

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 11 January 2019

Subject: **Rail: Service performance and timetable changes in 2019**

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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:	

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update members on the latest rail performance position. Performance data is included at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that rail timetable changes take place in May and December each year. The process of finalising plans for the December timetable change will take place in January and February. This report sets out the issues affecting the timetable changes planned for December 2019 and seeks the Committee's endorsement of the position to be taken by the Combined Authority's representatives on the Transport for the North Rail North Committee.
- 1.3 TransPennine Express has consulted the Combined Authority on its plans for December 2019. This report recommends the Committee to endorse the Combined Authority's response to this consultation on timetable.

2. Information

Update on punctuality, reliability and capacity performance

- 2.1 Rail performance figures for the period April to December are set out at Appendix 1. Performance over this period has been significantly worse in 2018 than for comparable periods in 2017. Restoring performance has been a priority since the widely felt impacts of the disruption caused following the May 2018 timetable change.
- 2.2 Northern's PPM (industry performance measure) for Period 9 (11 November – 8 December) this year was 68.5% compared to a poor autumn performance of 82.1% last year, and is the worst period recorded in this reporting year. Northern has suffered badly again with wheel flats¹ this year and investigations are ongoing to establish why this is an increasing problem. Network Rail's infrastructure was responsible for 31% of delays over three minutes and unforeseen circumstances such as trespass were responsible for 21% of the delays. Northern were responsible for 34% of delays over three minutes. Strike action continues to affect Northern services at weekends.
- 2.3 TransPennine Express's PPM for Period 9 this year was 67.7% compared 81.4% in the same period last year. Network Rail's infrastructure was responsible for 36% of delays over three minutes and unforeseen circumstances were responsible for 17% of the delays. TPE were responsible for 24% of their delays over three minutes.
- 2.4 The railway timetables changed on 9 December 2018. Changes to services were minimised with seeking to restore stability and reliability. At the time of writing performance figures were only available for the period up until 20 December however there were signs of improvement with the average PPM for both Northern and TransPennine Express increasing to 80% and 77% respectively. Whilst this improvement may be partly due to the end of the autumn leaf fall period, it would seem that some of the structural issues in the May 18 timetable have been overcome. Further information on performance during December will be reported verbally to the Committee.
- 2.5 It is notable that both Northern and TransPennine Express are due to introduce significant numbers of new trains throughout 2019. Whilst this is clearly welcome, the introduction of new trains also presents further significant performance and resource risks. This is due to the necessary training and staff familiarisation work required, plus the reality that new trains tend to be unreliable until they have 'bedded-in'. TransPennine Express announced delays to the introduction of new 'Nova 3' trains in November 2018 due to technical problems that arose during the testing phase. TransPennine

¹ Fallen leaves cause adhesion problems and can cause 'wheel flats' where the wheels of the train become damaged when they lock in attempt brake on contaminated rail head, or by excessive spinning whilst trying to take power. The resulting wheel damage causes performance issues in that flat wheels find it more difficult to gain traction, as well as the potential of long term damage to the infrastructure.

Express advises that it currently expects these trains to be introduced in spring 2019.

- 2.6 Performance of rail services, and actions being taken to improve performance, will be an early focus of the Train Operators Forum. The first meeting is due to take place on 30 January 2019. The Managing Directors of Northern and TransPennine Express will be invited to update the Combined Authority on plans to restore confidence in rail services at its meeting on 14 February 2019.
- 2.7 The Chair of the Transport Committee has written to the Regional Director of Northern setting out the Combined Authority's immediate priorities in early 2019 seeking improvements to performance and to optimise the deployment of rolling stock to trains where there is a known regular incidence of overcrowding.

Franchise Service Changes Planned For 2019

- 2.8 The December 2019 timetable change was intended to mark the final implementation of the service improvements initially committed under the TransPennine Express and Northern franchises that commenced in April 2016. The following service improvements were originally envisaged to be in place by December 2019;

Line	Service Enhancements expected by December 2019
Harrogate	Increase from 2 to 4 trains per hour Leeds – Harrogate
Airedale	One additional train per day Leeds – Lancaster
Calder Valley	5 trains per hour Leeds – Bradford Int (an increase of 1 per hour) linked onto Leeds – Sheffield – Nottingham to provide a through link 3 trains per hour Bradford – Manchester (an increase of 1 per hour) 4 trains per hour extended beyond Manchester (Wigan/Southport, Liverpool, Chester, Manchester Airport) – an increase from 1 to Southport at present Linking Huddersfield – Halifax – Bradford – Leeds – Selby service to Hull / Bridlington
Huddersfield	Additional peak trains at Slaithwaite and Marsden.
Huddersfield – Wakefield/ Castleford/ Pontefract	Huddersfield – Wakefield Kirkgate service extended to Castleford

Line	Service Enhancements expected by December 2019
York & Selby	Additional peak services at Cross Gates, Garforth, East Garforth & Micklefield;
All lines	<p>Sundays: an increase to 1tph from 0.5tph on the Leeds – Wakefield W – Sheffield / Doncaster lines. Additional services on other lines.</p> <p>First and last trains: earlier/ later trains on some routes</p>

- 2.9 Delays to the electrification of the railway between Preston and Manchester via Bolton (the Bolton corridor) have delayed the cascade of diesel trains. This project is expected to be complete by January 2019, with the full introduction of electric trains by May 2019 together with the availability of cascaded diesel stock. Delays to new and cascaded rolling stock for both franchises are already giving capacity issues especially on the TransPennine route. The availability of rolling stock will therefore be a factor for service enhancements in December.
- 2.10 As well as delays to the Bolton corridor electrification scheme, a number of other projects on the rail network have either been withdrawn from programme or delayed against original plans. This includes the withdrawal / deferral of various electrification and capacity schemes in the North West, which have been a major factor in the reliability problems experienced since the May 2018 timetable. These issues have been especially acute in and around Manchester and will limit the capacity to extend Calder Valley services beyond Manchester.
- 2.11 The Leeds station capacity enhancement is intended to support the operation of longer trains and additional services on a number of routes. It is due to deliver a new Platform 0 capable of accommodating 8-car trains, alterations to Platforms 1 to 6 including extension of Platform 6 and associated track work changes. This project was anticipated to be completed by December 2019 however it is now understood that additional capacity will not be fully available until December 2021.
- 2.12 The impact of pinch points on network capacity is clearly evident, including in the central Manchester area, in and around Leeds station and the line between Leeds and York. The ability of the network to reliably accommodate additional train services is therefore a major factor in planning the December 2019 timetable.
- 2.13 Expanding railway operations have also presented problems for the rail industry, particularly in terms of driver and rolling stock resource allocation. This was evident in the sharp decline performance following the May 2018 timetable and continue to persist. It is crucial that the rail industry sets a timetable in December which it can deliver reliably.

- 2.14 There is a shared priority to recover the performance of the railway, both in terms of the daily reliability of services and in ensuring that capacity, particularly at peak times. In this context, it is increasingly clear that additional service commitments due in 2019 will be very difficult to realise at the same time as improving the day-to-day dependability of the railway, particularly where this means running additional trains. It is anticipated that this is likely to delay the introduction of planned service enhancements in favour of actions which will stabilise performance.
- 2.15 Whilst this pragmatic approach is needed in the current circumstances, it is important that the promised service enhancements are delivered at a time when train resources and infrastructure works permit. Some franchise service commitments are not subject to the constraints and issues summarised in this report especially those at times when the network is less congested (for example earlier and later first and last trains, and improved Sunday services). In such cases, it is important for the Combined Authority to push for their delivery as originally planned.
- 2.16 TransPennine Express has consulted on service changes for December 2019. To meet the company's timescales, Combined Authority officers submitted the response included at Appendix 2 in consultation with the Chair pending endorsement by the Committee. This emphasises the need to deliver day-to-day reliability and capacity as an absolute priority.
- 2.17 The Northern and TransPennine Express franchises are co-managed by the Department for Transport and Transport for the North via the Rail North Partnership. The Rail North Committee is the forum through which members participate in this co-management. West Yorkshire and York is represented on the Rail North Committee by Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council. At its meetings in early 2019, the Rail North Committee is expected to be presented with the rail industry's plans for timetable changes in 2019 for comment.
- 2.18 In order to clarify the West Yorkshire position in this discussion, the Committee is recommended to endorse an approach to the planning of the December 2019 timetable which seeks to ensure day to day delivery of a reliable service providing capacity where it is most needed. Where specified service enhancements, which the industry has previously committed to, are to be delayed, there must be a clear rail industry plan to provide them. Any proposal that the franchise specifications are relaxed in this regard should be resisted by the Rail North Partnership. Discussions will continue on plans for December 2019 which will be reported to members of the Committee as the picture emerges.

3. Financial Implications

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

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6. External Consultees

6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Committee notes that the performance of the railway in West Yorkshire up to and including the end of Period 9 (8 December 2018) continues to be unsatisfactory and endorses the approach taken with the rail industry to address passenger concerns.

7.2 That the Committee recommends that, in planning the December 2019 rail timetable, the Transport for the North Rail North Committee seeks to ensure the day to day delivery of a reliable service providing capacity where it is most needed.

7.3 If specified service enhancements, to which the industry has previously committed, are to be delayed beyond December 2019, the Transport for the North Rail North Committee is encouraged to seek a clear rail industry plan and timescale to provide them.

7.4 That the Committee endorses the Combined Authority's response to the TransPennine Express December 2019 timetable consultation, as attached as Appendix 2.

8. Background Documents

None.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Rail operator performance

Appendix 2 Response to TransPennine Express December 2019 timetable consultation