

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 25 May 2018

Subject: **Rail Services Update**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director, Policy & Strategy

Author(s): Michael Sasse / Lynne Triggs

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:	

1. Purpose of this report

This report summarises the main changes that will occur to rail timetables in May 2018, identifies the main issues they raise, and proposes, for the Committee's endorsement, actions to address those issues. It also provides an update on recent operational performance on the railway.

2. Information

- 2.1 May 2018 sees major changes to rail services across the country, including on many rail routes across the City Region, in particular those operated by Northern ("NT") and by Trans-Pennine Express ("TP"). Some of the changes are positive and some are negative.
- 2.2 When the NT and TP franchises were originally let in 2016, the intention was that these major changes, which included a number of valuable improvements, would be introduced in December 2017. The December 2017 changes were planned to be a major timetable re-structuring exercise that would act as a stepping stone to further changes in December 2019 for both the NT and TP franchises.
- 2.3 However, the December 2017 changes were delayed due to a number of problems across the industry – initially they were to be introduced in May

2018, but now many service improvements will not be delivered in May 2018 either. The May 2018 changes are wide-ranging and complex, and a detailed note is available on request. The changes include:

- a) Improvements to services;
- b) Changes to services which can be seen as “neutral”;
- c) Routes on which there are few significant changes; and
- d) Deteriorations in service (worse than today).

- 2.4 Examples of each are contained in Appendix 1. A more detailed overview on a route-by-route basis is contained in Appendix 2.
- 2.5 Information as to the changes has been released very late and in an unsatisfactory manner. The rail industry is under an obligation (the “Informed Traveller” or “T-12” principle) to release finalised timetable information into the public domain no less than 12 weeks before a timetable change. Network Rail indicated that the best it would manage would be half of this notice period (“T-6”), but in practice the last timetable information was only received in the first few days of May.
- 2.6 As a result of the challenges in receiving information, the review summarised in this paper has relied on information from the train operators plus other official and semi-official sources. It should therefore be emphasised that the information provided through this paper is based on information available to officers at the time of writing, and in some cases is incomplete.
- 2.7 The Combined Authority has also had difficulty in planning supported bus services and providing up-to-date bus information. WYCA would seek to change the times of supported services to meet trains with 56 days’ notice, giving time to update passenger information. The delay in receiving train timetables has meant that bus service changes were planned at short notice, meaning delays to passenger information being available: in total, including the rail impact, over 7,500 roadside displays will need updating in May. The Authority has developed a contingency plan to prioritise where and how information is displayed, as the normal level of coverage will not be in place from the service change date.
- 2.8 Some of the deteriorations and failures to deliver improvements amount to non-compliances with the franchise agreements. Also, the deteriorations are not always easily traced to an obvious cause. It is understood that many of the negatives can be traced to:
 - A shortage of diesel trains arising from the severe delay in Network Rail electrifying the Bolton line;
 - A shortage of diesel trains that were to be cascaded into the north, due to infrastructure enhancement delays elsewhere in the country;
 - Very late notification by Network Rail (e.g. January 2018) to train operators of the delay in delivering enhancement schemes on time;
 - Northern’s position in particular in the ‘pecking order’ for timetable planning i.e. they are late in line to get their services planned in through the rail industry’s systems and processes;

2.9 However, some issues appear hard to relate to any such obvious cause, so the reasons why some improvements are not happening, or why some services are experiencing deteriorations, have not been provided in this report. WYCA officers intend to work with Transport for the North/Rail North Partnership colleagues to better understand this with a view to developing solutions to such problems.

2.10 There are serious concerns about passenger capacity on many routes, especially:

- All TP routes (including local services taken over from NT).
- Huddersfield-Manchester, Calder Valley, Woodlesford, York & Selby routes.
- The franchise agreement for Northern requires the following to be provided:

Northern Dec 17 onwards Seats + standing	Morning arrivals		Evening departures	
	Peak	High-peak	Peak	High-peak
	0700-0959	0800-0859	1600-1859	1700-1759
Leeds	26,034	12,531	25,660	10,294

And the corresponding one for TPE requires (again at Leeds)

Standard seats	Dec. 2017
AM peak 3 hrs	7,420
AM peak hour	2,760
PM peak 3 hrs	7,350
PM peak hour	3,000

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the Rail North Partnership (RNP) has yet to receive either operator’s train plan, and therefore West Yorkshire Combined Authority has not had sight of it. It is understood that the delay in provision of the train plan is due to it still being finalised, which serves to illustrate how last minute the timetable change process has become. The operators are under an obligation to provide the train plan to the RNP; it will confirm what specific rolling stock is scheduled to form every individual service, and therefore allow an assessment of the extent to which the above capacity requirements will be met, as well as an assessment of likely rolling stock quality. WYCA officers are concerned about whether either operator will comply with the above requirements; this translates into a continuation of severe crowding conditions.

