
Meeting: Rail North Committee Consultation Call

Subject: Transport for the North Business Plan and Member Contributions 2024/25

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Meeting Date: Tuesday, 14 November 2023

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Strategic Rail elements of the draft Transport for the North Business Plan 2024/25 and the Department for Transport's funding allocation for 2024/25.
- 1.2 This report also seeks endorsement of the 2024/25 Member Contribution payment.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee endorses the approach set out in the report to the 2024/25 rail elements of Transport for the North's Business Plan.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee notes the Department for Transport funding allocation for 2024/25.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee approves the approach to the 2024/25 Member Contributions as outlined in this report.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 The Transport for the North 2023/24 Business Plan focussed on Transport for the North's core roles and responsibilities and to push for better outcomes for passengers and investment in the rail network.
- 3.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were developed as part of the rail elements Business Plan and overall good progress is being made to deliver them, including:
- Consult on, and then publish final Strategic Rail Report (on track)
 - Publish the Connected Mobility Strategy (completed)
 - Rail Reform – Issue Proposition for the North (in progress).

Whilst the national programme for rail reform is unclear, Transport for the North has implemented a North West Regional Business Unit, re-established its Rail Reform Programme Board and is engaging with both the Great British Railways Transition Team and Greater Manchester on development of complementary Partnerships building on the existing Rail North Partnership.

Proposed Priorities for 2024/25

- 3.3 Transport for the North's Rail Team has two core functions:
- Providing Transport for the North's direction to the Rail North Partnership to meet the terms of the Partnership Agreement including consultation with partner authorities
 - Overseeing delivery of the Rail Strategy element of the Strategic Transport Plan including the rail investment programme and Statutory Advice to the Secretary of State relating to rail investment including NPR.

- 3.4 On 18 January 2023, the Department for Transport wrote to Transport for the North and outlined the 2023/24 and 2024/25 funding settlement.
- 3.5 The core funding allocation is £6.5 million for each of the current and next financial years (2023/24 and 2024/25) to ensure that Transport for the North can continue to fulfil its statutory functions.
- 3.6 In addition, the Department for Transport will provide an additional £710,000 for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 to allow Transport for the North to support the development of wider Subnational Transport Bodies and Local Transport Authorities capacity and capability.
- 3.7 As in previous years, this report provides an opportunity for the Rail North Committee to comment and shape relevant and rail aspects of the draft Business Plan prior to being included as part of the overall Transport for the North Business Plan development (and subsequent presentation to the Transport for the North Board in March 2024).
- 3.8 The proposed areas of focus in 2024/25 are:
- a) Shaping the rail strategy for the North, including using our existing (co-sponsor) role on Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) to get the best outcomes for the North from the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) and planned Network North investment
 - b) Using Transport for the North's role in the Rail North Partnership to get the best outcomes for passengers and freight including making recommendations on proposed timetable changes and shaping priorities in the train operator Annual Business Plans
 - c) Using Transport for the North's powers and influence on rail investment (including making Statutory advice where appropriate) to secure the best outcomes for the North from planned and committed investment schemes (including Manchester Task Force, East and West Coast Main Line programmes)
 - d) Improving accessibility of the rail network for all including taking forward the outputs of the Accessibility Task and Finish Group
 - e) Co-ordinating investment and service changes through developing a pan-Northern Investment Programme and blueprints bringing together investment and service changes planned by the industry and identifying additional requirements based on Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan
 - f) Develop and agree a reform proposition to embed Transport for the North's role within Great British Railways as a key strategic partner the unified voice for northern authorities and the business community, acting as the link between local devolution, multi-modal integration, business representatives and Great British Railway's regions
 - g) Delivering Transport for the North's Connected Mobility Strategy including supporting partners in developing initiatives and sharing best practice to provide the North with an integrated ticketing system and bring together member Authority aspirations for digital innovation in transport.

Resources

- 3.9 Transport for the North's core budget funds 12 roles within the Strategic Rail Team in addition to modest external consultancy support and modest travel budget. These resources can support the activities set out in paragraph 3.8.

Member Contributions:

- 3.10 Each financial year, Transport for the North sets an appropriate level for Member contributions (as defined in Transport for the North's Franchise Management Agreement) from each of the Transport for the North Rail Authorities in respect of a Support Payment to specifically support Transport for the North's operating costs.
- 3.11 It is proposed to continue with the approach used in previous years which will be the current year (2023/24) contributions with the appropriate indexation applied. Lead officers have been advised in writing of the financial contributions proposed.
- 3.12 In previous years 'in kind' contributions (or Additional Contributions) have been permitted in the form of staff time (for example Local Transport Authority staff working on specific projects or programmes on behalf of Transport for the North). The proposed approach is to continue the option of 'in kind' contributions.

4. Corporate Considerations:

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The financial implications are set out in this report and annual Member Contribution payments are used to support the operating costs of Transport for the North.

Resource Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 4.3 There are no apparent legal implications arising other than raised within the report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 4.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment however Transport for the North are actively managing a number of corporate risks in relation to rail.

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 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (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, or scheme Promotor as part of the consenting process.
- 4.6 Passenger and freight rail has an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within Transport for the North's Decarbonisation Strategy, particularly around managing vehicle mileage.

Equality and Diversity

- 4.7 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because it is not relevant to the type of work referenced. Proposed areas of focus include improving accessibility of the rail network.

Consultations

- 4.8 Consultations will be carried out by the appropriate body in development of any works outlined in the Transport for the North Rail Business Plan.

5. Background Papers:

5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

6. Appendices:

6.1 There are no appendices to this report.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

a) TPE	TransPennine Express
b) NPR	Northern Powerhouse Rail
c) ECML	East Coast Main Line
d) IRP	Integrated Rail Plan
e) EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
f) SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment