
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 13 March 2020

Subject: **Public Transport Performance 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 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. In March 2019, the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance was formed, bringing together the Combined Authority, Arriva Yorkshire, First West Yorkshire, Transdev and the smaller bus operators. The aims of the Alliance are to put customers at the heart of improving services, keeping buses moving and developing a sustainable bus network. Transport Committee has approved the objectives and workplan for the Alliance.
- 2.2. Through the Alliance, the Combined Authority 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.
- 2.3. Since January 2018, these statistics have been published on a quarterly basis through social media, and most recently accompanied by a press release, the following links to the published figures

<https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/all-news-and-blogs/west-yorkshire-bus-alliance-releases-latest-performance-figures/>

- 2.4. The latest performance data for the period from 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019 is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5. 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 0.2% increase in the number of monthly scheduled miles in comparison with the same period in 2018, equating to 8,400 miles.
- 2.6. 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
- 2.7. It is reported that there has been a 4% decrease in the number of buses that left their origin stop on time. There has also been a 2.2% decrease in the number of buses that left their selected stops on time, again in comparison to the same quarter in 2018.
- 2.8. Traffic in the run up to Christmas is normally busy, and there is usually decreasing punctuality compared to other times of the year however it is acknowledged that this period has seen a further decline, in comparison to the previous year.
- 2.9. The bus operators have identified possible explanations leading to the reduction in punctuality experienced over this period such as the general increase in traffic, the on-going effects of the 'Connecting Leeds' highway works and one-off road incidents.
- 2.10. The West Yorkshire Bus Alliance workplan has identified Highway Infrastructure as particular area 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.
- 2.11. Other deliverables relate to identifying hotspots where there are issues with congestion and developing and delivering schemes to address them.
- 2.12. 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.
- 2.13. At the time of writing, data from the January to March period is being collated and will be published at the end of April.

Rail Performance

- 2.14. The latest comparative performance data up to and including Period 11 (ended on 1 February 2020) is provided at **Appendix 2**. This indicates that by period 11 performance had improved for both Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) since reported to the Transport Committee in January.
- 2.15. Delays and cancellations to a train operator can arise from infrastructure and weather-related problems (Network Rail), train operating problems, or delays caused by other operators. The information provided in Appendix 2 shows a breakdown of responsibility for PPM failures for periods 10 and 11 which covers the two most recent periods from 8 December to 1 February. It also highlights the top incidents during this period impacting on each operator.
- 2.16. The greatest number of incidents impacting on performance for both Northern and TPE relate to infrastructure and weather-related issues, attributable to Network Rail. 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. Network Rail are introducing several initiatives to try and help improve performance which includes increasing the number of response teams to attend to incidents faster which, in a congested railway, helps to keep delays to a minimum. More local operation managers are also to be introduced which will enable more intimate knowledge of the area they are responsible for and enable more time to liaise with the train operating companies and target problem areas/build relationships.
- 2.18. For both TPE and Northern, train crew availability has been a significant cause of increased PPM, failures and cancellations. They have reported that delays to the delivery of new trains have resulted in a compressed period to train drivers, guards, customer hosts and dispatchers which in turn has impacted on crew availability. As more staff are trained the Train Operators have indicated that this pressure should start to ease, but it will be an ongoing challenge for some time. Both TOCs identified that in hindsight stronger contingency planning could have mitigated some of these effects.
- 2.19. Northern's performance has been adversely affected by complications with the new train fleet which continues to suffer with poor reliability of new trains whilst they bed in. Northern report that problems were both technical and relating to traincrew familiarity with their new vehicles. Both areas are reportedly improving but faults are still occurring although diminishing as vehicles coming into service start to have issues addressed in advance. Northern have a programme of interventions underway to address the new train reliability challenges, including an introduction of new specialised staff.

- 2.20. The new timetable commenced on 15 December 2019. The Train Operators have reported that the integrity and structure of the timetable appears to be working, however a number of different issues have contributed to poor levels of performance which impacted on period 10. TPE reportedly struggled in period 10 due to delays in driver training on new rolling stock, several of the new fleet remaining out of use pending crew training.
- 2.21. Northern have advised that an increase in staff sickness in December contributed to a reduction in performance despite driving training being put on hold over the Christmas Holiday period where resources are stretched. Sickness levels have subsequently improved however the reintroduction of the driver training programme in January continues to put pressure on performance. Whilst the numbers of driver shortages have fallen the training will still be on-going until the end of May, therefore risks exist during the school holidays, where demand for leave is high. Northern report that the training is advancing well.
- 2.22. Northern's performance on short formations for the West and North Yorkshire local services has improved considerably in periods 10 and 11 compared to periods 8 and 9. West and North Yorkshire Inter Urban services have shown a gradual improvement, but incidents remain high. Northern are introducing more new trains, both diesel and electric, from 17 Feb, through March and into the May 20 timetable change. There are likely to be some minor interventions beyond this point, but all trains should be in service by the summer. As these additional new trains come into service and start to operate more reliably, we hope to see this area improve further. However, at the same time concerns remain that the Northern fleet (especially diesel trains) is simply too small to deliver reliably the trains lengths scheduled let alone provide the capacity known to be needed. The expected withdrawal of the last Pacer trains risks exacerbating this.
- 2.23. Together with our colleagues in other city regions, we are carrying out an analysis to calculate the additional train fleet ("missing trains") needed to meet demand and aim to report the findings to the next Committee.
- 2.24. Northern's cancellations and significant lateness (CaSL) measure for the West and North Yorkshire local services showed a gradual decline in Period 10 and showed a more substantial drop in Period 11. For the Inter-Urban service group servicing West Yorkshire, Period 10 saw CaSL at very poor levels, although these recovered slightly in Period 11. This was mainly driven by the crew availability issues highlighted above.
- 2.25. As detailed in the January report to the Transport Committee, The Rail North Partnership agreed that TPE could 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 was planned to last until 5 January 2020, however on 30 December, TPE advised a further amended timetable for the remainder of the month.

- 2.26. TPE advised that the changes detailed above meant that training could be accelerated enabling staff to be trained on the new trains to enable their introduction, while also providing resilience to the timetable and reducing short term cancellations. TPE CASL for the North route reduced from 25.20% in period 10 (Jan) to 6.90% by the end of period 11 providing some stability for customers.
- 2.27. On Monday 3 Feb, TransPennine Express reinstated most of its services between Liverpool Lime Street and Edinburgh which were removed to help stabilise performance and the remaining 10 services were reinstated on 17 February. PPM for the TPE North route exceeded its target in period 11 but close monitoring will continue to ensure this does not adversely impact on West Yorkshire performance as services are reintroduced.
- 2.28. Short forming on TPE services increased to 2.37% in period 11, however, it is worth noting that TPE seating capacity in the AM/PM peak periods is up by 44% when compared to seating capacity available at the start of the May 2019 timetable. This however should be seen in the context of successive reductions in peak train capacity around Leeds that took place on TPE between 2016 and 2018.
- 2.29. Included in Appendix 2 are graphs showing how Northern and TPE compare to other train operators' performance and to the national average. In recent months Northern and TPE's performance fell significantly below the national average.
- 2.30. A Rail Forum meeting took place on 12 February which involved train operators and Network Rail updating Councillor Groves and Combined Authority Officers on both current performance issues and future developments aimed at enhancing and improving rail performance through investment.
- 2.31. TPE have recently launched a Season Ticket Compensation scheme as an apology for the recent disruption on their network. The scheme provides a refund of 3% of the annualised cost of Weekly, Monthly and Annual tickets held between the 1 October and 31 December 2019. Affected M Card holders will receive a flat £30 refund.

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