
Meeting:	Rail North Committee – Strategic Rail Director Consultation Call
Subject:	Rail North Partnership: Operational Rail Update
Author:	Gary Bogan, Director Rail North Partnership
Sponsor:	David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director
Meeting Date:	Wednesday 15 September 2021

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To update the committee on operational rail matters and to ask members to note the information in the report.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the information in the report.

3. Main Issues:

Contract Updates:

3.1 [Northern Trains Ltd](#)

Northern had put temporary plans in place from August 2 to reduce some services on selected lines in response to the Covid 'pingdemic' impact on train crew. All the affected services have now been reinstated.

The August bank holiday weekend saw some gaps in driver rotas particularly on Sunday in South Yorkshire which resulted in some cancellations.

The overall passenger numbers continue to grow. Northern is experiencing figures in the high 60% of its pre-COVID-19 numbers. The uplift is mostly in the leisure market which has been strong especially on a weekend and looks set to continue into autumn. Leisure was traditionally a comparatively small part of Northern's market, with commuters making up the bulk of the passengers. The operator has an eye on September when the schoolchildren return and commuter numbers potentially rise.

3.2 [TransPennine Express](#)

TPE continues to plan for December '21 and May '22 timetables against the background of uncertainty due to the deferral of the planned ECML timetable changes at May '22. Leisure markets continue to bounce back strongly, and the operator is seeing a return in commuting patterns but not on pre-Covid scales. Passenger numbers are now regularly in excess of 50% of pre-pandemic levels. Service performance is consistently high as is customer satisfaction.

3.3 [CrossCountry, LNER and Avanti](#)

Avanti has stepped its services back up earlier than planned and from Monday 9 August 2021, it was broadly running five trains per hour increasing to six trains per hour from Monday 16 August 2021. Ticket acceptance with other operators has been in place.

LNER is building back up to a 100% timetable over the coming months now that the latest East Coast Upgrade is complete although it is running slightly fewer services due to the issues around cracks found on the Hitachi Azuma trains earlier this year. Revenue is recovering with leisure-based revenue (which accounted for over 60 per cent before Covid) at nearly 100 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

Tickets for LNER services through to early January are now available. This is based on a trial of new technology allowing the operator to offer and manage bookings over 20 weeks in advance. Whilst this timeframe won't always be possible, the new approach means LNER can improve on the industry goal of 12 weeks. If it proves effective, it is hoped that this approach will allow more tickets to go on sale much sooner to allow customers to plan ahead and secure the best fares.

The first Middlesbrough service – a daily return – is due to start in December. LNER is also planning to start serving Reston in Scotland (once a day in each direction) from December, dependent on this new station being complete in time.

CrossCountry is seeing a similar trend in passenger numbers – mostly from the leisure market at around 60 per cent of pre-Covid levels. Services in the South East and to Scotland are particularly busy. The operator continues to operate more 'double-set' trains which means no direct Newcastle-Reading services are currently operating and this is expected to continue for the December 2021 timetable change. The length of the double sets allows for more passengers however the frequency of service is reduced because the units are coupled up rather than being separate. The operator expects to run its additional Edinburgh services in May 2022. There have been some performance challenges in the north particularly around Northallerton with infrastructure issues.

Timetable Updates

3.4 December 2022

Northern is introducing the following service changes at the December 2021 timetable change:

- improves to an all-day 1 train per hour (tph) service between Newcastle – Morpeth – Chathill
- improves to an all-day 2 tph service between Carlisle – Hexham – Newcastle
- improves to a 3 trains per day (tpd) service between Chester-le-Street & Durham
- improves to an 8 tpd service between Morecambe/Lancaster – Skipton
- reduces to a peak only service between Bridlington – Hull until the May 2022 timetable however the Scarborough to Hull service will remain at once an hour.
- improves to an all-day 2 tph service between York – Harrogate – Leeds
- improves to an all-day 1 tph service between Leeds – Sheffield – Lincoln
- improves to an all-day 1tph service between Hull – Leeds – Halifax
- improves to an all-day 1 tph service between Liverpool – Warrington – Manchester Airport
- improves to a 7 tpd service between Liverpool – Warrington Bank Quay

TransPennine Express is introducing the following service improvements at the December 2021 timetable change:

- improves to a 5 trains per day (tpd) service between Edinburgh – Newcastle
- improves to an all-day 1 train per hour (tph) service between Manchester – Scarborough
- improves to an all-day 1 tph service between Manchester – Edinburgh/Glasgow

All Train Operators timetables for December 2021 are now publicly available.

