

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 6 September 2019

Subject: **Rail matters affecting West Yorkshire**

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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 provide an update on several rail matters affecting West Yorkshire, for information.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the final submission of the Combined Authority's response to the HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement consultation.

2. Information

LNER presentation

- 2.1 Representatives from London North Eastern Railway (LNER) will provide Transport Committee with an update. LNER operates inter-city services on the East Coast Mainline (ECML) connecting West Yorkshire with London and intermediate stops along the line. LNER is a private limited company ultimately owned by the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 2.2 LNER currently provides a core half-hourly service on Monday to Saturday between Leeds / Wakefield Westgate, Doncaster and London, with alternating stopping patterns that provide hourly through-services to Grantham,

Peterborough and Stevenage. Stopping patterns and frequencies vary on Sundays.

- 2.3 In addition, LNER operates daily through-services to and from Skipton / Keighley, Bradford Interchange / Shipley, and Harrogate / Horsforth by extending London trains beyond Leeds. A plan of the route with current typical weekday service patterns is included at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 LNER took over the operation of the intercity East Coast services in June 2018, following the early termination of the franchise with Virgin Trains East Coast. It has rolled forward many of the commitments made as part of the Virgin Trains East Coast contract, including those for operating faster and more frequent services. These commitments include:
- Introduction of an entirely new fleet of Azuma trains with better acceleration, increased capacity and better range of passenger facilities, with an overall increase in the number of trains in the operation.
 - Speeding up the average Leeds to London journey time to around 2 hours, around 15 minutes quicker than present.
 - Increasing the core frequency of Leeds to London services from two per hour to two and a half per hour (by adding an additional service every two hours).
 - Extending more London trains beyond Leeds to / from Dewsbury / Huddersfield (once to London in the early morning, once from London in the evening), to / from Bradford Forster Square / Shipley (every two hours), and to / from Horsforth and Harrogate (every two hours).
- 2.5 A comprehensive update on the Virgin Trains East Coast franchise commitments was provided to Transport Committee at its meeting in March 2018 (see **Background Documents**).
- 2.6 LNER operates Wakefield Westgate station. This underlies an ongoing issue that the automatic barriers at this station do not currently read MCards. The other current issue is the ongoing withdrawal of two southbound and two northbound services between Leeds and London Kings Cross since 13 August 2018. This has allowed for new train testing and crew training and has facilitated the smooth introduction of the new Azuma trains. It is understood these services will be reinstated shortly.
- 2.7 LNER will present an update on its proposals for delivering the improvements set out above, with an opportunity for members to ask questions.
- 2.8 Some of the service enhancements listed above rely on work by Network Rail to improve and upgrade the East Coast mainline railway. A programme of work is now underway, which will include major remodelling of tracks around Kings Cross station, major track works near Peterborough (Werrington grade separation), and further upgrades to the power supply. These works will result in periods of disruption to services over the coming 18 months.

- 2.9 Members will be aware that West Yorkshire Combined Authority is a member of the Consortium of East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA), and is represented by Cllr Groves. It its meeting on 11 July 2019, the Consortium confirmed Cllr Aspen (Leader, City of York Council) as its chair, and Cllr Groves as the vice-chair covering the northern England part of the route.
- 2.10 ECMA will be launching a campaign later in the year to make a strong case for future investment in the East Coast Mainline for reliability and future service development, based on an updated evidence base. Communications officers at the Combined Authority are helping to develop the main messages for this campaign. Details will be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

December 2019 timetables

- 2.11 The next planned timetable change takes place on Sunday, 15 December 2019. At the time of writing, full timetables have not been received, but a summary of main changes expected is included at Appendix 2. This excludes information on changes to which trains are operating trains.
- 2.12 It can be seen that some changes that should have been introduced in December 2019 under Northern's Train Service Requirement will not be. These were summarised for Transport Committee at its meeting in January 2019. The main such improvements **not** taking place are:
- New Bradford Interchange – Leeds – Wakefield Westgate – Sheffield – Nottingham fast service.
 - Direct links from Bradford, Halifax and Calder Valley to Manchester Airport and to Liverpool.
 - New additional Bradford to Manchester train via Halifax and the Calder Valley.
 - Additional hourly service on Sundays the Calder Valley line Leeds – Bradford Interchange – Halifax – Manchester Victoria.
 - Additional semi-fast train every 2 hours between Leeds and Harrogate (bringing the total to 4tph across both LNER and Northern).
 - York – Scarborough: second hourly train provided by Northern, alongside existing TPE service (postponed to May 2020).

