
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 12 March 2021

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. Purpose of this report

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

2. Information

Transport for the North meetings

Transport for the North Board

- 2.1 The Transport for the North (TfN) Board met on 14 January 2021 and 18 February 2021.
- 2.2 A verbal update of the Board meeting on 14 January was provided to Transport Committee at its meeting on 15 January. The meeting covered the following substantive items:
- **Rail Needs Assessment** where members expressed their continued support for an approach that secures full delivery of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). TfN consequently issued statutory advice to

inform the anticipated Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North.

- **TransPennine Tunnel M6-A1 Corridor Statutory Advice** where members endorsed an approach that highlights the importance of strategic cross-Pennine connectivity, whilst recognising that upgrades to existing routes are likely to be the effective and environmentally sensitive approach, alongside investment in rail lines.
- **Funding and Business Planning** where members were briefed on TfN's funding settlement for 2021/22, which included a significant reduction in 'core grant', and an end to funding for the Integrated and Smart Travel (IST) programme. Members supported the need for sufficient funding of TfN's activities and expressed concern about the withdrawal of IST funding.
- **Recruitment of TfN Chief Executive** where members supported the case for recruiting a permanent Chief Executive.

2.3 The Board meeting on 18 February 2021 considered the following substantive items:

- **IST Programme** which covered the actions to wind-down activity on the Integrated and Smart Travel programme. It was agreed to make a final push to secure ongoing funding from the Treasury. Members expressed concerns about the loss of expertise built up in the team, and the lost opportunity to better integrate ticketing for multi-modal journeys.
- **Funding Update and Draft Business Planning** where members were updated on progress to putting in place a business plan for 2021/22. Reallocation of budgets has allowed some mitigation for the reduction of core funding.
- **Northern Powerhouse Rail** was further discussed. The result will be statutory advice from TfN to DfT to state the Board's priorities for NPR including on the preferred route. For West Yorkshire, this means a clear preference for a new link between Manchester and Leeds that serves central Bradford. Members reluctantly accepted that submission of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) will be deferred so that it can respond to the proposals in the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the Midlands and the North, expected to be published by DfT in March 2021.

2.4 Closure of the Integrated and Smart Travel programme will have implications for West Yorkshire. At the outset, it was intended that the programme would facilitate integrated pay-as-you-go ticketing across bus and rail, including fare-capping. Part of the programme would also have supported the necessary card reading equipment on smaller operators' buses. DfT has indicated there may be specific initiatives on ticketing announced as part of the Williams Review for rail and the National Bus Strategy. Subject to these

announcements it may be that initiatives for integrated ticketing across modes will need to be developed locally.

- 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 24 March 2020.

Rail North Committee

- 2.6 Rail North Committee met on 12 January 2021, covering the following substantive items:
- **Rail Reform Matters** which provided an update on still awaited rail reforms. Concerns were raised that decision-making appears to be increasingly centralised. Members discussed the merit in working at a level closer to the point of impact in future, and the importance of being able to offer local knowledge and intelligence in this context. The North East joint model was noted as a good case study. The importance of a stronger relationship with Network Rail was also raised.
 - **Update on Operational Rail Issues** updated members on the actions the industry and DfT are taking to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. In general, it has been easier to manage resources in the latest lockdown. Passenger numbers remain very low, although not as low as the spring lockdown in 2020.
 - **Planning for the Future.** Members endorsed the production of a 'roadmap to recovery' to support rebuilding after the pandemic. Members highlighted the risk of a 'car-led recovery' and underlined the importance of a flexible ticketing offer to attract passengers back.
 - **Manchester Recovery Taskforce.** Members received an update on the public consultation on service options for May 2022, which has subsequently been launched. Further details of this are provided elsewhere in this report.
- 2.7 Two informal workshops of the committee have also taken place. The first of these covered future service agreements. This topic is covered in further detail below. The second considered the emerging proposals for investment in capacity in the central Manchester rail network as part of the work looking at the long term under the Manchester Recovery Task Force activity.
- 2.8 A link to papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section, which includes access to recordings of the public session of the Committee. The next Rail North Committee is scheduled for 25 March 2021.

