-Huddersfield stopping service becoming 2 trains/hour when the TRU provides capacity. The aim should be a Brighouse-Leeds journey time of about 20 minutes with one or two stops (Mirfield/Dewsbury).
- In the slightly longer term we still hope that physical works on the CVL electrification project will begin by end of the 2019-24 control period (CP6).

Checklist 1: HADRAG's Calder Valley Line (CVL) aspirations – reasonable demands in shorter term 2016-19

These ideas are about how the new services promised by the franchise should be implemented, not about significant increases over and above that promise that would require additional resources.

Item (not prioritised)	Objective	Rationale	Means of achieving	Date	Remarks
1A SOW	Increased service at Sowerby Bridge (SOW) to include York-Blackpool + Manch'r Airport trains.	Second highest CVL passenger footfall growth over last 9 years. Large catchment area serving south-west Halifax and Ryburn Valley. Comparable with Hebden Bridge. Increased park & ride potential. T support economic development; and to encourage modal transfer. Current service to Halifax and Bradford hourly. Could be 2 or 3/hr to Bradford, Leeds and Manchester plus York-Blackpool trains.	(i) All Blackpool-York trains to call (Northern Connect)	by Dec'17	Suggested in past but never delivered, though a few peak hour trains call.
			(ii) Additional Manchester Airport-Bradford service to call at SOW	December 2019 (Sundays Dec'17)	Benefit of faster journey SOW-Manchester + MIA link
1B BGH Line	Enhanced Brighouse (BGH)-Manchester service, aiming for 50min BGH-MCV journey.	Brighouse station highest CVL passenger footfall growth over last 9 years but limited benefits proposed from new franchise. Significant Calder Valley town comparable with Hebden Bridge but much poorer service currently suppressing demand. Improved service demanded to support economic development and encourage modal transfer. Current service basically hourly to Halifax, Bradford, Leeds Manchester and Huddersfield. Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester service is all-stations stopper and do not run on Sundays. Proposed Elland station on route enhance potential.	(i) Leeds-Dewsbury-Brighouse-Manchester service to become semi-fast west of Todmorden	2017-2019	Improved Class 170 rolling stock known to be planned from 2018 – should allow faster journey time together with semi-fast stopping pattern.
			(ii) Possibility of Sunday service Leeds-Mirfield-Brighouse-upper Calderdale if resources are available.	?2018-19 summer timetable to promote leisure use	Published franchise plans increase Sunday BGH service to hourly but only via the circuitous Bradford route.
1C ELN	Elland (ELN) new station	Planning for Elland station is in progress. Expected to serve major catchment close to strategic road links with park & ride potential in area to SE of Halifax.	Future timetable planning must include provision for all trains to call.	Possible station opening during 2019-20 timetable period.	Whilst we would like to ELN open by 2019, whether or not that aspiration is achieved timetable must allow.
1D LMR	Low Moor (LMR) 2 trains/hr (at least)	Low Moor station (LMR) is to open (2016-17) with hourly service only on Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield route; no service to Manchester. Minimum service should be 2 trains/hr. Low Moor has potential to attract park & ride users from a wide area of south Bradford, enabling accessing to Leeds, Manchester and Manchester Airport (MIA) without the need to drive to Bradford Interchange.	One Manchester train each hour should call at LMR, from 2019 we hope this will be the Airport train	Dec'2017, Dec'2019	If second train each hour at LMR is to be the MIA train this implies that the Airport service should run through beyond Bradford to Leeds. (If one train/hour from MCV is to terminate at BDI this should be the Liverpool train.)

Continues on next page...

1E HFX	Halifax- Leeds 5 trains/hr	Not required by TSR but promised at franchise announcement (See benefits listed for Bradford-Liverpool/Manchester Airport at http://maps.dft.gov.uk/northern/index.html).	All three hourly Manchester-Bradford trains to run through to Leeds.		See also note in 1D .
1F MYT	Mytholm-royd (MYT) possible improvements	MYT is shortly to have a major station car park expansion. Increasing its potential as an alternative to Hebden Bridge. Consideration at least should be given to improving service frequency at this station.		2017-19	
1G , linked to 1C-F	Maximise benefits of airport service	With the Manchester-Todmorden-Blackburn also serving Manchester Airport the benefits could be maximised with all or most CVL stations gaining a service to the Airport.		2019	Suggested service pattern in Table 2 (p11).

Checklist 2: HADRAG's Calder Valley Line (CVL) aspirations – medium term 2020-24

These ideas, beyond initial franchise requirement, assume capacity enhancements and continuing growth.