2.11 It should be noted that there are other West Yorkshire Combined Authority priorities referred to in this paper and appendices that were neither specified

during the re-franchising process nor committed in the final franchise agreements. These are the “service gaps” that Transport Committee considered on 14 October 2016¹ which have yet to be translated into a commitment from the train operators, and which were therefore never an obligation for delivery in December 2017/May 2018. These include:

- Low Moor: increasing services from 1tph to 2tph
- Sunday services: introducing them on routes currently without, and increasing 0.5tph services on Hallam and Pontefract lines to 1tph
- Other service gaps such as Dearne Valley, Goole and Pontefract – Doncaster

2.12 It is proposed to pursue all of these issues both with RNP and directly with the train operators themselves. It is clearly imperative that the RNP put all reasonable pressure on the two train operators whose franchise it manages to ensure that they comply with their franchise obligations wherever practicable, and that any non-compliances and other issues are addressed as soon as it does become practicable to do so. In the case of service priorities that are not reflected in existing franchise commitments (such as the examples in paragraph 2.11 above), other potential funding options will be explored, such as the franchises’ ‘Service Option Funds’.

2.13 As a first step a list of the issues with the May 2018 services has been collated, noting for each one:

- Whether it appears to amount to a non-compliance with the relevant franchise agreement; and
- The suggested priority with which it should be addressed, having regard both to its importance for Leeds City Region connectivity and also to:
- What potential practical steps might be taken to resolve it, and when this might be feasible?

It should however be noted that this analysis is preliminary and has not yet been discussed with RNP colleagues, and therefore the priorities could change slightly as further information comes to light on what opportunities there are to improve train services.

2.14 On this basis, it is proposed that West Yorkshire Combined Authority should prioritise its work along the lines of the priorities identified in that list. This implies focusing in this priority order:

(i) “Top priority”: Matters of high importance where a solution **may** be possible before the December 2018 timetable change, such as:

- Additional train capacity as soon as any rolling-stock becomes available
- Adding station stops in trains planned to run anyway, to close anomalous gaps, especially where gap is longer than today

¹ Item 07, *Developing the Rail Franchises serving the Leeds City Region*

and/or constitutes non-compliance with the franchise agreement (e.g. east of Leeds stations)

- Additional stops at Low Moor at least in peaks
- Gaps in services which are anomalous, do not comply with franchise requirements and may not require additional resources or wider changes
- First or last trains which are earlier than today, do not comply with franchise requirements, and would not appear to have any obvious justification
- “Missing” Sunday trains on Calder Valley and Selby lines
- Poor Sunday services on Leeds-Wakefield W-Doncaster/Sheffield lines

(ii) “High priority”: Matters of high importance where a solution should be sought from the December 2018 timetable change, such as:

- Any items from the above list that prove incapable of delivery sooner
- Further train capacity increases
- Increasing weekday services to levels intended for May 2018
- Through services as per intended May 2018 specification (such as Calder Valley – Manchester Airport and York – Blackpool)
- Restructure timetable on Calder Valley
- Amend Sunday Airedale / Wharfedale timetable structure
- Recast services at Slaithwaite & Marsden to restore an all-day, daily local service
- Amend evening and Sunday timetables so that connections do not “just miss” at key connection nodes
- “Usable” service intervals on Dearne Valley (York-Pontefract-Sheffield)
- Early and late trains as per franchise specification
- 2tph at Low Moor all day, daily

(iii) “Medium priority”: Matters of high importance which will necessitate further development work with a view to their implementation in subsequent timetable changes but within the life of the two franchises:

- Various poor connections in proposed timetables;
- Early and late trains where franchise specification falls short of expectations, especially inconsistencies as between routes;
- Extra Sunday stops at Kirkstall Forge and Apperley Bridge;
- Additional Sunday services especially where only 0.5tph was specified, or no service at all;
- Focus on journey times as many are being slowed-down;
- Regular services to Goole and on Dearne Valley;
- Greater consistency: regular interval ‘clockface’ train times; and
- Additional service(s) to fill peak gaps on low-frequency lines.

(iv) “Low priority”: This is only relative, as matters which are of no importance to West Yorkshire Combined Authority have not been included; the category relates to improvements that would be of value and may, for example, be implemented as a by-product of other interventions. It also includes a small number of items that may technically not comply with provisions in the franchise agreements, but do not give rise to significant negative impacts for Leeds City Region travellers.