Rail Updates

Train Operators Forum and rail operator updates

- 2.9 The Chair led a meeting of the Train Operators Forum on 3 February 2021. This was attended by rail operators, Network Rail, Transport Focus and TfN, together with Cllrs Kaushik and Bolt.
- 2.10 Discussions included how to adapt to the changing market conditions and rebuild rail demand. This included looking at key information from surveys carried out by Transport Focus of what customers need/expect after restrictions are lifted. Transport for the North provided updates on rail reform and different recovery scenarios post COVID-19 and emerging key trends.
- 2.11 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 5**.
- 2.12 Recent poor rail performance because of changing weather conditions was discussed. Several trees laden with snow fell onto the railway in January. Network Rail has highlighted this as an area to be targeted during future de-vegetation work, to improve resilience and reliability in future.
- 2.13 Train Operators were asked to present to the next meeting initiatives they are proposing as part of an improved customer offer for post pandemic recovery.
- 2.14 The final train in Northern's fleet has entered their refurbishment programme. The £100 million programme includes more than 260 electric and diesel trains and has been carried out at eight depots across the country. The current stage of refurbishment focuses on customer comfort and includes upgrades to seating, lighting, interior and exterior painting, and toilets with baby changing facilities. The digital trains project is still ongoing which will see WIFI, USB charging points, media screens, passenger counting systems and improved maintenance features added. The passenger counting systems should mean comprehensive and accurate passenger counts are available to inform future decision making.

Planned timetable changes in May 2021

- 2.15 National rail timetables typically change twice a year in May and December. Whilst this cycle has been affected by short-term changes in response to the impacts of the pandemic, they remain the focus for planned changes.
- 2.16 Relatively few changes are being planned for May 2021, other than to refine provision according to available resources. The planned changes are also dependent on travel restrictions being lifted. A summary appears below, comparing the May 2021 timetable against what was initially operated in December 2020 (i.e. not against the January 2021 temporary timetables in operation at the time of writing).

- 2.17 On Northern, there are no changes planned to Sunday timetables. For weekdays, the principal changes are:
- Hull – Leeds – Bradford Int. – Halifax: drops from hourly (“1tph”) to every other hour (“0.5tph”)
 - Leeds – Skipton: normal daytime 2tph service continues, but additional peak-only trains are withdrawn.
 - Leeds – Wakefield Westgate – Doncaster: normal daytime hourly service continues, but additional peak-only trains are withdrawn.
 - Service increases previously proposed for Knaresborough – York, and York – Scarborough have been postponed.
- 2.18 On Trans-Pennine Express, no significant changes are planned for the West Yorkshire area, other than some alterations to the lengths of trains to minimise the risk of crowding. They will, however, monitor passenger numbers on the East Coast as there was a strong leisure market here last summer and adjust services if they can.
- 2.19 On LNER (London services), again no significant changes are planned for May 2021, though it should be noted that for much of this period, temporary timetables will be in force anyway due to the rebuilding of King’s Cross station and approaches and other engineering work.
- 2.20 Cross-Country (Edinburgh – Newcastle – York – Leeds – Sheffield – Birmingham – South-West services) are not planning significant changes in May 2021.
- 2.21 Grand Central’s Bradford – Halifax – Wakefield – London services are currently suspended. Subject to the lifting of restrictions as planned, services are expected to resume from 27 March 2021.

Transition of passenger operations to National Rail Contracts

- 2.22 Further to recent updates to Transport Committee on anticipated rail reform, the transition to new National Rail Contracts is underway, via a process of negotiated direct awards. The new contracts are intended as a relatively short term ‘bridge’ from the current emergency measures arrangements until a new long-term operational model to be defined and implemented as part of the wider Williams rail reform in coming years.
- 2.23 In common with the emergency measures arrangements, the contracts keep revenue and costs risks with DfT at a time when there remains a great deal of uncertainty due to the pandemic on revenue and funding. This means most decisions with financial impacts will be taken by the client, rather than the operators. Commencement of the new National Rail Contracts also marks a formal end to the previously agreed franchises, and the associated commitments they contained.