3.5 May 2022

Using the December 2021 timetable as a base, the plan for the May 2022 timetable change is to maintain recent high levels of performance, provide sufficient capacity to support passengers but remain responsive to changing passenger needs.

The planned introduction of the May 2022 East Coast Main Line timetable change has been postponed for at least a year. It is vital that the views of passengers and members are heard and reflected in the timetable. This decision ensures the lessons of May 2018 are learned, enabling the industry to conduct a full review of its readiness and resolve outstanding issues identified by the industry assurance group. The industry will also focus on delivering an improved, achievable new timetable, which fully considers the consultation responses by passengers and local stakeholders and delivers reliable services on the East Coast.

On that basis, Rail North Partnership (RNP) have recommended the following improvements are implemented at the May 2022 timetable change:

Northern

- return to an all-day 1 train per hour (tph) service between Bridlington – Hull
- improve to an all-day 1 tph service Hull – Doncaster
- improve to an all-day 1 tph service between Hull – Selby – York
- improve PM peak with additional services between Skipton – Leeds/Bradford
- improve to an all-day 1 tph service on each route between Leeds – Knottingley/Goole

TransPennine Express

- improves to an all-day 1 train per hour (tph) service between Liverpool and Scarborough
- improves to a 4 tpd service between Liverpool and Glasgow
- extension of the Manchester service to Saltburn.

Network Rail are now in the Timetable Preparation Period for the May 2022 timetable change. They will publish the Working Timetable on 12 November 2021 after which Train Operators will have a period where they can appeal any specific changes. That process should be completed by the end of January 2022 after which the timetable data is prepared for publication with a Timetable Start Date of 15 May 2022.

There are a number of services still in discussions with the train operators as to the best, most reliable options. RNP expects to provide an update on those services at the Rail North Consultation call on the 15 September 2021.

3.6 **December 2022**

Focus on December 2022 is planned for the introduction of the Manchester Recovery Task Force timetable (Agenda item 5. provides further information on this work.

3.7 May 2023

The current planning assumption for the May 2023 timetable change is the implementation of a new East Coast Mainline timetable. Significant work is being undertaken to review the feedback received from the consultation and the operational readiness to deliver an improved, achievable new timetable that responds to the feedback.

3.8 **Transpennine Route Upgrade**

The first major blockade of the Transpennine Route Upgrade Programme has now been completed in full and the railway was handed back on time in the early hours of Monday 16 August 2021. Since the blockade started on Saturday 31 July 2021 the following works between Manchester Victoria and Stalybridge have been completed:

- reconstructing Dantzic Street and Queens Road railway bridges;
- strengthening Bromley Street and Oldham Road bridges;
- upgrading over 3000m of track;
- realigning track; and
- installing 17 new signals.

Further work took place on Sunday 22 August 2021, is planned on Sundays throughout September, and on the weekend of 2/3 October, to make the final changes with less disruption to passengers. All TransPennine Express (TPE) services will again be diverted into Manchester Piccadilly, with TPE services between Manchester Piccadilly and Liverpool being operated by rail replacement buses on Sundays. Buses will also replace Northern services between Stalybridge and Manchester Victoria calling at Ashton-under-Lyne.

Just as the infrastructure teams achieved what they set out to do during the blockade, it is also the case that the train operators mitigated for the disruption very well. The blockade saw the first use of the TRU Customer Delivery Managers (CDMs), who are employed by TPE but are deployed across all train operators and locations affected as a cross-industry resource. In particular, they have augmented existing rail staff at stations informing passengers about the work going on and alternative travel plans in place. There has been much positive feedback about the success of the CDMs, with passengers indicating that they have been well informed throughout the project.

3.9 **Performance**

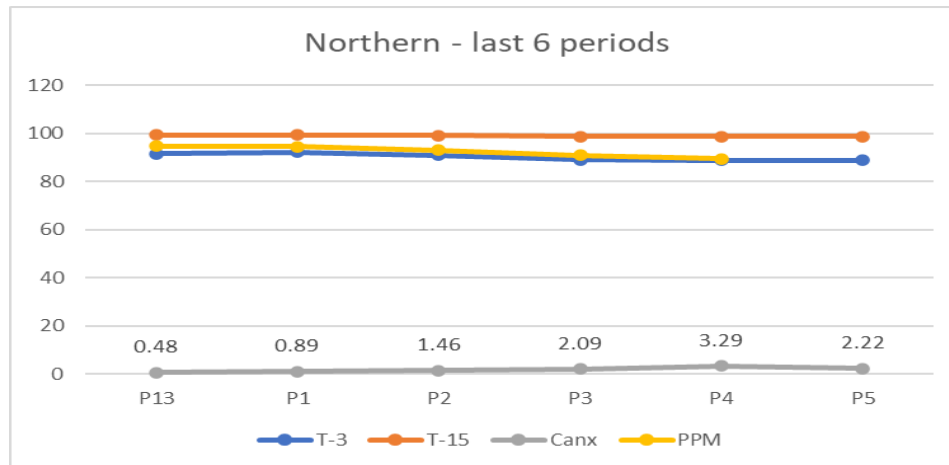
The graphs below highlight the train performance for both Northern and Transpennine Express.

The data is reported under the new performance metrics:

- T-3 (arriving within 3 minutes)
- T-15 (arriving within 15 minutes)
- Cancellations (% of trains cancelled v scheduled to run)

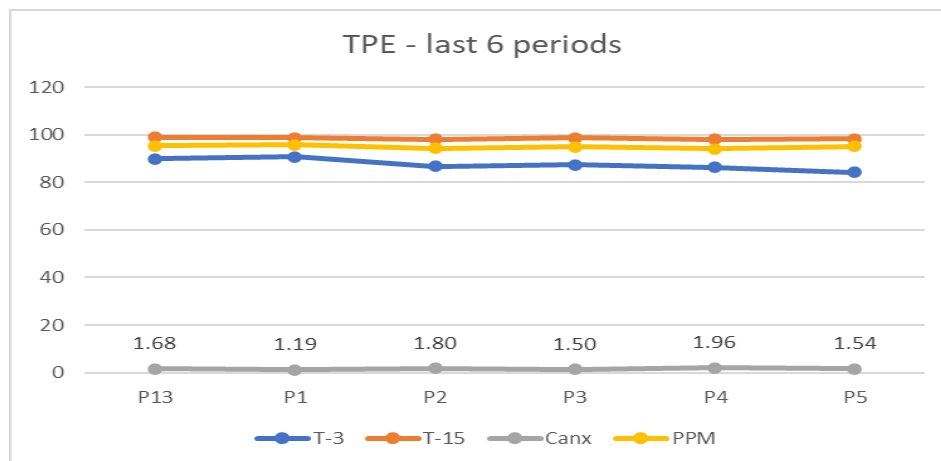
Although Public Performance Measure (PPM) is no longer a reporting metric, it has been included as a visual guide (data for PPM is extracted from the Office of Rail and Road webpages).

Northern



Performance overall has remained stable, however there has been a small decline in performance as patronage has increased. The proportion of trains running to T-15 has remained high throughout the last 6 periods - in the high 90s%. However, T-3 has steadily dipped since period 1 but remains in the mid-80% region. While PPM is no longer an official measure, analysis shows that this currently sits just below 90%. The percentage of trains cancelled has also increased steadily since period 13, peaking at 3.29% in period 4.

TPE



Transpennine Express has seen relatively good levels of performance at T-15, which has remained consistently high throughout the past 6 periods. However, T-3 shows a downward trend from the peak in period 1 to the lower mid-80% in period 6.

By comparison, PPM remains high throughout the six periods at mid-90% and the percentage of trains cancelled has remained stable throughout the six periods.

4. Corporate Considerations:

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 Transport for the North Finance Team has confirmed there are no financial implications.
- 4.2 There are no direct resourcing implications as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 Transport for the North Legal Team has confirmed there are no apparent legal implications as a result of this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.4 A risk assessment has been carried out and the key risks are included in the report.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because the report is for noting.

Equality and Diversity

- 4.6 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because the report is for noting.

Consultations

- 4.7 A consultation has not been carried out because the report is for noting.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 There are no appendices

