

Rail North Committee

Subject: Update on Operational Rail Issues

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Sponsor: David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director

Meeting Date: Tuesday 12 January 2021

1. Purpose of the Report:

The report provides Committee members with an update on Operational Rail matters including Covid impact, timetable changes, and performance.

2. Executive Summary:

- 2.1 Operational performance continues to be better than in recent years. Several revised timetables were introduced over the last few months and for the December 2020 timetable. Staff availability due to Covid remains a key challenge for the industry. As part of the new Rail North Operations Group, we have developed a set of principles to help guide the industry during this period of resource uncertainty.

3. Consideration:

3.1 Covid Timetables

Several Train Operators temporarily revised timetable services during November 2020 and December 2020 as Covid-related absence impacted on the availability of staff to operate services.

As part of the new Rail North Operations Group, we have developed a set of principles to help guide the industry during this period of resource uncertainty. The agreed principles are:

- No route loses a service completely;
- for routes with multiple operators, protect the route with the remaining operators if a single operator needs to withdraw a service;
- early engagement on possible changes;
- certainty of timetable to reduce short notice cancellations; and

- maintain services for school travel and key workers.

At the time of writing, resource availability was positive although there continue to be some localised shortages. We will continue to work with Operators through the Rail North Operations Group to match timetables to demand and resources.

3.2 **Latest Timetable Changes**

The Covid pandemic continues to present challenges to the industry in restoring as many rail services as possible for passengers. Resource availability continues to be a key challenge and has affected the implementation of planned service changes for December 2020.

Transport for the North will work closely with both operators to ensure those services unable to be introduced are put in place as soon as it is operationally practicable to do so.

As part of the new December timetable, Northern have introduced additional services on the following routes:

- Barrow – Manchester Airport
- Bentham Line
- Blackburn – Wigan
- Chester – Manchester Piccadilly
- Chester - Leeds
- Darlington – Saltburn
- Gainsborough – Sheffield
- Liverpool Lime Street – Manchester Airport
- Rose Hill – Manchester Piccadilly
- Settle – Carlisle
- Windermere – Manchester Airport

For TPE, the following service amendments were made:

- Manchester Airport – Cleethorpes will continue to start/terminate at Manchester Piccadilly; however, this will increase to a consistent hourly service. The first and last service of the day will run through to Manchester Airport;
- Manchester Airport to Edinburgh and Glasgow reverted to their normal calling patterns pre-COVID;
- Liverpool Lime Street – Scarborough will run as a shuttle between Scarborough and York on an hourly basis;
- Manchester Airport – Newcastle will run to/from Manchester Victoria where it will then run on to Liverpool after an extended

dwell as it does today. Lea Green will be inserted in all trains in addition to Newton-le-Willows;

- Manchester Piccadilly – Hull continues to run hourly. Evenings and Sundays this service will additionally call at Mossley, Greenfield, Marsden and Slaithwaite; and
- Manchester Piccadilly – Huddersfield stopping service will run hourly Monday to Saturday daytimes only.

3.3 **Next Timetable Plans**

Preparations for Northern’s May 2021 timetable changes continue to be monitored closely to ensure a reliable and resilient service is provided, including insight into the potential demand over the summer period. There are currently no plans for a timetable change in May 2021 for TPE.

Future timetable plans will also need to consider alignment with other key programmes such as Manchester Recovery Task Force, East Coast Mainline, and Transpennine Route Upgrade.

Details will be released by the operators to passengers and stakeholders next year and will be communicated to members as part of Transport for the North’s regular briefing updates.

3.4 **Future Timetable Plans**

Looking further into 2022, there are two key timetable plans aiming for a May, Manchester Recovery Task Force and East Coast Mainline (ECML).

Details of the Manchester Recovery Task Force are covered under Item 4 of this Agenda.

Significant changes to LNER (London North Eastern Railway) services are being planned to the ECML timetable from May 2022. These plans would enable an increase in frequency of trains to and from London. This is primarily around achieving the benefits from investment in the new Azuma trains and infrastructure improvements.

However, as members will be aware there is constrained capacity on the ECML north of York and currently there is insufficient capacity to accommodate a 7th train on this section of route. Thus, trade-offs are being considered by the industry and there is concern from North East Authorities that it may not be possible to run the second TPE train per hour that normally runs on this part of the route.

A consultation on service changes is anticipated in the early part of 2021. Given that improving east-west connectivity is a key Transport for the North objective and also that these services would ultimately

form part of the NPR network, the Committee is asked to support the North East in strongly promoting the retention of 2 trains per hour on TPE's North East services. Transport for the North will respond to the formal consultation on proposal expected early in 2021.

3.5 **Latest Operation Performance**

Operational performance is strong and continues to remain well above pre-Covid levels. For example, just prior to Covid, Northern's on-time levels were 54.2% and are now at 69.9% and TPE's on-time levels were 37.5% and are now at 65.4%. However, whilst still well above pre-Covid levels, there has been a decline in performance as more services have been re-introduced onto the network. For example, during April 2020, Northern were performing as high as 87.2% on-time and TPE at 78.8%.

The below graph highlights the trends of both operators since the beginning of this year.



Passenger journeys rose significantly the week England came out of the second national lockdown. At the time of writing (Late December 2020), Northern passenger demand was at 31% and TPE were at 24% of pre-Covid demand levels.

3.6 **Performance reporting**

Transport for the North is developing a performance dashboard that will be used by the Strategic Rail team to analyse and present operational performance statistics to the Rail North Committee. The aim of the dashboard is to stimulate strategic decisions around areas of focus and investment to improve the operational performance of rail in the North of England.

There is a significant amount of data existing both publicly and from the industry. Collating and processing performance data published from multiple sources is currently manually executed, making it time-consuming and more prone to error.

Transport for the North intends to streamline this process by creating a single platform where this data can be integrated and updated automatically. The dashboard will allow the user to undertake interactive analysis of the data to reveal performance trends at varying levels of aggregation (e.g., by operators, geographic locations, time periods), as well as the inclusion of delay attribution (cause) data.

4. Recommendation:

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the report and provide any feedback on the Covid timetable principles currently in place.
- 4.2 The committee is asked to support the North East in promoting the retention of 2 trains per hour on TPE's North East services.

List of Background Documents:

There are no background papers to this report.

Required Considerations
Equalities:

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

Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Equalities	A full Impact assessment has not been carried out because the paper does not propose changes to specific proposals.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth

Environment and Sustainability

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Sustainability / Environment – including considerations regarding Active Travel and Wellbeing	The provisions of this report do not require any environmental or sustainability assessment/appraisal.	Peter Cole	Tim Foster

Legal

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Legal	Transport for the North Legal Team has confirmed there are no legal implications.	Deborah Dimock	Julie Openshaw

Finance

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Finance	Transport for the North Finance Team has confirmed there are no financial implications for Transport for the North.	Paul Kelly	Iain Craven

Resource

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Resource	Transport for the North HR Team has confirmed there are no resource implications.	Stephen Hipwell	Dawn Madin

Risk

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Risk	A full risk assessment has not been carried out however some key challenges have been identified in para 3.2	Haddy Njie	Iain Craven

Consultation

Yes	No
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Consideration	Comment	Responsible Officer	Director
Consultation	A consultation has not been carried out because the paper does not relate to specific proposals.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth