
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 13 March 2020

Subject: **Rail Connectivity Vision and 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 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 introduce Matt Rice, Route Director North and East for Network Rail, who will be giving a presentation to the Committee.
- 1.2 In preparation for a Transport Committee Rail Vision workshop on 30th March 2020, to update the Committee on progress being made in developing a new Rail Strategy for West Yorkshire.
- 1.3 To update the Committee on recent announcements by Government in relation to HS2, the Northern franchise and the Restoring Your Railway Fund.
- 1.4 To update the Committee on the matter of Northern pacer retention and the associated Accessibility Fund 2020.

2. Information

Presentation from Network Rail

- 1.5 Matt Rice, Route Director North and East for Network Rail, will be updating the Committee on Network Rail's work to improve the performance and reliability of the railway, as well as planning for the future.

Rail Strategy

Background

- 1.6 The achievement of the Combined Authority's objectives for the economy, the environment and for people, depend on the delivery and operation of a modern, 21st century zero carbon transport network. The railway continues to play an important role as part of the transport network, a role which has grown in importance over the last two decades.
- 1.7 The railway's important role is forecast and indeed planned to continue, with the Combined Authority having re-noted its priorities for the railway at its meeting on 6th February 2020 as follows:
- A Northern Powerhouse Rail Network (NPR) with stops in Leeds, Bradford and York which 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.
- 1.8 A new rail strategy for West Yorkshire that builds on these priorities is currently in development. It is intended that it will provide a clear statement and explanation of West Yorkshire's ambition for and requirements of the railway as a whole, from the present day until 2050. The strategy will also articulate in high level terms how this is likely to be achieved, including an overarching Rail Vision for rail.
- 1.9 The rail strategy will provide key inputs to the wider Connectivity Strategy – the Combined Authority's future transport pipeline (developed with challenge from the National Infrastructure Commission). The transport pipeline will consider the role that rail can play within individual corridors across the region – in conjunction with other modes including proposals for mass transit.
- 1.10 The railway is undergoing one of its periodic high watermarks with regard to its evolution, with several recent and forthcoming policy announcements from Government. These include the recent announcement on HS2 by the Prime Minister and the imminent Williams Review White Paper. It is intended therefore that the rail strategy will be formed of several themes and products that will be finalised and publishable in stages. They will lend themselves more readily to updating which is important given the pace of change. A diagram indicating the key parts of the rail strategy, and a draft structure for its constituent products can be found at appendix 1.
- 1.11 At the Transport Committee Rail Vision workshop on 30th March 2020, members will be asked to consider options for what their vision for the region's

railway might be. Founded in the policy framework and evidence base developed to date, an interactive session is being planned that will enable members to articulate preferences for what they want the railway to do for the region, and how real world journeys should look and feel in the future. To enable Committee members to prepare for the workshop, material will be sent out in advance. This will include highlights from pieces of work recently completed, including the Rail Connectivity Vision.

Rail Connectivity Vision

- 1.12 There are numerous rail projects and programmes at varying stages of development considering requirements for the rail network at and around West Yorkshire, and Leeds in particular. Without a single, joined up, long-term vision for the railway serving the region, including HS2, NPR, TRU, and wider services, there is significant risk that individual programmes are developed in relative isolation that could lead to sub-optimal outcomes in the long term, with different programmes based on different planning assumptions.
- 1.13 In order to help address this, the Combined Authority, working with Transport for the North (TfN) and advisors, and supported by Network Rail and the Department for Transport, has undertaken a strategic, evidence-led piece of work to develop a vision for future rail connectivity (it should be noted that the overall Rail Vision will need to be broader than just connectivity). This will enable the region to provide a steer to all the above-mentioned programmes about what success looks like across all rail markets including local, inter-regional, inter-city, and freight.
- 1.14 Work has been undertaken to consider current and future travel markets and the role that heavy rail can play in achieving likely connectivity requirements. A range of alternative strategic models of how rail services could be organised across the region to provide the required connectivity has been considered. An evaluation framework has been developed to assess the relative merits of the options generated in line with the region's broad range of objectives.
- 1.15 The summary points emerging from the work are:
 - Heavy rail is well placed to serve the passenger transport market (and freight) in our region in support of the Combined Authority's economic, societal and environmental objectives. It is particularly good at enabling travel between major centres of population / very dense urban settings where large populations primarily want to move toward and within a major city's central business district.
 - There needs to be a mix of national, inter-regional and local rail connectivity with the flexibility for this to evolve over time as places (and the objectives for them) and travel markets evolve. There are many markets around our region that are currently poorly served by heavy rail and which have scope for improvement.

