

Quotes in support of Central Railway

1. Evidence to the Transport Select Committee, 20 November 2002 from Graham Good, Project Manager, MidMan Multimodal Study, Arup,

We did look at the impact (of Central Railway) on our study area (the M6 between Manchester and Birmingham) and we came to the conclusion that it would provide valuable extra rail freight capacity in the corridor and so would be welcome.

2. Resolution adopted by Sheffield City Council, 25 October 2002

"That this Council

- (a) notes the proposals from Central Railway Ltd. to build and operate a lorries-on-trains freight and passenger railway linking Yorkshire, the North of England and the Midlands with Northern France via the Channel Tunnel;
- (b) believes that such a project will provide a significant economic boost to both Sheffield and the wider region, has the potential to provide many jobs and benefit the environment;
- (c) accordingly resolves to support in principle the project and urges the Secretary of State for Transport to support the project when considering the Strategic Rail Authorities report on the project;
- (d) resolves to engage fully in any consultation which follows to ensure that the details of the project fully reflect the needs of Sheffield; and
- (e) resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Sheffield MPs, the Chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority, the Chairman of Central Railway, the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority and Director General, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport expressing this Council's support in principle for the project.

3. The North West Business Leadership Team – Letter to Rt Hon John Spellar MP, Minister for Transport – 24 September 2002

The continuing delays over the upgrading of the West Coast Main Line, its apparent capacity limitations for freight, and the increasingly congested motorway network, all serve to illustrate the importance of the work currently being undertaken by the Strategic Rail Authority in relation to the proposed Central Railway project.

Central Railway proposes to build and operate a lorries-on-trains freight railway linking Liverpool and Manchester to northern France via the Channel Tunnel. It is committed to providing the required freight capacity throughout the entire route, thus offering environmental benefits and a vital link to European markets for a significant section of the UK's productive economy whilst easing pressure on both the road and passenger services.

As members of the North West Business Leadership Team, representing major businesses throughout this region, we see the Central Railway project as precisely the kind of long-term scheme that is needed if this country's future competitiveness is not to be constantly hampered by poor transport links and road transportation is to be effectively managed. We await the outcome of the

SRA's assessment with growing interest and urge the Government to give early consideration to the necessary enabling legislation for this project.

4. Ronnie Porter, President of The Institution of Highways and Transportation – Belfast – 18 September 2002

“I found your presentation most informative and wish you and Central Railway success as you progress this visionary concept of a new rail link.”

5. John Monks, General Secretary – TUC (Letter to Rt Hon John Spellar MP, Minister for Transport) 13 September 2002

I believe that the SRA will be reporting to you shortly on the prospects for the proposals for Central Railway to build a new freight line to link the North West with the channel tunnel. I thought that this would be a good time to remind you that the TUC supports this project.

We share the government's aim that more freight should be carried by rail. It is clear that lack of capacity is constraining both the volume and the efficiency of rail freight business at the moment. Unless the capacity problem is addressed it will be very difficult for the government to meet its targets for increasing rail freight.

Better transport links to the North West would also bring greater prosperity to the region, and this would be a highly desirable outcome. It will certainly present exciting new opportunities for business in the region.

As you know, rail freight had a very hard time indeed after Hatfield. Central Railway are to be praised for maintaining their vision and commitment through this difficult period. It is heartening to know that in this time when it is fashionable to knock the railways, there are still some people with big ideas for the industry.

I hope that the SRA's report will allow you to give Central Railway the signal to proceed. If there is anything that the TUC can do to help to get the project started, please let me know.

6. Local Government Joint Channel Tunnel Initiative – Letter to Rt Hon John Spellar MP, Minister for Transport – 11 September 2002

I understand that you will shortly be receiving the recommendations about the Central Railway project from the Strategic Rail Authority, following the further investigation by their consultants that you asked for.

I therefore felt that it was an apposite time to remind you of the position taken by the Joint Local Government Channel Tunnel Initiative, the body representing local authorities throughout Great Britain. You will recall that our interest in the project began after an examination of the network capacity problems which we recognised were likely to inhibit the growth of the railway, especially for freight. It became apparent that the Central Railway idea offered a major opportunity to solve that growing problem (which has indeed got worse since we identified it some years ago).

