

Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 6 February 2020

Subject: **Strategic Rail**

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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 to the Combined Authority about strategic rail matters in particular High Speed Two (HS2), Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) Calder Valley Line and East Coast Mainline.

2. Information

- 2.1 In 2016, the Combined Authority agreed a set of rail priorities for pan-northern and national connectivity. On 3 August 2017 it reaffirmed its commitment to these priorities and on 5 April 2018 it agreed to submit these along with a longer list of other interventions into TfN's draft Strategic Transport Plan consultation. These priorities were again reiterated in a paper to the Combined Authority on 14 February 2019.

- A Northern Powerhouse Rail Network (NPR) with stops in Leeds, Bradford and York and integrates effectively with HS2.
- All phases of HS2
- Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) delivered in full

- Significant improvements to the Calder Valley Line and the East Coast Mainline.

Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 2.2 TRU is a vitally important short-medium term project for the North and for this region, providing long overdue additional rail capacity on the north's main east – west rail artery. As 7 out of the 12 LEP areas in the North, collectively accounting for over 80% of the north's economic output, are set to directly benefit from the TRU investment it is important that TRU is delivered in full. Government has reiterated it is committed to spending £2.9 billion on the TransPennine Route Upgrade, which forms part of the rail commitments from 2019 to 2024. It has yet to commit to the full scheme.
- 2.3 Network Rail consulted last year on an upgrade to a section of railway between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) to deliver passenger benefits as part of the TRU. Upgrading the section of railway between Huddersfield and Westtown is key to delivering the benefits passengers want along the TransPennine railway. The current layout in this area limits the railway's ability to run more and faster trains and affect the reliability of train services. The Combined Authority responded to this survey which was developed in close consultation with officers from council partners.
- 2.4 The Chair of Transport Committee also wrote a letter to the Secretary of State on 10 October 2019 that set out the Combined Authority's asks for the TRU project. This included delivering the scheme in full, making all stations on the TRU route accessible, full electrification to support the climate emergency targets and to work together to minimise abortive works and minimise disruptions.

East Coast Mainline

- 2.5 The East Coast Mainline (ECML) is an important part of the rail network serving West Yorkshire, linking West Yorkshire to London and the East Midlands via Doncaster as well as connections to the North East and Scotland via York.
- 2.6 The Consortium of East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) commissioned research into the economic impact of potential further investment in the route, which is also an important part of plans for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail. The research was completed in 2019 and includes an analysis of the economic impact of disruption on the line. Subject to the outcome of the Oakervee Review, the research will be published and launched later in 2020. Meanwhile it has been used to help make the case to Government for additional investment into the resilience of the line, which is particularly prone to events that severely disrupt services. This generated significant coverage in autumn 2019 and will be used to support advocacy work with the new Government in the first months of 2020. The Combined Authority's continued membership and support for ECMA supports this work.

Calder Valley Line

- 2.7 Connecting Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Manchester, this plays an important east to west route across the Pennines. The Calder Valley line has seen some improvements including upgrading track and signals that were supposed to provide journey time savings and the ability to run more trains along the route. However, passengers have not fully benefited as a result of the capacity constraints at Leeds and Manchester in particular. The Combined Authority has continually pressed for the additional infrastructure required to enable these franchise commitments to be met to provide new and better connections for example to Manchester Airport and more frequent services for passengers.
- 2.8 Also, following the North of England Electrification Task Force, the electrification of the Calder Valley Line is one of our top priorities for electrification. Calder Valley line improvements were also recognised in Transport for the North's Investment Programme as part of a package of improvements that is needed to stimulate economic growth in the North. There is also an opportunity to consider the role of the Calder Valley Line alongside the new capacity delivered by NPR. NPR serving Bradford presents the opportunity for Bradford Interchange to be reconsidered, potentially enabling faster journey times, a connection with the Calder Valley Line and improving journey frequencies.

High Speed Two (HS2)

- 2.9 HS2 Phase Two will transform connectivity between the North, Scotland, the Midlands and the South. For years, the region has planned and prepared for HS2's arrival and businesses are making investment decisions now about the benefits HS2 will bring to our places. HS2 offers a different relationship with Sheffield, East and West Midlands as well as London for our businesses and workforce. The lack of additional capacity provided by HS2 would drastically hinder the ability to rebalance the economy.
- 2.10 In September 2019 Government published Allan Cook's (Chair of HS2 Ltd) stocktake on the HS2 project. This identified that the likely opening date of Phase 2b of HS2 is now likely to be in the range 2035 to 2040. HS2 is also subject to a Government commissioned review led by Douglas Oakervee, following the Prime Minister's stated wish to review whether and how HS2 proceeds. The review will use all existing evidence on the project and consider its:
- benefits and impacts;
 - affordability and efficiency;
 - deliverability; and
 - scope and phasing, including its relationship with Northern Powerhouse Rail.
- 2.11 Leeds City Council and the Combined Authority submitted evidence to the review panel in September 2019 supporting the implementation of HS2 phase 2b. It is understood that the Chancellor is to consider ways to improve the way decisions are made in the Treasury through the Green Book so that levelling-up across the country becomes a reality. The Combined Authority is supportive of

finding ways to better reflect the economic needs of places within the North when appraising investments. It is equally important that decision-making processes also reflect climate emergency targets. HS2 has a role in both of these objectives and the Chair of Combined Authority recently wrote to the Prime Minister to stress this. The original aim was for the Review to report in Autumn 2019, but this has been delayed and is expected imminently.