Item	Objective	Rationale	Means of achieving	Date	Remarks
2A	Faster service Brighouse-Leeds	Hope that TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU), as well as enhancing and electrifying the Huddersfield line, will provide capacity allow more trains from Calderdale via the Brighouse line and Huddersfield/Mirfield, allowing journey time improvements for service via Brighouse and development of new services, encouraging more people to use local and regional rail links for a variety of purposes.	Leeds-Huddersfield stopping service to become half-hourly, Calder Valley- Brighouse-Leeds to become fast. (Alternatively additional service could be introduced.)	Staged over 2020-2024	Brighouse-Leeds journey time 20-22 minutes feasible with one or two stops compared with present 35 min. Similar benefits for upper Calderdale stations and Elland.
2B	Brighouse line increased services linking developing links Calderdale-Huddersfield and beyond.		Examples of possible new services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancs/Rochdale-Hebden Bridge-Huddersfield and beyond. • Preston/Halifax-Mirfield-Wakefield-York 		
2C	CVL electrification	2015 Task Force top recommendation. Following TRU/ Huddersfield line electrification, Calder Valley route is logical next stage in programme. Established electrification benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial/marketing attractiveness • Operational/maintenance economy • Energy/sustainability benefits • Less need for diesel operation “under the wires” (e.g. Calder Valley-Airport/Liverpool, Blackpool-York)... 		After 2022	It has been suggested that there will be no further northern electrification beyond current schemes before end of CP6 (2019-24) in which case planning should ensure CVL is top CP7 scheme.

Developing the Calder Valley Line (CVL): – *Sowerby Bridge, the Brighouse corridor and Calderdale-Bradford stations*

1 Background – evidence of need for better service

1.1 Table 1 is based on the annual Office of Road and Rail station usage (“footfall”) estimates as at most recent update (December 2015). The growth calculations have been done by HADRAG. All CVL stations Bradford and westwards are included and listed in order of calculated growth in footfall 2007/8 to 2014/15:

Table 1											
CVL station entries and exits by year (April-March) (ORR footfall figures updated December 2015)						Growth (HADRAG's calculation)					
						06/7 to 11 /12	06 /7 to 14/15	Mean/year 06/7 to 14/15	11 /12 to 12 /13	12 /13 to 13 /14	13 /14 to 14 /15
						2006/7	2011 /12	2012 /13	2013 /14	2014 /15	
						%	%	%	%	%	%
Brighouse	87,073	267,020	349,036	371,666	384,922	207	342	20.4	30.7	6.5	3.6
Sow'by B ^g	178,409	322,070	348,092	351,652	383,844	81	115	10.1	8.1	1.0	9.2
Bradfd Int	1,514,705	2,876,716	3,004,718	2,990,294	2,922,956	90	93	8.6	4.4	-0.5	-2.3
Hebden B ^g	400,885	761,778	735,560	739,112	764,354	90	91	8.4	-3.4	0.5	3.4
Halifax	1,049,085	1,858,914	1,911,150	1,912,798	1,935,764	77	85	8.0	2.8	0.1	1.2
Littleboro	210,712	384,834	376,934	368,598	380,786	83	81	7.7	-2.1	-2.2	3.3
Mills Hill	180,271	341,382	326,962	302,726	313,536	89	74	7.2	-4.2	-7.4	3.6
Castleton	87,758	153,010	150,108	143,506	148,596	74	69	6.8	-1.9	-4.4	3.5
Rochdale	651,679	1,107,430	1,118,236	1,059,282	1,098,630	70	69	6.7	1.0	-5.3	3.7
Todmdn	338,405	568,870	541,770	548,152	563,920	68	67	6.6	-4.8	1.2	2.9
BurnleyMR	167,159	232,404	247,488	244,548	273,000	39	63	6.3	6.5	-1.2	11.6
Mytholmd	105,910	158,544	158,436	156,704	171,704	50	62	6.2	-0.1	-1.1	9.6
Moston	51,573	139,626	134,966	125,902	82,486	171	60	6.0	-3.3	-6.7	-34.5
Smithy B ^g	93,868	163,064	167,054	146,980	144,206	74	54	5.5	2.4	-12.0	-1.9
Walsden	120,071	92,686	101,616	94,332	93,942	-23	-22	-3.0	9.6	-7.2	-0.4
Total	5,237,563	9,428,348	9,672,126	9,556,252	9,662,646	80	84	8.0	2.6	-1.2	1.1
(GK/JSW)	NOTES	Brighouse	new Leeds - Man Vic service from Dec 08								
		Burnley	Holme Tunnel closed for 20 wks until March 14								
		Moston	reduced service from May 14								
		Walsden	reduced service from Dec 08								

1.2 Note firstly that the annual footfall for both Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse (and also Littleborough) is now more than half that of Hebden Bridge. The rate of growth in footfall at both Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse

is remarkable and seems to be continuing. Footfall more than doubled at Sowerby Bridge between 2006/7 and 2014/15 (115% increase) and more than quadrupled at Brighouse (+342%). These figures correspond to mean annual passenger growth rates of roundly 10% for Sowerby Bridge station and 20% for Brighouse. Whilst it is accepted that the ORR figures are estimates and are affected by changes in methodology, it is felt that that apparent increases in usage at both Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse must be highly significant.

