
Meeting: Rail North Committee

Subject: Investment Planning Update

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Meeting Date: 15 December 2021

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report is to provide Members of the Committee with an update on a number of key Investment Planning issues in the North. This includes proposals for capacity upgrades to the East Coast Main Line and the development of proposals to deliver the long-term capacity, connectivity and performance requirements in the Leeds Station area including Bradford and the local network.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- 1) Note the progress with development of the case for capacity upgrades to the East Coast Main Line and the impact of the Integrated Rail Plan;
 - 2) Note the progress with development of the case for capacity, connectivity and performance upgrades to the Leeds area and the relationship to the Integrated Rail Plan; and
 - 3) Note the pending update of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline in relation to rail projects in the region.

3. Main Issues:

Background

- 3.1 The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) was established by the government in 2018, setting out a new approach for rail proposals that require government funding. This approach created a rolling programme of investment, focused on outcomes that provide benefits for passengers, freight users and the economy and moving government investment in enhancements away from a 5-year cycle. RNEP is how the Department for Transport (DfT) funds all major infrastructure enhancements, including the Transpennine Route Upgrade.
- 3.2 Since that time, Transport for the North (Transport for the North) has worked with the DfT to agree and develop a pipeline of investment projects in the north. Management of the pipeline, monitoring of progress with projects and programmes within it and approvals to progress projects through development and delivery stages are undertaken via DfT's North East Programme Board and

North West Programme Board. Integration between projects across these areas is managed through DfT's North of England Integration Board.

- 3.3 The programme boards are chaired by DfT and attended by representatives of passenger and freight rail service operators in the region, DfT, Transport for the North and Network Rail strategic planning and route operations.
- 3.4 Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) was published by the Government on 18 November 2021. This sets out the Government's proposals for the rail network, including for the East Coast Main Line (ECML) specifically in the context of changes proposed by the Government to HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR).
- 3.5 DfT have also reviewed the impact of the IRP on the broader Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

East Coast Main Line North

Services Options Update

- 3.6 Transport for the North made a strong response on behalf of the North to the original consultation on industry plans for a significant timetable change from May 2022. This would have reduced the number of TPE trains north of Northallerton to one per hour in favour of an additional LNER service to London (3 per hour in total). The May 2022 change has been deferred and the rail industry has been developing an alternative to the May 2022 consulted timetable for the ECML, targeted for implementation in May 2023. This alternative is still under development, but members have reiterated their priorities as being:
 - Greater emphasis on East-West connectivity;
 - Resolving local station calls (to maintain connectivity); and
 - Retaining the existing 2 trains per day to/from Bradford.
- 3.7 Transport for the North commissioned Atkins to support our input to this work including to review the opportunity to deliver 7 trains per hour north of Northallerton, including 2 x Transpennine Express (TPE) trains. Atkins are working through this with Network Rail and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Infrastructure Development

- 3.8 Given the network constraints on running more services north of York, Transport for the North and North East Leaders therefore wished to take a proactive approach to progressing work to explore the infrastructure requirements required to accommodate both the increased North-services and existing East-West services.
- 3.9 This led to Network Rail being commissioned by Transport North East, with financial support from both Transport for the North and Network Rail themselves, to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the 7th path between Northallerton and Newcastle.
- 3.10 This work has recently commenced and was anticipated as taking 6 – 9 months to complete. However, the remit is now being reviewed following the publication of the IRP which refers to 7 or 8 trains per hour being explored.

- 3.11 The IRP proposes:
- improvements at York;
 - extending the current 4-track railway to end just north of Northallerton, rather than just south of the station;
 - an additional through platform on the eastern side of Darlington station, with bays to reduce the number of local services that cross in front of fast trains, which is consistent with the existing proposals being developed by Network Rail with Tees Valley Combined Authority;
 - upgrading the Stillington route to allow more freight use, and restoring a 3rd track north of Chester-Le-Street and a former chord at Bensham to enable a greater degree of segregation between freight and fast passenger trains; and
 - lengthening some of the bay platforms at Newcastle to enable NPR trains to terminate in the station.

3.12 It is understood that Network Rail has been asked to take these proposals forward for development and delivery. Transport for the North, Transport North East and the other regional stakeholders will work with Network Rail to support the development of these proposals and to understand what service output enhancements they could support.

3.13 The IRP states the view that the case for re-opening the Leamside Line would be best considered as part of any future city region settlement on the basis of available evidence and value for money analysis. Further dialogue is required with partners on consideration as to how to take forward both ECML improvements and the Leamside Line reopening to maximise the benefits for the traveling public and the regional economies. Transport for the North Board agreed a response to the IRP at its meeting on 25 November 2021 and a letter and advice has been sent to the Secretary of State.

East Coast Main Line North Railmap

3.14 Transport for the North are proposing that a 'Railmap' is developed on the same principle of the Railmap successfully developed by the Manchester Recovery Task Force, that clearly links the infrastructure changes necessary to the required passenger and freight service outputs. The Railmap would show how services could be developed over time in line with infrastructure enhancements.

Leeds Area Capacity

3.15 Leeds Station is a major hub for West Yorkshire and the wider city region, being at the heart of the commuter network for West Yorkshire, supporting services to Bradford, Wakefield, Dewsbury, Huddersfield and Halifax. It is also the focal point for connections to other regional centres such as Hull. Pre-Covid it was the 4th busiest railway station in the UK outside of London and 2nd busiest in the north of England, handling over 30 million passenger entries and exits per year.

3.16 Current and future congestion make Leeds and the surrounding network a major constraint for future growth. In the year to January 2020 over 1.1m delay minutes were caused by incidents at Leeds station and the reaction to these on services in the immediate area being exacerbated by train congestion. This made Leeds the 3rd worst hotspot in Britain for reactionary delay and in combination with Whitehall Junction immediately to the west the Leeds area is one of the worst locations for such delays.

- 3.17 Due to its central location in the North and status as a through-station for TransPennine, CrossCountry and some LNER services, the impact of delays at Leeds can be felt throughout the country.
- 3.18 A number of separate industry workstreams have examined the medium and long-term requirements for the Leeds station area covering projects and programmes delivered by Network Rail, studies led by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and Transport for the North's NPR programme, in addition to workstreams related to High Speed 2. These include:
- The Leeds Existing Station Programme (LESP) of improvements to the station concourse, facilities, footbridges, environs and pedestrian routes;
 - The Leeds Area Improvement Programme (LAIP) of capacity increases, which is also examining options to deliver regular through services between London and Bradford;
 - West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Leeds Station Capacity Study;
 - Transport for the North's work on potential schemes to deliver the required reliability and capacity at the congested west end of the station and approaches to it, developed in the context of TransPennine Route Upgrade; and
 - Leeds City Council's workstreams related to High Speed 2.
- 3.19 The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) are also developing a Connectivity Infrastructure Plan, setting out what is required to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth, quality of life and decarbonisation. Within this, the Rail Strategy has analysed the future role that rail must play, and identifies the changes needed on the railway to allow this to happen. This includes enabling continued growth in rail use through modal shift, sustainable growth and future mobility, alongside delivering consistent standards of connectivity.
- 3.20 Rail capacity analysis carried out by consultant Steer for WYCA produced similar results to work already undertaken by Network Rail for their *Leeds Area Strategic Advice* of April 2020, which identified interventions on the approaches to Leeds Station that would be required in phases between now and 2043. There is also much commonality with work done by Transport for the North under its role in Northern Powerhouse Rail and TransPennine Route Upgrade.
- 3.21 All parties who have analysed the issues agree that capacity constraints at Leeds have been pressing for up to a decade and are still likely to become severe during the 2030s, even considering the interventions currently under development to cover the period up to around 2026.
- 3.22 At the North East Programme Board on 15 September 2021 Transport for the North identified that the mechanism for ensuring these different workstreams were brought together. Agreement was secured that WYCA be asked to present their rail strategy to the Board with emphasis on Leeds western approaches, Five Towns services and the interface with their mass transit proposals.
- 3.23 Transport for the North and WYCA jointly presented to the November North East Programme Board, identifying the actions required by the industry in partnership to develop an agreed long-term solution to deliver the rail capacity required at Leeds.

