

Meeting: Transport for the North Executive Board
Subject: Manchester Statutory Advice Update
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Meeting Date: Thursday, 8 June 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the progress and next steps for infrastructure development and service changes in Manchester, providing an assessment of the effectiveness of the December 2022 timetable change.
- 1.2 The report then seeks input to the revised Statutory Advice for Manchester in recognition of the progress which has been made through the collaborative efforts of the Manchester Task Force.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:
 1. Welcome the successful delivery of Configuration State 1 infrastructure and implementation of the December 2022 timetable change
 2. Welcome the commitment from the Department for Transport to fund delivery of infrastructure in Configuration State 2 alongside the continued development of Configuration State 3
 3. Endorse the proposed update to Transport for the North's Statutory Advice for Manchester for consideration by Transport for the North's Board.

3. Main Issues:

3.1 December 2022 Timetable Change

The December 2022 timetable change was designed by the industry working through the Manchester Task Force (including TfN and TfGM) to provide a new baseline structure to the North West timetable to deliver immediate improved reliability and performance, facilitated by investment in infrastructure including platform extensions and the introduction of new train maintenance depots and carriage sidings.

- 3.2 Whilst the timetable reduced connectivity in some areas, a key aim of the change was to reduce congestion, and modelling predicted a reduction of 20% in delays. Evaluation of the train service performance since the timetable change against statistics from December 2019 has been undertaken which shows:
 - Average delays across all service groups have reduced by 40% in comparison with 2019/20
 - T-3 performance for Northern's Manchester services and TransPennine Express overall has improved by 8-12%
 - Northern's reactionary delays in Manchester resulting from network congestion have reduced by 40%, exceeding modelling expectations
Peak capacity is maintained for passengers into Manchester.
- 3.3 These performance improvements have been achieved despite the timetable change having been implemented against a backdrop of unprecedented challenges for the railway industry, dealing with the ongoing consequences of the

Covid-19 pandemic and industrial action, with some service groups yet to be reintroduced and ongoing performance challenges.

3.4 **Infrastructure Development and Delivery**

Cross industry collaboration by the Manchester Task Force (formed of representatives from the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Northern, TransPennine Express, Transport for the North and Transport for Greater Manchester) has resulted in the development of the Blueprint for Manchester which has refined the plans and identified alternative solutions for addressing the problems in/around Manchester, optimised for efficiency and value. As a result of this work, it is now widely agreed by members of the Task Force that Package C is no longer the optimal solution for Manchester.

- 3.5 The Blueprint for Manchester (which has been shared previously with this Committee) identifies packages of infrastructure improvements designed to address capacity issues and improve train service performance, enabling more services to be operated without impacting punctuality and reliability. Each package forms part of a configuration state, which marks an intervention point at which the benefits of the infrastructure enhancements are realised through timetable changes with assumed timescales.
- 3.6 The December 2022 timetable change marked the first intervention point, establishing a baseline timetable which saw service groups amended with compromises needed, including changes to origins and destinations, frequencies, and stopping patterns to operate a robust service that passengers could rely on.
- 3.7 Funding is being secured from the DfT for the delivery of Configuration State 2 with the intent for works to take place between now and 2025, including:
- Salford Crescent Platform 3
 - East of Manchester Victoria Turnback
 - West of Manchester Victoria Turnback
 - Manchester Victoria Passenger Capacity Improvements.
- 3.8 This package of work is focused on delivering infrastructure in North Manchester, and following its completion, timetable changes can be implemented which will see additional services able to operate through North Manchester, increasing capacity whilst providing added resilience to the network.
- 3.9 The options for the timetable change aligned to the implementation of each configuration state will be identified through the Manchester Task Force and Rail North Committee will be asked to provide direction on priorities, continuing to balance the need to maintain performance whilst providing additional capacity and connectivity.
- 3.10 In parallel with the delivery of Configuration State 2, Network Rail is continuing to develop schemes identified within Configuration State 3.
- 3.11 A critical element of Configuration State 3 is the redevelopment of Manchester Oxford Road. There is a consensus through the Manchester Task Force on the scheme that needs to be delivered at Manchester Oxford Road. Solutions have been identified and modelled which address the capacity constraints caused by the current layout of the station. This includes providing extended through platforms accommodating longer trains, and an improved layout which reduces conflicting moves by those trains accessing the bay platform. Addressing the constraints at Manchester Oxford Road is a key enabler to increasing capacity on the Castlefield Corridor.
- 3.12 Network Rail submitted a Transport and Works Act Order application in 2014 which sought to secure the land required for the construction of Manchester