1.3 Observational evidence supports this. The recently extended car park at Sowerby Bridge station is now frequently almost full by 07.30 on weekday mornings. The car park at Brighouse station is used to capacity and problems arise when people arriving by car for the train are unable to park in the marked spaces.

1.4 Future aspiration for development around these two stations supports the need for a better train service. Local traffic surveys show movement along the Sowerby-Brighouse corridor. The Calder Valley Line via Halifax and Bradford will benefit massively under the new franchise awarded to Arriva Rail North from April 2016. Rochdale, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Halifax have a clear promise of services to new destinations starting with the December 2017 timetable. By the end of 2019 they will have increased service frequency and Northern Connect express-style services to York, Blackpool, Liverpool, Chester and Manchester Airport operated by brand new trains with greatly enhanced quality. This is extremely welcome. It seems, however, that the benefits for the towns of Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse (as well as village stations such as Mytholmroyd) may be more limited.

1.5 **At Sowerby Bridge** considerable frustration is expressed by users of the station that for much of the day as many as half of the trains that pass through Sowerby Bridge do so without stopping. Sowerby Bridge station is convenient for parts of south-west Halifax as well as for the town of Sowerby Bridge itself and the Ryburn Valley. The success of the extended station car park has been mentioned. A proposed Ryburn Valley greenway will in future feed cycling commuters into Sowerby Bridge station, which will also be the nearest railhead to the Copley Valley housing and business development zone which is itself close to the large Lloyds Banking Group site. We very much hope that Arriva is planning to stop more trains at Sowerby Bridge; we know that the station is to be branded a “Northern Connect” station with staffing from 0600 to 2200 – so this gives us hope. However, it is not yet clear (time of writing, Feb’16) how many of the Northern Connect trains are to serve the station. Nor is it clear whether the additional Sunday services on the Manchester-Bradford route will serve Sowerby Bridge.

1.6 **Brighouse** is a medium size town close to the midpoint of the M62 corridor and there are local aspirations to increase the town’s profile as a destination for both business and leisure. Growth in commuting from Brighouse has been observed on the ground and is remarkable given the limitations of the current service. The station is well placed to serve more than two council wards directly (Rastrick, Brighouse and at least parts of Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward) and potentially attracts rail patronage from a considerably larger area. On this basis Brighouse station already serves a larger population than Hebden Bridge – potentially much larger. Under the new train franchise there will be Northern Connect express-style services for Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Todmorden and possibly Sowerby Bridge; these services will have brand new trains by 2019. However, (again, at time of writing) it is unclear what improvement in service quality there will be for Brighouse beyond an increase in Sunday services from 2-hourly to hourly and some additional early morning trains.

It is at best unclear whether the Monday-Saturday daytime **Manchester-Rochdale-Brighouse-Leeds service** which spans the length of Calderdale district is not to have its hours of operation significantly extended to later evenings. Apparently there is no proposal to run this service on Sundays; this is particularly disappointing. A Sunday service on this route would open up significant new possibilities for leisure travel.

From information received so far about the new franchise, it appears that, by 2019, Hebden Bridge will have 4 or 5 trains/hour to Leeds Monday-Saturday daytime, and most of these will be Northern Connect services via Bradford formed of brand-new rolling stock. Brighouse, by contrast, will continue to have one direct service via Dewsbury and one very indirect via Bradford and it seems possible that both of these could still be all-stations (or almost all) “stoppers”. The service via Dewsbury seems likely to be the train that will run through to Southport formed of improved but not new rolling stock. We welcome the recent news that Class 170 units cascaded from Scotland are likely to be used by 2019. But Brighouse, we understand, will not be designated a Northern Connect station, receiving (along with Mytholmroyd) “partial staffing”.

The above seems a very poor deal for Brighouse compared with comparable towns and given its documented growth in station usage.

1.7 We believe there are actions that could be taken to give both Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse a better deal in the first few years of the new franchise. It may be easier to do more, sooner, for Sowerby Bridge than for Brighouse, the latter having development limited by capacity constraints along the Huddersfield-Mirfield-Dewsbury lines. We outline some ideas – reasonable demands, we hope – in the following sections.

2 Sowerby Bridge – reasonable demands, feasible action to improve service 2017-19

2.1 There are two clear possibilities for improving the service at Sowerby Bridge in the short term.

- (a) **All of the York-Blackpool express/semi-fast services (hourly) should call at Sowerby Bridge by December 2017.** This service is to become a “Northern Connect” route.

