
Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 14 February 2019

Subject: **Rail Update**

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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 the Combined Authority on the performance of the local rail service and on the industry reviews seeking to address the structural issues in the industry which are affecting passengers on a daily basis.
- 1.2 The Managing Directors of Northern and TransPennine Express together with the Regional Director of Network Rail have been invited to the meeting to explain their plans to restore confidence in the City Region's rail service.

2. Information

Punctuality, reliability and capacity performance

- 2.1 Punctuality and reliability over the Autumn period has been significantly worse in 2018 than for comparable periods in 2017. The ongoing effects of the May 2018 timetable were the major factor affecting performance together with the seasonal difficulties that the autumn leaf fall period brings on some lines within the region.

- 2.2 The railway timetables changed on 9 December 2018; many of these changes sought to address some of the structural problems arising from the May 18 timetable. Performance has improved on some lines suggesting that this objective has, in part, been successful. However passengers are experiencing poorer punctuality and reliability than they experienced in the same period in the preceding year which would suggest there remain issues to address.
- 2.3 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 potential performance and resource risks. This is due to the necessary training and staff familiarisation work required and the new trains will need to be 'bedded-in'.
- 2.4 The poor performance of rail services was discussed at the Transport Committee on 11 January who resolved to invite the Secretary of State for Transport to a future meeting to explain how the government intended to restore passenger confidence in the railway.

Transport Focus Rail Passenger Survey Autumn 2018

- 2.5 Transport Focus is the independent transport user watchdog. In Spring and Summer each year it undertakes the National Rail Passenger Survey (NPRS). The results for Autumn 2018 were published on 29 January 2019 and show a sharp decline in passenger satisfaction;
- Overall satisfaction with journeys on Northern was 72%, down 11% on the previous year's results. Commuter satisfaction was lower still at 56%
 - Overall satisfaction with journeys on TransPennine Express was 73%, down 12% on the previous year's results. Commuter satisfaction was 58%
 - Passengers expressed their greatest dissatisfaction with how the TOCs dealt with delays. Only 20% of Northern and 22% of TransPennine commuters were satisfied with this aspect of the service

West Yorkshire Combined Authority Train Operator's Forum

- 2.6 Current performance and actions being taken to improve passenger confidence, were an early focus of the inaugural meeting of the Train Operators Forum on 30 January 2019. The meeting set out to discuss the key issues and priorities in coming year ahead. Northern, TransPennine Express, Network Rail and Transport Focus attended and explained their plans for 2019. These include;
- Northern's current focus is on restoring performance on the Calder Valley line and ensuring available capacity is provided where needed
 - Both TOCs outlined plans to introduce new trains and offered assurances that the necessary workforce training would be in place
 - The importance of planning and communication of the disruption which may arise around new infrastructure projects was discussed

- 2.7 Cllr Groves and Firth stressed the need for better communication and engagement with the travelling public as being key to restoring passenger confidence.
- 2.8 The next meeting of the Forum is planned for April 2019

Franchise Service Changes Planned For 2019

- 2.9 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. It has become apparent that delays in providing the necessary infrastructure will delay these improvements, in some cases indefinitely.
- 2.10 This matter was considered in detail by the Transport Committee in January who resolved that the Transport for the North Rail North Committee is encouraged to seek a clear rail industry plan and timescale to provide the promised service improvements.

Rail North Partnership and Williams Reviews

- 2.11 The Rail North Partnership Review undertaken by Cllr Blake and the Minister for Rail Andrew Johnson was considered by the Transport for the North Board on 7 February 2018 and is expected to be published later this month. The report seeks to strengthen the devolved arrangements for managing the Northern and TransPennine rail franchises and to ensure that customers are placed at the heart of decision making. In particular the review will seek to enable a more meaningful role for Northern political leaders in shaping and directing the North's rail service.
- 2.12 As reported to previously members the Secretary of State has initiated a major review of the UK rail industry, led by Keith Williams. Roger Marsh has been appointed to the expert challenge panel. A call for evidence has now been made, with an overall deadline of 31 May 2019. Initial views are sought during the 'listening' phase of the Review, with a deadline of 18 January 2019. An initial submission from the Combined Authority was submitted in consultation with the Chair of Transport Committee and local authorities and is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.13 The Rail North Partnership Review will also make recommendations into the Williams Review identifying the benefits of devolving key decisions about the region's railways to the North

3. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 3.1 The problems faced by rail passengers outlined in this report will have been damaging to the Combined Authority's Inclusive Growth objectives.

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Legal Implications

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

6. Staffing Implications

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

7. External Consultees

7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 That the Combined Authority expresses its concern that rail passengers continue to experience delays, cancellations and short forming of trains and notes the steps taken by Northern, TransPennine Express and Network Rail to remedy this.

8.2 That the Combined Authority endorses the Combined Authority's initial submission to the Williams review of the UK Rail Industry.

9. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Combined Authority's initial submission to the Williams review of the UK Rail Industry