

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 4 September 2020

Subject: **Leeds City Region Transport 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:	

- 1.1 To provide the Transport Committee with an update on current issues not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Transport for the North meetings

Transport for the North Board

- 2.1 Transport for the North Board met on 29 July 2020. The meeting considered the following substantive matters:
- **TransPennine Route Upgrade** covering the recent announcement and TfN's latest position (covered elsewhere in this paper).
 - **Investment Programme Update** to consider an update on sequencing scenarios and the anticipated funding profiles that would be required to deliver these.

- **Economic Recovery Plan** confirming details of the final proposals in the Economic Recovery Plan, now submitted to government to consider for accelerated funding.
- **Northern Transport Charter** setting out proposals for further devolution of transport capital funding from Department for Transport with details of how the governance would need to be amended to achieve this. This will form part of TfN's submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

2.2 A link to TfN Board meetings and papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section. The next meeting of Transport for the North Board is scheduled for 17 September 2020.

Rail North Committee

2.3 Rail North Committee met on 14 July 2020. The Committee considered the following substantive matters:

- **Rail Operations and COVID-19 Recovery** with updates from TfN. The balancing act between encouraging use and keeping services safe was noted. Proposals for service recovery were considered.
- **Blake-Jones Review, Rail Reform and Devolution** where the Committee strongly endorsed ongoing need to promote passenger interests and secure meaningful devolution. The importance of better integration between transport modes locally was noted as a driver for devolution of decision making and funding. The long overdue Williams Rail Review was also discussed, with concern that it may not be published.

2.4 Cllr Blake (West Yorkshire and York representative) and Cllr Robinson (Chair of the Rail North Committee) subsequently met with the Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris MP, to press the case for reform and devolution. The Minister underlined his commitment to this agenda as part of forthcoming reforms.

2.5 Discussions were also held regarding the development of a business plan for the Northern operation (to follow later in the year), and proposals for recasting services in central Manchester to promote more reliable operation. This will come before the committee in October for a decision.

2.6 A link to papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section. The next meeting of Rail North Committee is currently scheduled for 21 October 2020.

Bus Updates

Fare Deal For Young People

2.7 At its meeting in March, the Committee approved a revision of the young people's concessionary fare scheme to introduce a simplified fare structure which encourages more under 19s to travel by bus. It was intended to introduce this from September however any initiatives to increase public

transport use will need to be delayed until the lifting of COVID 19 social distancing. A public consultation was undertaken in May-June 2020 to seek the views of the public on the proposed changes to bus fares for under 19s. 327 responses to the survey were received. A summary of the responses to the survey is as follows:

- 86% supporting a flat fare with 83% agreeing that a lower fare for short journeys would be a good idea,
- When advised that a flat fare scheme would mean some people would pay more and some less than they do now, 47% said they thought this was 'fair', with 34% saying that they thought it would not be fair.
- 96% of respondents thought it would be a good idea if all bus tickets for young people could be used on any bus, regardless of the bus company, with 52% saying they thought it would be fair for such a product to cost a little more than a product for just one bus operator's services.

2.8 Discussions are in progress to finalise the fare levels with bus companies and the West Yorkshire Ticketing Company ahead of a launch when the COVID social distancing restrictions are lifted.

2.9 As advised to the Committee in March, it has been agreed through the Bus Alliance to lift all requirements for under 19s to present a Young People's Photocard when purchasing a concessionary fare. This is aimed at removing the barriers for young people to use the bus, older looking under 19s may still be asked for proof of age. As this will also help reduce interaction between passengers and drivers during the COVID restrictions, it was agreed with operators that these new arrangements came into effect from August.

Network Navigation

2.10 As part of the Connecting Leeds programme, the Combined Authority aims to improve the information available to plan journeys and use the bus system in and around Leeds. The Leeds Core Bus Network project aims to make it easier for people to plan and take bus journeys by creating a user-friendly and accessible set of maps and new colour coded bus stop flags, shelters and other on-street infrastructure that link to bus lines across the city. A video of the trial bus stop and a set of maps and pictures were made available to the public on Your Voice website. People were asked to share their thoughts on the proposed maps and changes via a survey, which was promoted on a range of channels, including social media, a press release, and emails to key stakeholders.

