

Meeting: Rail North Committee Consultation Call

Subject: Rail Reform Next Steps

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1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This Report sets out the next steps in developing Transport for the North's approach to rail reform following discussion at the Rail North Committee in December 2021 and at the Transport for the North Board in November 2021.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Rail North Committee is asked to:
1. Note the progress on developing a proposition for implementing rail reform in the North;
 2. Agree to establish a Working Group to act as a sounding board for the officer Programme Board and advise the Committee as appropriate; and
 3. Note the main points of the Transport for the North submission made to the Whole Industry Strategic Plan consultation that closed on 4 February 2022.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail published in May 2021 proposes the establishment of a new body, Great British Railways (GBR), to oversee rail operations from 2023 by integrating infrastructure and train operations in a single entity. A transition team to plan for the establishment of GBR has been established which is led by Andrew Haines, Chief Executive of Network Rail.
- 3.2 The move to GBR presents a significant opportunity for Transport for the North to influence the future planning of rail. Discussions have been held with the GBR Transition Team and with Network Rail to develop ideas, with the 5 areas being identified that could form the basis of a partnership between GBR and Transport for the North:
- A. A Strategic Transport Plan that establishes the need for transformation of our transport system;
 - B. Through that Plan identify the role and outputs required of the rail sector in support of realising the North's economic potential;
 - C. A prioritised pipeline of investment – expressed in terms of outcomes and against which detailed interventions are developed;

D. The principle of 'double devolution' used to empower City Regions (and other areas) to enable integration of services at the local level, with increased oversight and local accountability; and

E. Decision making and advice at the regional/local level to be shaped by a 'profit and loss' account for the North that guides strategic choices, investment and service specification.

- 3.3 To take these issues forwards, a Programme Board is now being established which will involve Transport for the North, GBR, DfT, Network Rail and partner authorities. It will oversee a programme of work to consider the 5 areas and identify specific agreed actions, with a view to all areas being developed by the end of 2022/23. The Programme Board will ensure that the work reflects the North's geography in an appropriate manner.
- 3.4 To guide this work, it is proposed to establish a Member Working Group to be drawn from the membership of the Rail North Committee, but also include Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) representatives. The Member Working Group will provide guidance to the Programme Board.
- 3.5 There is already good practice of local involvement in planning and managing rail in the North, through the work of the Rail North Partnership and the locally specified Merseyrail concession; together with locally managed light rail networks and plans for stations and network development. Learning from these will be fed into the Member Working Group and Programme Board. Several Transport for the North partners are also pursuing opportunities for greater local involvement under the Williams-Shapps Plan. The work set out in this Paper will complement this, not duplicate or conflict and the Programme Board will ensure co-ordination.
- 3.6 To support this work, resources from within other parts of Transport for the North are being deployed and the work is being aligned with the Strategic Transport Plan and other corporate activity. The output of this activity is expected to be an agreed proposition with GBR that includes Transport for the North's future role. Regular reports will be provided to the Committee as the work develops.
- 3.7 GBR is also charged with developing the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP) which will be a 30-year strategic plan for rail. The WISP will reflect how the significant challenges facing the railway are met, particularly following Covid, and how future opportunities can be exploited. The priorities in it will be used to set realistic ambitions, measures, and areas of focus over the short, medium and long term. Crucially, the WISP will recognise that rail needs to be joined up with the wider transport system to achieve the strategic objectives shared in this document.
- 3.8 To inform the development of the WISP, a call for evidence was held between December 2021 and 4 February 2022. Transport for the North submitted a detailed evidence statement setting out its views on several issues identified by GBR. The key points of the Transport for the North submission are:
- The WISP and STP should be aligned to support economic growth in the North;
 - This alignment can extend to financial issues. The WISP should not be entirely focussed on costs – also consider benefits and wider impacts such as social and environmental;
 - Adjustment to the "Green Book" is important. This is key to achieve rebalancing as it allows wider impacts and strategic context to be considered in appraisal. Transport for the North work on the Manchester

Recovery Task Force and East Coast Main Line shows the value of a holistic approach;

- The railway needs to be more efficient and more sustainable. Transport for the North's work has shown the benefits of faster journey times and further electrification is identified in the Transport for the North Decarbonisation Strategy;
- There is considerable opportunity for freight in the North. For example, a W12 cross-Pennine route has significant potential for economic benefits and modal shift;
- The railway needs to be agile. Transport for the North future travel scenarios work is important to inform future planning; and
- Devolution can add value to the WISP. This is particularly important in achieving integration with wider planning and with other modes of travel at local level.

3.9 Transport for the North's WISP submission will shortly be published on the Transport for the North website.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct finance implications as a result of this report.

Resource Implications

4.2 Additional resources have been deployed to develop activity on rail reform however this is by redeployment of existing staff resources.

Legal Implications

4.3 There are no apparent direct legal implications as a result of this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

4.4 There are no direct risk implications as a result of this report. There is a risk that Transport for the North fails to secure an appropriate role in the process that results from rail reform, hence the need to carry out the work set out in this report.

Environmental Implications

4.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the EIA Directive and therefore does stimulate the need for SEA or EIA.

Equality and Diversity

4.6 A full Impact Assessment has not been carried out because it is not required for this report.

Consultations

4.7 This report develops the approach agreed by the Rail North Committee and Transport for the North Board in 2021. This has been informed by consultation and discussion with Partners. Transport for the North's submission to the WISP call for evidence was informed by discussion with Transport for the North Partners.

5. Background Papers

5.1 There are no background papers.

6. Appendices

6.1 There are no appendices.

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.

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| a) GBR | Great British Railways |
| b) STP | Strategic Transport Plan |
| c) WISP | Whole Industry Strategic Plan |