
Meeting:	Rail North Committee
Subject:	Rail North Partnership Operational Update
Author:	Gary Bogan, Rail North Partnership Director
Sponsor:	Darren Oldham, Rail and Road Director
Meeting Date:	Wednesday 13 September 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To update the Committee on operational rail matters, including performance, and to ask members to note the information in the report.
- 1.2 Representatives from Northern Trains (NTL), TransPennine Trains (TPT) and the government's Operator of Last Resort will attend the meeting.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the information in the report and the actions that Transport for the North and Rail North Partnership (RNP) are taking to ensure operators have robust recovery plans in place.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Committee members discuss the current issues with representatives of the industry attending the meeting.

3. Overview:

- 3.1 A summary of performance for the last 6 months for TransPennine Express and Northern services is included as Appendix 1. Performance continues to be impacted by industry-wide issues including industrial relations (including ongoing and potential future strikes), higher than average levels of sickness and training backlogs dating back to covid. These issues are combining to create a very challenging environment for operators and unacceptable levels of performance and disruption for passengers.
- 3.2 In the North of England further strikes took place on 20, 22 and 29 July 2023, 26 August, 1 and 2 September 2023. Additionally, national action short of strike (including Rest Day Working (RDW) withdrawal) by ASLEF impacted services.
- 3.3 Both Transport for the North and Rail North Partnership individually and through the RNP board are working with Northern and TransPennine Express to enable the operators to take appropriate actions for their respective businesses. RNP is using its contractual relationship with operators to ensure there are appropriate recovery plans in place and hold them to account for delivery.
- 3.4 Despite these challenges, there continues to be strong growth in the North, particularly in the leisure markets for both Northern and TransPennine Express, though industrial action has affected that growth. Northern is developing products and promotions to attract new customers to rail and TransPennine Express is developing marketing and promotional activity that will be implemented once performance of its services has stabilised. Liverpool Lime Street continues its recovery above pre-Covid levels of footfall. Leeds sees the weekend leisure recovery continue and Manchester Piccadilly continues to be below pre covid levels. The combined North stations are marginally ahead of the combined London stations for weekdays; the combined London stations have closed the gap for weekend leisure travel.

Skills for Rail in the North

- 3.5 Rail North Partnership is continuing to work with a range of industry bodies and government departments (including Department for Transport, Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions) to ensure the future needs of rail in the North and the Northern workforce are fully represented in their discussions on future skills for rail. RNP will keep members updated on its progress.

- 3.6 RNP is continuing to work with skills leads from combined authorities and operators to develop a basic skills for rail programme, both to build up the skills base and to reach out to communities that do not yet consider rail a career. This work is progressing well, and it is hoped that a pilot scheme can be launched in the 2023-24 academic year.
- 4. TransPennine Express:**
- 4.1 First TPE was transferred to the Operator of Last Resort (OLR) on 28 May 2023, since when the focus has been to ensure as smooth a handover as possible while continuing to stabilise the business. The new business is called TransPennine Trains Ltd, but it will continue to use the TransPennine Express trade name for its operation, such as station announcements.
- 4.2 TPT has focussed on creating a stabilisation plan. The first positive action was to agree a new RDW agreement with ASLEF, although ASLEF called Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) immediately the new agreement was signed, meaning RDW was still not available. Following further negotiation over local disputes, RDW was finally reinstated on 4 July 2023, and became a feature in daily rosters from 24 July 2023. Since that date, operational performance has shown a significant recovery, with very low P-Coding (planned cancellations) and on the day cancellations. However, as RMT and ASLEF continue the national pay dispute, on strike days and ASOS days, the operational performance still suffers from a return to the pre-RDW level.
- 4.3 TPT will produce a 100-day plan of initiatives intended to relaunch the business under DoHL ownership, but in the meantime, in the operational sphere TPT has proposed to take three immediate actions in order to restore reliability and stability to services.
- Temporary amendments to the timetable from December 2023 to deliver improved punctuality and confidence for customers;
 - Develop plans to (re)introduce stable and reliable services as early as December 2024, or sooner; and
 - Temporarily withdraw the Nova 3 rolling stock (class 68 locomotives and mark 5a carriages) from the December 23 timetable to simplify and stabilise the service provision.
- 4.4 The Rail North Partnership Board has agreed these temporary measures. The future development of timetables and use of the Nova 3 fleet is subject to further consideration.
- 4.5 TPT, along with other train operating companies in England including Northern, has held a consultation into proposed amendments to ticket offices at the stations it manages. TfN will present a draft response at the Rail North Committee meeting on 13 September 2023.
- 4.6 TPT wrote to RNC members on 24 August 2023 updating them on its preparedness for the December 2023 timetable ahead of consultation with trade unions on that timetable and the timetable being uploaded to industry timetable planning systems by Network Rail. Public communications on the December 2023 timetable are planned from October 2023.
- 4.7 During August TPT opened its new multi-agency safeguarding hub in a bid to make Hull Paragon Station even safer, following a £100k investment using Customer and Communities Improvement Schemes Funding into the Interchange. The Safer Hull Paragon Hub, thought to be the first of its kind on the rail network, was created in collaboration with Hull City Council, British Transport Police (BTP), Humberside Police, local community agencies and support-providing charities, to provide a consistent point of contact for those in need. Alongside BTP and Humberside Police, Carlisle Security, The Railway Children, The Samaritans, The Antisocial Behaviour Action Team, Vulnerable Exploited Missing and Trafficked Team (VEMT), Hull 4 Heroes, and Andy's Man Club will be taking regular slots within the hub's opening hours.

Since opening, increased policing presence by BTP and Humberside Police officers has helped apprehend offenders and deter incidents from happening. This year, TPT has trained more than 800 members of staff in safeguarding, appointed 34 safeguarding champions, trained 30 mental health first aiders and received a prestigious safeguarding accreditation award.

- 4.8 TPT has installed new tactile maps at Hull Paragon Interchange, Dewsbury and Manchester Airport stations as part of its commitment to help blind and partially sighted passengers find rail travel even more accessible. The tactile 'Map for All' is a unique product developed and produced by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and is intended for use by people of all ages and abilities. They can be read by sight, by touch, or a combination of both and are designed with 'access for all' as the core principle.

5. Northern Trains:

- 5.1 Cancellations continue to be a challenge with slow progress in reducing the rate of cancellations. Cancellations are predominately traincrew related driven by 3 key factors: Sickness, Skills, and Sundays. Sickness remains higher than the 5-year average and above the Rail Industry average. Skills remain challenging in reducing the work bank of training days without Rest Day Working. Sundays continues to have a disproportionate impact on cancellation levels as they are not part of the working week for all of Conductor grade and Drivers in West and Central regions. Northern continue to progress on their improvement plan however some of these areas can only be addressed through wider reform.
- 5.2 Northern have now communicated their changes for the December 2023 timetable change date which has minimal service changes in light of the financial budget pressure. Changes are focused on matching train capacity to demand with variations through the day and seasonal changes.
- 5.3 Hull Botanic Gardens assumed full responsibility for the Class 170 fleet on the 17 July 2023, reflecting the significant milestone and transition from an outstation to a key Train Care Centre.
- 5.4 Northern has been working closely with the industry on its autumn preparedness plans to improve reliability for passengers. The Rail Head Treatment Train will have additional planned treatment by Network Rail between Macclesfield and Stoke as well as a shorter Saturday circuit on the worst routes around Manchester (Atherton, Hadfield, Macclesfield) with these routes now getting 7 day/week treatment. Northern's timetable will be adjusted to allow the treatment of Colne branch, which was affected last year by engineering works. Autumn timetables will be in place on the Buxton, Clitheroe, Colne, Rose Hill/New Mills Central, Newcastle-Carlisle lines. Northern has also been collaborating with the University of Sheffield on the Cryogenic Railhead Cleaning Programme, which will be trialling their Cryogenic CI142 between Knottingley and Goole in November 2023.
- 5.5 Northern wrote to stakeholders advising them of its December 2023 timetable ahead of this appearing in industry systems in August 2023. Public communications are planned for October/November 2023.

6. Other operators:

East Midlands Railway

- 6.1 EMR's performance this period to date is good, sitting currently at 76.3% T-3 and 97% T-15 performance. EMR has a current network cancellation rate of 2.5% and a short formation rate of 0.79%. Service Quality Regime (SQR) saw a great period for EMR, with all benchmarks reached at stations, on trains and with the customer service provided.
- 6.2 Sunday 10 December 2023 will see changes to EMR's timetable. The new timetable sees several improvements on EMR's Regional routes, including the return of the 0851 Liverpool Lime Street-Nottingham. The 0521 Nottingham-

Liverpool Lime Street and the 0635 Nottingham–Liverpool Lime Street will both be strengthened to 4-car services from current 2-cars.

