
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 20 November 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.
- 1.2 To seek the approval of the Transport Committee to amendments to approved spending programmes

Transport for the North meetings

Transport for the North Board

- 2.1 Transport for the North Board met on 17 September 2020. The meeting considered the following substantive matters:

- **Northern Powerhouse Rail Preferred Phasing Scenario** where members discussed TfN's position on phasing of the Northern Powerhouse Rail project to inform the Board's input into the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North.

- **Integrated Rail Plan Update** where members were updated on progress towards developing an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North. This will feed into the work being undertaken by the National Infrastructure Commission, due to report by the end of the year.
 - **Comprehensive Spending Review** with a focus on the submission TfN had made to DfT to support its ongoing role in respect of major projects (namely NPR and Integrated and Smart Travel), together with the core funding for the organisation and funding for the Rail North functions.
- 2.2 At the Item on the Comprehensive Spending Review the Chair took the opportunity to relay details of a meeting held earlier in the week with the Secretary of State. The role of the Northern Transport Acceleration Council (NTAC) and the future focus of TfN was discussed, together with further devolution of powers and funding. The Chair reported that all parties agree there is a clear ongoing role for both TfN and its Board alongside NTAC and that each has a distinct function. The Chair reported that the Secretary of State said that clearer guidance on future transport governance and financial devolution will be set out as part of the proposed Devolution White Paper.
- 2.3 The Chair also explained to members his role as President of the NTAC and explained he accepted the position as complementary to his role as Chair of the TfN Board.
- 2.4 An 'establishment meeting' of the NTAC was held in September, which was attended by Councillors Blake and Hinchliffe for West Yorkshire. The focus of this initial meeting was to establish the Council, and no substantive items were discussed. At the time of writing discussion are ongoing in respect of a clear terms of reference membership.
- 2.5 A link to TfN Board meetings and papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section, which includes access to recordings of the public session of the Board. The next meeting of Transport for the North Board is scheduled for 18 November 2020. A verbal update will be provided on any significant matters that arise at this meeting.
- Rail North Committee
- 2.6 Rail North Committee met on 21 October 2020. The Committee considered the following substantive matters:
- **Priorities for Future Rail Services** with a discussion on the right approach to develop medium term service priorities. The opportunity for 'reset' of services through the COVID-19 recovery was highlighted.
 - **Rail Reform Matters** providing an update on the most recent announcements on rail franchising, together with progress on implementation of the Blake-Jones reforms to the function of the Rail North arrangements.
 - **Update on Operational Rail Issues** with updates from TfN. Members heard that rail services remain reliable, but that patronage had dipped

following the increase during the summer break. It was explained that whilst increases in services to return to a ‘normal timetable’ are planned in December 2020 and May 2021, this is contingent on availability of staff and a recovery in demand. There will be an impact on staff availability throughout 2021 due to delayed staff training.

- **Update on matters reserved to the Secretary of State** where an update was provided on the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements. The Chair raised the merit of the 1.5% management fee being offered to private operators under these arrangements, which he stated is an operating profit. A motion was supported to write to the Secretary of State to challenge this arrangement.
 - **Infrastructure Investment: Central Manchester** where members were provided an update on activity to develop interim changes to timetables to secure more reliable operation of services pending development a more substantial infrastructure solution. Work on this, under the auspices of the ‘Manchester Recovery Taskforce’, continues.
- 2.7 A link to papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section. The next Rail North Committee will be in early April 2021 on a date to be agreed.

Bus Updates

Electric Buses in Leeds

- 2.8 First West Yorkshire commenced operation of service 5 in Leeds (Halton Moor/ City Centre loop) with nine electric single deck buses on 13 October 2020. The Yutong E10 is a fully electric bus that combines latest battery technology with LED lighting and USB charging for phones and tablet devices to create a journey experience without minimal engine noise or vibration. The bus has a range of 200 miles on a single charge overnight, enabling it to operate all day without recharging. It is fitted with the BusEYE system of early warning features to improve road safety with other vehicles and alert pedestrians. An acoustic vehicle alerting system (AVAS) is helpful for people with visual impairment.

MCard Mobile App

- 2.9 MCard Mobile is an app launched in October by the Combined Authority and West Yorkshire Ticketing Company that allows customers to buy and activate a range of tickets that provide unlimited travel on any bus or train operator’s services within West Yorkshire. The app is available for Android and iOS devices and produces digital bus and train tickets stored within the app and validated through QR and rail Aztec codes. With an internet connection, a customer can buy a mobile ticket from anywhere at almost any time and scan the ticket when travelling by bus or train in West Yorkshire. MCard Mobile is the first multi modal app ticketing service in the UK.

- 2.10 Alongside the MCard Mobile app, the West Yorkshire Ticketing Company has also launched a range of bus and rail zonal Day Saver tickets aimed specifically at those people who will return to work after COVID-19 on a part time basis.
- 2.11 Given the successful completion of the first phase of the app, a further development enable additional functionality which will support third parties such as employers and Job Centre Plus purchasing tickets on behalf of the customer, refunds direct to the customer and improved data reporting.

Smartcard and Information Programme

- 2.12 At its meeting on 3 June 2020, Transport Committee approved that capital funds within the Smartcard and Information Programme previously approved by the Committee are utilised to fund activities in support of the Transport Recovery Plan. This has facilitated the adaptation of the real time information (RTI) system to incorporate bus occupancy information described elsewhere in this report and the next stage in developing the MCard Mobile app. Deployment of the remainder of the Programme funding is as follows

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| Development of MCard Mobile App | £148k |
| 6 bus station info screens | £33k |
| Bus occupancy data on RTI | £81k |
| Replace Bus Station RTI screens | £110k |
| 3 MCard vending machines | £75k |
| Customer database development | £85k |
| Total Programme Budget Remaining | £532k |

Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) System

- 2.13 In partnership with South Yorkshire PTE and City of York Council, the Combined Authority operates one of the largest RTPI systems in the UK. The System provides real time bus information to on-street displays as well as to a large number of web and App based platforms. There is an urgent requirement to upgrade the System to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- 2.14 Due to COVID related delays in delivery of Demand Responsive Transport solutions, the ITB programme for 2019-22 for public transport assets, services and information improvements, which was approved by the Transport Committee in April 2019, is being re-shaped to accommodate the required renewal of the RTPI system. This will deliver improvements to the quality and reliability of the real time offer for bus passengers, boosting passenger confidence in the years to come as efforts to recover bus patronage from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue.

- 2.15 To help passengers travelling during the current pandemic, an occupancy indicator is now included on the real time information screens and mobile data. This is based on data from the bus ticket machines.

Dewsbury & Wakefield Bus Station Travel Centres

- 2.16 Arriva Yorkshire has stated that the company does not intend to re-open its Travel Centres at Dewsbury and Wakefield which have been closed since the start of lockdown in March. Dewsbury Bus Station is owned and managed by the Combined Authority which had an agreement with Arriva to operate the Travel Centre. The current COVID situation is causing low footfall through the bus station and it is not proposed to reinstate the Travel Centre in its previous form during the COVID emergency. A further review will be made of customer services at Dewsbury Bus Station and the Transport Committee will be advised of the outcome of this early in 2021 as part of the post COVID recovery arrangements. The Combined Authority' Customer Services Team will continue to discuss ticket retail and customer service at Wakefield bus station with Arriva which owns and manages the facility

Rail updates

Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade

- 2.17 Network Rail is inviting residents in the Huddersfield area and across the wider region to view the latest online proposals for major upgrades to the railway between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury).
- 2.18 The plans include electrifying the eight mile stretch and doubling the number of railway tracks from two to four. This work would bring a more modern and reliable railway for passengers, allow more trains to run and better connect the region. Improvement work is also planned at Huddersfield, Deighton, Mirfield and Ravensthorpe stations. These proposals are the core part of the wider Transpennine Route Upgrade, which will transform journeys between York and Manchester via Leeds and Huddersfield.
- 2.19 Following two phases of consultation for the scheme in autumn 2019 and spring 2020, Network Rail would like to give the public a final opportunity to view the plans and see how they have developed. A link to the documents on the Network Rail website is included in **Background Documents**. They will be available from Monday 5 October until early 2021.
- 2.20 The final scope of the TRU has yet to be confirmed by the government. It is our understanding that full electrification, accessible stations, 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.

Rail Forum meeting

- 2.21 The Rail Forum met on 4 November 2020, chaired by Cllr Groves with representatives from Northern, TransPennine Express, LNER, Cross Country, Network Rail, Transport Focus and Transport for the North.
- 2.22 The management of the current COVID-19 crisis was discussed, and the details are reflected in the separate COVID-19 paper before the Committee at **Item 6**.
- 2.23 Other matters discussed included how to adapt to the changing market conditions and rebuild rail demand. Industry partners were also updated by the Combined Authority on progress with Transforming Cities Fund projects that have a relationship with railway.
- 2.24 Network Rail advised that recent engineering works at Leeds Station to complete the next stage of building 'Platform 0' had gone well.

Rail industry reform

- 2.25 On Monday, 21 September 2020 the Secretary of State made a significant announcement on the future of the rail industry. The announcement confirmed details of new Emergency Recovery Measures Agreements which franchised operators have now entered. These arrangements supersede the Emergency Measures Agreements that had been in place since March 2020.
- 2.26 The new Agreements operate on a similar basis, where cost and revenue risk are assumed by the Department of Transport. Operators will take a margin on pre-COVID-19 operating costs of up to 1.5% subject to performance. The agreements run for between 6 and 18 months and include provision for termination of the underlying franchise agreement, terms for which are to be agreed. With levels of demand expected to be lower for an extended period, the former franchise agreements are financially unsustainable.
- 2.27 Members will recall that Northern and LNER are not franchised operators; instead they are operated by the state controlled 'operator of last resort' and are governed by service agreements – these arrangements continue.
- 2.28 The Agreement with First TransPennine Express is expected to last until March 2021, beyond which an interim direct award arrangement will be negotiated pending wider industry reform.
- 2.29 In making the announcement about the new Agreements the Secretary of State confirmed that in future rail services will be managed as 'concessions'. This confirms that the transfer of revenue risk for passenger services to the state is now a long-term position. The Secretary of State noted that this will mean an end to confusing operator-specific ticketing and duplication of different operators' services signalling anticipated major reforms and drastic simplification of the way the passenger railway is organised. A link to the DfT announcement is included in **Background Documents**.

- 2.30 The announcement went on to confirm that the Williams Review is expected to be published as a White Paper once the course of the COVID-19 pandemic becomes clearer. The publication of the Williams Review White Paper is also expected to provide some clarity on the role of local transport authorities in securing greater local accountability of and influence over rail operations. This was highlighted in the text of the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal.
- 2.31 Whilst there is a great deal of uncertainty until more details of the reforms are published, the transition to a new structure will take at least two or three years to fully implement. The shift of revenue and cost risk to DfT means that the fundamental feature of concessions is already in place. A series of interim arrangements are expected to be put in place as a bridge to the new arrangements. The award of an interim management contract for CrossCountry services to continue to be operated by Arriva for up to three years from 19 October 2020 fits this approach. Arriva will earn a performance related fee for operating the services on behalf of DfT.

HS2 East

- 2.32 A group of MPs, civic and business leaders from across the Midlands and the North has written to the Prime Minister calling for the full delivery of HS2's Eastern Leg from Birmingham to Leeds. In a letter to the Prime Minister, the cross-party group cites a new report which demonstrates stark social and economic inequalities between the Eastern and Western regions of the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.
- 2.33 The letter and the report – *Mid the gap: The role of HS2's Eastern Leg in bridging England's east-west divide* can be viewed on HS2 East website. A link to website is included in **Background Documents**.

