



<b>Report to:</b>	Transport Committee
<b>Date:</b>	13 March 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Transport Policy Update</b>
<b>Director:</b>	Simon Warburton, Executive Director Transport
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on a number of key areas of transport policy for consideration.

## 2. Information

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the following transport policy related topics including:
- Strategic Transport Plan, Transport for the North
  - Rail North – rail operational matters
  - Rail infrastructure
  - Network North
  - Major Road Network

## **Strategic Transport Plan for the North**

- 2.2 The first Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for the North was published in 2019 by Transport for the North (TfN). Since that time much has changed and TfN have been working to produce a second STP. This new Plan sets the vision, strategic ambitions and the North's long term strategic transport priorities up to 2050, creating a consistent framework for work with government, local transport bodies and delivery bodies.
- 2.3 The STP sets out the opportunities and challenges facing the North of England's economy, people and communities, and demonstrates how improved transport links can help the North achieve its true potential. TfN undertook a public consultation from May – August 2023, which the Combined Authority inputted to.
- 2.4 The TfN Board agreed on the 14 December 2023 to defer adoption of the STP until this month. This provided TfN time to work with partners to fully consider the implications of the Network North announcement made in October 2023. They have also utilised the deferral to improve the plan to make a stronger case for freight, better articulate environmental benefits beyond decarbonisation and reviewed the narrative on international connectivity following consultation. The revised STP will be presented to the TfN Partnership Board for adoption on 20 March 2024.

## **Rail North - Rail Operational Matters**

- 2.5 Performance continues to be impacted by industry-wide issues including industrial relations: higher than average levels of sickness and training backlogs. On the industrial relations situation, ASLEF members have recently voted overwhelmingly to renew their existing strike mandate, and in addition their members on LNER and Northern have voted for separate, additional, action in relation to specific grievances with those two operators.
- 2.6 Several operators have recently been affected by weather-related incidents causing infrastructure damage, such as floods and landslides (most recently at Baildon, causing the full closure of the Shipley – Guiseley line). We have asked Network Rail for feedback on how they are proposing to cope with such weather-related incidents, both in terms of prevention and of mitigating impacts.
- 2.7 On TransPennine Express (TPE), there is evidence that the temporary reduced timetable introduced in December 2023 is having positive impacts in terms of improved reliability of services – above all, in reducing crew-related cancellations (both on the day and night-before “p-code” cancellations). It is reported that so far TPE services are generally coping with crowding levels, but we await more detailed information, and will continue to monitor the situation as services stabilise and, hopefully, demand increases in response. We are also waiting for details as to how TPE will reinstate the services removed in December 2023, which should happen in full by December 2024, including the prospects for any reinstatements earlier than that.

- 2.8 On Northern, train crew unavailability continues to drive cancellations. It is hoped that an improvement will result from a recent change in the way in which staff who have been on sick leave are recertified as fit to return to work (appointment of a new contractor to do this).
- 2.9 The next national rail timetable change date is Sunday 2 June 2024. Changes in our area will be relatively minor. On Northern, unfortunately, this means that the shorter trains introduced on several routes in December 2023 (including Leeds – Doncaster, where the 3-car trains instead of 4 have caused crowding complaints) will continue to as such. On the positive side, discussion of the details of existing service patterns between West Yorkshire Combined Authority officers and Northern have led to a number of small adjustments to timetables which will be introduced in June, especially on the Calder Valley and Leeds – Skipton – Carlisle routes, such as additional station calls to plug gaps in services, above all in late evenings and on Sundays.
- 2.10 While little information is yet available for the December 2024 timetable change, Rail North Partnership has confirmed that a worrying proposal to replace the TPE trains operating the Leeds – Huddersfield stopping services with older, slower, smaller and less reliable Northern units is, as a result of our representations, not now going ahead. However, alternative proposals may yet emerge and the Combined Authority will work to ensure that services are not adversely affected.
- 2.11 The ongoing TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) has continued to cause scheduled disruption to services as major engineering works progress. We have raised with operators, with Network Rail and with the TRU cross-industry teams the issue that information is not always being provided widely or early enough with regard to temporary service arrangements (be they amended rail or replacement bus services).

### **Rail Infrastructure**

- 2.12 In addition to ongoing TRU work affecting much of the Leeds – Huddersfield section, construction work continues at White Rose station, though an opening date is not yet confirmed. Work has now started at Bradford Forster Square to build its additional platform and make other modifications; this is expected to be complete at the end of this year or beginning of 2025. While this infrastructure will enable the planned increase in Bradford – London LNER services, the operation of such services has not yet been signed off by Department for Transport (DfT) – it is hoped this will happen this spring. At Leeds, the Leeds Area Improvement Programme (LAIP) and Leeds Existing Station Programme (LESP) schemes include work to improve passenger flow within the rail station, plus work to extend platforms. Via Transport for the North, we have recently raised with DfT concerns that the scheme may not make sufficient provision for growth in demand which we expect to see on Huddersfield – Leeds local services after TRU, and their response is awaited. LAIP is also developing a scheme to provide an additional line into platform 17 from the Woodlesford direction, which will greatly reduce conflicts with trains using platform 16, such as TPE services towards Huddersfield.

