
Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 2 July 2021

Subject: Rail 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:	
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 an update to Transport Committee on rail policy matters including the Williams Review, New Stations Fund, Integrated Rail Plan, Manchester Recovery Taskforce, East Coast Main Line timetable consultation and Transpennine Route Upgrade Transport and Works Act Order submission.

2. Information

Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail

- 2.1. The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail was published by the Government as a White Paper on 20 May 2021.
- 2.2. The Williams Rail Review was commissioned by Government in September 2018 in response to widespread timetable disruption and a failing commercial model for delivering passenger services. The review was commissioned to make recommendations for reform that prioritise passengers' and taxpayers' interests.

- 2.3. Initially due to be published in late 2019, it was delayed by the General Election, and then the impact of COVID-19. The latter has resulted in franchises ending early, accelerating a key part of the reform proposals.
- 2.4. West Yorkshire's submission to the Review in 2019 called for reform that delivered:
 - **clarity of objectives** for the railway in social, economic, and environmental terms;
 - **value for money** in day-to-day operation and in delivery of new infrastructure;
 - a coordinated and integrated rail system with a '**controlling mind**' with clear lines for influence and accountability;
 - **devolution** to ensure that objectives reflect local priorities and conditions, with accountability to those most affected by the railway; and
 - an **operationally independent of government** (but accountable) railway, with a long-term focus on investing in skills and competence.
- 2.5. The Review was also informed by the work and recommendations of the Blake-Jones Review, with a particular focus on the North. Sir Roger Marsh OBE was also part of an expert challenge panel that informed the review. Sir Roger held this role reflecting his professional background, his role as part of the NP11 group, and advocate for the North.
- 2.6. In overall terms, the White Paper proposes:
 - Fundamental restructuring of the railway with **a new public sector arm's length railway body** which will subsume the responsibilities of Network Rail, most rail functions of Department for Transport (DfT), and many operator roles to secure a more joined-up approach to running the railway. It will be called '**Great British Railways**' (GBR), assume the role of 'guiding mind', and provide accountable leadership. It will comprise a heavily devolved regional structure, initially based on the five Network Rail regions.
 - **Passenger services to be operated via Passenger Service Contract concessions** procured by Great British Railways. These tightly specified contracts will keep revenue risk with Great British Railways. The proposal is for Great British Railways to own the passenger relationship (ticketing, information, complaints). This will mean an end to competition between operators, provide greater clarity about who is in charge, with single sources of information and a consistent national railway brand (with potential for regional variations).
 - **Reform of rail fares**, to sweep away historic complexity. This is long overdue to make the railway more user-friendly and affordable and is crucial to the recovery. This will start with national roll-out of flexible season tickets (8 in 28 days), and a promise to quickly roll out pay-as-you go ticketing in urban and commuter networks. The lessons from the TfN ticketing programme (and others) will be incorporated.

- **Commercial reform** of the railway, to make it more financially accountable and more affordable to taxpayers by removing complexity and ensuring projects are delivered efficiently and on time. Great British Railways is intended to bring the railway's finances together in one place. Budgetary control will be internally devolved to regions and locally.
 - **People reform** to attract a more diverse workforce and establish better career paths in the railway.
- 2.7. The proposals therefore address many of the main areas set out in the West Yorkshire submission. An extract of the 62 commitments contained in the White Paper are included at **Appendix 1**, and a link to the full document provided in **Background Documents**.
- 2.8. The proposals set out in the White Paper will take at least three years to implement and will require primary legislation. Great British Railways is expected to be formally established in 2023. Andrew Haines (current Chief Executive at Network Rail) has been tasked on making a start on early proposals to realise benefits as soon as possible. This is likely to see the combining of parts of DfT, Rail Delivery Group and Network Rail as a shadow Great British Railways entity in short order.
- 2.9. In addition to its important national and inter-regional roles, the railway is an important part of the local transport mix in West Yorkshire. This is underlined by:
- Almost 7 in 10 passengers using trains in West Yorkshire are making trips within West Yorkshire.
 - Rail use at Leeds has more than trebled in the last 20 years – before COVID-19 there were over 30 million trips at Leeds station every year.
 - We spend over £900,000 annually on rail concessionary fares in West Yorkshire, widening access to local services, funded locally via council tax. Our MCard ticketing initiative is one of the biggest joint bus and train ticketing schemes outside of London.
 - We have invested over £40 m into projects to improve West Yorkshire's rail network in the last 10 years and have an ambitious programme of over £180m of investment in the railway in the coming years. This is delivering new stations, improved passenger facilities and station accessibility, and enhancing station gateways at key centres around West Yorkshire.
 - Further growing the role of the railway will be vital to achieving our ambition to be a net zero carbon economy by 2038.
- 2.10. A central element of the White Paper proposals is for Great British Railways to have a heavily devolved structure with empowered regional management. Intended to be clearly accountable, they will take decisions over services and investment, building on the new regional approach adopted by Network Rail. The Williams Review was also informed by recommendations in the Blake-Jones Review which considered ways to make the railway in the north more

accountable, and to address complexity in decision-making. An anticipated Levelling Up White Paper later this year is expected to confirm more details on how local partnerships with Great British Railways will work. However, the full scope of the partnerships will be limited without commensurate devolution of funding; no funding devolution proposals are included in the White Paper.

Next steps

- 2.11. The opportunity is now to shape the detail of the White Paper proposals as they are established. Officers will continue to engage with DfT officials directly and with and through the Urban Transport Group to ensure that the local partnership structures are effective. Discussion at the Transport for the North (TfN) Board in June also confirms an important role for TfN in securing the scope of strong local partnerships with Great British Railways for members.
- 2.12. Meanwhile, at the West Yorkshire level we are taking a pro-active move to establish a West Yorkshire Strategic Rail Partnership, to be chaired by the Mayor, with relevant industry leaders to shape the ultimate relationship with Great British Railways. This will establish a deeper and more influential partnership role with the railway locally across our delivery programmes, to ensure local choices respond to local priorities and to secure wider benefits from our significant rail investment. Ultimately, this way of working paves the way for a locally integrated public transport network. An initial meeting of the West Yorkshire Strategic Partnership is planned for July, where shared objectives and ways of working will be agreed, reflecting on the findings of the analysis in the Blake-Jones Review.
- 2.13. Transport for the North's role in rail will change fundamentally because of the reforms, and the move away from franchises. For pan-Northern issues there is a clear role for Transport for the North (TfN) where we pool our sovereignty with partners across the North, including making a strong case for investment in major projects such as TransPennine Route Upgrade and Northern Powerhouse Rail. The regional structure of Great British Railways also secures for TfN a necessary strategic role in securing co-ordination of strategy and a coherent delivery approach for the North across the two regions east and west of the Pennines.
- 2.14. We will bring further updates to Transport Committee as discussions progress and more details of implementation plans as they are produced.

New Stations Fund Announcement

- 2.15. It was reported to Transport Committee at its meeting on 03 July 2020 that the Combined Authority had developed and submitted two applications in June 2020 to the government's third round of the New Stations Fund (NSF) for proposed new rail stations at White Rose and Thorpe Park.
- 2.16. The fund was launched in February 2020 with £20m available to part-fund delivery of new stations. DfT was expected to carry out assessment of applications in August 2020 and announce successful submissions in autumn

2020. In November 2020, the DfT confirmed that three stations outside West Yorkshire had been successful for funding as part of a now enlarged £32m fund with a further announcement to follow.

- 2.17. On 26 May 2021 DfT announced another three stations had been successful for funding including White Rose (£5m) and Thorpe Park (£7m). A funding letter has been received, with the monies to be used as part of wider funding packages to deliver the stations which are currently in development.

Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North

- 2.18. Following the Oakervee Review of HS2 in February 2020, the government announced its intention to draw up an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the North and the Midlands which will identify the most effective scoping, phasing and sequencing of relevant investments and how to integrate HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Midlands Engine Rail and other proposed rail investments.
- 2.19. This Plan will be informed by the National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) independent assessment of the rail needs of the Midlands and the North and inputs from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) around costs and delivery mechanisms.
- 2.20. The NIC published the Rail Needs Assessment on 15 December 2020 and we understand the IPA has already submitted its findings to Government. The IRP, first expected by the end of 2020, remains unpublished. The continued delay to IRP publication is impacting on rail investment programmes nationally, including those benefitting West Yorkshire such as Leeds station capacity work, HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and TRU.
- 2.21. On 21st June 2021, the Yorkshire Post published an article suggesting that based on an official document it had seen, a decision was soon to be put to HM Treasury's Major Projects Review Group in relation to investment decisions around NPR and TRU. This was purportedly a decision to design, develop and deliver a TRU option that would lead to NPR between Leeds and Manchester not taking the form of a new line via central Bradford.
- 2.22. In response Mayor Brabin welcomed the TRU programme, but was clear that this should be as well as NPR, not instead of it. The implications of such a decision would go far beyond the city of Bradford, they would impact people across the region by also risking local services being cut in the future, as well as a less robust transport system with too much reliance on one line across the Pennines
- 2.23. The Mayor subsequently spoke to the Secretary of State for Transport to seek reassurance on NPR plans and the uncertainty around a new station and line via central Bradford. The Transport Secretary refuted recent reports about the Government scaling back NPR in Bradford. He reaffirmed his commitment to the city, acknowledging the need for Bradford's young people in particular to be better connected to infrastructure and greater opportunities.

