

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 17th September 2021

Subject: **Rail Strategy**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director Policy and Development

Author: James Nutter, Lead Policy Manager Rail

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 update Transport Committee on the Rail Strategy work programme, and re-emphasise its continued importance given the uncertainty posed by the absence of Government's Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands.
- 1.2 To propose wider involvement in the finalisation of the Rail Strategy.

2. Information

Wider context

Rail reform

- 2.1 The proposals set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail White paper were summarised at the last meeting of the Committee. These proposals signal a much stronger role for the Combined Authority as a partner to a reformed industry, ultimately in the form of Great British Railways.

- 2.2 As signalled at the last Committee, the Mayor has now taken steps to establish a West Yorkshire Strategic Rail Partnership, and an initial establishment meeting was held in July. This meeting included managing directors from the relevant rail operators, Network Rail and senior DfT rail officials. It will be used as the basis to oversee and manage our relationship with the railway across our transport services, delivery, and strategy activities to help us establish the strong partnership envisaged in the White Paper.
- 2.3 Our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement prospectus proposals (see separate item) envisage a programme to put us on course to establishing a London-style integrated transport network for West Yorkshire and has been influenced by work commissioned as part of the Rail Strategy programme. Rail has a core role to play in this network, and success will depend on effective integration with other modes. Local information, ticketing and branding will all require a much stronger partnership basis. This will involve us continuing to co-invest alongside the railway, and likely growing our involvement to ensure local priorities are being achieved as part of the railway's wider programmes.
- 2.4 The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy, as a key component of the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, will form the basis of and provide structure to this growing activity in rail. It will ensure we have a clear basis to achieve the influence over the plans and proposals being developed by the industry, as well as helping to shape and prioritise the Authority's investment programmes and initiatives.
- 2.5 Industry engagement in the development of the Rail Strategy, including via the Rail Expert Panel, is already establishing local influence, and building capacity in our working relationships.

Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North

- 2.6 The Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North (IRP) is now expected to be published in the context of the autumn spending review. This should mark the end of a prolonged period of uncertainty about the government's medium-term plans for the rail network in the North, including decisions on the scope of TransPennine Route Upgrade, HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail.
- 2.7 Publication of the IRP will create the opportunity to establish meaningful plans for the short to medium term development of the rail network. Transport for the North (TfN) will have a significant role to play in articulating a clear strategy for the north's rail network in the context of the Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals. The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy will be an important way in which we influence industry's planning in response to the Integrated Rail Plan, as well as the work that TfN will need to quickly undertake.

Whole Industry Strategic Plan

- 2.8 The publication of the IRP will also allow progress to be made on the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP). Network Rail commenced preparation of the WISP in 2020 at the request of DfT and its development is now being

overseen by the Great British Railways Transition Team. The WISP is intended to provide the national industry plan recommended by Keith Williams in response to the fragmentation of decision-making that has repeatedly hampered effective rail investment decision making and service planning.

- 2.9 Structured engagement on WISP is expected to commence later this year and during 2022. The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy will provide a formal and agreed basis to secure influence over the WISP proposals to address and respond to our local priorities.

Rail Strategy

Rail Vision

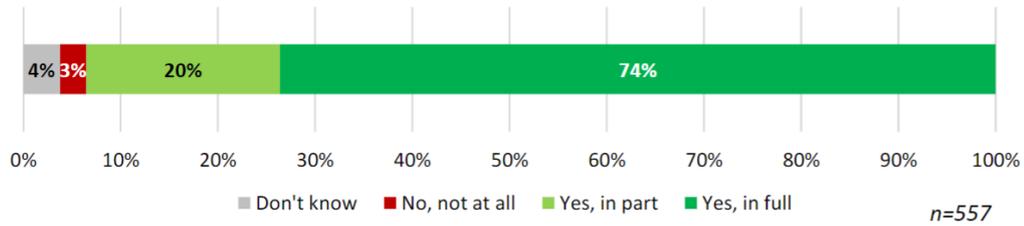
- 2.10 The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy is needed to reflect the specific needs of our region in the development of rail by Government, Transport for the North and the rail industry. The strategy needs to support us to:

- **Local priorities** – Represent local priorities for rail considering the challenges and opportunities faced in the region.
- **The role of rail** – Establish the role of rail within the wider transport mix across the short, medium, and long term.
- **Spatially specific** – Develop proposals that reflect local priorities and the spatial aspects that make our region unique.
- **Role of the region** – Look beyond boundaries to consider the role of the region within wider Northern and national context.

- 2.11 Part of the West Yorkshire Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, the Rail Vision was developed with welcome and comprehensive input from Transport Committee in 2020. Since that time Government has been developing its long awaited Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, originally due in December 2020 and now expected in the autumn.

- 2.12 The Connectivity Plan suite of documents, has been the subject of public and stakeholder consultation from January – June 2021. The outcome of the consultation, including any proposed changes to the Rail Vision in response to the consultation, will be reported and requested elsewhere separately to the Committee. In the meantime, the following should be noted by the Committee in terms of headline consultation feedback on the Rail Vision:

Figure 11 - To what extent do you agree with the ambition for rail set out in the Rail Vision?



2.13 Meanwhile using the Rail Vision as the overall framework, development work has been continuing on the full rail strategy, including undertaking a number of analytical commissions to strengthen and complete the evidence base. The Vision and evidence base has already been put to use to help inform rail development work including but not limited to that being led by Network Rail and sponsored by the Department for Transport on the Leeds City Region Area Improvement Programme (LAIP). LAIP is the umbrella term for the programme of rail infrastructure enhancements being both developed for delivery in the medium to long term e.g. post 2026, as well as developed and delivered in the short term e.g. platform extensions and junction improvements at and around Leeds itself to help start unblocking this major network pinchpoint , as well as elsewhere in the region e.g. Bradford.

Completion of the Rail Strategy

- 2.14 The Rail Strategy is about how the rail vision is taken towards implementation, and will set out more detailed priorities and interventions proposed in the short to medium term to deliver on the ambition of the Rail Vision.
- 2.15 The rail strategy is planned for completion in spring 2022, and Transport Committee’s input during this process is proposed and requested below.
- 2.16 The strategy will be completed incrementally, chapter by chapter, from November 21 through to spring 22 – currently planned as follows:

Chapter	Completion date
Capacity needs	November 2021
Freight options	January 2022
Decarbonisation	January 2022
Connectivity needs	February 2022
Expanding the reach	February 2022
Access & integration	February 2022
Major projects	February 2022
Implementation and full strategy document	March – May 2022

2.17 Through dialogue with the Chair, it is vital that in finalising the Rail Strategy, the Combined Authority secures:

- business support;
- cross party support;
- verification from the rail industry; and
- public support on areas which matter most to the public.

2.18 This means that the scope and “actors”/audience for any engagement/consultation will differ depending on the subject matter contained in each chapter. The following engagement activity is proposed so far:

- With members through Transport Committee (Transport Committee endorsement to publish and appropriately engage on each chapter will be sought incrementally over the coming months)
- With business through the LEP and Chambers of Commerce
- With the rail industry through existing channels such as the Rail Expert Panel, bilateral meetings with the rail industry and ultimately the Strategic Rail Partnership
- With members of the public through targeted engagement activity.

2.19 As part of this process, member input is requested to a number of targeted, informal meetings to secure member feedback on “skeleton drafts” of the chapters.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 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 is central to the ambition outlined in the Rail Vision, and which is shaping the strategy work to ensure a focus on local rail particularly in hard to reach and economically deprived areas where the rail offer is in need of modernisation.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 Whilst there are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this update report, ensuring an effective, stable and affordable public transport network is key for equality and diversity. Equality and diversity will be a major theme for the rail strategy.

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 Transport Committee note the update on development of the Rail Strategy.

10.2 That Transport Committee endorse the proposed involvement of members in finalisation of the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None.