- 3.24 As a result, the Board agreed to mandate the rail industry to undertake the development of the case for the required interventions to increase capacity at Leeds, that:
- Builds on existing knowledge, but where necessary generates alternative solutions to those already put forward;
 - Is adapted to the situation regarding land availability;
 - Takes into account the IRP; and
 - Has regard to a desired “end state” for the area’s rail capability and capacity in the 2040s, including a robust and logical phasing strategy between now and then.
- 3.25 At this meeting, it was envisaged that Transport for the North and WYCA would collaborate with Network Rail on devising future solutions for rail infrastructure in the Leeds area.
- 3.26 The government’s *Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands* published on 18 November 2021 indicated that DfT acknowledges that Leeds is a critical node in the national network and acknowledged that the Leeds area requires a major piece of long-term strategic development work, with work on Leeds Station capacity and the study of route options to take HS2 to Leeds to be led by Network Rail.
- 3.27 It is therefore proposed that Transport for the North now engages with and supports this work, ensuring it takes account of and complements the work undertaken by WYCA as appropriate and also addresses the connectivity issues related to Bradford, following the consensus at Transport for the North Board on 24 November 2021 that the IRP does not sufficiently address Bradford’s connectivity challenges.
- 3.28 This includes offering assistance from Transport for the North’s Technical Assurance, Modelling & Economics (TAME) team in order to use their analytical tools and emerging Appraisal Framework to help Network Rail develop a strong business case for investment in the Leeds area.

The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP)

- 3.29 Whilst the Integrated Rail Plan was published on 18 November 2021, at the date of this report the anticipated update of the DfT’s Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline for the north had not been published.
- 3.30 When published, Transport for the North will conduct an analysis of the implications of the revised RNEP on Transport for the North and partner investment priorities in the north (including capacity increases in and around Sheffield and capacity and connectivity increases in the Hull area).
- 3.31 If the RNEP update is published before the 15 December 2021, a verbal update will be given at the Rail North Committee meeting.

Next Steps

- 3.32 Further discussion with partners on how to take forward the 7th path business case work and role of the Leamside Line alongside the ECML improvements proposed in the IRP.
- 3.33 Further dialogue with DfT and Network Rail on the proposal to develop a ‘railmap’ for the ECML linking infrastructure and service enhancements.

- 3.34 Engage with Network Rail and other partners on the long-term strategic development work on Leeds Station capacity and the study of route options to take HS2 to Leeds to be led by Network Rail.
- 3.35 Proactively work with Bradford Council and WYCA to support the delivery of improved connectivity and specifically additional Bradford-London services.
- 3.36 Conduct an analysis of the implications of the revised RNEP when published and provide a further update to Members.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The utilisation of the modelling function and input into schemes is not anticipated to have financial implications over and above those captured within the latest budget revision for 2021/22. Any financial implications in future years will be captured by the 2022/23 budget and business planning process.

Resource Implications

- 4.2 There are no direct resourcing implications as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no obvious legal implications arising other than raised within the report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the December 2022 timetable are being identified, managed and monitored through the Rail North Partnership.

Environmental Implications

- 4.5 This report does not constitute a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the EIA Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for SEA or EIA. All proposed infrastructure developments will be subject to screening for the need for EIA by the relevant development authority as part of the design development and consenting process.

Equality and Diversity

- 4.6 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because it is not relevant to the type of work referenced.

Consultations

- 4.7 No consultation has been carried out this review.

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

a)	<i>RNEP</i>	<i>Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline</i>
b)	<i>DfT</i>	<i>the Department for Transport</i>
c)	<i>IRP</i>	<i>Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands</i>
d)	<i>ECML</i>	<i>East Coast Main Line</i>
e)	<i>NPR</i>	<i>Northern Powerhouse Rail</i>
f)	<i>TPE</i>	<i>TransPennine Express</i>
g)	<i>SOBC</i>	<i>Strategic Outline Business Case</i>
h)	<i>WYCA</i>	<i>West Yorkshire Combined Authority</i>