Oxford Road under the plans within the previously promoted Package C. With the refinement of plans, Network Rail is evaluating the relevance of the current Transport and Works Act Order, and will determine whether this needs to be withdrawn or replaced.

3.13 It should be noted that a Transport and Works Act Order is not a commitment to deliver a scheme, but forms part of the planning process associated with the delivery of a proposed scheme.

3.14 The business cases for schemes identified within Configuration State 3 and Configuration State 4 continue to be developed through the Manchester North West Transformation Programme and Manchester Task Force with cross industry input to ensure a robust case can be made to Treasury for the investment. Transport for the North will continue to support the development of these business cases by providing local insight and data with the intent of maximising the benefit of any investment and securing the best possible outcome for passengers.

3.15 **Transport for the North Statutory Advice**

With significant progress made recognising the completion of Configuration State 1, the commitment to the delivery of Configuration State 2 and the continuing development of Configuration State 3, it is both timely and appropriate for Transport for the North to update its Statutory Advice to the Secretary of State in relation to Manchester.

3.16 Previous Statutory Advice issued in February 2020 referred to 'Package C' which included plans to remodel Manchester Oxford Road station and construct Platforms 15 and 16 at Manchester Piccadilly, and identified 'other' infrastructure enhancements, recommending delivery of all these schemes in full. Through the work of the Manchester Task Force many of these schemes, including those contained within Package C, have either been delivered, superseded, or changed priority.

3.17 In this context it is recommended that the revised Statutory Advice recognises benefits of collaboration through the Manchester Task Force, and the evolutionary approach which has been taken by this group to refine proposals and determine the best possible outcome for Manchester. As a result, it seeks to avoid specifying outputs, recognising that as the programme is developed and refined, the solutions required may change, and instead specifies the outcomes that are needed.

3.18 The revised Statutory Advice highlights the continued need for investment in infrastructure in Manchester to address the capacity constraints which are limiting the North and creating significant operational challenges, within the context of major rail schemes arriving in the region including HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail which require careful integration to maximise the benefits of investment.

3.19 The revised Statutory Advice also draws attention to the strong return to rail across the North, and the need for significant and sustained investment if the railway is to keep pace with passenger and freight demand, realise the benefits of major schemes, and support modal shift with both decarbonisation and economic benefits for the region.

3.20 The Committee is requested to endorse the revised Statutory Advice for Manchester for consideration by Transport for the North's Board and to note the progress which has and continues to be made in the development and delivery of infrastructure and train service performance improvements in Manchester.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

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

Investment decisions to allow Network Rail to develop and deliver schemes are subject to Department for Transport and Treasury approval.

Resource Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 4.3 Transport for the North has power to offer statutory advice to the Secretary of State. There are no other apparent legal implications arising as a result of this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to any timetable changes and infrastructure enhancements are being identified, assessed, managed and monitored through the Manchester Task Force. A risk has been included on the Transport for the North Corporate Risk Register in relation to future timetable changes.

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 Strategic Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment. 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.

Delivery of the blueprint will encourage growth of travel by rail services and contribute to environmental targets through reduction in journeys by road.

Any specific environmental issues will be picked up by Network Rail in the development and delivery of individual infrastructure interventions.

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 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 Manchester Statutory Advice Update.

This appendix is the draft of the revised Statutory Advice for Manchester for review. This draft has been shared with partners for review and comment, however it remains subject to change based on feedback from partners, and as it progresses through the governance process.