
Meeting:	Rail North Committee
Subject:	East Coast Main Line Services and Infrastructure
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Sponsor:	David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 31 May 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on development of a revised East Coast Main Line timetable and on Transport for the North's work with partners to develop a Blueprint for development of services and infrastructure on the East Coast Main Line on the same model as that being successfully applied to the Manchester congestion hotspot
- 1.2 To provide the committee with an update on the Leeds Area Study.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the update on industry work to introduce a revised timetable on the East Coast Main Line.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the work to develop a Blueprint to restore connectivity to and from the north of the East Coast Main Line on the same model as that being successfully applied to the Manchester congestion hotspot and the need to develop appropriate member and officer level governance arrangements
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the update on the Leeds Area Study.

3. Main Issues:

Background

- 3.1 The East Coast Main Line (ECML) links the North East to almost all other parts of the UK but suffers from constraints and unreliability that places a limit on the number of passenger and freight trains that can serve the region, constraining future growth. Transport for the North, Authorities and businesses in the North East have been seeking an increase in the capacity of the northern end of the East Coast main line for some time.
- 3.2 Various studies have identified infrastructure options to increase capacity. Some, including works to allow larger freight containers to use the Northallerton–Eaglescliffe route to access Teesport rather than reverse at Darlington, are progressing towards delivery.
- 3.3 Other interventions are currently in development, such as the remodelling of Darlington Station which, combined with alterations to services which currently cross the main line at Darlington, will also release capacity for further services.

Timetable Development

- 3.4 Following recent investment through the ECML upgrade programme, mainly at the southern end of the route, a third London North Eastern Railway (LNER) service per hour between London and Newcastle was proposed in the May 2022 Consultation timetable. Whilst this investment is welcomed, this additional service

was at the expense of an existing northeast – northwest service which reduced connectivity across the north and also had a number of other impacts on local services and reduced calling patterns at some stations in the North.

- 3.5 Transport for the North made a robust response to the 2021 timetable consultation which contributed to the decision by the industry to develop alternative proposals. The Transport for the North priorities included:
- Greater emphasis on East-West connectivity;
 - Resolving main line local station calls (to maintain connectivity); and
 - Retaining the existing 2 trains per day to/from Bradford.
- 3.6 The earliest that any alternative proposals could be implemented is May 2023 and a decision to implement the changes would need to be made in the summer of 2022. At the time of writing revised proposals had not been published by the industry although Transport for the North is aware that a number of options are under development. Once available, Transport for the North will undertake a qualitative assessment of the revised proposals including a comparison with the previous (summer 2021) proposal. This will include a high-level assessment against the priorities highlighted in paragraph 3.5 above.
- 3.7 In the meantime, Transport for the North commissioned Atkins to undertake an assessment of previous options to ascertain whether additional East-West services could be accommodated alongside the industry proposals and if not, what the barriers to implementation would be. The technical work demonstrated that whilst it may be theoretically possible to accommodate *some* additional east-west services within the industry timetable, it was not possible to create a consistent (every hour of the day) timetable with an even spread of services around the clockface and even then, there would need to be adverse changes to some local connections.
- 3.8 The overarching conclusion of the work supports the case for additional infrastructure investment in the East Coast Main Line, particularly North of York.
- 3.9 The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) , published in November 2022 sets out the intent to develop infrastructure enhancements to support 7 or 8 trains per hour North of York. 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 as at present;
 - 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.

Strategic Outline Business Case Development

- 3.10 Transport North East (TNE) approached Network Rail (NR) to fund development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for interventions to uplift capacity from 6 trains per hour (tph) to 7/8 tph pending development of proposals in the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP). TNE, Transport for the North and NR shared costs for this study equally. Results from this work are expected by July 2022.

- 3.11 Infrastructure improvements considered in the SOBC include:
- extensions to bay platforms at Newcastle to accommodate 5-car LNER trains;
 - the works at Bensham tunnel and re-instatement of Bensham curve to reduce the number of freight movements from the north needing to cross the ECML on the flat to access Tyne Yard; and
 - works to the Stillington route to allow more freight trains to use that route complementing the scheme in development to upgrade the Northallerton – Eaglescliffe route and together allowing a continuous route for freight away from the ECML, although this would increase freight journey times and reduce the ability to switch to fully electric haulage.
- 3.12 Also included is the extension of the current 4-track ECML to end just north of Northallerton with reconstruction of platforms on the new extended slow lines and grade separation to better segregate fast trains and slower trains calling at Northallerton enroute to Middlesbrough and beyond.
- 3.13 The projects covered by the SOBC work is being put forward for fast-tracking as an IRP deliverable. Early progress with enhancements identified in the IRP is critical to improve the capacity and resilience of the route and unlock local growth plans.
- Development of a Blueprint Linking Infrastructure to Service Development.
- 3.14 Transport for the North as led the development of a Blueprint based on the work with DfT in Manchester. This includes a new form of collaboration linking infrastructure development to future timetables, setting out committed events/infrastructure enhancement and the best information about future schemes in a pipeline of improvements driven by service needs. The Blueprint shows the co-ordinated long-term service and infrastructure solution to restore and improve connectivity.
- 3.15 This approach is proposed as best practice for programmes with complex interaction between different infrastructure options and service requirements. DfT are also supportive of this approach.
- 3.16 The draft Blueprint for ECML North has been developed by Atkins on behalf of Transport for the North from the contents of the IRP, studies undertaken by/collaborative discussions with partners and the DfT to support the needs of the people and industries in the East and North East. Key studies and inputs include:
- Transport for the North’s Strategic Transport Plan & Long-Term Rail Strategy;
 - Atkins ECML May 2023 & ‘ESG’ Timetable Analyses;
 - Network Rail East Coast Main Line Route Study (Dec 2017) and the Transport for the North-led response; and
 - proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail Leeds to Newcastle corridor interventions.
- 3.17 The current draft Blueprint, which is subject to further development, is attached as Appendix 1. Transport for the North has shared a copy of this draft with Network Rail and DfT. Collaborative engagement will continue with partners, Network Rail and DfT to enable continuous development of the Blueprint.
- 3.18 Transport for the North has also approached Network Rail to take ownership of development of the Blueprint and delivery of the infrastructure with progress to be monitored through programme boards and collaboration with partners.

Governance

- 3.19 Given the stage of timetable development and urgency of re-instating connectivity, joint governance of this programme needs to be put in place as a matter of urgency. TNE wrote to the Minister of State on behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee and North of Tyne Combined Authority to seek their support for the formation of an ECML Integrated Rail Programme Board (North East) or similar, in relation to the major ECML interventions outlined in the IRP.
- 3.20 The aim of the proposed Board would be to provide a forum for government Ministers and local leaders to have joint oversight of the development and delivery of the improvements identified for the North East section of the ECML.
- 3.21 The proposed Board would include senior representation from Network Rail, Transport for the North and any neighbouring authorities who may wish to participate. This forum will give confidence to all sides that the improvements progress to an agreed plan and are integrated as far as possible with local plans and investments, as well as industry plans, to bring the widest possible benefit. A response is currently awaited.
- 3.22 Transport for the North will work with the DfT and member authorities to develop the full governance structure which will include a clear definition of the purpose of the Board and outcomes required, how input will be provided from both Member and officer level to influence development of the Blueprint and ensure Members are briefed on progress with ongoing development and delivery and decisions required.

Leeds Area Study

- 3.23 The Government's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) published in November 2021 commits to look at the most effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds including the most optimal solution for Leeds Station capacity and starting work on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System. To support this activity, studies will be carried out over the next 18 months guided by Terms of Reference set by the DfT. At the time of writing, these Terms of Reference had yet to be published.
- 3.24 To support the study, West Yorkshire Combined Authority has established a Leeds Area Studies Board. This Board will steer and provide oversight for the studies covering extension of high-speed services to Leeds, Leeds station network capacity and better Bradford connections, as set out in the IRP. This Board is chaired by Network Rail and includes partners from West and South Yorkshire, Government Departments, East Midlands Councils and Midlands Connect. Transport for the North plays a key role in this Board, recognising the importance of Leeds station to services across the north and further afield.
- 3.25 This Board has now met twice. It will operate within the Terms of Reference set by Government and will commission work including analytical work where appropriate. Transport for the North will support this including through its analytical capability. An important role for the Board is to ensure that short term investment and land-use decision making is enabled in line with the direction of the studies. Whilst there is considerable interest in how HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail will serve Leeds, there are existing capacity and reliability issues that also need to be addressed.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for Transport for the North as a result of this report.