Consortium of East Coast Mainline Authorities

- 2.34 The Consortium of East Coast Mainline Authorities met on 8 October 2020. Members agreed the principles of a further round of advocacy activity to make the case of investment in the route. This is supported by new research into the wider economic benefits that the line and the services it provides. The growing importance of the railway in decarbonisation, including accommodation of more freight traffic were highlighted, together with the importance of reliability of services.
- 2.35 The communications team at West Yorkshire Combined Authority is supporting development of this activity, which is expected to be launched in November 2020.
- 2.36 The meeting also heard from DfT, Network Rail and LNER on the ongoing upgrade works. These will allow for further development of the timetable in 2022.

Network Rail Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy

- 2.37 In September 2020 Network Rail published its strategy on how energy from rail traction should move away from carbon-based sources, above all diesel power. While written at a high level rather than with detail of specific interventions in specific places, the Strategy contains several useful aspects:
- A reminder that rail transport is inherently energy- and carbon-efficient, and therefore one of the most important ways in which rail can contribute to decarbonisation is through a shift away from other modes of transport such as car and air.
 - It affirms the strength of the case for a long-term, consistent, and comprehensive programme of rail electrification, which should ultimately cover all principal passenger and freight lines, including almost all railways in West Yorkshire. “Traditional” electrification is a mature and cost-effective technology that allies decarbonisation with increasing the efficiency, performance, and attractiveness of the railway for passenger and freight traffic. It is the only credible option for rail freight and high-speed / high-density passenger railways.
 - Alternative sources of traction power such as energy storage through battery and hydrogen technology will also play a role, primarily in replacing diesel on less busy lines, especially in rural areas where there is little or no freight traffic. It may also have a role in easing the transition from diesel to full electric traction.
 - There is a programme-level business case setting out how the recommendations could be realised and the order-of-magnitude costs of doing so.
- 2.38 Following on from this work, NR is now working on more place-specific studies to identify the pathways to the zero-carbon railway, and in particular how a rolling programme of electrification should look, such as which lines should be prioritised.
- 2.39 Members will note the close alignment between this strategy and the Combined Authority’s own strong support for rail electrification, including the priorities set out in the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy. A link to a summary of the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy is included in the **Background Documents** section.

Active Travel

- 2.40 An announcement is still awaited from government on the outcome of the West Yorkshire application for Emergency Active Travel Fund tranche 2 funding. Approval has been sought from Investment Committee at their meeting on 5 November and a summary of the approvals sought is provided as part of Item 13 on this agenda.

Future Mobility

- 2.41 The Department for Transport has launched a trial of rental electric scooter schemes (e-scooters) which was open to all local authority areas to take part. In July 2020, Government passed secondary legislation relating to the regulation of e-scooters within trial areas.
- 2.42 The Combined Authority registered an initial interest with the Department for Transport in taking part, in order to join a list of interested authorities on behalf of our West Yorkshire partner councils. However, neither the Combined Authority nor the partner councils are actively progressing a rental e-scooter trial and the deadline for involvement has now passed.

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.
- 8.2 That the Committee approves the updated spend profile for the Smartcard and Information Programmes as set out in this report
- 8.3 That the Committee approves the revision of the Integrated Transport Block Programme to accommodate the upgrading of the Real Time system as set out in this report.

9. Background Documents

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://transportforthenorth.com/about-transport-for-the-north/meetings/>

Documents and plans forming part of Network Rail's current engagement on the Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury).scheme are available via this link: www.networkrail.co.uk/TranspennineEngagement

Further details of the Secretary of State's announcement on rail reform ion 21 September is available via this link:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rail-franchising-reaches-the-terminus-as-a-new-railway-takes-shape/>

The HS2 East website with details of the latest activity can be accessed via this link: <https://www.hs2east.co.uk/>

A summary of the Network Rail Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy is available online via this link: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Traction-Decarbonisation-Network-Strategy-Executive-Summary.pdf>

10. **Appendices**

10.1 None