Previously, a year or more before the May 2014 timetable recast, it had been hinted (half-promised) that this might be done. In the event it did not happen although, in 2014, the number of these trains serving Sowerby Bridge at peak hours was increased slightly. Those York-Blackpool trains that do not call at Sowerby Bridge nevertheless have extra time in schedules between Halifax and Hebden Bridge which is shown in the working timetable as “performance allowance”. Performance risk was understood to be the reason for all of the trains not serving Sowerby Bg. But since the trains that do currently call there are peak hour services, when performance is most affected by volume of passengers, this does not seem entirely logical. The overall timing York-Blackpool and *vice versa* does not seem to be affected by whether the train stops at Sowerby Bridge or not. Anecdotally it is quite usual for Blackpool-York trains, provided they have left Lancashire on time, to arrive in Halifax 1 or 2 min. early. The conclusion is therefore that, perhaps with a little more tweaking of the timetable all of these trains could call at Sowerby Bridge between Hebden Bridge and Halifax. On Sundays all York-Blackpool trains already serve Sowerby Bridge.

The first significant timetable change date in the new franchise is expected to be December 2017. This seems likely to be a major recast across the North. In the light of the above considerations it would therefore be reasonable to ask that all York-Blackpool trains call at Sowerby Bridge from that date. (We should, of course, be delighted if this could be done sooner.)

- (b) **There is a franchise commitment (subject only, we understand, to on-time completion of enhancement work by Network Rail) for an additional fast/semi-fast train between Manchester and Bradford in 2019.** (It is not clear time of writing whether the intention is for this additional service to run beyond Bradford to Leeds.)

It seems perfectly reasonable to ask that this additional service should also call at Sowerby Bridge at the December 2019 timetable change.

The Airport service should, we believe, also call at Low Moor, in which case it should run through beyond Bradford to/from Leeds.

2.2 The proposals outlined in 2.1 above would have the effect of doubling the daytime weekday inter-peak service at Sowerby Bridge station and also at Low Moor. Sowerby Bridge would have 3 or 4 trains/hr to Leeds, 3/hour to Bradford and Manchester; this would still be less than the service enjoyed by Hebden Bridge and Todmorden.

2.3 **Sundays.** The stopping pattern for the second hourly Sunday service on the Manchester-Bradford route is not yet known. Clearly we hope these additional trains will serve Sowerby Bridge.

2.4 In the longer term there should be an ambition to increase service frequency along the upper Calderdale-Sowerby Bridge-Brighouse corridor and beyond towards Huddersfield/Wakefield/Leeds. There is clear demand for travel from upper Calderdale to Huddersfield. Suggestions include a circular Manchester-

Calder Valley-Huddersfield-Stalybridge-Manchester service or an additional service over the route from Preston and east Lancashire to Huddersfield and beyond. See also section 3.2 below.

3 Calderdale-Bradford route – Mytholmroyd, Halifax, Low Moor

3.1 **Mytholmroyd:** It is appropriate to add at this point that HADRAG is also committed to arguing for an improved service at Mytholmroyd station. The station is to get a greatly improved car park in the next two years. Whilst we accept that the village station may not justify a large number of Northern Connect services because this conflicts with the objective of faster overall journey times. Possible improvements that might be considered include:

- a modest increase in the number of York-Blackpool trains calling, perhaps two daily in each direction allowing for day return journeys to Lancashire and York. At present a single Mon-Sat early morning York-Blackpool calls at Mytholmroyd, but nothing in the opposite direction.
- There is an argument that stations such as Mytholmroyd should be served by the Manchester Airport service, maximising the benefits to communities of the new cross-city connectivity.
- For a time Mytholmroyd enjoyed 2 trains/hr to Halifax and Bradford. HADRAG detects a strong local feeling that this ought to be restored, at least for part of the day.

3.2 **Low Moor station**, between Halifax and Bradford, should open by early 2017, but with initial service limited to hourly trains on the Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield route (plus 4/day Grand Central service to/from London). Clearly it is highly desirable for Low Moor to have two regional trains per hour and it would appear more useful for the second hourly train to be a Manchester service (rather than a York-Blackpool).

- Low Moor is potentially a highly attractive park & ride railhead serving a large area of south Bradford for inward and outward commuting, business and other uses.
- This attractiveness would be enhanced if the station were to be served by the planned Manchester Airport service from 2019.

3.3 **Halifax.** This is the main station at the centre of HADRAG's zone of interest! The release of information at the franchise announcement stated on an interactive map that "Halifax will get an extra train every hour to and from Bradford **and** Leeds". This implies an increase in Halifax-Leeds service frequency from 4 to 5 trains/hr, presumably by 2019 and also that the Manchester Airport to Bradford service (so described) will run through to Leeds. It will be a disappointment if this does not happen. The Train Service Requirement (issued February 2016) shows a minimum of 4 trains/hr Halifax-Leeds which is the present service level.*

4 The Brighouse Line short and medium term aims for service improvement

4.1 Obstacles to Brighouse service improvement – what can be done, short term?

4.1.1 Given the growth in usage over recent years (para 1.1-1.3) and the potential of the station for a variety of purposes ranging from commuter railhead to leisure destination (1.6), the offer for Brighouse from the first four years of the new franchise might not unfairly be seen as derisory.

4.1.2 ***But it is important to make clear that this is not the fault of Arriva, the new franchisee.*** The Invitation to Tender for the franchise specifically prohibited bidders from proposing increased service frequency over the Brighouse-Huddersfield and Brighouse-Mirfield-Leeds routes. This, it must be assumed, is because of the limitations of capacity on the track network in the Huddersfield Mirfield area, where TransPennine Express will

* See line benefits for Bradford-Liverpool/Manchester Airport in <http://maps.dft.gov.uk/northern/index.html>, and TSR in <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-rail-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>.

be running 6 trains/hr from 2017, there already being 5 TPE services plus a Huddersfield Line Northern stopper (which will become TPE) plus the Brighouse Line service itself. We know from frustrating experience that trains from Bradford to Huddersfield are frequently held awaiting their path at Bradley Junction whilst the Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester trains in both directions are often held for pathing purposes in the Mirfield and Heaton Lodge Junction area.

4.1.3 Nonetheless, we look to Arriva to give Brighouse the best deal possible. We suggest two immediate actions that we believe are feasible in the short term:

- (a) Improve journey times on the Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester service:
 - by making the Leeds-Brighouse-Rochdale-Manchester(-Southport) service semi-fast between Todmorden and Manchester Victoria (suggested stops Littleborough, Smithy Bridge, Rochdale)
 - by exploiting the improved performance of Class 170 trains expected to be cascaded to this service in 2018, which have a higher power/mass ratio than “Sprinter” rolling stock on which current timings on this route are based, as well as improved linespeed to be implemented by 2019 on the route.
- (b) Do more to improve the Sunday service and late evening service at Brighouse. The obvious solution would be for the Manchester-Rochdale-Brighouse-Leeds service to operate 7 days/week and also later in the evenings Monday-Saturday. This would be over and above the (minimum) Train Service Requirement (TSR) but we hope it might be considered.

4.1.4 A possible service stopping pattern to deliver the above objectives is explained in section 5.2 below.

4.2 Medium term aims using additional Huddersfield Line capacity

4.2.1 It is clear that there is potential to develop improved and more frequent services over the Brighouse Line to meet latent demand not just at Brighouse itself but also for travel through the area. We believe two or three aims should be pursued:

- (a) The possibility of **a fast service from Halifax or upper Calderdale to Leeds via Brighouse**. The non-stop running time for a Brighouse-Leeds trains is about 17 minutes. This means that a train running fast Brighouse-Leeds with one or two stops could have a booked journey time of perhaps 20-22min including the usual allowances. This compares with a current journey time of 33-35 minutes. Sowerby Bridge to Leeds by a fast train over this route could be 32 minutes (currently 44 min) and there would be similar time saving for stations in the upper valley of between 10 and 15 minutes in journey time to Leeds. As an initial development following the Huddersfield line upgrade (see below) it is hoped that:
 - The Leeds-Huddersfield stopping service could become half-hourly, ...
 - ...which would allow Manchester-Brighouse-Leeds trains to become limited stop (Mirfield and/or Dewsbury) between Brighouse and Leeds giving a Brighouse-Leeds journey time of no more than 22 minutes.
- (b) There is demand for **better links to Huddersfield from upper Calderdale and the adjoining area west of the Pennines**. Suggestions include:
 - A circular service Manchester-Rochdale-Calder Valley-Brighouse-Huddersfield-Stalybridge-Manchester.
 - An additional service from Preston via Burnley serving all stations Hebden Bridge to Brighouse and running to Huddersfield or beyond. “Beyond” could mean Huddersfield, Sheffield, or York via Wakefield and Castleford (which includes the possibility of a service reversing at Huddersfield).
- (c) An obvious more local development would be to increase service frequency over the Bradford-Halifax-Brighouse route, going beyond Brighouse to Huddersfield, Wakefield/York, or Leeds. An interim proposal is suggested below in para 4.2.4.

- (d) Implied in (b) and (c) above is the obvious possibility of a direct service from upper Calderdale/Halifax/Huddersfield to York via Wakefield and Castleford giving new connectivity towards the East Coast and North East avoid the need to go via Leeds. It would also give a direct service from Wakefield to York.

4.2.2 Clearly the above require sufficient capacity on the lines into Huddersfield and through Mirfield towards Dewsbury and Leeds. We are aware of the following planned works by Network Rail referred to in the January 2016 Enhancements Delivery Plan (EDP) update[†]:

- Huddersfield-Bradford signalling renewal. Our understanding is that this will introduce modern signalling between Hebden Bridge and Bradford and in conjunction with Network Rail Calder Valley Line West and East enhancements (including Mill Lane Junction at Bradford) will facilitate more CVL trains.
- Capacity enhancements at Huddersfield station.
- TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU). The major element of this is what we prefer to call Huddersfield Line (Guide Bridge-Leeds-York) electrification and is one of the major schemes that was “paused” in summer 2015. The scheme is now nominally “unpaused” but in an extended planning stage which should see work start on the ground by the end of 2018 for completion four years later. The expectation is that this scheme will now deliver additional capacity, for example by reduced headways made possible by the latest signalling, as well as electrification.