- 2.13 The main reasons for these services not being introduced are due to their being insufficient capacity at present on the network (especially around Leeds and Manchester) with some infrastructure schemes not having been delivered, and / or due to a shortage of diesel trains. The availability of staff to cover operation of additional services on Sundays is an also an issue, and subject of ongoing discussion between Northern and trade unions. It remains a priority to ensure network capacity constraints to enable these services are addressed.

New trains – TransPennine Express

- 2.14 A comprehensive update on TransPennine Express' (TPE's) new trains was provided at the last Transport Committee (see **Background Documents**). On Saturday, 24 August TPE introduced the first of its new 5-carriage Nova 3 trains

into public service on the Liverpool – Manchester – Huddersfield – Leeds – York – Scarborough route. A second Nova 3 train is expected to enter daily service in September on the same route. TPE reports that initial passenger response to the new trains has been very positive. These trains bring welcome additional capacity, as well as releasing existing 3-carriage trains to re-strengthen peak time services; TPE has confirmed its first priority will be to use existing trains released for strengthening other peak services.

- 2.15 The delayed introduction of Nova 3 trains means it has so far not been possible to restore capacity on key peak-time services on the Manchester – Huddersfield – Leeds core route as planned. To compensate customers for this Transport for the North has agreed to a scheme where £25 travel vouchers are being made available to season ticket holders and walk up train users between Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Leeds. These customers would also receive a catering voucher enabling a hot drink to be obtained free of charge.
- 2.16 TPE has now also started to accept Nova 1 trains, and an intensive programme of staff training is underway. Four Nova 1 trains are expected to start operating in public service from late October on Liverpool – Manchester – Huddersfield – Leeds – York – Darlington – Newcastle services, bringing a further significant increase in capacity.
- 2.17 It has been a significant concern that peak time capacity would not be fully restored as the very busy autumn period approaches. It has been made clear to TPE at Rail North Committee and via the West Yorkshire Rail Forum that the first priority remains delivery of peak-time capacity.

New trains – LNER

- 2.18 LNER has continued to introduce its new Azuma trains onto an increasing number of Yorkshire to London services. The roll-out is understood to be going well, and feedback from passengers has been generally positive.

New trains – Northern

- 2.19 Northern successfully introduced new electric trains on the Leeds – Doncaster services in July. Training is now underway for introduction of these trains into service on the 'Leeds North West' services between Skipton / Ilkley / Bradford Forster Square and Leeds. The new trains are expected to start entering into service on these services from early September. This will release the older (non-air-conditioned) electric trains to go 'off-lease', and represents a welcome improvement in the quality of trains.
- 2.20 More important is the introduction of new diesel trains by Northern, which will help to offset continued problems with availability of diesel trains to strengthen peak-time services in particular, as well as to allow the withdrawal of Pacer trains.
- 2.21 Staff training is now underway to allow the new diesel trains to be introduced on Calder Valley line services, initially on Leeds – Bradford – Halifax – Manchester

Victoria – Chester services, and then on York – Leeds – Bradford – Halifax – Preston – Blackpool services. This is expected to happen in October / November this year. New trains are then expected to be introduced on Leeds – Wakefield Kirkgate – Barnsley – Sheffield – Nottingham / Lincoln services around the end of the year. These new trains will provide a significant uplift in the quality of passenger facilities, as well as additional capacity.