- Our region is likely to need a hub, nodes and spokes (mixed) model type approach, to enable a mix of direct and interchange connectivity within and out with the region.
 - This is likely to be based on a set of train service frequency standards that vary according to the current and future travel markets, objectives for and role of the places served.
 - The current major programmes of NPR, HS2, TRU, Leeds station area network improvements need to be integrated, based on a common, integrated vision of the future into a single programme. They get us a long way towards our needs.
 - However, there are also gaps that these projects don't solve and our connectivity work collating together current issues and identifying new issues based on future growth assumptions.
- 1.16 Due to the then pressing timescales for a TfN Board decision by December 2019, an early priority of the work has been 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. Earlier work by TfN showed that Stourton Junction is not required to achieve the agreed outputs of the HS2 and NPR Programmes when considered in isolation.
- 1.17 The study has taken an integrated approach building on Transpennine Route Upgrade, HS2 and NPR to consider the connectivity needs based on future economic, social and environmental trends. This approach predates but is consistent with the Oakervee Review recommendations for an integrated rail plan for the North and Midlands. The work suggests that a combination of a Clayton North junction and other infrastructure may deliver better outcomes than Stourton for West Yorkshire and wider North of England.
- 1.18 Following completion of the study, further work is being commissioned by the NPR co-clients to investigate the case for a Clayton North Junction that would allow northbound trains from HS2 to access an upgraded Doncaster to Leeds route via Wakefield, and with a re-instated Wortley Curve to enable direct access to Bradford. Until this further work is satisfactorily concluded, Stourton junction remains in play as a clear West Yorkshire priority.
- 1.19 Investment in the existing rail network is needed, including further electrification of the local rail network. The Network Rail Continuous Modular Strategic Planning (long term planning) process is important here as is other work led by the Department for Transport on short- and medium-term interventions in the Leeds area. To maintain the overall integrated approach identified in the initial study, further work is planned with TfN and partners DfT and Network Rail, to develop a City Region sequenced programme of rail investment including consideration of future rolling stock needs.

- 1.20 On 28th January 2020, Government announced the creation of a nationwide £500m fund to support the restoration of passenger services and re-open rail stations originally closed following the 1960s Beeching Report. Initial guidance was published on 19th February 2020 with a deadline of 28th February for initial ideas for one part of the fund.
- 1.21 The funding is being split in 3 ways to offer support to projects at different phases of development:
- *Ideas Fund*: This will provide support to proposals to reinstate axed local services. These should be sponsored by MPs working with local authorities and community groups.
 - *Accelerating existing proposals*: As well as looking for new ideas, the £500 million fund will be used to help accelerate the development of closed lines and stations which are already in the process of being considered for restoration.
 - *Proposals for new and restored stations*: A new round of the New Stations Fund will support both the development of new stations and the restoration of old station sites.
- 1.22 It is unclear how much of the £500m is new money. It should also be noted that Beeching's report led to 5,000 miles of line closure. To give a feel for what this level of funding might afford, a good example is that of the Borders Railway re-opening in Scotland:
- The 35-mile line cost £294m (2012 prices). Construction of the new railway involved extensive mining remediation, just under a million tonnes of earth moved, 30 miles of new railway and 90,000 sleepers laid, development of seven rail stations and six station car parks (www.bordersrailway.co.uk).
- 1.23 At the time of writing, consideration is being given to a possible submission to the *Ideas Fund* to help further investigate the case for the Wortley Curve re-opening and associated requisite rail infrastructure upgrades. Consideration is also being given as to whether the Combined Authority's existing new stations programme is eligible for funding.