4.2.3 HADRAG very much hopes that the projects referred to in 3.2.2 will deliver additional capacity that could benefit the Brighouse corridor. We agree that it is not our place to suggest specific solutions. It is reasonable, however, to make the observation that the TransPennine route between Huddersfield and Thornhill LNW Junction (Mirfield/Dewsbury) was once a 4-track railway but is now mainly 2-track with an Up (westbound) loop at Mirfield. Local services are delayed when they have to wait for fast trains to pass. Trains from Bradford and Halifax through Brighouse to Huddersfield usually have to stand at Bradley Junction whilst trains run in front between Huddersfield and Dewsbury; similarly trains from the CVL thorough Brighouse towards Leeds are held at Heaton Lodge West Junction whilst faster TransPennine Express (TPE) services coming off the Huddersfield Line go in front. If TPE is running late (not an infrequent occurrence) this damages the local service. Additional tracks would allow for parallel movements, improving the timetable for existing services and allowing additional trains. It would be easy to suggest that this whole section of line (Huddersfield-Mirfield) should be reinstated to 4-track (which would be not so much an enhancement as a restoration of infrastructure previously destroyed). Short of this there are obvious suggestions such as an additional line between Bradley Junction and Huddersfield and/or an additional line between Heaton Lodge West Jn through Mirfield, either/both of which would allow parallel moves benefiting Brighouse line services. We realise that for any such restoration or enhancement to happen there must a clear case quantitatively expressed in terms of costs and benefits. Notwithstanding the foregoing discussion, as stated it is not for us to advocate specific solutions. Qualitatively, however, and in common-sense terms, it would appear ludicrously short-sighted if the TRU including erection of overhead line electrification (OLE) equipment, which would have to be modified to accommodate additional tracks in the future, were to proceed without the inclusion (or at least allowance for) infrastructure capacity improvements the need for which is foreseeable.

- ***What we hope, specifically, is that the TransPennine Route Upgrade (when completed by 2022) together with the other schemes will deliver benefits allowing more services over the routes through Brighouse towards both Huddersfield and Leeds/Wakefield.***

4.2.4 **Possible Brighouse-Halifax shuttle service – a seed of further development?** There is believed to be another possibility for an enhanced service at Brighouse (and Elland) as an interim measure which would

[†] See Network Rail Hendy Review Enhancements Delivery Plan Update, January 2016
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/Enhancements-Delivery-Plan-Update.pdf>

not require any immediate additional track capacity. It would be possible with one extra train unit to run an hourly shuttle service between Halifax and Brighouse, spaced in the timetable to operate between the existing Leeds-Bradford-Huddersfield trains to give an approximately half-hourly frequency between Brighouse and Halifax, giving more connections for Brighouse with frequent trains on the Bradford-Manchester route as well as the York-Blackpool service. It is thought that the train could lay over between workings on the Bradley Curve (beyond Brighouse) without interfering with the existing service that uses that route. There would be a short layover only at Halifax, between other CVL services. This limited development could be further developed in the future as additional train units and infrastructure capacity become available; for example it might be extended from Brighouse to Huddersfield and beyond or to Mirfield and beyond (perhaps to York or to Leeds via Dewsbury).

4.3 Elland station

4.3.1 The development of a station to serve the greater Elland area, comprising roundly two local council wards and a catchment area population of at least 20 000 has been under discussion for many years; it was part of the original Brighouse line reopening scheme before 2000 but dropped from the plans to reduce capital cost. It is expected that a new station would be well situated on the strategic A629-corridor road network and could therefore serve as a park and ride railhead for a wider area south-east of Halifax.

4.3.2 At time of writing we welcome the latest stage of feasibility work on technical, operational and economic considerations by WYCA between February and August 2016. We hope this will lead to a firm project which will allow the site for the station to be confirmed and detailed plans to be drawn up. There would be great disappointment locally if opening of the station were to be delayed beyond the next four years.

4.3.3 It is (we hope) clear that the December 2017 and December 2019 timetables must contain allowance for all trains that currently stop at Brighouse also to serve Elland.

4.3.4 Elland should, indeed, also benefit from any future additional services at Brighouse. There is a synergy of capacity to run more services through from Halifax and upper Calderdale via Brighouse attract greater use of Elland station, complemented by the new station strengthening the case for more trains.

4.4 Mirfield

The developments suggested above also potentially provide additional and higher quality services at Mirfield station.

5 Concluding arguments towards a 2019 service pattern – and beyond

5.1 2017 timetable

However realised, we believe the following objectives for the upper Calder Valley stations and the Brighouse line should be implemented **by the December 2017 timetable change**:

- **All York-Blackpool services should call at Sowerby Bridge**
- **Brighouse should have a faster service to Manchester via the CVL.**
- **Rochdale-Todmorden local stations should have an hourly all-day service via Bradford and Halifax restored.**

5.2 2019 timetable

5.2.1 The following is a rationale for a possible 2019 service pattern, based on the published (Spring 2016) TSR but with increased frequency at certain stations, principally Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse and Low Moor.

- As explained, we believe the York-Blackpool trains should call at Sowerby Bridge all-day.
- The increased service frequency from December 2019 should be an opportunity to further increase service frequency at Sowerby Bridge and also at Low Moor. These two stations (and possibly all Calderdale stations) should be served by the Manchester Airport trains.
- A limited-stop train Brighouse-Mirfield-Leeds service would be very attractive as it could cut 10-15 minutes off Calderdale-Leeds journey times. **But we accept this is not feasible in the short term** because of capacity and the need to run a mix of fast and stopping trains over the Mirfield-Leeds route (the fast trains also serving Huddersfield).
 - ➔ In the short term therefore journey time improvement for Brighouse should focus on Brighouse-CVL-Manchester.
- With semi-fast running Todmorden-Manchester (instead of all-stations) and linespeed as well as capacity improvements, Brighouse-Manchester journey time could be reduced by about ten minutes i.e. roundly from 1 hour to 50 min. **And:**
- There is a desire in Rochdale district for an all-stations service from intermediate stations to Bradford. Daytime inter-peak Mon-Sat services from Smithy Bridge, Littleborough and Walsden ceased at the May 2014 timetable change when the hourly train to Leeds from these stations became the service via Brighouse. This caused considerable annoyance for people wanting to travel between these stations and Halifax, Bradford etc.
- From 2017 when we understand there will be additional trains Manchester-Rochdale, the Brighouse line service could run fast Manchester-Rochdale.
- From 2019 the plan is to have 4 trains/hr from Manchester towards Hebden Bridge and beyond (with a 5th to Blackburn via Tod Curve and a sixth turning back at Rochdale). If two of the four are to be “fasts”, the third could be a semi-fast via Brighouse (but serving all stations Todmorden-Brighouse) and the fourth could serve all stations from Rochdale to Bradford and Leeds. This last could be the Liverpool or the Man Airport service as there is a clear desirability for the Chester train to be a fast; if it were to be the Manchester Airport service this would deliver North-South Manchester connectivity to the maximum number of CVL stations.
 - ➔ possible hourly pattern on CVL at end of 2019 is summarised in Table 2 (next page).

5.2.2 The advantages of the pattern in Table 2 are:

- Principal stations Rochdale and upper Calderdale would have two fast/semi-fast trains an hour to Halifax and Bradford, with the Blackpool-York service continuing to provide a further semi-fast service each hour Hebden Bridge-Halifax-Leeds

- All stations intermediate between Rochdale and upper Calderdale would have an hourly service to Halifax and Bradford.
- If the 2019 additional Manchester-Bradford service continues to Leeds the above total to give 5 trains/hour Hebden Bridge-Leeds (of which 4/hour via HFX). If this service terminates at Bradford this would give 4/hour Hebden Bridge-Leeds. The lower frequency is specified in the 2019 Train Service Requirement (TSR)[‡]; however as explained in 3.3 there is an apparent promise to increase Halifax-Leeds frequency from 4 to 5 trains/hr. It is hoped that the Airport service might serve most CVL stations and continue beyond Bradford to Leeds.
- Brighouse-Manchester journey time would be improved by about 10 minutes.
- With Manchester Airport services running both to Burnley/Blackburn and to Bradford/Leeds, almost all CVL stations would be served by direct link with south Manchester. This would maximise the benefits of the new connection.

Table 2: Manchester-Bradford/Brighouse pattern – a suggestion (Dec 2019)

Service type	From	Stopping pattern	To
NC	Chester	MCV, RCD, (LTL?) TOD, HBD, HFX, BDI Manchester-Bradford journey 52 min.	Leeds
NC	Blackpool	Fast/semifast from Preston HBD, <u>SOW</u> , HFX, BDI	NC
NC	Man Airport	Fast to RCD then all stations to BDI (<i>maximises cross-Manchester connectivity and restores daytime service SMB/LTL/WDN-Bradford</i>)	Leeds
Local	MCV	Moston, Mills Hill, Castleton	Rochdale “turnback”; see assumption (c) below
NC	Liverpool LS	MCV, RCD, TOD, HBD, (MYT?.) SOW, HFX, BDI Manchester-Bradford journey 54-56 min.	(Bradford or) Leeds
Local	Huddersfd	BGH, ELN, HFX, LMR, BDI. Could run fast Bradford-Leeds to improve BGH-LDS journey time	Leeds or beyond
Semifast	Southport	Fast MCV-RCD; then all stations RCD-BGH except Walsden. Manchester-Brighouse journey 50 min.	Leeds via Brighouse and Dewsbury
Semifast	Man Airport	All stations MCV-RCD; then TOD and main stops to BBN	Blackburn (Tod Curve Service – assumption (d))