- 2.22 Officers continue to closely monitor the impact of short-formation of peak time trains, and this was a matter discussed with the operator at the West Yorkshire Rail Forum in August.
- 2.23 It is important that Northern does not prematurely withdraw Pacer trains until it has sufficient new trains in reliable service to run all the services (including peak strengthening) it has committed to. Northern has also agreed to keeping some Pacer trains in 'warm storage' to ensure that they are available should stock shortages occur, particularly through the autumn period.

Pacer trains

- 2.24 Pacer trains were meant to be progressively withdrawn by Northern from September 2018, with a profile that would have seen all 102 Pacer trains withdrawn by early November 2019. Northern relies on the introduction of brand new trains and the transfer of trains from other operators to achieve this.
- 2.25 The first Pacer train was withdrawn on Monday, 12 August 2019. The delay to the withdrawal programme is mainly as a result of delays to the introduction of brand new trains. It is now clear that Northern will need to keep around 23 of its Pacer trains in passenger service beyond the end of 2019, in diminishing numbers to achieve complete withdrawal by summer 2020. Whilst this situation is clearly unwelcome, the alternative is a potentially worse situation of having to cancel trains and / or reduce capacity of peak services.
- 2.26 Northern's proposal will see Pacer trains remain on a handful of lines and services predominantly in around South and West Yorkshire. This is based on reasonable factors such as staff familiarity and maintenance regimes.
- 2.27 In summary Northern proposes that a small number of very early morning and late evening trains will continue to be operated by Pacer trains on a number of routes. In addition, the majority of trains on the Penistone Line, on local services between Bradford and Huddersfield, on local services between Castleford and Huddersfield, and trains on the York – Pontefract – Sheffield service will continue to be operated by Pacers. This will ensure Pacers are not deployed on the busiest commuter services around West Yorkshire.
- 2.28 Pacer trains are widely regarded as failing to meet passenger expectations, and their timely removal from service was a significant and high-profile 'promise' when the new franchise was awarded. In combination with officers from South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, officers are in discussion with Northern to secure passenger benefits for those areas that will have to rely on Pacer trains for local rail journeys beyond the end of the year.

- 2.29 A crucial further factor is the need for all trains to comply with the Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM) regulations from 1 January 2020. These regulations require all trains to meet base requirements for accessibility and on-board facilities from that date. Pacers do not currently fully meet these requirements, and there is a national shortage of suitable and PRM compliant trains to use alternatively. There is a national backlog of work to bring older fleets of trains into compliance with the regulations. The most significant issue for Pacers relates to the accessibility of the toilets, but there is a range of other non-compliances.
- 2.30 Northern is engaging with its Accessibility User Group to test the mitigations it is proposing to put in place to address the non-compliances. This will include specific on-train and station-specific proposals, including an enhanced passenger assistance service. This package will form the basis of an application to the Department for Transport for a temporary dispensation from the regulations. Part of the process for this determination will include reference to the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DTPAC). There will be a particular emphasis on where Pacer trains will be the only type of train calling at a station throughout the day. Northern is expected to make an application for a dispensation from the regulations in late August or early September.

Train Operator Performance

- 2.31 The latest Train Operator Performance Graphs are included at Appendix 3. Performance in 2019 has been improved compared to the service breakdown in 2018, but in recent weeks (Period 5, 21 July to 17 August) both Northern and TransPennine Express have suffered a significant decline in performance, with indications this has continued through late August. Driver availability has been an issue for the operators, together with a series of significant disruptions on the network which have then impacted services for many hours afterwards. This reflects the ongoing challenge of reliably operating an increasingly congested network, and underlines the importance of investing in network capacity and resilience.
- 2.32 Short formations (trains running with fewer carriages than planned) at peak times has remained a big issue for Northern. The importance of improving on this situation was set out to Northern at the August meeting of the West Yorkshire Rail Forum. The steady introduction of new diesel trains should help this situation as we move into the busier autumn period.
- 2.33 Richard George as part of his work identified ways to improve day-to-day reliability, together with a programme of actions and small investments. An update on that programme is expected at Rail North Committee in September, and information will be relayed to Transport Committee when available.

