

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 5 November 2021

Subject: Rail Strategy Capacity Chapter

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

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on work currently in progress on the Combined Authority's Rail Strategy, with particular focus on our future requirements for capacity on the rail network.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's approval for the proposed approach to endorsement of the Rail Strategy.

2 Information

Background and context

- 2.1 As reported to the previous meeting of Transport Committee in September 2021 (item 8), work on developing the Rail Strategy is progressing. Using the Rail Vision¹ as the overall framework, development work is being undertaken on a number of analytical commissions to strengthen and complete the evidence base.
- 2.2 The first such commission currently being worked on is "Capacity". In the sense of the Rail Strategy, capacity includes:

¹ [Rail Strategy 'vision' January 2021](#)

- The capacity of the **trains** themselves to carry the passengers forecast to wish to use them in future; as well as
 - The capacity of the **network** to accommodate the numbers of trains needed (of the appropriate type and length), including both passenger and freight transport
- 2.3 With the connectivity needs of our region at the heart of our vision, we have analysed the future capacity requirements of the rail network in the region – considering the need to accommodate:
- Expected growth in rail passenger demand.
 - Service enhancements to meet our frequency standards.
 - Wider connectivity aspirations designed to increase the role of rail.
 - The increased future role of rail freight services.
- 2.4 Looking out to a longer-term horizon of 2040, we have identified solutions to provide the required capacity – spanning both rolling stock and infrastructure enhancements. To meet expected growth in demand and reduce overcrowding we will need longer trains or more frequent services – an extra 60 carriages by 2024 and a further 70 by 2040.
- 2.5 We have identified that substantial infrastructure work will be required to support the needs of our region in the medium and longer term – with specific interventions across four broad categories:
- Platform lengthening – to allow longer services to run on routes throughout our region.
 - Signalling enhancements – to make better use of heavily-used sections of the network.
 - Capacity enhancements – focussed on key junctions and stations across the region.
 - Four-tracking of key sections – to enable separation of services at critical bottlenecks.
- 2.6 We have set out ‘how’ and ‘when’ these critical capacity enhancements should be delivered – a timeline out to 2040 shown as a series of ‘configuration states’ – grouping schemes into delivery packages as we step up through our connectivity and capacity needs. This piece of work is now in a suitable draft format to be commented on and discussed with, Transport Committee. Please see paragraph 2.11 in which a proposition is put forward as to how Transport Committee members can help input into this and other aspects of the strategy development technical work.
- 2.7 To fully realise our Rail Vision and to realise the necessary capacity across the network, we **need** key pieces of infrastructure (In addition to those we identify as crucial to our local aspirations) to be delivered as part of a single, joined-up plan:

- **HS2 Eastern Leg** – Completion of HS2 Phase 2b east between Leeds and the Midlands. This includes early delivery of the Leeds HS2 station along with a link south to a junction with the existing network.
- **Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)** – Delivery of the full NPR network linking Leeds, Bradford, and Manchester – with a new through station in the centre of Bradford to accommodate both NPR and Calder Valley services.
- **Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU)** – Completion in full by 2026, including electrification between Huddersfield, York, and Selby, and the Garforth touchpoint, to provide additional capacity now to support economic recovery.
- **Leeds Station** – With the station approaching pedestrian capacity, investment is urgently required. We also need to create significant additional capacity on the eastern and western approaches to the station to relieve the current bottleneck.
- **Electrification** – A rolling programme to create an electrified City Region rail network, starting with the Calder Valley line, to decarbonise the railway and the economy, and to open up opportunities to transform connectivity, while also increasing the cost-effectiveness, efficiency and attractiveness of the railway.
- **East Coast Main Line (ECML)** – Continued investment in this vital economic artery – optimising links to London – and which will remain critical after HS2 is delivered.

Impacts of Covid and relationship to other work

- 2.8 While further work will be needed in future to understand better the long-term impacts of Covid-19, we take the view strongly that the types of interventions identified in the Rail Strategy work are likely to be “futureproofed” and to remain the right answers.
- 2.9 As well as summarising the technical findings in terms of the types of change that are likely to be needed in order to give effect on the rail network to our vision, the Capacity Chapter and the Rail Strategy as a whole will also highlight the implications of not investing in the railway’s capacity. This also includes showing the relationship with other modes of public and sustainable transport, to demonstrate how rail is a part of the overall solution alongside bus and, in future, mass transit: investing in one is not an alternative to investing in another. Provision of sufficient rail capacity will indeed be a prerequisite to allowing bus and mass transit to fulfil their own true potential as part of an integrated door-to-door transport network. This includes pursuing within the strategy a whole range of access improvements to rail stations.

2.10 As reported at the previous meeting of Transport Committee there are several other chapters and associated technical workstreams being undertaken pursuant to the production of the final strategy:

Chapter
Capacity Needs
Freight Options
Decarbonisation
Connectivity Needs
Expanding the reach
Access and Integration
Major Projects

Transport Committee Consultation and Sign-Off Process

2.11 As noted in the previous meeting (item 8, paragraph 2.19) and through dialogue with the Chair, there is an intention to seek member input to the Strategy through a number of targeted, informal meetings to secure member feedback on “skeleton drafts” of the chapters.

2.12 Officers propose to hold two workshop style events: One in January to discuss in detail the work undertaken to date on the chapters highlighted in the table at paragraph 2.9 and one in March, prior to the publication of the Rail Strategy document in May. It is hoped that this process will allow Members the opportunity to shape the strategy, provide some assurance on the work being undertaken and finally and as far as the second workshop is concerned, to check that the issues they have raised have been addressed in the Strategy. Members will be asked to endorse these proposals under the recommendations section of this report.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

3.1 Rail is the lowest-carbon form of powered transport readily available, with the potential, through electrification and renewable generation, to be zero-carbon. Providing sufficient capacity on the railway to allow decarbonisation through modal shift from car, lorry and air transport, and for future economic growth to rely on rail as part of our overall connectivity vision, will play a critical role in addressing the climate emergency.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

4.1 The Combined Authority’s vision for future rail connectivity is inextricably linked to our goals for socially inclusive growth in the form of linking areas of deprivation to those of opportunity (such as access to jobs and education / training) and allowing the industries of the future to create sustainable and distributed wealth, providing high-quality employment. Therefore, provision of capacity on the network to enable this vision to be realised is directly material to Inclusive Growth.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the development of the Rail Strategy, making sure that the rail network does not directly or indirectly discriminate against any parts of society.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, although the recommendations of the Rail Strategy as regards future investment in rail capacity are intended to help inform decisions in this area, be they investment decisions of the Combined Authority itself or those of other funders of the rail industry.

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 It is important to emphasise that this type of work is always carried out in very close cooperation with our colleagues in Network Rail, who have regarded this commission as being directly complementary to their own work. As such, it is helping to inform the current work in relation to Leeds, as well as Bradford Forster Square and other locations. We are also working with Transport for the North and other partners towards using our evidence as the basis to move towards a common, shared vision for what the future should look like in Leeds and across our region.

- 9.2 In addition to the two Transport Committee Member workshops proposed, further engagement with Local Authority Officers and Leaders will be undertaken in a similar format to that described in paragraph 2.12.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That Transport Committee note the update on development of the Rail Strategy and in particular the Capacity Chapter.
- 10.2 That Transport Committee endorse the consultation and signoff process outlined in paragraph 2.12.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None