

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 10th January 2020

Subject: **Public Transport Performance Update**

Director: Dave Pearson, Director, Transport Services

Author(s): Various

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:	

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. To provide the Transport Committee with an update on recent bus and rail performance.

2. Information

Bus Performance

- 2.1. The West Yorkshire Bus Alliance collates and publishes aggregated punctuality and reliability performance data from the major bus operators in West Yorkshire; Arriva Yorkshire, First West Yorkshire, Transdev and Yorkshire Tiger.
- 2.2. Since January 2018, these statistics have been published on a quarterly basis through social media, and most recently accompanied by a press release, see <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/all-news-and-blogs/latest-west-yorkshire-bus-figures-show-improvement-in-miles-operated/>.
- 2.3. The latest performance data for the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019 is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4. Reliability data is calculated as the number of miles operated as a percentage of those that were scheduled to run. It is reported that there has been a 0.3%

increase in the number of monthly scheduled miles in comparison with the same period in 2018, equating to 13,500 miles.

- 2.5. Punctuality data is categorised in two ways:
 - **Origin:** the percentage of buses that departed their first stop on time
 - **Intermediate:** the percentage of buses that departed their timing points on time
- 2.6. It is reported that there has been a 0.2% decrease in the number of buses that left their origin stop on time. Similarly there has been a 1.1% decrease in the number of buses that left their selected stops on time, again in comparison to the same quarter in 2018.
- 2.7. The operators have identified possible explanations leading to the reduction in punctuality experienced over this period such as the highway works on the Headrow in Leeds, major roadworks in other areas and busy 'back to school' traffic.
- 2.8. The West Yorkshire Bus Alliance has identified Highway Infrastructure as particular area they want to focus on, with specific deliverables related to improving communications between operators and the local authorities regarding planned and future roadworks, which is hoped will help to mitigate some of the impacts felt across the bus network.
- 2.9. Other deliverables relate to identifying hotspots where there are particular issues with congestion and developing and delivering schemes to address them.
- 2.10. It is acknowledged however that periods of disruption, particularly in Leeds City Centre, will continue to affect bus punctuality for some time as major highways schemes, such as the Connecting Leeds Programme, are delivered.
- 2.11. This bus performance update will now be reported regularly to the Committee. At the time of writing, data from the October to December period is being analysed and will be published at the end of January.

Rail Performance

- 2.12. The latest comparative performance data up to and including Period 9 (ended on 7 December 2019) is provided at **Appendix 2**. This indicates that performance has fallen significantly across both TransPennine Express (TPE) and Northern, with exceptionally bad levels of disruption on TPE.
- 2.13. The analysis below covers Periods 8 and 9, from 13 October to 7 December 2019. The timetable change took place on Sunday, 15 December 2019, following which performance further deteriorated on TPE. A verbal update of the latest position will be provided to the meeting. Full details of Period 10 performance will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

- 2.14. Periods 8 and 9 are typically poor compared to other times in the year due to the impact of autumn leaf-fall on railhead conditions. However, this year's performance is significantly worse than can be explained by autumn effects, which is confirmed by the underlying data.
- 2.15. The impacts of the autumn leaf fall have arrived later than last year, and the effects have been less severe than previous years. The work on wheel flats appears to have been successful with reduced need for tyre turning compared to previous years. Whilst it is not possible to disaggregate the impacts of more favourable autumn conditions from industry preparation, it is clear there was better autumn preparedness across the rail industry this year.
- 2.16. A series of significant disruption events, including heavy rain and flooding, have had specific impacts leading to times of especially poor performance. There remains a challenge of recovering services from these impacts on what is an increasingly congested and complex network. The complexities of having the right crew available given the mix of new trains adds to problems of service recovery.
- 2.17. Operators have identified the following specific incidents that caused significant disruption in Periods 8 and 9 on services with impacts on West Yorkshire:
- 25 October – Train fault at Leeds
 - 26 October – Signal failure at Shipley
 - 26 October – Flooding at Kirk Sandall
 - 7 November – Flooding at Walsden
 - 7 November – Overhead line issues at Guiseley
 - 3 December – Doncaster track circuit failure
 - 4 December – Freight train traction problems at Dronfield
 - 2 December – Track circuit failure at west end of Leeds station
 - 7 December – Sheffield points failure
 - 6 December – Castleford track circuit failure
- 2.18. For both TPE and Northern, train crew availability has been a significant cause of increased cancellations when looking at the 28-day averages (a measure that smooths the impact of one-off events to help identify the underlying patterns). This is related to the introduction of new trains and the significant associated training requirements which have impacted on crew availability. As more staff are trained, this pressure should start to ease, but it will be an ongoing challenge for some time. It remains the case that when passengers experience new trains and they are operating on time, that the response is very positive.
- 2.19. Northern has adapted its plans for new train introduction to help manage the impacts associated with training, which, in part, has resulted in further Pacers remaining in service into 2020. There is an expectation that performance will continue to be impacted in coming weeks as new trains 'bed-in', which is difficult to mitigate.