TransPennine Route Upgrade: Transport and Works Act Order consultation

- 2.34 On 20 August 2019, Network Rail issued a press release about an upcoming consultation in relation to TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) between Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury). The press release did not include details of the proposed enhancements nor a full commitment on TRU in terms of funding and scope.
- 2.35 Upgrading the section of railway between Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) is vital and an important part of TRU. Network Rail intends to submit a Transport and Works Act order (TWAo) application in autumn 2020. Prior to submitting the application, it is our understanding that Network Rail would like to consult the public which will help inform the further development of their proposals. Further information is available on Network Rail's website; a link is provided in **Background Documents**.
- 2.36 Officers have requested Network Rail brief members on the scheme and have scheduled briefing sessions with Leaders and Transport Committee members on 2 September 2019. It is an opportunity for members to ask Network Rail any further questions about TRU. The briefing sessions will take place in advance of any public consultation events.
- 2.37 Meanwhile, the Combined Authority continues to press the Government to make a full commitment on TRU and provide clarity on the overall scope of work. At the time of writing, a formal announcement is still outstanding.

Rail reviews

- 2.38 The Blake Jones Review of the Rail North Partnership was published on Friday, 19 July 2019. The review and its recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the Transport for the North Board at its meeting on 31 July 2019, together with an Action Plan to bring focus to delivery of early wins. The Combined Authority also endorsed the Review's recommendations at its meeting on 1 August 2019. The core theme running through the Review and its recommendations is the need to put rail passengers first.
- 2.39 The Review identifies five recommendations for immediate implementation and a further four recommendations for longer term implementation, and which are made to inform the William Review.
- 2.40 The Williams Review is now in its final stages. The review's findings and recommendations will be published in a government white paper in autumn 2019, with reforms from 2020 onwards.
- 2.41 Keith Williams delivered an interim speech at an event in Bradford on 16 July 2019. In this speech he highlighted that reform will be focused on five main areas:
- New passenger offer – customer service excellence;

- Simplified fares and ticketing;
- A new industry structure;
- A new commercial-model – “the current franchising model has had its day”
- Leadership, skills and diversity

2.42 Discussion has been ongoing over summer about how the proposed reforms can bring more effective accountability to rail service delivery and planning.

Department for Transport Access for All Mid-Tier Programme

2.43 The Department for Transport (DfT) announced last year that up to £300 million has been made available nationally to extend its Access for All programme as part of its ‘Inclusive Transport Strategy’. The Strategy document can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/next-steps-towards-a-fully-inclusive-transport-network>.

2.44 It was reported to Transport Committee in May 2019 that Todmorden, Menston and Selby rail stations had been announced to form part of the extended programme which will, subject to a feasible design being possible, receive an accessible step free route into the stations, as well as to and between every platform over the next five years. It was also confirmed that deferred schemes selected for funding in 2014 but not yet implemented, would also be completed during the 2019-24 budget period. Garforth rail station falls into this category.

2.45 The ‘Inclusive Transport Strategy’ also included that a proportion of the funding would be made available for a new round of ‘Access for All’ Mid-Tier funding which will support station accessibility projects requiring between £250,000 and £1 million of Government support. The Mid-Tier programme was announced on 08 July 2019, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20-million-fund-marks-one-year-on-from-the-inclusive-transport-strategy>. This is a £20 million fund open to applications from stations in need of accessibility improvements, leading to small-scale enhancements which enable more disabled people to access the rail network more easily, for example, tactile paving, handrails and Harrington Humps, which selectively increase platform heights.

2.46 The funding is only available for projects which have reached a credible stage in development having completed feasibility studies and after identification of other funding sources, including funding for operational, maintenance and renewal costs. Projects with third-party match funding will also be looked at more favourably. All projects will need to be completed by April 2024.

2.47 The Combined Authority proposes to work together with rail industry and council partners to identify accessibility improvements and develop potential funding applications. Transport Committee members will be consulted on potential applications before the next meeting in November 2019 in order to meet the DfT’s deadline for applications 18 October 2019. It is likely that Local Transport Plan funding will be required as match funding for applications. The views of other key local stakeholders will also be sought.

HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation Response

- 2.48 HS2 Ltd is consulting on eleven proposed changes to the design of the HS2 Phase 2b route which includes one design refinement within West Yorkshire. The proposed change is in the height of the route for 8km between the centre of Leeds and Woodlesford so that the line is predominantly on a viaduct, rather than a combination of at ground level, cutting and embankment. The closing date for consultation responses is 6th September 2019.
- 2.49 The Combined Authority endorsed the principles of the consultation response in a meeting on 1st August 2019. These included welcoming the opportunity the refined design provides with regards to reducing travel disruption and congestion to both the public transport and highway network, ensuring visual intrusion and noise pollution is mitigated as much as possible, calling for further development work from HS2 to so that the viaduct undercroft area is developed to benefit local communities and reinforcing the need for a touchpoint on the HS2 network at Stourton with the conventional railway.
- 2.50 The proposed HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation response is provided in Appendix 4. Links to the actual HS2 consultation and previous report presented to the Combined Authority paper are provided in the **Background Documents** section.

HS2 Independent Review

- 2.51 The Prime Minister has requested a review on “whether and how we proceed” with HS2 ahead of the ‘Notice to Proceed’ decision for phase 1 (London to West Midlands) due by the end of 2019. The review will examine whether HS2 Ltd is able to deliver the project effectively, look at the full range of costs and benefits for the project, the potential for cost reductions and to see if the assumptions behind the business case are realistic. The review covers all phases of the project.
- 2.52 The review has asked for specific cost reduction options to be considered which include building only phase 1 (London – West Midlands), combining phase 1 and 2a (West Midlands – Crewe), different choices of phasing of phase 2b (West Midlands – Leeds / Manchester), reductions in line speeds and making Old Oak Common the London terminus rather than Euston in the short term.
- 2.53 The review is chaired by Doug Oakervee who is an ex-chairman of HS2 and Crossrail and includes a panel of industry experts with a wide range of views on the project. The final report will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in autumn this year with oversight from the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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 Northern, TransPennine Express and LNER have commented on the factual accuracy of parts of this report.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the updates on the various matters outlined in the report be noted.

7.2 That the Transport Committee endorses ongoing work by officers with train operators and Network Rail to secure franchise commitments, including restoration of and securing additional peak-time capacity.

7.3 That the Transport Committee endorses the ongoing activity of the West Yorkshire Rail Forum in making clear to the rail industry the Committee's ongoing commitment to the daily reliable operation of the local rail network.

7.4 That the Transport Committee endorses the approach set out to develop applications for the Department for Transport Access for All Mid-Tier Programme as set out in the submitted report.

7.5 That the Transport Committee approves the final submission of West Yorkshire Combined Authority to the HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation response.

8. Background Documents

Virgin Trains East Coast franchise commitments and plans. Set out in **Item 9** – West Yorkshire Transport Committee, 16 March 2018. Available via:

<http://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk>

Franchise service changes planned for 2019. Set out in **Item 7** – West Yorkshire Transport Committee, 11 January 2019. Available via:

<http://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk>

New trains update. Appendix 2 to **Item 11** – West Yorkshire Transport Committee, 5 July 2019. Available via: <http://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk>

Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) consultation material on Network Rail website, available here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/transpennine-route-upgrade/huddersfield-to-westtown-dewsbury/>

“Williams Rail Review: an update on progress”: transcript of Keith Williams’ speech. Available online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/williams-rail-review-an-update-on-progress>

Summary of Blake Jones Review of the Rail North Partnership, including recommendations. Contained in **Item 7** – West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 1 August 2019. Available via: <http://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk>

HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation can be downloaded at - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807420/hs2-phase-2b-design-refinement-web.pdf

HS2 consultation response – **Item 6** – West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 1 August 2019. Available via:

<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=834>

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – LNER 2019 route and service plan

Appendix 2 – Summary of December 2019 timetable changes

Appendix 3 – Train Operator Performance Graphs

Appendix 4 – HS2 Phase 2b Design Refinement Consultation response.