
Meeting: Transport for the North Board
Subject: TransPennine Route Upgrade Programme
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Meeting Date: Thursday 22 June 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide an update on the TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) as it approaches a major milestone for funding and delivery.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that Transport for the North Board:
- a) Endorses the importance of work to consider the integration of future infrastructure and timetabled passenger and freight services across the North of England and requests a separate presentation on this work from Network Rail is arranged to which Transport for the North Board members will be invited.
 - b) Supports the next steps for the TRU business case which is a major milestone for the project as it seeks a decision to deliver and secure the funds required for delivery.
 - c) Supports funds being identified to enable design and delivery of high gauge clearance to support connections to East and West Coast ports and inland freight terminals off the TRU core.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) is a transformative, multi-billion pound railway programme that will better connect passengers in the North between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York. Forthcoming investment decisions will also directly influence future journey times, train type, capacity, and performance of passenger services to the major regional centres of Liverpool, Scarborough, Hull, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Durham, Newcastle and Manchester Airport as well as freight services to east and west coast ports and the North's inland freight terminals. Investment decisions made later this year will signify a major milestone towards a decision to deliver for the programme. Continued support for TRU from Transport for the North Board is therefore required to help secure Ministerial approval.
- 3.2 Whilst some elements of the TRU Programme are still in design phase, key elements of work are already being delivered including:
- Stalybridge remodelling and resignalling: the tracks on the approach to Stalybridge station have been remodelled, with over two kilometres of new track installed, 23 new signals, the upgrading of 13 crossovers, and the fitting of overhead line equipment to support the eventual operation of electric services to Stalybridge by the end of 2024
 - Morley station: foundations have now been laid for new, longer platforms, tracks have been realigned and a complete drainage upgrade completed. The next key piece of work at Morley station is set to take place in June, which will

see the old station demolished, ready for the new station to open for passengers later this year

- Leeds - York: overhead line equipment and two new pipelines beneath the track carrying high voltage cables have been delivered along with surveys of the ground and structures to allow the re-modelling of the track layout and support the electrification of the line east of Leeds. During this work use was made of the Castleford line as a diversionary route which has undergone major work to make it more resilient, with new track, improved signalling and a new entrance in and out of Holbeck depot to remove congestion and increase capacity.

- 3.3 Future planned TRU related work includes full electrification of the route (Manchester – York), additional track in some sections, new digital signalling, station upgrades including accessibility enhancements, and works to increase the route's capability to carry freight. The increased capacity for passenger and freight services (extra 2 passenger trains every hour and up to 15 freight paths per day) will be supported by a reduction in journey times and an improvement in reliability as well as an estimated reduction in carbon emissions by up to 87,000 tonnes per year. The TRU Programme of work will therefore transform the north Transpennine rail corridor into a high-performing, reliable railway, bringing more frequent, faster, greener trains.
- 3.4 The magnitude of this work requires disruptive possessions of the track, and therefore suitable mitigation planned months in advance. The success of the access planning work is being monitored through the TRU Stakeholder Forum which is chaired by Transport for the North. Feedback from partner authorities has already highlighted a number of concerns relating to the planning and operation of rail replacement bus services, passenger information and signage which the industry has responded to with improvements. Network Rail is also undertaking a 'lessons learnt' review of all disruption planning activity to ensure continuous improvement as the project evolves.
- 3.5 As resolved by Board (September 2022) TfN officers are continuing to work closely with Network Rail to strengthen the working relationship, including making the case for involvement in the Programme Board. There has been an offer of regular updates to Transport for the North Board (every 6 months) and we also understand existing governance arrangements are now being reviewed presenting Transport for the North with an opportunity for greater formal input and engagement.
- 3.6 A further resolution at the September 2023 Board was for Network Rail to consider and present opportunities for accelerating TRU delivery timescales. Transport for the North has engaged with the rail industry about expediting the delivery phase and releasing scheme benefits sooner but it has been agreed that the most opportune time to pursue future milestone discussions will be following the next business case milestone later this year.
- 3.7 Transport for the North is acutely aware that the speedier realisation of passenger and freight benefits is not simply reliant upon swifter delivery of TRU infrastructure but is also dependent upon wider timetable planning and infrastructure delivery across the North. This includes decisions on future rolling stock, depots and stabling, high gauge clearance requirements for intermodal container traffic off the TRU core route and capacity and performance enhancements on congested infrastructure and at major rail hubs.
- 3.8 To this end Transport for the North officers are supporting Network Rail's review of the interrelationship between planned rail interventions and the future timetabling of passenger and freight services across the North over the next