- 2.24 TransPennine Express (TPE) is anticipated to move to the new contractual basis from 1 April 2021 or soon afterwards. The same management principles will apply to the Northern operation whilst it remains under direct government ownership, which is expected to be formalised onto a new direct award contract from the first quarter in 2022.
- 2.25 An important feature of the new contracts will be annually agreed business plans setting out what operators will provide and to what standards. Engagement with DfT on the content and form of the annual business plans for TPE and Northern is being managed via the Rail North governance. Members of the Rail North Committee have requested oversight of the business plans for the forthcoming year. At the time of writing the long-awaited Williams Review white paper has not been published. It is currently anticipated in March 2021.

East Coast Main Line timetable consultation

- 2.26 The Chair met with industry representatives in January 2021 to discuss the proposed recast of the East Coast Main Line timetable in May 2022. This recast will allow for additional services and shorter journey times following the completion of major infrastructure projects as part of the East Coast Upgrade.
- 2.27 Details of the proposed changes are still being developed, but the opportunity was taken to highlight priorities for West Yorkshire, including:
- The importance of connectivity to stations between Doncaster and London, including for connections to the East Midlands and Cambridgeshire.
 - The importance of service frequency on local trains between Leeds, Wakefield, and Doncaster, particularly where some local stations only have an hourly service.
 - The continuing importance attached to ensuring regular through services to Bradford, noting these remain dependent on other infrastructure proposals at Shipley and Bradford.

- 2.28 A formal timetable consultation is expected to commence in later in the year, and a response will be presented for members to agree at a future meeting. Further details about the East Coast Upgrade are available via the link in **Background Documents**.

Manchester Recovery Tasks Force public consultation

- 2.29 Transport for the North, Network Rail and Department for Transport have been consulting the public on the trade-offs for restructuring the timetable in and around central Manchester to achieve better reliability. Three options are presented, each with different impacts on services and different anticipated reliability benefits.

- 2.30 The result of this consultation will inform a recommendation of the Manchester Recovery Task Force (MRTF), which the Rail North Committee will be invited to endorse at a special meeting in April. The changes are then expected to be introduced from May 2022.
- 2.31 The emphasis from TfN is that these are short-term measures to help ensure more reliable services, which underlines the need for investment in the network to accommodate planned timetables.
- 2.32 The options present no major negative impacts on connectivity for West Yorkshire. Given the issues involved, the West Yorkshire response does not endorse or state preference for specific options. The response supports the need for change and supports some aspects of the options. A specific benefit included in two of the options is a more consistent and regular service throughout the day for Slaithwaite and Marsden as part of stopping services between Huddersfield and Manchester.
- 2.33 The response also makes clear the ongoing priority attached to through services from Bradford, Halifax and the Calder Valley to Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. This north – south connectivity across Manchester was an important aspect of the original ‘Northern Hub’ infrastructure proposals and informs our engagement with the MRTF activity focused on the longer-term network investment proposals.
- 2.34 The consultation was due to close on 10 March 2021, and a copy of the West Yorkshire response is included at **Appendix 1**. A link to background information, including the consultation document are included in the **Background Documents** section.

Restoring Your Railway Fund

- 2.35 On 23 January 2021, the Government announced the third round of the Restoring Your Railways Ideas Fund to develop proposals to restore railway lines, services and stations axed under the Beeching cuts. Originally anticipated to be announced in November 2020 the third round was due to close 05 March 2021. A link to the announcement is included in the **Background Documents** section.
- 2.36 The Combined Authority will not make any submissions to this third round of the Ideas Fund. Building on the Rail Vision, which was published in January as part of the overarching Connectivity Plan, Combined Authority officers are currently developing the new Rail Strategy which will produce priorities for a pipeline of interventions which will be guided by and ultimately decided upon by members.
- 2.37 Part of the new Rail Strategy will include the role that new / re-opened railway lines and stations should play in delivering West Yorkshire’s objectives and critically, how these relates to the plans for mass transit. This is very much a work in progress and is in the early stages of development, meaning that we are at present not ready to prepare and submit a bid to the Ideas Fund. Also,

worth noting is that in the considerable and helpful engagement with Transport Committee members on the Rail Vision, the onus from Members was very much on improving the railway that is already there rather than on significant expansion through further new stations and re-opened lines. Following completion of the Rail Strategy and further development of the mass transit plans, we will look to develop further Ideas Fund proposals for member consideration at a West Yorkshire level.