HS2 Update

Oakervee Review

- 1.24 The Government has recently published the 'Oakervee Review' which sets out advice on 'whether and how' to proceed with HS2. The review panel was chaired by Doug Oakervee supported by industry experts, representing a wide range of viewpoints.
- 1.25 The advice is that HS2 should proceed in full and the Government should recommit to the principle of a Y-shaped network serving both sides of the Pennines. HS2 will deliver greater capacity and reliability for the rail network

and there are no 'shovel-ready alternative investments that could deliver the same benefits.

- 1.26 Oakervee makes several recommendations including the need to deliver an integrated railway investment programme for the Midlands and the North of England and a study to bring forward service improvements in these areas as soon as possible and before Phase 2b (to Leeds and Manchester is opened). It calls for a review of specifications for HS2 including a small reduction in frequencies, a pause in preparation for the HS2 phase 2b parliamentary bill, more work to maximise commercial opportunities around stations including local authorities and combined authorities potentially taking on HS2's role in funding and developing stations.
- 1.27 The Prime Minister in a statement to Parliament on the 11th February 2020 committed to delivering HS2 in full. He also stated that the Government will draw up an integrated plan for rail in the North, informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission to work out how best to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 Phase 2b more effectively. It's not clear at this stage how many of the other Oakervee recommendations will be implemented or the role of the Combined Authority in the proposed integrated rail plan.

Integrated Rail Plan

- 1.28 On 21st February 2020, Government published the terms of reference for the proposed integrated rail plan. The key points are:

- The integrated rail plan will be informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission which will look at the rail needs of the Midlands and the north, and the available evidence on Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub, HS2 Phase 2b and other proposed Network Rail projects.
- The government will also proceed with the legislation to allow for the development of the Western Leg provided it does not prejudice any recommendations or decisions that will be taken in this plan, and noting that Phase 2b can be legislated for in two or more hybrid bills, which may run concurrently.
- The Integrated Rail Plan will be published by the end of the year.

Northern Franchise

- 1.29 The Northern franchisee (Arriva Rail North Ltd) had become financially unsustainable. The default has occurred, and the franchise will now end prematurely. The franchise was otherwise expected to run until March 2025.

- 1.30 The Northern operation will be taken over by Northern Trains Ltd (Northern Trains) on 1 March 2020. Northern Trains is owned by DfT Operator of Last Resort Holdings Ltd (OLR), which in turn is owned outright by the Secretary of State for Transport. Arriva Rail North's staff and contractual positions will transfer to Northern Trains Ltd.
- 1.31 Robin Gisby is the managing director of OLR and Richard George is the chair. Both are familiar to the Combined Authority.

Northern Pacer Retention & Accessibility Fund 2020

- 1.32 As has been previously reported, pacer rolling stock is being retained by Northern for the first half of this year due to delays in rolling stock introduction. As part of mitigation planning for their retention in 2020, a fund of £250k was proposed by Northern to the combined authorities affected: South Yorkshire PTE, Transport for Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, to recognise that those most impacted by the retention of Pacers are customers with accessibility needs.
- 1.33 A briefing note from Northern on this subject can be found in Appendix 2.

3. Clean Growth Implications

- 1.34 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. 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 Engagement with Leaders and officers from around the region took place in late autumn 2019 in relation to the Rail Connectivity Vision.
- 7.2 Network Rail have been made aware of the contents of this report.

8. Recommendations

- 1.35 That members note and consider the presentation given by Matt Rice, Route Director North and East for Network Rail.
- 1.36 That members note and consider the progress being made in developing a new rail strategy for West Yorkshire, in advance of the Committee Rail Vision workshop on 30th March 2020.
- 1.37 That members note the updates on HS2, the Restoring Your Railway Fund, the Northern franchise, Northern Pacer retention and Accessibility Fund 2020.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Rail Strategy Key Parts and Structure

Appendix 2 – Northern Pacer Retention & Accessibility Fund 2020 Briefing