## **Network North**

- 2.13 The recent Government announcement in February 2024 concerning £4.7bn investment in local transport across the North and Midlands was aimed specifically at communities outside City Regions which receive City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements. Therefore, this has no implications for West Yorkshire at this time.
- 2.14 The publication of the Network North in October 2023 included new proposals to better connect Bradford to Manchester via Huddersfield, a new station for Bradford and electrification / improved services between Leeds and Sheffield / Hull. It also proposed a study looking at improving connectivity between Midlands, Yorkshire and the North-East (MYNE). This is in addition the previously announced proposal to electrify the line between Leeds and Bradford Interchange.
- 2.15 In relation to the MYNE study, discussions with DfT and Network Rail are continuing to make the case for a Leeds “T-station”, i.e. using the land originally planned for a HS2 station for other services, in order to provide the additional capacity Leeds station needs without other, potentially more disruptive, interventions to the existing station. The land for the “T-station” is at present only safeguarded until this summer and the Combined Authority has commissioned technical work to support this. A letter outlining our objections to the proposed release of safeguarded land has been sent to the Prime Minister.
- 2.16 Work is just starting on looking at potential options for a new Bradford station and how this can be integrated into the city and support regeneration within the Bradford Southern Gateway. It is not clear at this time what the governance arrangements and timescales are covering the new link between Bradford and Huddersfield, the Manchester – Marsden new link and infrastructure improvements between Leeds and Sheffield / Hull. The Combined Authority has also made it clear to the DfT that the Calder Valley line electrification should also be included as part of Network North, as a logical next step following the TransPennine route upgrade and Leeds – Bradford electrification. The Combined Authority will continue to make the case for additional funding for the Penistone Line to enable an uplift in frequency.
- 2.17 The transport priorities for West Yorkshire will also be promoted by the Yorkshire and Humber Councils through a publication of the key transport schemes needed across the wider region later in the spring.
- 2.18 Network North also commits funding to a number of other projects locally which include £2.5bn for Mass Transit and £2.1bn to a further City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS2). Across the North £350m is allocated for accessibility improvements to rail stations, £700m for a new wave of Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP), £3.3bn for potholes (resurfacing), £100m for smart ticketing and £460m for road schemes including Shipley Eastern Congestion Relief Road and the A650 Tong Street.

## **Major Road Network**

- 2.19 As reported to Transport Committee in November 2023, the Network North announcement also included announcement of £460 million allocated to ensure delivery of 21 road schemes in the north through the current Major Road Network/Large Local Majors funding programme (MRN/LLM); and £1 billion allocated to a new roads fund. Details of the full Network North announcement are available here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/network-north>
- 2.20 The identification and designation of a Major Road Network by DfT followed consultation in 2017 and is envisaged by DfT to form a middle tier of the country's busiest and most economically important local authority 'A' roads, sitting between the national Strategic Road Network (SRN) and the rest of the local road network. The MRN/LLM programme provides a specific new funding stream has been dedicated to improvements on MRN roads.
- 2.21 The new £1 billion funding is expected to enable delivery of a further pipeline of Major Road Network schemes in the North (MRN2) but further detail and guidance from DfT is still awaited, including timescales for submission, delivery window and scope and objectives of the fund. Transport for the North (TfN) has started discussions with TfN members in order to prepare for the opportunity and propose to work with members to identify priorities for improvements to be made on the Major Road Network.
- 2.22 As part of discussions with DfT on the MRN, TfN intends to propose additional routes for inclusion within the MRN designation and will work with partners to identify any suitable links that should be proposed to DfT. Ahead of any published guidance, the Combined Authority and district partner councils are working together to consider potential opportunities and will work with TfN to try and ensure that West Yorkshire priorities are reflected in the future MRN programme.
- 3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**
- 3.1 Investment in our public transport networks will make a positive contribution towards tackling the climate emergency by encouraging modal shift towards more sustainable travel modes.
- 4. Inclusive Growth Implications**
- 4.1 Providing a more reliable and effective public transport network, better connecting areas with limited access to employment, leisure and health will make a positive contribution to inclusive growth.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 Improving access for all to our public transport network, better connecting areas with limited access to employment, leisure and health will make a positive contribution with regards to equality and diversity.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Committee notes the updates on Transport Policy.

## **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

## **12. Appendices**

None.