

**Meeting:** Transport for the North Board

**Subject:** Rail North Committee Feedback

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**Meeting Date:** Wednesday 29 September 2021

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**1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 This report provides feedback to the Board from the Rail North Committee Strategic Rail Director Consultation Call held on 15 September 2021.

**2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 Board members are requested to note the feedback from the Rail North Committee Consultation call.

**3. Main Issues:**

3.1 Response to the Williams-Shapps White Paper

The Committee considered a report on Transport for the North's response to the White Paper. Committee members endorsed the approach and welcomed the work done to date including the work on the proposed four pillars drawing on the strengths of Transport for the North and its partners.

- 3.2 The core proposition is to work with Great British Railways as a strategic partner in the North's railway building on the strong work and track record Transport for the North has developed with the industry in multi-modal planning and the existing Rail North Partnership arrangements.

There is a separate report to the Board setting out the proposed next steps to develop a strategic partnership.

3.3 Manchester Services and Infrastructure

An update on Manchester Services and Infrastructure was provided. This highlighted the progress that had been made on improving the December 2022 timetable proposed by the Manchester Recovery Task Force (including Sheffield City Region- Manchester Airport and cross-Warrington services). Progress was also reported on a roadmap setting out the 'exit strategy' (an essential requirement) from the

December 2022 timetable utilising future service changes and infrastructure delivery to improve the timetable. Transport for the North and the DfT have developed a new collaboration to work to deliver these outcomes – including a commitment to assess specific interventions such as platforms 15/16 at Manchester Piccadilly.

3.4 The next steps were highlighted as:

- 1) Publication of a consultation report on the Phase 1 consultation together with the new collaboration linking service development to infrastructure through a roadmap; and
- 2) a second phase of public consultation (led by the operators) on the detail of the timetable proposals.

3.5 Operational Update

Rail North Partnership and the train operators provided updates on the covid recovery and plans for future timetable changes.

3.6 It was reported that demand and revenue recovery across the North had been strong, particularly around leisure journeys and that operators are delivering a range of promotions to support the recovery. Operators highlighted the need to be agile in future timetable development to take advantage of the changing markets.

3.7 Whilst it was highlighted that operational performance had generally been very good members raised some concerns about services changes and performance in the North West, particularly on Sundays. Concern was also raised about revisions to services in the Humber region while additional York to Harrogate services from December 2021 were welcomed.

3.8 An update was provided on the East Coast Main Line service changes which have been deferred from May 2022. Transport for the North coordinated a strong response to the consultation on behalf of authorities across the North. The industry is now developing alternative proposals which will be available for consultation with members shortly.

3.9 Other Issues

A report was presented on the outline Transport for the North (Strategic Rail) business plan for next year. Members endorsed the objectives and the approach to financial contributions from partner authorities. This will be reflected in future business planning reports to the Board. It was also agreed to arrange a member briefing meeting to discuss an approach to future service provision in October.

3.10 The Committee was informed about the planned changes to Transport for the North's Constitution to facilitate virtual participation in meetings and considered the format of future Committee meetings.

3.11 A report on Transport for the North's input to operator business plans was also considered.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations:**

##### **4.1 *Financial and Resource Implications***

The financial and resourcing implications to implement the proposals within this paper are contingent on additional funding being provided by the Government or GBR. Future financial and resource implications will be set out as part of the Business Planning process for 2022/23 and presented to a subsequent meeting of the Board.

##### **4.2 *Legal Implications***

The proposed changes to the Transport for the North Constitution are the subject of a separate report to the Board.

##### **4.3 *Risk Management and Key Issues***

There are no new risks as a result of this report.

##### **4.4 *Environmental Implications***

None.

##### **4.5 *Equality and Diversity***

None.

##### **4.6 *Consultations***

The report refers to the public consultation in relation to the proposed December 2022 Manchester area service changes.

#### **5. Background Papers**

5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

#### **6. Appendices**

6.1 There are no appendices to this report.

**Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used (*if applicable*)**

*Please include any technical abbreviations and acronyms used in the report in this section. (Please see examples below.) This will provide an easy reference point for the reader for any abbreviations and acronyms that are used in the report.*

a) *DfT*                      *Department for Transport*