Assumptions:

- Linespeed improvements Manchester-Hebden Bridge-Bradford to give journey time reductions in conjunction with stopping pattern and improved rolling stock (new Class 195 and cascaded Class 170).
- Signalling capacity improvements Hebden Bridge to Milner Royd Junction and Halifax to Bradford under CP5 signalling renewal scheme.
- We have assumed 6 trains/hour Manchester Vic to Rochdale. The (minimum) Train Service Requirement (TSR) for 2019 states 5/hr; however it is reasonable to assume that an additional service Manchester-Rochdale local service might operate, using the new bay platform at Rochdale.
- We understand that the Manchester-Blackburn “Tod Curve service” is run from/to Man Airport.

5.2.4 Brighouse late evening and Sunday services (4.1.3 (b)). The increase in the basic Huddersfield-Brighouse-Bradford-Leeds Sunday service from Dec’17 is welcome. But failure to offer a Sunday service on the Manchester-Rochdale-Brighouse-Leeds route is a missed opportunity to exploit demand for leisure travel along the length of the Calder Valley. There is now a wide acceptance that the demand for Sunday travel is almost as great as that during the week, at certain times possibly greater. Whilst we understand TransPennine Express will be operating a similar level of services over the route through Dewsbury on Sundays to that on weekdays, it seems reasonable to suppose that there could be capacity for one train per hour from the Calder Valley to operate to Leeds on Sundays via Brighouse and Dewsbury (perhaps as a semi-fast).

[‡] Updated TSRs were published on the Government website 19 Feb’16
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-rail-2016-rail-franchise-agreement>

5.3 Reasonable demands for 2017-19 summed up:

- All York-Blackpools to serve Sowerby Bridge (from 2017). Any additional services introduced 2017-19 should also call Sowerby Bridge.
- Brighouse-Manchester improved journey time semi-fast (2017) with Class 170 operation (2018) aiming at 50 min BGH-MCV journey time. In addition better pathing in the Mirfield area may enable slight journey time improvement Brighouse-Leeds. Operation of this service on Sundays (at least between Leeds and the upper Calder Valley) and also later evenings should also be considered.
- Planning to open Elland station, possibly end of 2019.
- Manchester Airport-Bradford-Leeds service (from 2019) to call most Calderdale stations including Sowerby Bridge and Low Moor, giving Sowerby Bridge 3 trains/hr to Manchester, Low Moor 2/hr to Leeds. The promise of 5 trains/hr Halifax-Leeds should be delivered.

5.4 Medium term aspirations 2019-24 (detailed in para. 4.2.1)

5.1 Network Rail's TransPennine Route Upgrade must deliver capacity improvements as well as electrification, not only for Leeds-Huddersfield-Manchester fast services but also to enable more trains over the Brighouse corridor in the medium term. Additional Brighouse line trains which we hope could be considered for the second half of the current franchise, include the following (**discussed in para 4.2.1** above):

- fast Calderdale-Leeds services via Dewsbury. As a start, the existing Manchester-Brighouse-Leeds service could become fast Brighouse-Leeds when Leeds-Huddersfield stopping service becomes hourly.
- services linking Huddersfield with upper Calderdale and beyond, or a Calderdale-Wakefield-York service.

5.2 As an interim measure consideration could be given to an additional hourly service operating as a Brighouse-Halifax-shuttle (see 4.2.4) which could later be extended to provide new longer distance services.

6 A note on electrification

Whilst this paper is principally about the need to improve services in the short and medium term at Sowerby Bridge and along the Brighouse corridor, HADRAG is anxious to see early progress towards electrification of the Calder Valley Line realistically by the middle of the next decade.

Electrification increases the relative attractiveness of rail transport in terms of the environment and sustainability. It also yields operational efficiencies for example where existing diesel service operate for distances "under the wires" (as will be the case with a number of CVL service after 2019).

The CVL, defined as the cross-Pennine routes via Bradford and via Brighouse to both Manchester and Preston, was ranked top on economic and business criteria by the Northern Electrification Taskforce among a number of routes recommended for electrification during CP6 (2019-24). It is essential that the business case for this scheme is now developed to ensure it follows on logically from the TransPennine route upgrade/electrification via Huddersfield (which is due to be completed at the end of 2022). The starting point may be Network Rail's Route Study process for the North of England which we believe should now be ongoing.

- The aim should be to start work on the ground on CVL electrification by 2024 at the latest.

JSW, 20.iii.16, 5.ix.16