- 2.38 The Combined Authority is not the only body in West Yorkshire eligible to bid to the Ideas Fund, and will consider supporting and providing information from existing work should individual MPs or other partners and stakeholders decide to submit bids.

Northern Accessibility Fund

- 2.39 In 2020, Northern agreed with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport, Transport for Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire Combined Authority to launch a £250,000 Accessibility Fund, dedicated to accessibility improvements for Northern rail services. This was related to the later than anticipated withdrawal of Pacer trains.
- 2.40 Northern will consider schemes or projects that will enable disabled and older people to travel with Northern, by improving the accessibility of Northern trains and stations, with a project value of up to £50,000. The fund will be led and overseen by the Northern Accessibility User Group (NAUG), an independently chaired pan disability user group, whose membership represents a range of disability groups and charities reflecting the communities served by Northern. At the time of writing, the Combined Authority is reviewing the criteria and considering a proposal, particularly focused on the rail lines where Pacer trains remained in service for longer than planned.
- 2.41 A link to the Northern Accessibility Fund webpage with more information is included in the **Background Documents** section.

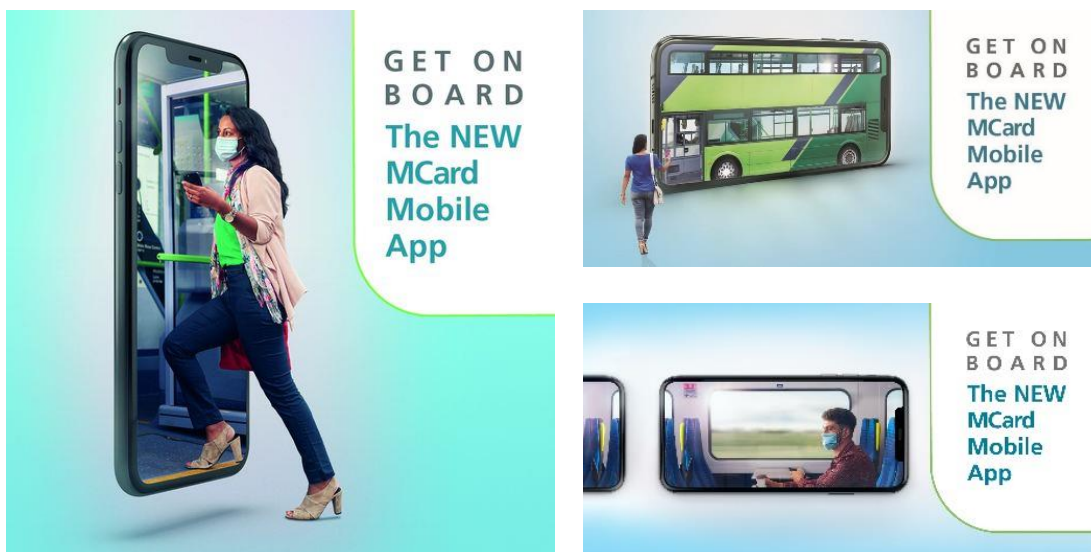
Bus Expert Panel

- 2.42 As part of the Combined Authority's work to understand the future options for bus in West Yorkshire, an Expert Panel has been established. The panel provides an opportunity to discuss bus in West Yorkshire and draw on the experiences of others outside of the area.
- 2.43 The second Expert Panel for bus was held in February 2021 and the discussion focussed on the customer and what techniques and interventions may be required to return the existing customers to the bus during the recovery phase and how to attract new customers going forward. The panel discussed how a clear and simple message, which makes bus an accessible option to use is key to returning and growing patronage.
- 2.44 The next Expert Panel is due to be held in June 2021.

Ticketing Update

MCard Mobile

- 2.45 MCard Mobile is a new app introduced in late 2020 enabling customers to purchase and download MCard tickets directly to their Apple or Android phone. The customer downloads the app, registers their details and payment card and then purchases tickets delivered to the phone as a secure bar code which can be read by the bus ticket machine and rail station ticket barrier.
- 2.46 The app is particularly aimed at returning part time commuters who will be able to buy travel for the days they need. Alongside the app, a new bus and rail “DaySaver” ticket has been introduced using the MCard travel zones. This is understood to be the first multi-modal ticketing app in the UK that allows the customer to purchase and use tickets via your smartphone to travel on bus and rail services. The customer can buy ten of these tickets for the price of nine and can choose which days they activate them according to the days they plan to commute. A full promotional launch will be held in the summer when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The graphics below indicates the marketing material to be used.



- 2.47 The next stage in the development of the MCard Mobile app is to develop “gifting”. This is where an organisation or individual can buy and send a ticket to an individual’s phone. This facility will for example enable parents to buy tickets for school students and companies for their workforce.

Leeds Public Transport Improvement Programme Update

- 2.48 Progress is being made on the schemes to improve bus facilities and services in Leeds funded by the Leeds Public Transport Improvement Programme;
- Installation of new bus stop signage is in progress to roll out the colour coded Leeds Core Bus Network. A digital map and video is now

available on wymetro. Additional real time information displays are also being installed throughout the City

- City Centre bus stop infrastructure improvements at Headrow, Park Row and Infirmary Street are approaching completion with works having started in the Corn Exchange area
- Work is progressing on bus priority corridors to reduce bus journey times and improve punctuality
- Stourton Park & Ride service is planned to commence in September using electric buses
- The East Leeds “FlexiBus” Demand Responsive Transport service is also planned to commence in September using electric minibuses

Levelling Up Fund and Existing Local Pinch Point Expressions of Interest

- 2.49 In the 2020 Spending Review the government announced the Levelling Up Fund, a new cross-departmental fund under the oversight of the Treasury, Department for Transport (DfT) and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to invest in high value local projects that support economic recovery and regeneration. The Levelling Up Fund will supersede existing local growth funding streams.
- 2.50 The DfT wrote to Local and Combined Authorities on 11 February 2021 with some further details of the Levelling Up Fund, advising of the intention to publish a prospectus for the fund shortly, and to launch the first round of competitions in the first quarter of this year.
- 2.51 The DfT’s letter also advised that the Levelling Up Fund could include the Local Pinch Points Fund (LPPF) Programme, and was seeking Local/Combined Authority views by 24 February 2021 on whether they would like their LPPF Expressions of Interest (EOI) that had previously been submitted to the DfT in January 2020 to be considered for funding through the Levelling Up Fund in 2021/22. The DfT had put on hold the consideration of LPPF EOI due to the circumstances of COVID-19.
- 2.52 Transport Committee has previously been advised that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority was able to submit up to 5 EOI on behalf of the partner councils and was required to rank the schemes, indicating relative priority. The prioritised list of West Yorkshire LPPF EOI, agreed by Transport Committee, and submitted to the DfT in January 2020 was:
1. North Baileygate, Pontefract Gyratory and Junction Signalisation, (Wakefield Council) - DfT LPPF grant sought of £1,671,000;
 - 2= A62 Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield (Kirklees Council) - DfT LPPF grant sought of £9,300,000;
 - 2= A61 Scott Hall Road bus lane, Leeds (Leeds Council) - DfT LPPF grant sought of £8,900,000;

4. Tetley Street / Inner Ring Road realignment, Bradford (Bradford Council) - DfT LPPF grant sought of £10,000,000;
5. A655 Black Road Bus Priority Scheme, Wakefield, (Wakefield Council) - DfT LPPF grant sought of £1,150,000 to 1,500,000 (depending on options).

- 2.53 In response to the DfT's letter of 11 February 2021, the Combined Authority asked the partners councils to review the list shown above and advise on the status of their EOI. The West Yorkshire Leaders confirmed that these schemes remain, and reflect, local priorities. This same list was then re-submitted to the DfT to their deadline of 24 February 2021. Local MPs had been contacted by the partners to identify their support for the schemes that fall within their constituency. A funding decision is awaited from the DfT.
- 2.54 An update report will be made to the next meeting of Transport Committee following publication of the government's Levelling Up Fund prospectus and Local Pinch Point Fund decisions.