decade leading up to the anticipated completion of the TRU programme in circa 2032. The review by Network Rail is designed to support a holistic and thorough analysis of the railway system at a future point in time to help inform the decisions that enable the integrated investment that delivers transformational change.

- 3.9 The work by Network Rail, which is being supported by a thorough industry review of post covid rail demand in the North, is likely to be completed by spring 2024 and will help to flesh out the many timetabling opportunities and issues that need to be considered and resolved by the beginning of the next decade. It is recommended that the TfN Board request Network Rail to provide an update on this work at a separate briefing session.
- 3.10 In parallel with this work the next stage of the TRU business case is progressing with a significant step towards decision to deliver, expected later this year. This major milestone for the project sets out an approach for the next major funding release to move key elements into delivery notably the interventions planned between Huddersfield – Westtown (near Dewsbury) and Leeds – Church Fenton. We understand the latest business case will also set out a series of recommendations for remaining development areas (freight, NPR facilitation and rolling stock) to move into design. It is vital the Transport for the North Board fully support the business case process to help unlock investment.
- 3.11 The development of an improved Transpennine freight offer continues to be championed by Transport for the North. At present there is currently no high-gauge (W10/W12) network from East-West in the North of England or from the Port of Hull. All large container intermodal freight must operate in a North-South direction on either the West Coast Main Line or the East Coast Main Line. The aspiration to deliver gauge cleared freight path for large shipping containers across the Pennines has been a key priority for Transport for the North Board and therefore features as a key ambition within our Freight and Logistics Strategy.
- 3.12 Transport for the North understands the necessary interventions to facilitate intermodal freight movements over the TRU corridor feature in the latest business case and are therefore subject to Treasury approval. However, to release the full benefit of TRU corridor specific freight interventions, further works are also required off the TRU core. Notably, this includes further high gauge clearance to support connections to East and West Coast ports and inland freight terminals which is being considered as part of Network Rail’s Transpennine Wider Freight Strategy (TPWFS). Transport for the North understands that design funding to progress off TRU core high gauge clearance identified by the TPWFS workstream now requires Treasury approval. As an integral part of the overall TRU business case and aligned with our freight ambitions for the North the appropriate level of funding is now required to take identified interventions through design and eventually into delivery.
- 3.13 Network Rail will provide members with an update at the meeting on the TRU scope, funding and challenges and the work that is taking place across the industry to manage disruption to passengers, communities and businesses and the work being undertaken to deliver the programme in an expedient and efficient manner.

4. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 4.1 No direct financial implications associated with this report.

Resource Implications

4.2 There are no direct human resource implications as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

4.3 There are no apparent specific legal implications with this report other than the governance points raised within it.

Risk Management and Key Issues

4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment. Transport for the North's Corporate Risk Register includes a risk associated with TRU.

Environmental Implications

4.5 There are no environmental implications to be considered by this report. This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment or EIA.

4.6 Passenger rail and increasing rail freight has an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within Transport for the North's Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around reducing road vehicle mileage.

Equality and Diversity

4.7 There are no equality and diversity implications with this report.

Consultations

4.8 A consultation is not required.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Transport for the North Board – September 2022 Agenda Item 5

6. Appendices

6.1 Not applicable.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

a)	TRU	Transpennine Route Upgrade
b)	DfT	Department for Transport
c)	NPR	Northern Powerhouse Rail
d)	MNTP	Manchester and North West Transformation Programme
e)	TPWFS	Transpennine Wider Freight Strategy