It is therefore important that this project is fully and properly tested, and not allowed to go by default. There are certainly a number of concerns being expressed, especially about local impacts, and we support the concept of proceeding by way of the Hybrid Bill as a way of ensuring that these are properly exposed and dealt with. We also recognise the institutional interfaces

that the scheme is involved with and we trust that you will not permit these to loom so large as to prevent the project going forward. We hope that you will feel that the Bill route, involving as it does steps like the full Environmental Statement and the surrounding public consultation, is the proper way to proceed. It is through that process that people will be in a position to judge the overall worth of the project.

Otherwise, our fear is that in a few years time we will all look back on an opportunity missed.

We look forward to your positive decision to back the Hybrid Bill.

7. Extract from “Driving Business Forward in the North West” (The North West Chamber of Commerce Transport Priority Plan 2002)

“The West Coast Mainline (WCML) is in the middle of a major upgrade to achieve faster and more reliable journey times. Completion of this project must now be driven forward with real determination as the delays experienced to date have resulted in unacceptable levels of service. The cost of this upgrade has spiralled to £12 billion – a significant proportion of the total transport budget. In order to achieve transport upgrades and new developments with limited funding, it is critical that cost projections are more accurate and managed effectively. The Government’s reform of the planning process must ensure that unnecessary delays are avoided.

We support the concept of creating additional rail capacity for both passenger and freight traffic on the rail network. There are currently two proposals aiming to deliver quality rail links to the region, securing long term capacity. These are:

- High speed passenger North/South link
- Central Railway’s bid for a freight link from Liverpool to Lille via the Channel Tunnel

Both of these lines could bring benefits for the North West through capacity relief on the WCML.

8. Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce July 2001

Mary Flavelle, policy and communications executive at the chamber, said: "They (LACRC) are putting the cart before the horse. "They say that they want traffic off the roads but they have not put in place any alternatives for businesses."

Chamber president Jean Charmark expressed his disappointment at LACRC's attitude saying: "These councils claim that they want to see cars and lorries taken off the roads but when they are presented with a proposal which may achieve their wish, they oppose it on environmental grounds."

Taken from:

<http://www.thisisbuckinghamshire.co.uk/buckinghamshire/archive/2001/07/20/bucksnews52403RM.html>

9. Railway Development Society, evidence to Transport Select Committee enquiry on Rail Investment June 2000:

We welcome the much improved positive environment for rail investment, as evidenced by ... revived Central Railway proposals for new freight route.

10. South West Transport Network (written) evidence to the Transport Select Committee 15 May 2002.

Connections between the South West and Europe are important. For passengers by rail, enhancement of the line to Waterloo will help, and when St Pancras is the terminus for Eurostar good connection from the Great Western will be desirable. For freight via Channel Tunnel there is much to be said for the Central Railway project, to which we would expect a connection from the Great Western at Colnbrook, where a major freight area is in development, associated with Heathrow. The possibility might also be examined of a connection from the L&SW line where it would cross the Central Railway (adjoining M25) at Byfleet.

11. Lord Tony Berkeley to the Transport Select Committee on 20 March 2002.

I believe a project like Central Railway is going to be necessary in the period 10 to 20 years' time if the growth carries on. It has been developed to a certain level of detail and I believe it should be developed more but I think it is up to the SRA to say whether they want a new freight railway or a new high speed railway or putting more freight on the existing line or a bit of both. That is a job for the SRA but it is something that needs to be looked at and I believe the demand is there from 10 years onward between London and the North West. There will be a need for more capacity than is available on the existing lines even with the improvements planned at the moment.

12. The Freight Transport Association to the Transport Select Committee on 20 March 2002.

Chris Grayling MP: The Central Railway Project: do you believe that it is a viable alternative, particularly from what you are saying about the brewing industry and long haul, from the point of view of the industry?

Graham Miller, Projects Director for Logistics Development - Scottish Courage: Madam Chairman, you probably saw me nodding at the back when the previous witness was present. I do believe it will be a vital freight project. It provides us with the possibility of a dedicated freight route free of interference from variable speed passenger trains. It may well not attract the kind of business that I am in but I can believe that it would be very viable for a lot of freight businesses and would allow a significant increase in capacity, particularly for traffic moving from the north west going to London and hopefully beyond. One would like to have seen the last time the rail freight suggestion for a central railway was put forward that it had garnered a bit more support from those who speak highly of investing in rail freight and perhaps had a little bit more support from those who might have voted for it rather than against it at the time.