

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 4th March 2022

Subject: **Rail Strategy 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 To provide an update on the ongoing work on the Combined Authority's Rail Strategy, in the light of the Authority's response to two recent calls for evidence, as follows:

- UK Parliament Transport Select Committee: Integrated Rail Plan (IRP); and
- Great British Railways Transition Team: Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP).

2. Information

Background and context

2.1 Both the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) and the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP) and our subsequent responses will shape and influence West Yorkshire's Rail Strategy. It is therefore important that our Rail Strategy provides a space for West Yorkshire to declare and justify the full extent of our rail ambitions and how we will work in partnership with Great British Railways to deliver them.

- 2.2 This report sets out the implications of the IRP on the development of the Rail Strategy, provides Transport Committee with the responses to the recent calls for evidence, and sets out a revised timescale for Committee Member involvement in shaping the strategy.

West Yorkshire Rail Strategy

- 2.3 As reported to the November meeting of Transport Committee (see Background Documents) work on developing the Rail Strategy is ongoing. That report noted in paragraph 2.12 that *“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”*.
- 2.4 This position anticipated that the IRP would contribute towards the realisation of West Yorkshire’s rail ambitions. The IRP was subsequently published on 18 November 2021, which has significant implications for the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy. A summary of the IRP’s implications for West Yorkshire was provided to Transport Committee at its meeting in January 2022 (see **Background Documents**).
- 2.5 The January 2022 Transport Committee paper provides several recommendations to address not only the lack of key pieces of infrastructure missing from the IRP, but also how to take forward some of the commitments in the plan. However, attention now needs to focus on how the IRP impacts on the development of the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy.
- 2.6 Time required to understand the implications, ramifications, and regional position as a result of the publication of the IRP has diverted available resources away from the immediate needs of drafting the Rail Strategy. Further work now needs to bind the outputs of our Rail Strategy with the available inputs emerging from the IRP. This has led to a slight delay in the Transport Committee involvement, and this is discussed more in paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17.

UK Parliament Transport Committee: Integrated Rail Plan

- 2.7 The UK Parliament Transport Select Committee opened an Inquiry into the IRP on 15 December 2021 (see Background Documents). The Inquiry is considering *“the implications of the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the economy and rail capacity and connectivity.”*. The Combined Authority has provided a response to the Call for Evidence, attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.8 The Combined Authority’s response is summarised as follows:

- The response welcomes the publication of the IRP and Government's commitment and decisions regarding the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and a mass transit system for West Yorkshire.
- However, as it stands, IRP is not ambitious enough for the region and West Yorkshire seems to be at a disadvantage compared to other areas of the North.
- IRP will have serious impacts in two of West Yorkshire's largest cities:
 - **Bradford** is not included as part of the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network and effectively remains on a branch line, despite it being the UK's worst connected city. NPR would regenerate the local economy including delivering 27,000 new jobs. If the Government is serious about levelling up, then a city centre Bradford station would be included on the Leeds – Manchester NPR link.
 - The **Leeds** city strategy is shaped around a new HS2 station and accompanying growth strategy that would deliver 50,000 new jobs. Loss of the station and HS2 / NPR services to London, East Midlands and Sheffield costs the Leeds City region economy £1.7bn a year in lost output.
- IRP does not provide a cohesive plan but instead a series a fragmented upgrade proposals which does not deliver the network needed and will be very disruptive to passengers while the infrastructure is delivered. The lack of ambition in terms of the IRP is clear when compared to the preferred NPR network agreed by Northern leaders at via the Transport for the North Board.
- There is hardly any mention about NPR services between Leeds and Hull, it is unclear what is proposed for NPR services beyond York and NPR Leeds to Sheffield is subject to a study on how to get HS2 to Leeds. Leeds to Bradford electrification whilst welcome, does not make sense as services will then continue onto Halifax, Preston and Manchester on a line which is not electrified.

2.9 The Mayor of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority wrote to the Secretary of State on 19 January 2022 to raise our concerns about the implications of the IRP, a copy is at **Appendix 2**. A response was received on 18 February, and is attached at **Appendix 3**. The Combined Authority is seeking to be involved in the governance of the further studies and development works which will have a direct impact on this region, we are still waiting for a response from the Department for Transport on this.

Great British Railways: Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence

2.10 The Great British Railways Transition Team launched a Call for Evidence in December 2021 to inform the production of a Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP), a 30-year strategy for the railway. Full details are provided at via the link in **Background Documents**. The WISP is a welcome development, and

is intended to provide a strategic context to Great British Railways, once established, as the 'guiding mind' for the UK's rail network. The production and maintenance of such a strategy was an important recommendation of the *Williams Shapps Plan for Rail* published in May 2021.

2.11 The Call for Evidence invited views from within and beyond the rail sector to inform the development of WISP around the following 5 strategic outcomes:

- meeting customers' needs
- delivering financial sustainability
- contributing to long-term economic growth
- levelling up and connectivity
- delivering environmental sustainability

2.12 The Combined Authority's response is attached at **Appendix 4**. A key concern is that it is not currently clear how local partners can influence the delivery of the WISP, which underlines the importance of securing strong relationships and clear governance mechanisms as Great British Railways is established.

