

## **Rail North Committee Meeting –**

- Subject:** Update on Operational Rail Issues
- Author:** Adam Timewell, Head of Rail Service Outputs
- Sponsor:** David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director
- Meeting Date:** Wednesday 21 October 2020

### **1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on operational rail issues and provides an opportunity for members to discuss current progress and next steps on the timetable recovery plans. It covers current operational performance, and December 2020 & May 2021 timetable plans. It also covers a proposal received by the Rail North Partnership relating to Boxing Day services in 2020.

### **2. Executive Summary:**

- 2.1 This report summarises the current operational performance and levels of demand in light of the transition from summer holiday period to the return of school. The report also touches on impact the recent local lockdown and other Covid restrictions have had on demand in recent weeks.
- 2.2 This report outlines the upcoming timetable changes for both December 2020 and May 2021 as part of the Covid recovery timetables, building further on the recent September timetable changes.
- 2.3 This includes an update on the approach to Boxing Day services.

### **3. Current Operational Performance**

- 3.1 Previously, punctuality was primarily recorded using the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which considered trains to be 'on time' if they arrived within five or ten minutes at their final destination only, for short distance and long-distance trains respectively. In April 2019, all rail companies began to use the more transparent measure as its primary method of measuring punctuality. Rail companies now publish a spread of information about train punctuality: early, within a minute of the timetabled arrival or within three, five, 10 or 15 minutes and after 15, 20 or 30 minutes. The proportion of trains cancelled is also shown.

- 3.2 For Northern, the timetable uplifts have operated successfully and continue to deliver high levels of operational performance, both in terms of punctuality and low levels of cancellations. The punctuality within 3 minutes at each stop measure pre-Covid was 75% which increased to 96% in April as part of the Covid Timetable introduction. The measure has since been trending downwards across the last five periods as more services have been introduced to 90.4% (Public Performance Measure comparator 93.4%). TPE have seen a similar trend and their punctuality within 3 minutes at each stop was 87.87% (Public Performance Measure comparator 95.6%).
- 3.3 Over the summer period, passenger demand grew to between 40-60% of pre-Covid levels. Whilst there was anticipation of further demand with the return of school, the only noticeable effect was a drop in mid-week leisure travel. Peak travel has also shifted from traditional peak times to Thursday & Friday afternoons.
- 3.4 With more local lockdowns being put in place over recent weeks, passenger demand has fallen again by approx. 10% and has been felt widely across the North.

#### **4. December 2020 timetable changes**

- 4.1 December 2020 continues the progress made to build back rail services from the Covid Timetable. The North of England Contingency Group, which brings member officers and the industry together, has helped to shape and monitor the development of these incremental plans under an extremely challenging environment.
- 4.2 Northern's plans for December 2020 will see additional services to the current September timetable from 82% to 89% of full-service provision. A summary of the changes can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.
- 4.3 A key issue developed in the lead up to the September changes, which saw a planned removal of the service from Rose Hill Marple. As a result of discussions with Rail North Partnership, Transport for the North, and TfGM, Northern were able to develop a revised plan which saw the reinstatement of some additional trips to Rose Hill Marple in September with a further uplift in services is being introduced from the end of October, followed by the resumption of an hourly service from December 2020.
- 4.4 TPE's plans also see a step-up for December 2020, as part of a phased, measured, and considered move toward full timetable introduction. The timetable aims to maintain high levels of performance, to maximise journey opportunities and capacity, and is based on a reliable level of competent traincrew resource. A summary of the changes can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 4.5 Concerns have been raised from member authorities regarding the suspension of most calls at Alsager Station for East Midlands Railway (EMR) services between Derby and Crewe. Concerns also remain for the reduced number of calls at Chesterfield Station for Cross Country services. Both Operators maintain that these decisions were for performance improvement reasons.

Transport for the North and member officers continue to work with EMR and Cross Country to address these concerns and identify the key interventions needed to take place to operate the full service with good performance. These include the issue with the level crossing immediately next to Alsager station and Dore Station junction.

## **5. May 2021 timetable plans**

- 5.1 There is a clear desire across the industry to embrace the opportunity to 'Build Back Better' and deliver a timetable change that will sustain the much-improved levels of train performance we have seen across the network since March, benefiting passengers and freight users alike.
- 5.2 As seen in timetable uplifts this year, there is a relationship between increased levels of service and reduced network performance and several operator plans for May 2021 have been identified as potential risks to network performance including TPE. TPE had been working on plans to return to a full service, with further service increases in line with their franchise agreement. To maintain the current high levels of performance it has been proposed to continue with the December 2020 level of service, with some minor amendments where necessary to improve performance further and match passenger demand. The System Operator (part of Network Rail) will work with TPE to identify how the slots not proposed to be used might be retained to facilitate driver training or reinstate services later in the timetable period should circumstances require it.
- 5.3 Northern plan to re-instate further services from May 2021, building on the December 2020 uplift from 89% to 92% of full-service provision. However, several services will remain suspended due to predicted levels of resource shortfalls. Details of the service uplifts and remaining service suspensions have been shared with lead officers as part of the North of England Contingency Group. Building on the experience of this summer, this plan has been optimised in order to provide the capacity and frequency for customers where it is needed most and a reliable/punctual railway.
- 5.4 Northern are working with Rail North Partnership and DoHL as the operator maps the areas (both around staffing and by geographical/service group location) where they are particularly susceptible to the impacts of Covid spikes/second wave and how services could be stepped back in an orderly fashion should this prove necessary through time. This work is due to be completed in the coming weeks and will be brought together with the System Operator's own plans early in the

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New Year to either verify readiness for May 21, or map necessary amendments.

- 5.5 Rail North Partnership report that the work around projected driver availability and the interactions between this and other areas such as depot/signalling staff availability is at a level that has not been achieved since May 2018 although it remains a hugely complex task given Northern's complex, interworked planning. There is also an appreciation, in particular following issues around the September Timetable uplift of a need for close working with stakeholders.

## **6. Boxing Day Services**

- 6.1 The Rail North Partnership Board endorsed a recommendation, subject to consultation with the Rail North Committee, to approve Northern's variation request to not operate a Boxing Day 2020 service, taking on board the limited routes over which Northern can operate on Boxing Day 2020 due to engineering works and the impact of Covid-19.
- 6.2 The potential demand for Boxing Day services in 2020 has been considered. Covid-19 has seen vastly reduced current levels of passenger demand and could be a possibility of further reductions in demand if restrictions during the winter period increase. Consideration was also given to the low passenger numbers for Boxing Day 2019 which also saw restricted routes resulting from engineering works.
- 6.3 The extent of the engineering works can be found in Appendix 3 of this report, but the works cover the key flows which, under normal circumstances, would generate the most passenger demand opportunities across the North.
- 6.4 This recommendation is that given the Covid impact in 2020, Transport for the North seeks a clear focus delivery of the Boxing Day service commitment from 2021 onwards. To this end Rail North Partnership Management Team will engage Transport for the North in a 4-way dialogue (Rail North Partnership/Transport for the North/Network Rail and Northern) to plan Boxing Day services from 2021, and explore the full potential of running Boxing Day services balanced against the need of Network Rail to have unrestricted access to the rail network for enhancement and renewal works.

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**7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 It is recommended that the report is noted and that that members endorse the approach to Boxing Day services, including securing early commitment to services from 2021 onwards.

<b>8.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
8.1	Appendix 1: Northern December 2020 service uplift
8.2	Appendix 2: TPE December 2020 service uplift
8.3	Appendix 3: Key Engineering works during the Christmas Period

## Appendix 1: Northern December 2020 service uplift

Corridor	September 2020 Service Level	Service Resumption in Dec 2020
Rose Hill -Piccadilly	6 services per day	Hourly service
Victoria–Warrington -Chester	Two hourly (Hourly Leeds –Vic with two hourly extension to Chester)	Hourly (provided by hourly Leeds - Chester service)
Barrow -Manchester Airport	Through service focused on peak times	Increase from 6 to 11 through services
Windermere -Manchester Airport	Through service focused on peak times	Increase from 3 to 4 through services
Liverpool -Warrington -Airport fast	Peak only service	Increase from 3 to 10 services per day
Piccadilly -Chester via Altrincham	Hourly peak and two hourly off peak	Hourly all day
Piccadilly -Hadfield/Glossop	Half hourly service	Additional peak services resumed
Blackburn -Todmorden–Wigan	3 hourly service Blackburn–Todmorden–Victoria	Blackburn -Todmorden–Wigan hourly
Saltburn–Bishop Auckland	Hourly	Hourly with half hourly frequency Darlington -Saltburn
Sheffield–Gainsborough/Lincoln	Hourly Sheffield–Lincoln	Hourly service with Gainsborough - Sheffield peak services
Leeds –Carlisle	6 services per day	8 services per day

## Appendix 2: TPE December 2020 service uplift

TPE’s plans for December 2020 include;

### Anglo-Scottish routes – Edinburgh to Manchester Airport / Glasgow to Liverpool

Most services will operate from December apart from a number of services predominately focused around early morning/late evening times of the day.

### South routes – Cleethorpes to Manchester Airport

Services will continue to operate an hourly Cleethorpes – Manchester Piccadilly service. All trains are planned to be six car formations throughout the operating day. TPE will maintain the first and last services of the day running through to Manchester Airport.

### North routes - Scarborough to Liverpool, Redcar to Manchester Airport, Edinburgh/Newcastle to Liverpool, Newcastle to Manchester Airport

TPE plan to increase services between Newcastle and York including additional extensions to Edinburgh, as well as an additional journey each direction between Redcar and York.

## Appendix 3: Key Engineering works during Christmas Period

The Key engineering works include

- Newcastle KEB Waybeams (year 10 of 12),
- Sheffield station
- York station
- Leeds station (Shutdown period only)
- Doncaster reballasting
- Carlisle heavy maintenance including Carlisle Station

- Sunderland station overbridge, Streethouse branch for underbridge replacement and Gilberdyke station overbridge (re-planned due to Coronavirus).
- Crewe to Sandbach
- Drainage at Farington
- Ashburys to Manchester Piccadilly
- Manchester Piccadilly to Ordsall Lane

## Required Considerations

### Equalities:

Age		No
Disability		No
Gender Reassignment		No
Pregnancy and Maternity		No
Race		No
Religion or Belief		No
Sex		No
Sexual Orientation		No

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Equalities	A full impact assessment has not been carried out because the report does not contain any specific new proposals.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth

### Environment and Sustainability

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Environment and Sustainability	A full impact assessment has not been carried out because it is not required.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth

### Legal

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Legal	There are no new legal implications for TfN as a result of this report	Deborah Dimock	Dawn Madin

### Finance

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Finance	There are no direct finance implications to TFN as a result of this report.	Paul Kelly	Iain Craven

### Resource

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Resource	There are no direct resourcing implications as a result of this report.	Stephen Hipwell	Dawn Madin

### Risk

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Risk	A full risk assessment has not been carried out as it is not required for the purpose of this report.	Haddy Njie	Iain Craven

### Consultation

	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Consultation	Relevant consultation on timetable changes has taken place with member authorities.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth