

fMeeting: Rail North Committee
Subject: Rail North Partnership Operational Update
Author: Gary Bogan, Rail North Partnership Director
Sponsor: David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director
Meeting Date: Tuesday 15 November 2022

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. Representatives from FirstGroup, Northern Trains, TransPennine Express (TPE) and Network Rail will attend the meeting. Readiness for the Manchester Task Force-led timetable changes in December 2022 is covered in a separate report.

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 and to provide them with support and guidance to respond to current issues in the best way possible for passengers.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Committee members discuss the current issues with representatives of the industry attending the meeting.

3. Overview and Avanti West Coast

Overview

- 3.1 Train operations in the North (and elsewhere) continue 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 caused by Covid. These issues are combining to create a very challenging environment for operators and unacceptable levels of performance and disruption for passengers. For performance to improve to sustainable levels, the training backlog must be addressed and this needs to be managed alongside the ongoing impact industrial action, sickness and the loss of rostering flexibility previously afforded by driver Rest Day Working is having on daily performance through full or part cancellations.
- 3.2 In the North of England further strikes took place on 1, 5 and 8 October 2022. Strikes call for 5, 7 and 9 November 2022 were called off, but the late notice meant services were still disrupted. RMT is balloting TPE conductors for renewal of the strike, and action short of a strike, mandates.
- 3.3 Transport for the North is using its role and influence in the Rail North Partnership (RNP) to seek solutions to the underlying issues as well as short-term mitigations. RNP is using its contractual relationship with Northern and TPE to develop appropriate recovery plans, implement them once approved and hold the operators to account for delivery against them.
- 3.4 Transport for the North and the Mayors of Manchester, Liverpool, South and West Yorkshire and North of Tyne have all sent letters to the Secretary of State asking for action to resolve current performance issues, including giving operators

mandates to negotiate new Rest Day Working agreements. The Secretary of State has suggested a meeting with the Northern mayors to discuss matters.

Avanti West Coast

- 3.5 As a result of a shortage of available drivers, Avanti amended their West Coast services from 14 August 2022 to run four trains an hour from London Euston, one to each of Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. Every two hours trains run through to Edinburgh, via the West Midlands. There is a shuttle service between Crewe and Holyhead, plus a through service between Euston and Chester once a day. This amended timetable was in place through September 2022, when more staff allowed Avanti to run more trains at peak times on some services. The company's timetable recovery plan calls for a significant, sustained and reliable increase from about 180 trains per day to 264 trains per day on weekdays as new and retrained drivers become available.
- 3.6 The revised timetable has an adverse impact in the North. While Avanti's contract is not managed through RNP, Transport for the North has met representatives from Avanti and DfT to highlight the impacts on the North and seek reassurances that a plan to restore services at the earliest opportunity is being produced.

4 TransPennine Express and Northern

Recovery Plans

- 4.1 Against a backdrop of stronger recovery of passenger demand in the North, performance remains unacceptable and below target levels (see Appendix 1), due to the impact of sickness, training, industrial action and the loss of driver Rest Day Working flexibility. That said, the recent resolution of a driver rostering disagreement in Northern's Central and West region has resulted in a fivefold reduction in cancellations in the region. Furthermore, the intended December 2022 timetable will see more vehicle miles provided by Northern services than before covid.
- 4.2 RNP has been working with Transport for the North, TPE and Northern to develop robust recovery plans, implement them and hold the operators to account for delivery against them. RNP is working with operators to transform ways of working to provide a sustainable and responsive foundation for growing back reliably and making sure operators have the resources, including through large-scale recruitment, to run reliable services and increase services as resources allow.
- 4.3 RNP continues to work with DOHL (the holding company for the Operator of Last Resort), Transport for the North, DfT and the operators to develop plans, originally put forward by Northern, for a Rail Academy for the North – a multi-location training academy for our (and potentially other) operators, which will both offer people across the North the opportunity to develop the skills needed for careers in rail and provide operators with a sustainable supply of skilled staff for future growth.
- 4.4 Transport for the North has continued to meet with DfT and operators to push for greater clarity on future plans and certainty for passengers where services are disrupted.
- 4.5 RNP has additionally approved TPE's recruitment of additional driver trainees this year, building on its already significant pipeline of trainees.
- 4.6 Operators' recovery will be measured by constant monitoring of performance across the network to see if timetable adjustments are supporting service stabilisation, monitoring of sickness levels to see if trends are improving or

degrading, reporting of recruitment plans and levels of recruitment and driver training progress, through performance dashboards.

- 4.7 A review of South and North TransPennine route timetables is also currently being carried out by RNP with TPE to establish whether selected temporary minor reductions in services may also help stabilise the performance position on those routes.