- 2.20. Northern's performance on short formations has worsened since Period 7 and in Period 8 recorded its highest level of short formations this financial year and higher than in the same period last year. The position recovered slightly in Period 9. Short formations remain an overall concern. As additional new trains come into service, we hope to see this picture improve. At franchise-level, Northern's cancellations and significant lateness (CaSL) measure declined significantly in Period 8, and again in Period 9. For service groups servicing West Yorkshire, Period 8 saw CaSL at very poor levels, although these recovered slightly in Period 9. This is driven by the crew availability issues highlighted above.
- 2.21. TPE experienced severe performance difficulties in Periods 8 and 9. This was driven by the train crew issues highlighted and compounded by the impact of external incidents and technical issues. TPE extended services to Edinburgh on the North TransPennine route at the timetable change on 15 December 2019. This required Nova 1 trains to be in service, as their higher operating speeds are necessary to operate the services on the East Coast Main Line north of York. This required a particularly intensive period of crew training in the weeks before the timetable change.
- 2.22. The Rail North Partnership agreed that TPE should withdraw some services on the Liverpool – Manchester – Huddersfield – Leeds – York – Newcastle – Edinburgh turns from 15 December 2019 as a short-term measure to reduce ad-hoc cancellations. This is intended to create 'breathing space' for more crew training and to deal with maintenance backlogs on trains. This was planned to last until 5 January 2020, however on 30 December, TPE advised a further amended timetable for the remainder of the month. The planned cancellations (around 10 per day in each direction) are intended to avoid the busiest times peak times, although the evening peak at Leeds towards Huddersfield and Manchester is a concern and the impact is being monitored. Many TPE services are now planned to be operated as 5 and 6-car trains, so overall capacity should be up compared with earlier in the year.
- 2.23. In the circumstances, planned cancellations in the short-term is considered a better outcome for passengers than continuing the high levels of ad-hoc delays and cancellations experienced in November and December. However, at the time of writing, there are strong indications that the service is no more predictable after the timetable change than it was in the preceding weeks, indeed early indications are that it has deteriorated even further. Detailed analysis will be included in the next report.
- 2.24. The December 2019 timetable change otherwise includes further structural tweaks aimed at improving the overall reliability of services. Considering the above factors, especially the large-scale introduction of new trains in coming months, it is likely that overall performance will remain disappointing. Only once the fleet transitions are complete later in 2020 will it be possible to know if these further timetable tweaks have achieved the aim of a more reliable service structure.

- 2.25. The recent poor levels of reliability have had serious impacts on day-to-day journeys for many passengers. The Chair raised the issues set out above with each of TPE and Northern at senior-level meetings in December. The importance of properly managing disruption and conveying reliable information to passengers was emphasised, together with the importance of delivering a stable service as a priority. A further update on progress will be provided by the operators at the West Yorkshire Rail Forum in February. Northern and TPE are both due to be represented at a senior level at Rail North Committee on 8 January 2020 to be held to account for recent performance levels.
- 2.26. Further compensation will be secured from TransPennine Express to benefit passengers because of the need to withdraw services from the timetable. This will be agreed and managed via TfN and the Rail North Committee. The Combined Authority will seek to ensure that affected MCard holders can access some of this compensation.

3. Clean Growth Implications

- 3.1. The report identifies the work currently ongoing to develop the bus network in West Yorkshire. Improving the bus offer to customers will increase bus patronage, encouraging modal shift to public transport.
- 3.2. The Combined Authority's efforts to hold rail operators to account on poor performance is intended to improve the attractiveness of a more sustainable mode of travel. Furthermore, improved reliability of rail services will improve productivity supporting clean 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. Arriva Yorkshire, First West Yorkshire, Transdev and Yorkshire Tiger provide their performance data to the Combined Authority to collate on a quarterly basis.
- 7.2. Rail performance data is based on published information, supplemented by analysis and additional data provided by Rail North Partnership and Transport for the North.

8. Recommendations

8.1. That the Committee notes the updates provided in this report.

9. Background Documents

9.1 None

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 –West Yorkshire Bus Alliance Performance Update

Appendix 2 – Train Operator Performance Graphs

Appendix 3 – Northern Rail Performance Correspondence

Appendix 4 – Transpennine Express Rail Performance Correspondence