2.11 There were 2068 unique visits to the Your Voice webpage, which represents the number of people who visited at least one page of the Leeds Core Bus Network page. 273 people completed our survey and 11 people and one organisation provided comments via the dedicated Your Voice email address. More than half of respondents selected that the proposed maps and designs would make planning their journeys easier.

- 2.12 The designs are currently being finalised, taking into consideration feedback received and adopting this into design where possible. Roll-out on-street will commence later on in the Autumn with installation in the City Centre coming next Spring to align with Connecting Leeds infrastructure works. A formal launch of the Leeds Core Bus Network will be arranged when the COVID social distancing restrictions are lifted. The scheme will be extended to the rest of West Yorkshire as part of Transforming Cities Fund.

Bus Fleet Monitoring

- 2.13 Working through the Bus Alliance, monitoring of the environmental standards of the West Yorkshire bus fleet is underway. **Appendix 1** illustrates the current position whereby 59% of the fleet meets the Euro VI emission standard required for compliance with Clean Air Zones.
- 2.14 Leeds has the greatest percentage of Euro VI buses in operation with 76%, a 20% increase from 19/20 reflecting the investment in new buses as part of the LPTIP scheme. Bradford, Calderdale, and Wakefield have 59%, 53% and 50% respectively, with Kirklees lowest percentages of Euro VI buses in operation at 38%.
- 2.15 All five districts have seen increases in the proportion of Euro VI buses in operation since 19/20 reflecting operator investment and the roll out of the £8 million retrofit scheme administered by the Combined Authority with funding from DEFRA which is almost complete upgrading approaching 480 buses.
- 2.16 First West Yorkshire is planning to operate service 5 in Leeds (Halton Moor/ City Centre loop) with nine electric single deck buses from October 2020. Electric double deck buses will operate Stourton Park & Ride in Leeds from late 2021. Both are part-funded through the DfT Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) grant scheme.

Tendered Bus Service Changes 30 August

- 2.17 There were several changes to bus services operating under contract to the Combined Authority on 30 August. These were largely the outcome of procurement processes which were conducted earlier in the year with implementation delayed due to COVID 19. They can be summarised as follows:
- **Airport services** – the network of services which link Leeds and Bradford operate are jointly funded by the Combined Authority and the Airport company. Following a procurement process, Transdev has been engaged to operate the services which will be branded “Flyer” . Route changes to the Bradford services will enable a faster journey time between the City and the Airport and new links to Apperley Bridge rail station
 - **Calderdale services** – a full area review of tendered services in Calderdale was undertaken in 2019 and a procurement process

commenced. At the start of the COVID 19 emergency, local bus operator TJ Walsh t/a Halifax Bus Company ceased trading. Tenders were invited for the company's services which were not in competition with other operators and contracts awarded to Yorkshire Tiger and South Pennine Community Transport. Arising from this exercise, it has been possible to reinstate a through bus service between Halifax and Keighley.

- **Shipley local services** – Yorkshire Tiger gave notice of early termination of contracts to run local services in the Shipley/ Bradford area following the loss of the Airport contracts. Tenders were invited and a contract has been awarded to TLC Travel Ltd to operate the services on a “gross cost basis”; this is where all fares revenue accrues to the Combined Authority and reduces the overall cost of the contracts.

Rail updates

Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade

- 2.18 The Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) was first announced in 2011. It is a programme of investment to deliver a high performing, reliable railway for passengers, with more seats, more trains and faster journeys between Manchester and York via Huddersfield and Leeds.
- 2.19 On 23 July 2020, the Transport Secretary announced a range of investments to level-up infrastructure across the North. This includes the release of £589m to begin design work on the first section of the Trans-Pennine railway line and other investment in the North of England.
- 2.20 He also announced the establishment of a new Northern Transport Acceleration Council (NTAC), dedicated to accelerating vital infrastructure projects and better connecting communities across the North's towns and cities. The body will ensure northern leaders have a direct line to ministers and has, the Secretary of State indicated, been formed with the desire to cut bureaucracy and red tape, so that passengers can get the modern, reliable transport network they deserve as quickly as possible. It is understood that the NTAC will hold its first meeting in September and will be made up of mayors and council leaders, with the Transport Secretary as chair.
- 2.21 The Minister of State for Transport has also written to TfN and clarified several issues in relation to TRU. The letter and the detailed response are included in **Appendices 2a and 2b**. The main points are summarised as below:
- The funding will support design and early delivery work on schemes within the first section of TRU, which includes doubling the congested part of the route east of Huddersfield from two to four tracks, electrifying the busiest sections and speeding up the line for improved journey times.
 - Full electrification, digital signalling, more multi-tracking and improved freight capacity and capability are now under consideration as part of the 'Integrated Rail Plan' due to report in December 2020.