2.15 It should be emphasised that there is no guarantee that all of the above will be capable of being delivered either within the timescales suggested above (which can be considered “best-case” targets) or at all. The intention is to illustrate how WYCA’s strategic rail planning work might be effectively prioritised, and to seek endorsement from the Committee to this approach.

Rail Service Performance - Rail Periods 10-13 (10th December – 31st March)

2.16 Northern: Public Performance Measure (PPM)

The public performance measure (PPM) shows the percentage of trains which arrive at their terminating station within 5 minutes (short distance/regional services) or 10 minutes (for long distance services). It combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure.

2.17 In Period 13 Northern’s overall PPM was 87.5% whereas in the same period last year the PPM was 92.7%. In all of the above periods the PPM this year was lower than the same time in the previous year. Northern’s annual PPM target is 92.80% which was not reached in any of the last four periods. The performance in the West and North Yorkshire area was higher than Northern overall, however except in Period 11 the performance was down on the previous year.

2.18 There were 5 lines of route that scored above 90% in all of the last four periods. There were 2 lines of route that scored above 92% in all of the last four periods. The highest scoring route was Leeds-Bradford Forster Square at 98.57% in Period 11. Other high performing routes include Knottingley-Wakefield, Leeds-Harrogate-Knaresborough, Goole-Knottingley -Leeds and Leeds-Ilkley.

2.19 The poorest performing routes over the four periods were the Leeds – Blackpool North, Manchester Victoria-Hebden Bridge-Leeds and Leeds-York. The lowest recorded performance was on the Blackpool North – Leeds/York at 75.06% in Period 10.

2.20 *Northern: Short Forming (Periods 10-13)*

Short forming is when a train is run with less capacity than specified in the train plan. In Period 13 Northern’s level of short formations was 3.4% against a target of 0%, last year’s figure was 1.9%. Generally short forming is worse this year than last. Issues impacting on Northern have been wheel flats during leaf fall season, severe winter weather and train units being out of service for refurbishment.

2.21 *Transpennine Express (TPE): Public Performance Measure (PPM)*

In Period 13 Transpennine Express had a PPM of 84% whereas in the same period last year the PPM was 91.4%. Performance was down in all the above periods against the same period last year. TPE's annual PPM target is 90.90% which was not reached this year in Periods 10-13.

2.22 *Transpennine Express (TPE): Short Forming (Periods 10-13)*

In Period 13 TPE's level of short formations was 0.51%.

2.23 *Other Train Operating Companies (TOCs): Public Performance Measure (PPM)*

Over the last four periods Cross Country, East Midlands, Grand Central and Virgin East Coast all had lower PPMs than in the same period the previous year. The PPMs for these TOCs in Period 13 were - Cross Country 86.8%, East Midlands 92.0%, Grand Central 76.6% and Virgin East Coast 75.3%.

2.24 High-level analysis undertaken by WYCA officers looking at weekday train performance between Monday 5th March and Friday 27th April 2018, found the following (the data presented covers weekdays only into Leeds, ignoring the two Northern strike days and includes all train operators):

- 231 train services were cancelled between 7am and 7pm (1.32% of those scheduled to run) including 74 in the morning peak (1.61%);
- 3,719 services ran three or more minutes late (21.3% of all services) including 1,071 operating in the morning peak (23.3%); and
- On average 41 services a day in the morning peak ran three or more minutes late. This impacts 10,200 rail users and equates to 671 hours in lost time each day to those affected passengers.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority officers have already raised concerns at the overall levels of punctuality, reliability and short-forming with both Northern and Trans-Pennine Express, and also with the Rail North Partnership. It is proposed that West Yorkshire Combined Authority should continue to press for remedial action, including escalating the matter with the RNP.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5 Staffing Implications

5.1 The work to secure better outcomes for Leeds City Region beyond the May 2018 timetable change will be carried out by existing WYCA officers.

6 External Consultees

- 6.1 The original May 2018 timetable proposals from the Northern and Trans-Pennine franchisees were the subject of a consultation exercise in 2017, which was considered by Transport Committee on 7 July 2017 and led to Combined Authority submitting its responses. The recommendations of this report are entirely consistent with those responses.

7 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the summary of the May 2018 service changes and of recent operational performance trends;
- (ii) Endorse the proposed actions by WYCA officers to seek to address the issues identified with the May 2018 train services in accordance with the methodology set out in paragraphs 2.14 – 2.15 above; and
- (iii) Endorse the proposal to escalate concerns at the operating performance of the Arriva Rail North and Trans-Pennine Express franchises through the processes of the Rail North Partnership.

8 Background Documents

May 2018 Rail Timetables: Northern and Trans-Pennine Express: report to Transport Committee, 7 July 2017

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Selected examples of main categories of change

Appendix 2 – Route-by-route overview of May 2018 timetable change implications