2.13 In summary the Combined Authority asserted that a WISP should set out the following framework for the rail industry:

General Industry/Governance

- Railway is there to serve a wider purpose in society and not an end in its own right
- The railway must be accountable to those who use, fund and benefit from it
- Rail must be seen in the context of wider transport needs
- Trade-offs between outcome and cost must be informed
- There must be openness and honesty within the rail sector along with simplification of the industry to drive improved accountability for decision making and affordability
- Plans should not be made based on the current Covid-19 transport position – cannot assume current trends will continue

Customer

- Customers must be at the heart of the industry – simple affordable fares, good reliable service matching travel needs, full accessibility and a high-quality offer to encourage modal shift
- The rail industry must have some freedom to use their expertise to improve the passenger offer, grow the rail market and provide more financially sustainable services

Climate

- The strategy needs to prioritise the climate emergency and provide for inclusive growth for everyone across our region

- Rail freight must be encouraged, and new freight customers supported, balance between customer and freight services needs to be appropriate

Investment/Major Schemes

- There needs to be local powers/influence to ensure the that local needs are provided for
- Rail investment needs to be judged over the longer term to allow investment to provide longer term cost savings
- There must be acceptance that some investment/costs cannot be judged on a pure financial business case but on wider benefits and the government agenda of levelling up and decarbonisation.
- TRU should be delivered with full electrification and accessible stations. Details are required on disruption and timetabling planning to maximise the benefits of the programme and minimise the disbenefits to the local communities and businesses.
- Further studies will be required to look at options that deliver benefits close to the HS2 East and NPR network, CA should be involved in the governance process
- Leeds station needs the capacity required (both track and pedestrian capacity) as a major rail hub and bottleneck of the rail network, and the connectivity of Bradford needs to be transformed to realise the city's economic potential

West Yorkshire Rail Strategy – Implications and Timescales

- 2.14 The West Yorkshire Rail Strategy is being drafted to be a showcase for the region's economic and connectivity ambitions, within the framework of the overall Connectivity Infrastructure Plan. In line with the published Rail Vision the Strategy will:
- Address critical capacity issues across the rail network and accommodate the forecast growth in the region.
 - Enhance passenger experience to create a high-quality journey offer.
 - Address significant disparity in the current rail service offer.
 - Facilitate an integrated transport network with attractive door-to-door journeys.
 - Support the decarbonisation of the rail network.
- 2.15 The West Yorkshire Rail Vision was written prior the publication of the IRP and the commencement of the development of the Whole Industry Strategic Plan and whilst the IRP (and to a lesser extent the WISP) must not dictate the direction the Rail Strategy should take, there should at least be some relation to what is proposed in these documents, even if it is to provide a counter-point to proposals or lack of, contained therein.
- 2.16 As set out above, because of the implications of the IRP there will be slight delay to the development of the West Yorkshire Rail Strategy. However, it is still the intention to offer Transport Committee Members the opportunity to

shape the Strategy. A workshop is now proposed to be held at the end of April. The purpose of the workshop is to provide members with a summary of the technical work undertaken to date and what this means for the Rail Strategy. Members will be asked if any key messages are missing and there will be an opportunity to help shape the Strategy.

- 2.17 A first draft of the Strategy will be circulated to Members in June, with a second workshop planned for July, where Members will be given the opportunity to comment on the draft document. It is planned to publish the Strategy shortly afterwards.

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 Development of the Rail Strategy to date has been carried out in consultation with colleagues in Network Rail and other industry partners, who have regarded the commission as being directly complementary to their own work.

9.2 We are also working with Transport for the North and other partners to ensure our evidence as the basis to move towards a common, shared vision for what the future should look across West Yorkshire. Finally, a credible Rail Strategy for West Yorkshire should provide a reasoned evidence base to justify the levels of investment required in our region.

9.3 In addition to the two Transport Committee Member workshops proposed, engagement with officers from partner councils will continue.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That Transport Committee **note** the update on the development of the Rail Strategy.

10.2 That Transport Committee **note** the following submitted Call for Evidence responses and the implications these have to the development of the Rail Strategy:

- UK Parliament Transport Committee: Integrated Rail Plan Inquiry Call for Evidence response, at **Appendix 1**; and
- Great British Railways Transition Team Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence response, at **Appendix 4**.

11. Background Documents

Rail Strategy Capacity Chapter, Item 8, Transport Committee, 5 November 2021. Available here:

<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=138&MIId=1127>

Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands, Department for Transport, 18 November 2021, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-rail-plan-for-the-north-and-the-midlands>

Integrated Rail Plan, Item 8, Transport Committee, 7 January 2022. Available here:

<https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=138&MIId=1128>

Integrated rail plan Inquiry, Transport Select Committee, background to the Inquiry and call for evidence available via this link:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1712/integrated-rail-plan/>

Whole Industry Strategic Plan: Call for Evidence, Great British Railways Transition Team. Background information including launch document available here: <https://gbrtt.co.uk/wisp/>

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – West Yorkshire response to UK Parliament Transport Committee: Integrated Rail Plan Inquiry Call for Evidence

Appendix 2 – Letter sent to the Secretary of State for Transport by the Mayor on 19 January 2022 regarding the Integrated Rail Plan.

Appendix 3 – Letter received by the Mayor from the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the Integrated Rail Plan

Appendix 4 – West Yorkshire response to Great British Railways Transition Team Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence