

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 20th November 2020

Subject: Rail Vision

Director: Alan Reiss, Director Policy, Strategy and Communications

Author: James Nutter

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 introduce the draft Rail Vision for consideration and approval, following the considerable and valued input from Committee members earlier this year.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's endorsement for the draft Rail Vision document to be considered by the Combined Authority for public engagement, as part of the wider Connectivity Plan suite of documents.

2. Information

A New Rail Strategy for West Yorkshire

Rail Vision

- 2.1 The Combined Authority is producing a Connectivity Plan for the region. With an aim to create easy, seamless, door-to-door journeys, this ambitious plan identifies West Yorkshire's priorities for different forms of transport and how they will integrate. The plan aims to deliver a significant shift to public transport use – bus, rail and a new form of urban mass transit – and cycling and walking.

- 2.2 The Connectivity Plan includes daughter documents that outline the ambition for each mode of transport as part of the holistic ‘whole’. The new West Yorkshire Rail Strategy is the document that will fulfil this purpose for ‘heavy rail’, the Rail Vision being the first product thereof.
- 2.3 With an ever-changing economic, transport and rail policy context, it remains important that West Yorkshire has a rail strategy that is both current and, at the same time, adaptable to the ever-changing world. The strategy needs to support us to:
- Work in partnership with the rail industry to secure delivery of committed improvements.
 - Influence the rail industry and help to shape the development and delivery of future interventions.
 - Guide development of rail priorities for the region and establish inputs to a coherent programme.
 - Challenge the industry to maintain high standards of passenger experience and service delivery.
- 2.4 The COVID-19 crisis has brought unprecedented disruption to society. There is a growing sense that we will see lasting impacts that will change the way we travel for good – where we travel to, why we travel to certain places, when we travel, and the modes we choose to suit our new travel needs.
- 2.5 At this point in time it is too early to say with any confidence that we know what the future holds in terms of the reshaping of rail travel markets – we face an uncertain future in the short term. We need our Rail Strategy to reflect this uncertainty.
- 2.6 We must continue to plan for growth in rail across our region – for economic, social, and environmental reasons. Our objectives are clearly supported by a shift towards sustainable modes, and rail in particular, and we must continue to encourage rail growth. This need is clearly demonstrated in our emerging strategy aimed at tackling the Climate Emergency – clearly showing that we need to pursue continued investment in enhancing the rail network and services to meet both passenger and freight needs of our region
- 2.7 As the first product of the Rail Strategy, the Rail Vision sets out West Yorkshire’s ambition for the way in which the railway needs to serve the region, its people and businesses in the future. Beyond the Rail Vision, development of the full Rail Strategy will translate the high-level objectives, outcomes, and outputs contained in the vision into interventions across the full scope of rail policy. This will include prioritisation.
- 2.8 The Committee will recall the Rail Vision workshops that took place over the spring and early summer. The Committee’s input was an invaluable direction that formed the basis on which Rail Vision document has been developed.

During those workshops, the ambition and objectives (p13-21), and priorities (p40) for the region’s railway were derived, discussed and endorsed for inclusion in the Rail Vision.

- 2.9 The draft Rail Vision document is found in Appendix 1. Using the Committee’s input outlined above, the document contains an overall ‘headline’ vision for rail and more detailed vision summaries for each area of rail theme and output. The headline vision for rail sets out the region’s capacity and connectivity needs, our well-formed position on established major rail programmes, and then takes each leg of a door to door journey in turn, outlining how the ‘rail experience’ of the future should be.
- 2.10 The detailed vision summaries contain a description of the challenges, priorities and vision for each output, and are based on the following themes:

Capacity	Connectivity
Track capacity	Journey times
On-train capacity	Frequencies
Station capacity	Access & integration
Freight options	Growth areas
Major projects	New stations / network gaps
Standards	Implementation
Reliability / punctuality	Funding landscape
Information	Decision-making
Station quality	Industry structure
Rolling stock quality	Devolution agenda
Fares & ticketing	Cost effectiveness

- 2.11 The underpinning technical work and evidence base for the Rail Strategy is more developed in some of the above themes and outputs than others. The Committee will observe that this comes through in the Rail Vision document, where there is a greater degree of specificity for areas which are more developed.
- 2.12 The Rail Vision’s realisation would enable West Yorkshire’s residents and businesses to enjoy the benefits of a railway that is comparable with and no different to that enjoyed by London and the South East.

Next Steps

2.13 Subject to the Committee's considerations, the Rail Vision will be tabled for the Combined Authority to endorse public and stakeholder engagement on it as part of the Connectivity Plan suite of documents.

2.14 Work to develop the full West Yorkshire Rail Strategy continues in the meantime, which alongside the outcome of the engagement exercise, will enable it to be finalised in 2021. Members, Local Authority and rail industry partners will continue to be engaged in the process.

3. Clean Growth Implications

3.1 Championing growth and development of the local rail network is an important way in which the Combined Authority can facilitate modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and support continued economic growth

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 No external consultations have been undertaken.

8. Recommendations

8.1 That the Committee considers and approves the draft Rail Vision document.

8.2 That the Committee endorses the draft Rail Vision document to be considered by the Combined Authority for public engagement as part of the wider Connectivity Plan suite of documents.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Rail Vision