Lumo

- 6.3 In June 2023 Lumo provided its first 10-carriage service which successfully operated between Edinburgh Waverley and London King’s Cross. This was to prove the concept, following successful validation by the Office of Rail and Road. While not part of normal operations, it will use this capacity increase to provide more space for passengers during key events.
- 6.4 Overall passenger numbers continue to be strong, however external performance issues, notably trespass/fatalities, infrastructure failures and animal incursions continue to affect their service running. Its all-electric train fleet also continues to perform to a high standard, delivering a high level of reliability.
- 6.5 Lumo has developed a number of partnerships recently, sponsoring Beamish Museum, Newcastle Pride, Alnwick Gardens, Edinburgh Fringe Festival and continuing their long-term relationship with People’s Kitchen, based in Newcastle.

Hull Trains

- 6.6 Hull Trains continues to see strong passenger figures, with the operation of additional capacity on several services for key events such as the Rugby Challenge Cup final and during the busy summer holiday period.
- 6.7 Local MP David Davis re-opened Howden platforms following £1.2m worth of investment by Hull Trains which included improving the stepping distance on and off the platform, new tactile paving, as well as non-slip surfacing, drainage and white and yellow lining. The operator is considering other investment opportunities as part of its Passenger Infrastructure Investment Fund, which will be announced shortly.
- 6.8 Hull Trains’ performance has been above target recently, but infrastructure issues linked to overhead lines, signalling faults and cable theft have affected services. For the past two rail periods, Hull Trains’ fleet has been the most reliable, best performing fleet in Britain, testament to the strong working partnership with train maintainer Hitachi.

7. Corporate Considerations:

Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications to TfN arising from this report.

Resource Implications

- 7.2 There are no direct resourcing implications to Transport for the North arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 7.3 There are no apparent legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 7.4 Transport for the North have two relevant corporate risks which are being actively managed - 309 ‘viability of future train services and future investment decisions’ and 311 ‘future timetables’.

Environmental Implications

- 7.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA. Passenger rail has an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation

objectives within Transport for the North's Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around reducing private car vehicle mileage.

Equality and Diversity

7.6 There are no equality or diversity issues arising from the report.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Performance update.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

a) RNP	Rail North Partnership
b) TPE	TransPennine Express
c) TRU	TransPennine Route Upgrade
d) NTL	Northern Trains Ltd
e) NPS	Transport Focus National Passenger Survey
f) CSAT	Customer Satisfaction Survey
g) RMT	National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
h) ASLEF	The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen
i) TSSA	Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
j) OLR	Operator of Last Resort
k) ORR	Office of Rail and Road
l) TPT	TransPennine Trains Ltd
m) DOHL	Department for Transport OLR Holdings Ltd

Appendix 1.

Performance update

The charts below highlight the train performance for both Northern Trains and TransPennine Trains.

The data is reported under the new performance metrics:

- On-time (arriving within 59 seconds)
- T-3 (arriving within 3 minutes)
- T-15 (arriving within 15 minutes)
- Cancellations (% of trains cancelled v planned to run)
- P-codes (% of trains pre-planned cancellation)

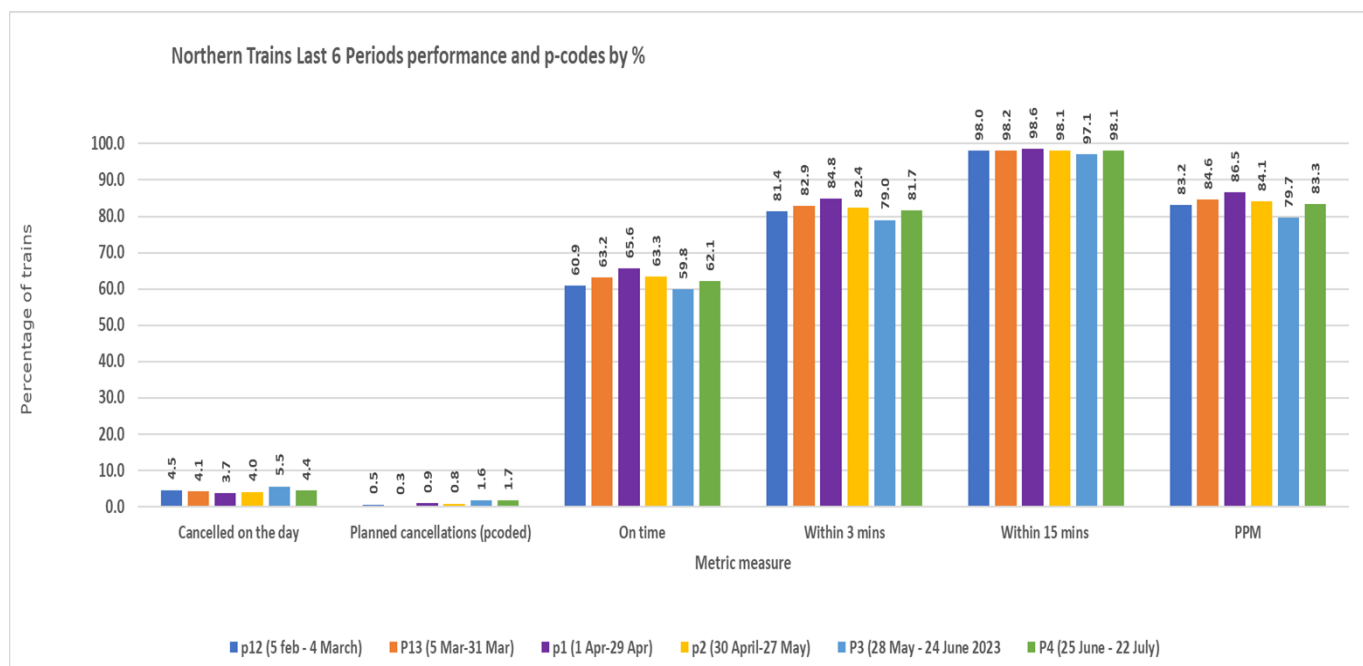
TPT continue to reduce train services through implementing planned service reductions before 22.00 hours the previous day and these services do not reflect in the overall performance of cancellations but are referenced in the performance charts below as a percentage of trains p-coded.