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)

- 2.12 Northern Powerhouse Rail is a programme to deliver a transformed network in the North of England. Currently people in the North's ability to access new opportunities is constrained by the current transport network. Northern Powerhouse Rail would bring more than 10 million people within 90 minutes of multiple key cities in the North, against just 2 million today. As part of this network, NPR has the potential to provide faster transpennine links between Manchester and Leeds serving Bradford city centre. NPR is an essential element of the comprehensive investment in transport infrastructure needed across the North. By better connecting our strongly performing sectors in the North, the aim is to rebalance the economy and bring tangible benefits to the places and people of the North. By better connecting our towns and cities, TfN estimate that NPR could support an increase in productivity of up to 2%, going some way to closing the North-South divide. Leeds to Sheffield improvements will be delivered through HS2 Phase 2b and an upgrading of the route from Sheffield and is one part of the interaction between HS2 and NPR.
- 2.13 Work has identified the importance of NPR serving Bradford City Centre, including an additional £15bn GVA and 15,000 new jobs across Leeds City Region by 2060. NPR can double the number of people and businesses within reach of Bradford providing access to ¾ million more job opportunities in the key economic sectors of the North for Bradford residents, including places most in need of investment and access to opportunities, particularly for young people. These benefits can only be realised if Bradford is served directly.
- 2.14 Following the announcement by the Prime Minister supporting Northern Powerhouse Rail and in particular routes across the Pennines, it is understood that Government wants to accelerate consultation. Working with TfN, the Combined Authority will continue to stress the importance of -
- a new line between Leeds, Bradford city centre and Manchester
 - recognising that NPR is a network to ensure benefits are felt across the North.
 - the climate emergency and the role of modal shift in tackling carbon reduction.
 - recognising that the Government is planning to change the appraisal process and therefore any work to date on Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) ought to acknowledge that a new approach is being planned to support the Government objective of levelling-up.
 - learning lesson from HS2, particularly the consequences of putting a cost on a scheme early in the process.
 - TRU being a separate scheme that needs to be delivered as soon as possible.

- recognising improvements are needed to the existing network both in advance of NPR and as part of maximising the benefits of NPR, specifically to the Calder Valley line and the capacity around Leeds.

Leeds station and network approaches

2.15 At its meeting on 25 April 2019 the Combined Authority resolved to urge DfT and Network Rail to prioritise analysis of rail network capacity in central Leeds to bring clarity on the investment required to deliver committed service improvements and accommodate growth. These matters are now becoming better understood and it is increasingly clear that significant investment will be required in the short term for improved reliability and for accommodating ongoing growth in rail services across the City Region and beyond.

Rail Connectivity Vision

2.16 Working with TfN and advisors, and supported by Network Rail and DfT, the Combined Authority is developing an evidence-led 'Rail Connectivity Vision' to establish a shared vision for the region's national, regional and local rail connectivity needs. This will form a major part of the Combined Authority's forthcoming Rail Strategy and will play an important role in the development of the Connectivity Strategy. Consultation with Members on development of the wider Rail Strategy will take place over coming months, to engage in the strategic choices about the type of rail future they want for the region.

2.17 Part of the work is to determine whether or not the proposed touchpoint between the HS2 and classic rail networks south of Leeds at Stourton – not part of the current design scope for the HS2 Phase 2b Hybrid Bill – is required to deliver the Vision. Further feasibility work into alternative solutions to the Stourton touchpoint that could potentially deliver more benefits to the wider city region is being undertaken.

Williams Review

2.18 Government established the Williams Rail Review to look at the structure of the whole rail industry and the way passenger rail services are delivered. The review will make recommendations for reform that prioritise passengers' and taxpayers' interests. The review was launched in response to the evident need for substantial structural reform of the rail industry, not least as evidenced by the widespread chaos caused by the May 2018 timetable change.

2.19 The Combined Authority has engaged with the Williams review as set out at the Combined Authority meeting on 27 June 2019. The outcome of the Review will be published as a White Paper setting out reforms to be followed by legislation as necessary for implementation. The new Government is expected to publish the White Paper in the early part of 2020.

2.20 Northern leaders have made it clear that the current performance of rail services in the north is unacceptable and failing to meet passenger expectations, and have repeatedly called for decisive action to address this. By

the time of the Combined Authority meeting, it is expected that the Secretary of State for Transport will have made a decision on who will operate Northern rail services following the financial failure of the franchise, either Arriva or the Operator of Last Resort. The implication is that a new contractual baseline will apply from some point in 2020. Either outcome will not in its own right address the fundamental issues affecting the North's rail network and it is hoped that the Williams Review will commit to devolution of powers and money that create meaningful local accountability.

3. Clean Growth Implications

- 3.1. The report identifies the work currently ongoing to influence and develop major rail projects. Improving the rail offer to customers should increase rail patronage, encouraging modal shift to clean public transport and thereby reducing carbon emissions by reducing car use. The Combined Authority, through working with TfN and Government on these projects, is highlighting the need to properly assess the carbon impact and ensure that modal shift is prioritised.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Public transport is vitally important to ensure accessibility for employment and training opportunities.

5. Financial Implications

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

6. Legal Implications

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

7. Staffing Implications

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

8. External Consultees

- 8.1. No external consultations have been undertaken.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. That the Combined Authority notes the agreed rail priorities and the progress towards their delivery.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1. None

11. Appendices

11.1.None.