DfT Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport grant funding 2021/22

- 2.55 The DfT wrote on 13 February 2021 to all Local and Combined Authorities in England to identify the allocations for Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport block grant funding for the next financial year, 2021-22. The DfT's notification had been delayed by Covid-19 impacts.
- 2.56 The Government's Spending Review in 2020 had identified that funding programmes for the immediate future would prioritise the response to COVID-19 and a focus on supporting jobs and families. That impact can be seen in the confirmed allocations for Highway Maintenance, which includes Potholes Fund 2021/22, Highways Maintenance Block (Needs element) 2021/22 and Highways Maintenance Block (incentive element) 2021/22. The table below provide a comparison between the funding for the next financial year (2021/22) and the current financial year (2020/21). The figures have been released at a West Yorkshire level. The amounts for each partner council will be confirmed by the DfT shortly, but as the allocations are made by a fixed formula the partner councils are aware of the level of funding to be received by each.

Highways Maintenance grant funding for West Yorkshire				
	Pothole Fund	HMB Needs	HMB Incentive	Total Highway Maintenance
Next financial year 2021/22				
West Yorkshire total	16,212,000	16,211,000	4,054,000	36,477,000
Current financial year 2020/21				
West Yorkshire total	18,610,000	23,507,000	4,896,000	47,013,000

Reduction in 2021/22	13%	31%	17%	22%
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- 2.57 Comparing any two years of pothole funding is difficult as the amount of pothole funding has fluctuated significantly over recent years and the allocation to pothole repairs in 2020/21 was significantly bolstered by the government's Challenge Fund grant to West Yorkshire, for which there was discretion to prioritise use, and the partners agreed to prioritise pothole repairs. The impact on general highway maintenance however shows a clear, and significant decrease in funding.
- 2.58 The DfT's delayed announcement corresponds with when annual Highway Maintenance programmes area being approved by Local Highway Authorities for 2021/22. This means that some of the West Yorkshire partners may have approved programmes that they will not now be unable to fully fund. The funding reductions will impact on the ability of the partners to maintain assets including roads, pavements, street lighting, bridges and drainage. The partners have been under significant pressures for some time to ensure that highway assets are maintained to a suitable standard, with significant funding shortfalls experienced over a period of decades. This current reduction comes at a time of concern with deterioration in asset condition due to a winter that has been harsher than normal.
- 2.59 The DfT allocation in respect of the smaller Integrated Transport Block shows a very slightly increase in grant funding from £13,104,000 in 2020/21 to £13,206,000 in 2021/22 (- an increase of £102,000 or 1% on the current year).
- 2.60 The partner councils have identified their concerns with the Highway Maintenance funding cuts to the DfT's Northern Engagement Team. The partners are currently reviewing their investment strategies to consider the full implications of the cuts. An update report will be brought to the next meeting of Transport Committee on how next year's programmes will be adapted.

Department for Transport: Future of Transport Rural Strategy

- 2.61 The Department for Transport launched a call for evidence to support the development of a national Future of Transport Rural Strategy with a closing date 16th February 2021. West Yorkshire Combined Authority has submitted a response to the call, using the findings of the Future Mobility Strategy development work, presenting aspects of best practices occurring in our rural areas as well as some of the challenges faced.
- 2.62 A link to the call for evidence is included in the **Background Documents** section, and a copy of the West Yorkshire response is included at **Appendix 2**.
3. **Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**
- 3.1 As described under the various topics covered above.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 As described under the various topics covered above.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7. Staffing Implications

7.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

8. External Consultees

8.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

9. Recommendations

9.1 That the Committee notes the updates provided in this report.

10. 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/>

More information on the East Coast Upgrade and background to the various projects are available via this link: <https://eastcoastupgrade.co.uk/the-upgrade/>

Background to the Manchester Recovery Task Force public consultation and a copy of the consultation document are available via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/timetable-options-to-improve-rail-performance-in-the-north-of-england>

The government announcement on the third round of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund is available via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/transport-secretary-launches-794-million-investment-to-boost-rail-links-in-north-and-south>

Background to the Northern Accessibility Fund is available via this link: <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/accessibility-fund>

Background to the Future of Transport: rural strategy – call for evidence is available via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence/future-of-transport-rural-strategy-call-for-evidence>

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Submitted response to the Manchester Recovery Task Force public consultation

Appendix 2 – Submitted response to the Future of Transport: Rural Strategy Call for Evidence