

**Report to:** Transport Committee

**Date:** 14 May 2021

**Subject:** **Leeds City Region Transport Update**

**Director:** Liz Hunter, Interim Director of Policy and Development

**Author:** Richard Crabtree, Rail Development Manager

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:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 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 24 March 2021 and 16 April 2021.
- 2.2 The Board meeting on 24 March 2021 considered the following substantive items:

- **Business Plan and Budget** where these were agreed for the coming year. Members noted the importance they attach to TfN's role in

freight and the decarbonisation agenda in the discussion. Members also considered what role TfN ought to play in respect of buses, especially in light of the new national 'Bus Back Better' strategy. Members acknowledges the risks on TfN's budget imposed by the outcome of the Integrated Rail Plan (expected by summer), given the central importance of the Northern Powerhouse Rail project to resourcing the organisation.

- **Decarbonisation Strategy** where members approved the draft strategy for consultation from May 2021. Members welcomed the work TfN has done on this as an important piece of work. The economic opportunities attached to decarbonation were highlighted, together with the opportunity to showcase specific initiative at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021. The importance of electrifying rail freight was highlighted by members.

- 2.3 The TfN Board met on 16 April 2021 to confirm the appointment of Martin Tugwell as the new Chief Executive. Martin has over 20 years' experience in transport and investment senior leadership roles in the public sector and will join TfN from England's Economic Heartland, the Sub-national Transport Body for the region including Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire.
- 2.4 Martin has committed to meeting Northern leaders on a one-to-one basis to understand their priorities for TfN ahead of talking up the appointment in summer announcements. It may be that initiatives for integrated ticketing across modes will need to be developed locally. It was also agreed that TfN's current Northern Powerhouse Rail Director, Tim Wood, will become Interim Chief Executive until Martin starts the role.
- 2.5 The agreed TfN Business Plan for 2021/22 has now been published. A link is provided in the **Background Documents** section.
- 2.6 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

- 2.7 Rail North Committee met on 25 March 2021, covering the following substantive items:
- **Priorities for Future Rail Services**, covering the 'roadmap to recovery' the emerging TfN decarbonisation strategy (see Board feedback), and the Manchester Recovery Taskforce consultation. Network Rail and the operators summarised the actions they are taking as part of the recovery and preparing to promote the return to rail as conditions allow.

- **Rail Reform Matters** which provided an update on still awaited rail reforms. The Rail North Partnership arrangements are subject to a review considering the changing relationships with operators. Work continues developing a response to the Williams Review when published.
- **Rail North Partnership Update** where Partnership officers updated on revised timetables on the business plans for Northern and TPE, as set out in the report.
- **Business Planning and Commissioning.** This noted the budget decision from the Board meeting. The priorities for the coming year were set out, and details of the financial contributions to the Rail North function for 2021/22 set.

2.8 Further informal workshops of the committee have also taken place, focusing on the findings of the Manchester Recovery Taskforce prior to the Committee being asked to take a formal view in May. The focus of these discussions has been on the short-term timetable changes, and the need for a clear plan for investment in the infrastructure to address the network constraints that impact services across the north.

2.9 A link to papers is provided in the **Background Documents** section, which includes access to recordings of the public session of the Committee. A Rail North Committee meeting is anticipated in May 2021 to formalise a review on short-term timetable changes proposed under the MRTF proposals.

## **Rail Updates**

### **Train Operators Forum and rail operator updates**

2.10 The management of the current COVID-19 crisis is covered in the COVID-19 paper at **Item 7**. The next Train Operators Forum meeting is planned for 19 May 2021.

### **East Coast Upgrade works**

2.11 Significant work has been underway as part of the East Coast Upgrade, with a series of blockades in recent months to rebuild the approaches to Kings Cross station. Further closures at the southern end of the line are scheduled for early June. This will mark the completion of the most significant and disruptive works as part of the upgrade programme.

2.12 More details on the projects and planned disruption in June are available via the link in **Background Documents**.

2.13 These works pave the way for a recast of the East Coast Main Line timetable in 2022. Consultation on the new timetable is expected to commence in June 2021, and will likely involve changes to LNER, TransPennine Express and CrossCountry services in West Yorkshire.