- 4.2 Further funding will be required for Network Rail to develop and deliver the infrastructure schemes including business cases, which will be subject to DfT and Treasury approval.

Resource Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 4.4 Consideration will need to be given as to any potential consequential changes to the governance provisions in Transport for the North's Constitution to reflect the formation of the Leeds Area Studies Board, and the potential ECML Integrated Programme Board and the co-sponsorship arrangements as outlined in the report. There are no further apparent legal implications arising other than raised within the report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.5 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the delivery of infrastructure will be identified, assessed, managed and monitored by Network Rail. A risk is included on the Transport for the North Corporate Risk Register in relation to future timetable changes.

Environmental Implications

- 4.6 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. Any infrastructure proposals to improve the capacity and reliability of the system will be subject to EIA Screening, conducted by Network Rail as part of the consenting process for those projects.
- 4.7 Delivery of the blueprint will encourage growth of travel by rail services and contribute to environmental targets through reduction in journeys by road.
- 4.8 Any specific environmental issues will be picked up in the development and delivery of individual infrastructure interventions.

Equality and Diversity

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

Consultations

- 4.10 Consultations will be carried out by the appropriate body in development of the infrastructure works and on timetable changes through industry processes.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – East Coast Main Line (North) Draft Blueprint

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) DfT | Department for Transport |
| b) ECML | East Coast Main Line |
| c) IRP | Integrated Rail Plan |

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

d)	<i>LNER</i>	<i>London North Eastern Railway</i>
e)	<i>NR</i>	<i>Network Rail</i>
f)	<i>SOBC</i>	<i>Strategic Outline Business Case</i>
g)	<i>TNE</i>	<i>Transport North East</i>

Additional Acronyms in Appendix 1:

h)	<i>BDI</i>	<i>Bradford Interchange</i>
i)	<i>Cap/perf</i>	<i>Capacity/performance</i>
j)	<i>DAR</i>	<i>Darlington</i>
k)	<i>DON</i>	<i>Doncaster</i>
l)	<i>EAG</i>	<i>Eaglescliffe</i>
m)	<i>EDB</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>
n)	<i>ESG</i>	<i>Event Steering Group</i>
o)	<i>ETCS L2</i>	<i>European Train Control System Level 2 ('in cab' signalling')</i>
p)	<i>FBC</i>	<i>Final Business Case</i>
q)	<i>GRA</i>	<i>Grantham</i>
r)	<i>HGT</i>	<i>Harrogate</i>
s)	<i>HPL</i>	<i>Hartlepool</i>
t)	<i>HUD</i>	<i>Huddersfield</i>
u)	<i>HUN</i>	<i>Huntingdon</i>
v)	<i>KGX</i>	<i>London Kings Cross</i>
w)	<i>LDS</i>	<i>Leeds</i>
x)	<i>LSI</i>	<i>Line Speed Improvement</i>
y)	<i>MAN</i>	<i>Manchester</i>
z)	<i>MBR</i>	<i>Middlesbrough</i>
aa)	<i>NCL</i>	<i>Newcastle</i>
bb)	<i>NTR</i>	<i>Northallerton</i>
cc)	<i>OBC</i>	<i>Outline Business Case</i>
dd)	<i>PSU</i>	<i>Power Supply Upgrade</i>
ee)	<i>SUN</i>	<i>Sunderland</i>
ff)	<i>TRU</i>	<i>Transpennine Route Upgrade</i>
gg)	<i>TT</i>	<i>Timetable</i>
hh)	<i>TVCA</i>	<i>Tees Valley Combined Authority</i>
ii)	<i>W'walton</i>	<i>Woodwalton</i>
jj)	<i>YRK</i>	<i>York</i>