- There is a key focus in phasing TRU by geographic areas, with early Group 1 projects (west of Leeds) delivering core “no regrets” interventions (i.e. those that will be appropriate regardless of what options are chosen for the sections of the project still being designed), to support a range of likely strategic directions for the whole Manchester-York route. Examples of this core scope are the extra tracks and junction works east of Huddersfield, which should unlock significant reliability and capacity improvements, and electrification of all the “Group 1” sections (Leeds – Huddersfield and Stalybridge – Manchester). This approach allows delivery of the core scope to progress without delay, while also allowing the remaining projects (some west, and some east of Leeds) to be developed to allow a decision in 2021 on the final configuration of the whole scheme.
- There is acknowledgement that station accessibility is a priority and DfT have asked Network Rail to put forward proposals to upgrade all stations to required standards where this is not already planned. The proposals will form part of the update to Business Case in 2021.

2.22 Delivery of the TRU scheme will inevitably be very disruptive. Combined Authority officers are participating in discussions with Network Rail to ensure that disruption is properly managed in the context of local bus and highway networks, as well as rail passengers. Highways officers in Kirklees and Leeds are party to these initial conversations. More information will be brought to Transport Committee as clearer delivery plans are developed.

Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and the north consultation
Integrated Rail Plan

2.23 In February 2020 the Oakervee Review was published, which was a report undertaken for the Government looking at whether and how to proceed with HS2. The report recommended that HS2 should go ahead, including the full Y shaped network to Leeds and Manchester, but that a further study to develop an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), embracing HS2 alongside other rail investment programmes, should be undertaken.

2.24 The Government re-confirmed their commitment to the full Y-shaped network in the House of Commons in February 2020. The IRP will be drawn up by the Department for Transport by the end of this year. It will be informed by a Rail Needs Assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC). NIC issued a call for evidence at the end of March 2020. The Combined Authority and the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce submitted our response in May 2020; a copy of the response was shared with members of Transport Committee at the July meeting.

2.25 NIC published an interim report in July 2020 and invited stakeholders for comments around the methodology of assessment. While the broad methodology seems sensible, there are still some areas of concern. These include:

- *Limited scope and omission of key programmes*: The scope of the proposed Rail Needs assessment seems very limited. This means that schemes / programme that have national and regional significance such as Leeds station and network capacity schemes at and around Leeds could be excluded from the IRP.
- *Lack of focus on Local or Intra-regional Rail* : The interim report repeatedly states that ‘local transport’ is out of scope; the apparent lack of focus on the ‘local’ or ‘intra-regional’ rail¹ is problematic and affects the robustness of the assessment, both because of the inherent importance of regional rail in its own right and as a feeder to longer-distance services, but also because the vast majority of rail routes in our region (and the North as a whole) are “shared-use” railways where it is not meaningful to consider only the longer-distance services using the line, and ignore regional rail and freight traffic which also operate on the same route.
- It is not clear how the proposed methodology could help to join and integrate the programmes through a holistic set of outputs. There is a danger that individual rail projects are being considered and evaluated in isolation and interventions could be picked and chosen to fit the funding scenarios instead of achieving true network. The result would be a suboptimal and non-integrated rail network, potentially trading off the ability to improve regional rail links and/or freight against enhancements to intercity services.
- It is not clear if the regeneration benefits of rail investment are sufficiently captured in the methodology.

2.26 The Combined Authority and the West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce submitted our response to the interim report on 15 August 2020. A copy is included at **Appendix 3**.

Rail Forum meeting

2.27 The Rail Forum met on 19 August 2020, with representatives from Northern, TransPennine Express, LNER, Cross Country, Network Rail, Transport Focus and Transport for the North.

2.28 The management of the current COVID-19 crisis was discussed and associated barriers which are stopping customers from returning to use rail and other public transport. Recent surveys from Transport Focus provided a useful insight in this area.

2.29 Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade was also discussed with special reference to ensuring customers were considered during the programme of works, for rail (including freight) and the wider community to ensure the region can be kept moving, including on local bus and road networks. The Rail Forum was also advised of a new role in Transport for the North which has been specifically

¹ P.12, Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and the North (Interim Report)

introduced to help manage the interface with the train operators during the planning for disruption during the scheme delivery.

- 2.30 Industry partners were also updated on progress with the Transforming Cities Fund, ahead of formal engagement to come.

Flexi-season tickets

- 2.31 The new flexi season ticket product was launched by Northern for Leeds to Harrogate journeys in July 2020. This is part of the TfN Integrated and Smart Travel programme and are loaded onto the new Northern and TPE smart cards.
- 2.32 The tickets are a bulk purchase of 10 all-day tickets for the price of 9 standard day returns. This gives a price per return journey generally between an off-peak return and a standard (peak) return. They are especially suitable for occasional commuters and should be particularly attractive to people commuting 3 days per week on average where a normal rail season ticket does not generally offer savings.
- 2.33 During August, the availability of these tickets extended to include journeys to and from Leeds and Skipton, Bradford, Dewsbury, and Huddersfield (stations with ticket gates). Platform validators are currently being installed at all railway stations across the north to allow passengers to 'tap in' at the start of their journey. This should allow the wide-scale roll-out of flexi-seasons by the end of the calendar year.
- 2.34 These tickets are a welcome addition to the range of products available for regular rail travellers. Work is now ongoing to develop a similar option for multi-modal MCard season tickets in West Yorkshire.

Rail industry reform

- 2.35 At the time of writing there had been no further official announcements relating to the publication of the Williams Rail Review. As highlighted in the Rail North Committee report above, Cllr Blake met with the Rail Minister in July to continue to press the case for reform and devolution.
- 2.36 Speaking at the Transport Select Committee on 24 June 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport acknowledged the continuing need for rail industry reform. He said that the current emergency funding arrangements are likely to allow the acceleration of the move to different types of contracts for passenger services. He also highlighted that events related to COVID-19 had partly overtaken Williams' analysis. The relevant link to the Transport Select Committee proceedings is provided in the **Background Documents** section.
- 2.37 DfT announced that the arrangement for the Operator of Last Resort (OLR) to continue running the LNER operation has been extended. OLR took over operation in June 2018 for an initial 2-year period. This has now been

extended for up to 3 additional years and provides some welcome certainty for continuing to actively plan and invest in service improvements.

- 2.38 The existing arrangement for Arriva to operate CrossCountry services is due to expire in October 2020. The current contract was extended when the franchise competition was terminated in September 2020 pending the outcome of the Williams Rail Review.
- 2.39 Further announcements on industry restructuring are expected by the time Transport Committee meets, including what will follow the current Emergency Measures Agreements (due to expire on 20 September), as well as the future arrangements for Cross Country.

Future Mobility

Future Mobility Strategy

- 2.40 The purpose of the West Yorkshire Future Mobility Strategy is to demonstrate how technology and innovation in transport can help the region meet our wider goals and assist in the long-term recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The Strategy also sets out the principles and priorities for our work on Future Mobility to meet our wider ambitions over the short (0-2 years), medium (2-5 years), and long (5-10 years) terms.
- 2.41 Over recent months we have been working alongside partners to develop the Strategy document. The Future Mobility Strategy public consultation was launched the week commencing 18th August 2020 to run for a period of 4 weeks. Following the close of consultation, all feedback will be considered and used to shape the final version of the strategy.

3 Clean Growth Implications

- 3.1 As described under the various topics covered above.

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 Consultations

- 7.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8 Recommendations

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

9 Background Papers

Agendas, papers and webcasts of meetings of the Transport for the North Board and meetings of Rail North Committee are available via this link:
<https://transportfornorth.com/about-transport-for-the-north/meetings/>

Further details of the Secretary of State's appearance at the Transport Select Committee on 24 June are available via this link:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/event/1207/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/>

- Appendix 1 Bus Fleet Monitoring
- Appendix 2 Andrew Stephenson MP letter to TfN
- Appendix 3 TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU): DfT responses to Transport for the North "challenges" set in January 2020
- Appendix 4 Response to the Rail Needs Assessment for the Midlands and the North (Interim Report)