## **Bus Updates**

- 2.14 On 15 April, Arriva Yorkshire announced the sale of its Yorkshire Tiger operation to Transdev Blazefield. This involves the transfer of staff, vehicles and depots in Elland and Huddersfield from July 2021. Yorkshire Tiger provide bus services under contract with the Combined Authority in Calderdale and Kirklees, both companies have requested the transfer of these contracts along with leases for occupation of space within bus stations. Arrangements are in progress to facilitate the necessary transfers and to discuss plans for the future operation of services with Transdev Blazefield. Combined Authority officers will seek to ensure continuity of service for those communities currently relying on the services operated by Yorkshire Tiger. Significant service changes are not therefore expected in July however the operation of service 231/232 Huddersfield to Wakefield will transfer from Yorkshire Tiger to Arriva Yorkshire as part of the deal.

## **MCard Tickets for Flexible Working**

- 2.15 The Covid Transport Recovery Plan adopted by the Combined Authority in July 2020 identified the need to a new approach to enable flexible ticketing to support the changes to working patterns expected following the pandemic. The Plan also identified the role of public transport ticketing in supporting a return to employment for those who may have recently lost their job.
- 2.16 As reported to the previous meeting, the MCard Mobile app is now in operation enabling customers to purchase multi operator tickets onto their phone. Along with the App, a new zonal Day Saver product has been introduced enabling customers to buy a whole day's travel by bus and rail. The cost of these tickets range from £11.10 to £13.80 depending on which zones the customer wishes to travel in. A West Yorkshire wide bus only Day Saver is available on the app at £5.50 with discounts for multiple purchase. MCard prices are set by West Yorkshire Ticketing Company; a joint venture company co-owned by the Combined Authority, bus and rail operators. The images below show screenshots of the tickets on the app.



- 2.17 The next stage of the development of the MCard Mobile app will allow employers to buy these tickets in bulk at a discount and send them to their employees' phones. Initial discussions with large employers indicate that this will be a popular approach from people who intend to adapt a "hybrid" approach combining commuting to a workplace with working from home. Discussions are ongoing with Department for Work and Pensions to utilise this approach for job seekers. It is expected to launch this new facility in September 2021.

### **Real Time Bus Information System**

- 2.18 The Yorkshire Real Time System informs customers of the number of minutes until the arrival of their bus. The System delivers this information to electronic displays on bus stops, mobile phone apps, text messages to phones, web browsers and to third parties like Google. Geographically it is the biggest Real Time system in the UK and supports the large (and growing) on-street and in bus station display estate across Yorkshire. The System has been in operation since 2003 and a procurement process has been undertaken to renew the back office technology and support for the service. The new system will

enable more live data feeds to apps and other third party systems and will be more technically robust

- 2.19 Each of the participating authorities (South Yorkshire, City of York, East Riding, Hull, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire) makes a financial contribution to the ongoing operation of the System. The Combined Authority is the lead partner and holds the contractual relationship with the system supplier and employs the internal technical and data processing staff who ensure that the service delivers for passengers. The annual cost to the CA and its partners for operation of the Real Time system is currently just over £200k.
- 2.20 In 2020, in response to the Covid emergency, a bus capacity indicator data was included in the data and outputs. Bus operators funded the data collection and transmission and the CA/ partners funded the database and output elements. Yorkshire was one of the first places in the country to do this.
- 2.21 A selection exercise is currently being undertaken for a replacement system in line with UK procurement legislation. Transport Committee oversees the Local Transport Fund Programme which contains provision to fund the capital costs of the system replacement with commensurate contributions from the respective partners. Subject to finalising the procurement process, the capital cost of the project is in line with provisions made in the programme. On 5 May 2021, Investment Committee approved the project to proceed through decision point 4 (full business case).

### **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. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 As described under the various topics covered above.

### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

## **9. External Consultees**

9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 That members of the Committee note the updates provided in this report.

## **11. Background Documents**

The Transport for the North Business Plan for 2021/22 is available here:  
<https://transportforthenorth.com/business-plan-2021-22/>

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/>

## **12. Appendices**

None