- 2.24. Leaders continue to urge the Government to publish the IRP as soon as possible to end the uncertainty in rail investment and to restore confidence amongst businesses.
- 2.25. All major rail investment programmes such as TRU, HS2 and NPR will provide apprenticeship opportunities for young people in West Yorkshire.

Manchester Recovery Taskforce

- 2.26. Further to the last report to the Transport Committee, a special meeting of the Northern Transport Acceleration Council was convened by DfT in early May. At this meeting, it was agreed that DfT and TfN should work more closely together on supporting the case for infrastructure investment to address capacity constraints in central Manchester that impact on services across the North.
- 2.27. It was also proposed to defer the timetable changes to improve reliability to December 2022, to secure more time to take the decision on the most appropriate service changes. It was noted at the TfN Board meeting on 9 June that Richard George, a trusted senior industry figure, was to be introduced to the process to facilitate a decision on service changes.
- 2.28. At the time of writing, a decision on proposed timetable changes for December 2022 is expected to be presented to Rail North Committee at a special session in July 2022. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority position remains that set out at Transport Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2021.

Leeds Area Improvement Programme

- 2.29. Building on the rail industry's Leeds Area Strategic Plan that Transport Committee lent its support to in July 2020, Network Rail has established the Leeds Area Improvement Programme, which is a scheme in DfT's Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP). Given the negative impact that the congested rail network at and around Leeds has on the ability to run longer and better services in West Yorkshire, across the North and nationally, this programme is highly important.
- 2.30. Sponsored by DfT, the Programme is coordinating and aligning various rail infrastructure schemes in and around the Leeds area. These include interventions to 2026, as well as longer term development beyond that to pave the way for HS2 and NPR.
- 2.31. Short term interventions include but are not limited to platform lengthening, junction improvements and other works at Leeds proposed at Christmas 2021, as well as around West Yorkshire. Also included are other improvements around the region such as works under development at Shipley and Bradford Forster Square. The programme interfaces with HS2, NPR and TRU to ensure that the right holistic solutions are delivered. The planned passenger-side investment through the Leeds Existing Station Programme is also a key

interface, as are other relevant Station Gateway schemes e.g. at Bradford Forster Square.

- 2.32. Interventions beyond 2026 are subject to development work to be funded through DfT's RNEP programme, funded by HM Treasury. At the time of writing, and this is also the case with the passenger side Leeds Existing Station Programme, there has been a delay in HM Treasury endorsing the release of development funding. Network Rail have stepped in on an interim, short term basis to keep the work programme moving forwards and prevent teams from halting work. DfT officials are working to support a positive decision.
- 2.33. Combined Authority officers represent West Yorkshire in the programme governance in an advisory stakeholder capacity, with the aim of influencing delivery of West Yorkshire's Rail Vision. Decision making lies with the DfT and ultimately HM Treasury.
- 2.34. The establishment of a closer and deeper working relationship with the emerging Great British Railways should greatly assist in helping successful delivery of the Combined Authority's Rail Vision through the Leeds Area Improvement Programme.

East Coast Main Line May 2022 consultation

- 2.35. Rail operators have now published consultation proposals for the revised timetables resulting from the proposed recast of East Coast Main Line services in May 2022. As set out to the Committee in May, this recast will capitalise on the package of network improvements delivered as part of the East Coast Upgrade.
- 2.36. The proposed changes, which have been developed via a cross-industry group and signed off by DfT, have been published by individual operators, including LNER, TransPennine Express, Cross Country and Northern. The proposals are detailed, and the full implications are still being analysed.
- 2.37. The overall position though remains one of compromises being required due to the overall constrained nature of the rail network, that makes it very difficult to reconcile competing priorities.
- 2.38. Amongst some of the most notable proposals impacting West Yorkshire are:
 - A modest reduction in journey times between West Yorkshire and London.
 - A new daily service between Huddersfield and London, also serving Dewsbury – comprising an early morning service to London, and an evening return service.
 - A reduction of the number of through services between Bradford, Shipley and London to one each-way, reversing a modest improvement delivered in 2020. This is alongside a commitment to continue to work with Network Rail and Northern to secure the promised six through trains per

day when possible (requiring works at Shipley and Bradford Forster Square).

- A reduction in the number of through services to Edinburgh and Newcastle to hourly (the recent historic norm), because of constrained capacity north of York (the relevant services are proposed to terminate at York in future), to facilitate an increase in Anglo-Scottish services to and from London.
- 2.39. Whilst an additional train every two hours between West Yorkshire and London is not part of the May 2022 proposals, this remains an aspiration for LNER. Also mentioned in the consultation is a proposal to introduce an additional hourly fast train between Leeds, Wakefield Westgate and Sheffield, enabled by the recast timetables, but to be delivered when resources allow. In combination with the hourly Cross Country service this would significantly improve connectivity between Leeds / Wakefield and Sheffield city centres.
- 2.40. The industry consultations close on 5 August. A proposed response will be developed and agreed with Members by correspondence for sign-off by the Chair.

Transpennine Route Upgrade Transport and Works Act Order

Consultation submission

- 2.41. The Combined Authority has submitted a response to the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application made by Network Rail to the Secretary of State for Transport for the proposed improvements between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) on 17 May 2021. Upgrading the section of railway between Huddersfield and Westtown is key to delivering the benefits passengers want along the Transpennine route and is regarded as “no-regrets” intervention by the rail industry.
- 2.42. A copy of the submitted response was circulated to the members of this Committee. We are supportive of Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and the proposed works outlined in the TWAO and we have outlined the importance of the proposed improvements due to its benefits to passengers, communities and the economy in this region. The application for the Order, however, raises a number of issues that require further clarification and engagement with Network Rail. These include the following:
- Land issues - the proposed Order confers powers of compulsory acquisition and temporary possession over land owned by the Combined Authority, including in the vicinity of Huddersfield bus station. These powers have the potential to disrupt the operation of the bus station which means the bus station might need to be closed or partially closed.
 - Communications plan – it is important that any communication to the travelling public, communities and businesses about the impacts of disruption and travelling alternatives needs to be made jointly and through our channels and not just to existing rail passengers.

- Disruption and mitigation measures – we would like Network Rail to continue to work with our officers on a comprehensive management strategy, to mitigate the potential impacts on residents and businesses and for this to be agreed at the earliest opportunity. Station Travel Plans and Construction Traffic Management Plans need to be developed jointly with the Combined Authority and Kirklees Council due to the impact on the public transport network.
 - Train Services - we would like to work closely with Network Rail and the rail industry to shape the train services that meet the needs of this region.
 - Skills - we would like to explore the potential to include an additional skills premium to maximise the economic potential of the project.
- 2.43. The response was received by DfT and we are informed by them that the Secretary of State has decided to hold a public inquiry into the TWAO application. Our response is currently classified as an objection by DfT due to the concerns and questions we raised; procedurally this is an expected outcome and ensures that the matters above can be worked through appropriately. The Combined Authority could withdraw its objection at any point before the public inquiry should it become clear that outstanding concerns have been addressed.

Next steps

- 2.44. The Combined Authority has already been working with Network Rail to obtain suitable assurances that the powers in the Order will not adversely affect the safe and efficient operation of the bus station. We expect that such assurances can be secured prior to any inquiry or hearing held in connection with the TWAO application. However, in the unlikely event that our concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved by that time, the Combined Authority would wish to have the opportunity of appearing before and being heard by the person appointed by the Secretary of State in the Public Inquiry.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Modal shift of transport movements from air and road modes to rail will achieve reduced carbon impacts. This is relevant in particular for Anglo-Scottish transport considered as part of the East Coast Main Line consultation, where air is the most significant mode for travel between Scotland and South East England.
- 3.2 The full implementation of TRU with full electrification will help to encourage modal shift to public transport and tackle climate change.
- 3.3 A reliable and robust local, regional and national rail network with appropriate investment will help to provide an attractive alternative for road transport which will help tackling climate emergency and protect our environment.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 The principle of inclusive growth has already been incorporated in all policy areas.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 In our TWAO response, we have highlighted that developing inclusive growth that is accessible to all is vital to transforming our economy. We urge Network Rail to incorporate the principle of inclusive growth in every stage of development. Consideration of equality issues should be incorporated in the engagement process and communication plan. The principles of inclusivity, diversity and equality should be incorporated in the design of the stations and the network, mitigation measures, disruption planning, employment of the workforce and the operation of the railway. Design should take into consideration our aging population and those with long term health conditions, it is important that these groups are considered throughout the process in order to ensure there are no physical barriers to travel.
- 5.2 The principles of inclusivity, diversity and equality are incorporated in the design of new rail facilities and infrastructure including new stations, TRU, NPR and HS2.

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 additional staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 There has been regular engagement with the rail industry in the lead up to the East Coast Main Line timetable consultations.
- 9.2 Officers of the Combined Authority have worked closely with officers of Kirklees Council in relation to the TWAO response.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That members of the Committee note the contents of this report, including the next steps set out.

11. Background Documents

The Great British Railways white paper can be accessed here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>

The Network Rail led Leeds Area Continuous Modular Strategic Planning Rail Study was supported by Transport Committee at its meeting on 3rd July 2020, and can be found at: <http://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk>

The full TWA submission can be found in
<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/transpennine-route-upgrade/huddersfield-to-westtown-dewsbury/>

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 Extract of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.