Northern P-coded trains have increased over the past 3 periods.

Although Public Performance Measure (PPM) is no longer a reporting metric but is a combination of all metrics, it has been included as a visual guide (data for PPM is extracted from the Office of Rail and Road webpages).

Periods are calculated each 4 weeks and period dates are included in the charts.

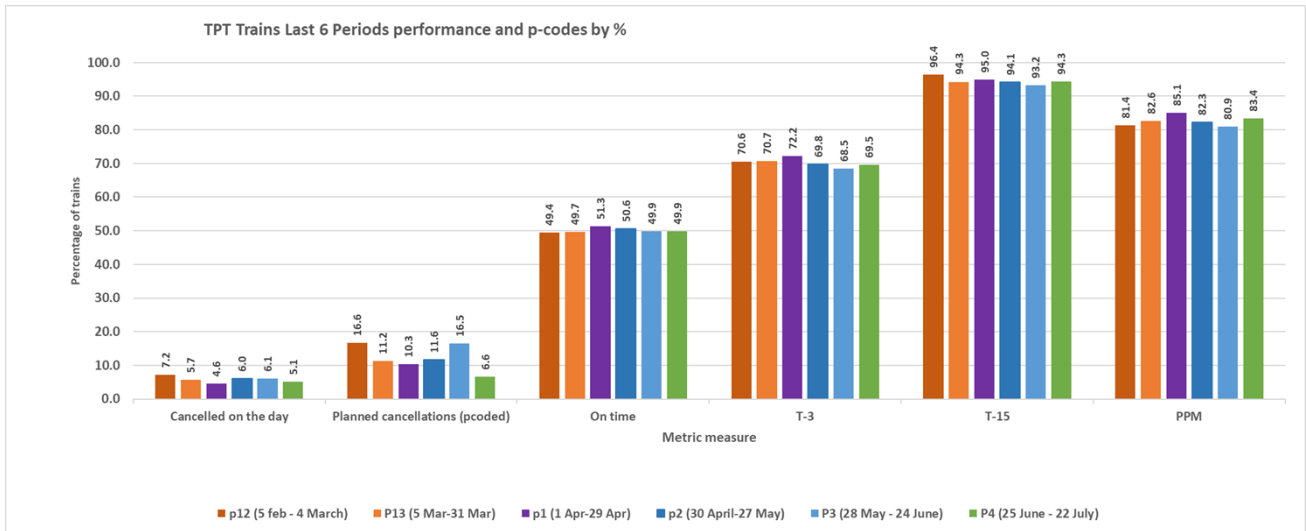
Northern



Performance across all metrics declined for periods 2 and 3 then improved in period 4. Planned cancellations (p-codes) have slightly increased since period 13.

Although PPM is no longer an official measure; analysis shows that PPM was at its lowest level in period 3 then improved in period 4.

TPT



TransPennine Trains' performance declined across all metrics in periods 2 and 3 then regained ground during period 4.

P-coded services peaked at 16.5% in period 3 and then significantly reduced to 5.9% in period 4.

Although PPM is no longer an official measure; analysis shows that PPM has improved to 83.4% since period 2.