

# TfN Scrutiny Committee

**Subject:** Manchester Recovery Taskforce

**Author:** Adam Timewell, Head of Rail Service Outputs

**Sponsor:** David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director

**Meeting Date:** Thursday 4th March 2021

## 1. Purpose of the Report:

The report provides information about service change options flowing from recommendations of the Manchester Recovery Task Force. The Committee is asked to note the recommendations of the Manchester Recovery Task Force and the ongoing public consultation.

## 2. Executive Summary:

- 2.1 Congestion in Central Manchester has had a significant impact on performance across the North of England. The Manchester Recovery Task Force was established early 2020 and their work has progressed to develop feasible options for consideration and to assess carefully how these options will improve the overall reliability of the network as well as the impact they will have on passengers. The Task Force has produced a series of options to improve performance in the short-term pending the delivery of infrastructure in the medium to long term.
- 2.2 A public consultation commenced in early January 2021. It is seeking views from the public and stakeholders on work that has been undertaken to date by the Task Force. The consultation will inform decisions to be made in Spring 2021 on potential changes to the passenger timetable planned for May 2022.

## 3. Consideration:

### 3.1 Manchester Recovery Task Force update

The Manchester Recovery Task Force was set up in January 2020 to address the unacceptable levels of train performance impacts across the north. The Task Force - made up of industry and stakeholder representatives from the Department of Transport, Network Rail, Northern, TransPennine Express, Transport for the North and TfGM - is the first of its kind to address a congested infrastructure issue.

- 3.2 The Castlefield Corridor infrastructure in central Manchester had been declared 'congested' by Network Rail in 2019. The official designation of the area as 'congested' formally acknowledges that the infrastructure is not able to deliver all the train service frequency requirements being demanded of it, resulting in repeated and regular poor performance. In practice, the designation of congested infrastructure means that Network Rail must work with Train Operators and other industry partners to devise a timetable that can deliver a level of performance upon which the travelling public can reasonably depend.
- 3.3 Manchester Recovery Task Force work has worked during 2020 to develop feasible options for consideration. The options for consideration have the same objectives – namely:
- To improve train performance for everybody;
  - to maintain service levels for as many passengers as possible; and
  - to create a timetable that is based on sound principles from which it will be possible to build improvements, as infrastructure investment becomes available.
- 3.4 All options have got several essential features in common, which are:
- A reduction in frequency on the Castlefield Corridor the key 'Congested Infrastructure' constraint;
  - Better spacing of trains on the Castlefield Corridor to avoid delays knocking-on to following trains;
  - Fewer conflicts at key junctions to avoid trains crossing each other's paths;
  - Better linkage of services at Victoria to reduce trains turning around in platforms; and
  - A move towards regular 30 or 60-minute service patterns, to standardise operations and make train service patterns simpler for passengers, particularly when they need to interchange to complete their journey.

The detailed proposals are set out in Appendix 1

- 3.5 Each of the options has been assessed using two established quantitative methods:
- A rail passenger demand model, which calculates the effects on passenger numbers of changes in proposed timetables; and
  - A rail simulation model that calculates the expected amount of delay for any given timetable.
- 3.6 The initial results indicate that changing the timetable in the ways proposed can offer passenger benefits and performance benefits overall, by trading-off some direct services to destinations (including Manchester Airport) and choice of Manchester destination station for some journeys.

- 3.7 There has been consideration as to whether timetable changes are now needed, given that performance is currently higher than previously and it may take some time for passenger demand to recover from the pandemic.

The Task Force is strongly of the opinion that timetable changes, as described in section 3.4, should be pursued. There are three important reasons for this:

1. The current infrastructure cannot reliably deliver the (pre-Covid) timetable. This has not changed despite the pandemic.
  2. It is sensible to plan any changes to the timetable whilst fewer people are travelling by rail.
  3. Although it may take some time, it is imperative that we attract and encourage passengers back to the railway when the time is right. We must be ready for them with a robust and reliable timetable.
- 3.8 A public consultation, issued jointly by DfT and Transport for the North, commenced in early January 2021. The consultation does three things:
1. Explains the problem we are trying to solve and how the Task Force have developed the three main options and how they are being assessed.
  2. Seeks views on how we make trade-offs and comments on the different options – particularly the requirements of different types of passengers, for example airport travellers vs commuters.
  3. Sets out next steps.
- 3.9 During this period, the Task Force will continue to work with stakeholders, train operators and others to further develop and refine the options. In April 2021, the Task Force will produce its final recommendation to the Rail North Committee for them to endorse which, if any, of the options to progress. This will then proceed to the Department for Transport to complete the necessary approvals process.
- 3.10 In the light of this decision, Train Operators will develop a detailed complete timetable which they will then consult on with the public and other user groups, as is normal practice for proposed timetable change. This second consultation will provide an opportunity for communities to engage with operators who will endeavour to accommodate adjustments to the proposed timetable where possible. By this point the main structure of the timetable will be broadly fixed.

#### **4. Recommendation:**

- 4.1 That Scrutiny Committee make recommendations to the Rail North Committee in response to the Consultation.

**Appendix**

Table of proposed timetable variations

**List of Background Documents:**

Public Consultation Paper - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/consultation-launched-to-improve-manchesters-railways>

## 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

<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Equalities	A full Impact assessment has not been carried out but a public consultation exercise has been conducted.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth

### **Environment and Sustainability**

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

**Risk**

Yes	No
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
Risk	A full risk assessment is not needed for this report and therefore not carried out. However some key challenges have been identified in para 3.2	Haddy Njie	Iain Craven

**Consultation**

yes	
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<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Director</b>
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Consultation	A public consultation exercise has been carried out.	Adam Timewell	David Hoggarth
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