TransPennine Express

- 4.8 Throughout the year, TPE has seen ongoing high levels of sickness, greater than anticipated levels of drivers leaving the business and a very substantial volume of driver training required to recover from Covid-related competency loss and to meet the demands of enhancement programmes (principally TRU and Manchester Task Force related) and timetable changes.
- 4.9 This has impacted service performance, with the situation compounded by diminished rostering flexibility from the loss of driver Rest Day Working since December 2021 and strike action by each of ASLEF, TSSA and RMT which has impacted the rate at which training can be delivered.
- 4.10 RNP has been working with the operator and stakeholders to resolve the underlying issues and improve the service for passengers including flexibility to facilitate a temporary Rest Day Working Agreement.
- 4.11 As a temporary solution, and subject to strict conditions, TPE introduced a revised timetable from mid-September 2022 for services it operates on the West Coast Main Line. The amended timetable entails reductions in services back to a similar level provided pre-May 2022, complemented by additional bus services in Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. The timetable reduction has not resulted in a consistent reduction in cancellations as hoped but, with several newly qualified drivers due from November 2022, the situation should improve in the run up to the new timetable in December 2022.
- 4.12 There will be a focus on the provision of accurate and timely information to passengers about the changes to be implemented and any issues with delivery of the new timetable.
- 4.13 TPE will continue to work with Transport for the North members and stakeholders to understand the impact of the timetable in practice and consider any improvements or enhancements to better align the passenger offer with passengers' particular requirements or experiences.
- 4.14 TPE will continue to work with RNP, Transport for the North and DfT to monitor and report on its recovery plan to address the underlying issues which have triggered the need for this change.
- 4.15 Looking forward, TPE continues to make headway with its significant driver training programme and is recruiting additional driver trainees. With the May 2023 timetable change, TPE is looking to add additional York – Scarborough services for holiday traffic (Fridays and weekends / bank holidays), as well as extending its Manchester – Huddersfield service to York via Wakefield and Castleford.

Northern Trains Ltd.

December 2022 timetable

- 4.16 The objectives of Northern's December 2022 timetable focuses on 3 key areas:
- Providing a robust and resilient timetable, giving customers certainty;
 - Reintroduction of services where possible, broadly in line with December 2021 levels; and

- Delivery of the significant recast to services as part of Manchester Taskforce (MTF) change.

- 4.17 This results in a timetable which achieves a service increase compared to the current May 2022 plan and delivers the significant recast to services in line with the MTF outcome.
- 4.18 Transport for the North officers were briefed of the changes on the 17 August 2022, with timetables issued directly by Northern soon after.
- 4.19 Committee members received correspondence from Northern on 20 October, confirming the operator's readiness for the timetable change and outlining the phased approach to implementation over the Christmas and New Year period. This approach is to ensure a reliable service from day 1 of the timetable change date and will see 92 services implemented from 3 January.

Performance

- 4.20 Since the May timetable change Northern's services in the North West have been impacted due to a rostering disagreement, coupled with the reduction of flexibility given the wider industrial relations environment along with high absence levels across the business. As of the end of October the rostering dispute has been resolved and the region has seen a fivefold reduction in cancellations and no day before cancellations. It should be noted that while Northern has enough train crew to operate a resilient Sunday service, it still remains outside of the working week for 95% of Central and West drivers and conductors and as such remains largely voluntary. Northern continues to remain focussed on bringing Sundays inside the working week for resilience.
- 4.21 It is acknowledged that there are other areas of Northern with high levels of cancellations, particularly in the North-East which is due to high absence levels. This is being managed through an Action Plan which Northern is preparing.
- 4.22 Northern continues to face challenges due to other operators not running services. While the operator is working to manage the impacts of other operators' delays/cancellations, these are causing impacts on performance for which Northern is not to blame.

Successes

- 4.23 Northern has been nominated for the second time for the best Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy at the Engagement Excellence Awards. Northern has won Best Tourism and Leisure campaign at the Prolific Marketing Awards for Go Do Your Thing. Northern's Safeguarding on Rail Scheme was implemented and successfully accredited by BTP, making Northern the first operator in the North of England (third in the UK) to be accredited.

5 Other Updates

Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 5.1 Following publication of the Integrated Rail Plan, TRU programme funding has increased to around £9bn. Work to better connect passengers in the North between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York is due to be completed in the next 10 years. The programme aims to transform the Transpennine route into a high-performing, reliable railway, bringing more frequent, more reliable, faster, greener trains.
- 5.2 The 76-mile Transpennine line serves 23 stations, crosses over and dips under more than 280 bridges and viaducts, passes through 6 miles of tunnels and crosses 29 level crossings. As well as electrification of the entire route, TRU involves station improvements and a new signalling system.

- 5.3 The programme is funded by the Department for Transport and delivered by Network Rail, working with TPE, Northern, freight operators and combined authorities across the region, as well as the businesses across the North that make up the TRU supply chain.
- 5.4 Operators continue to work collaboratively to refine and develop Customer Handling plans and deployment of Customer Delivery Managers (an industry resource), in preparation for the more disruptive periods expected from 2023 onwards.
- 5.5 Communications to staff and public, including around the installation of the first overhead wires, a video of the project vision and Huddersfield station's 175th birthday, are ongoing. After a pause during the funeral arrangements for the late Queen, online/social media and in-station/on-train communications have restarted. Stations beyond the route are being considered for communications given the impacts of works and benefits to passengers.

Cross Country Trains

- 5.6 Over the last three months CrossCountry and the wider rail industry have continued to face the challenges of disruptive industrial action. However, throughout this period performance, delays and cancellations have continued to achieve positive results for the region.
- 5.7 TransPennine has also continued to experience challenges delivering their full timetable, so CrossCountry has maintained our support for our industry partners and passengers by providing ticket acceptance and amending our stopping patterns to serve Reston station on a temporary basis.
- 5.8 As part of its support for those wishing to pay their respects after the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II, CrossCountry stabled a five-car voyager train overnight at Waverley station so people could rest in comfort and enjoy refreshments ahead of catching morning trains during the events of national mourning.
- 5.9 Finally, CrossCountry have recently launched the UK's first Sustainable Travel Education Toolkit alongside Community Rail's Education Network and Decarbon8 Network. These resources aim to educate Key Stage Two students about sustainable travel as part of the national curriculum. The toolkit is free for everyone to download from the Community Rail Network Website.

East Midlands Railway (EMR)

- 5.10 In December 2022 there will be minor changes to EMR's timetable. This includes some minor re-timings and removal of some non-standard calls on the Liverpool – Norwich services West of Sheffield. These changes are required to support the planned major industry timetable change in the Manchester area.
- 5.11 Prior to suspension of RMT strikes, the next instance of industrial action impacting service levels for EMR was planned to be on Thursday 3, Saturday 5 and Monday 7 November 2022. EMR has extensive contingency plans in place and will run as many services as possible, however this will greatly impact the level of service EMR is able to provide. The passenger advice for strike days is to only travel by rail if absolutely necessary and those planning to travel should expect severe disruption. Customers are advised to plan ahead - especially the first and last trains of the day. Full service information and timetables will be available online shortly.
- 5.12 EMR has signed a National Rail Contract (NRC) with the Secretary of State for Transport, which began on the 16 October 2022. The NRC provides greater stability and certainty for EMR, as it ends the Emergency Recovery Measures Agreement (ERMA) and commences a new 4-year contract, which could be

extended up to 8 years at the discretion of the Department for Transport. The new contract also gives EMR a clearer picture of how performance against objectives will be measured and how these align with their annual business plan.

LNER (London North Eastern Railway)

- 5.13 The latest statistics from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) show that London North Eastern Railway (LNER) has become the first rail operator to deliver more passenger journeys than prior to the pandemic. The ORR found that relative usage between April 2022 and June 2022 this year was 106.4 per cent of 2019 levels, with LNER being the leading operator for the past five consecutive quarters. LNER has welcomed more than 15 million customers onboard so far this year.
- 5.14 LNER has also been found to have one of the best customer satisfaction ratings among all train operators. Transport Focus recently published the results from its rail user survey which shows overall satisfaction being 92 per cent for LNER. LNER is also second place for satisfaction with value for money, at 74 per cent.
- 5.15 LNER recently opened the first Family Lounge on the UK rail network at London King's Cross Station. The Family Lounge has been specially designed to help make rail more family friendly and to give families a dedicated space to wait for trains, with plenty on offer to keep children entertained and parents relaxed.
- 5.16 More than £400,000 has been raised for LNER's partner charity Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) thanks to fundraising activities supported by customers and colleagues. Customers have generously donated £196,997 through Delay Repay compensation and many have donated credit built up through LNER's loyalty scheme, LNER Perks.

First Hull Trains

- 5.17 While Hull Trains has continued to be affected by Industrial Action involving the wider rail industry, passenger numbers have continued to recover post pandemic. Customer behaviour has notably changed however, with leisure travel very much the key driver of demand. As a result, the company has increased capacity on key services around and during weekends, operating more 10 carriage trains to meet demand.
- 5.18 Hull Trains also put on additional carriages during the mourning period for Queen Elizabeth II, so that customers could access London to pay their respects.
- 5.19 At the recent National Rail Awards, Hull Trains were delighted to have been shortlisted in three categories and for their Service Delivery Director, Louise Mendham, to win the Outstanding Personal Contribution award for her amazing leadership and dedication to the company and its staff and customers.
- 5.20 Work is progressing on delivering a £3.6m investment fund, with 2 key projects committed for Howden, including the raising of platforms levels to make them more accessible and a doubling of the station's car park capacity using a sustainable car park surface. Further projects are being finalised aimed at improving passenger infrastructure and will be announced shortly.

6. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Resource Implications

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

Legal Implications

6.3 There are no apparent legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

6.4 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

6.5 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 not stimulate the need for 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

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

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1. Performance Update

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

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.

| | | |
|----|-------|--|
| 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 |

Appendix 1.

Performance update

The charts below highlight the train performance for both Northern and Transpennine Express.

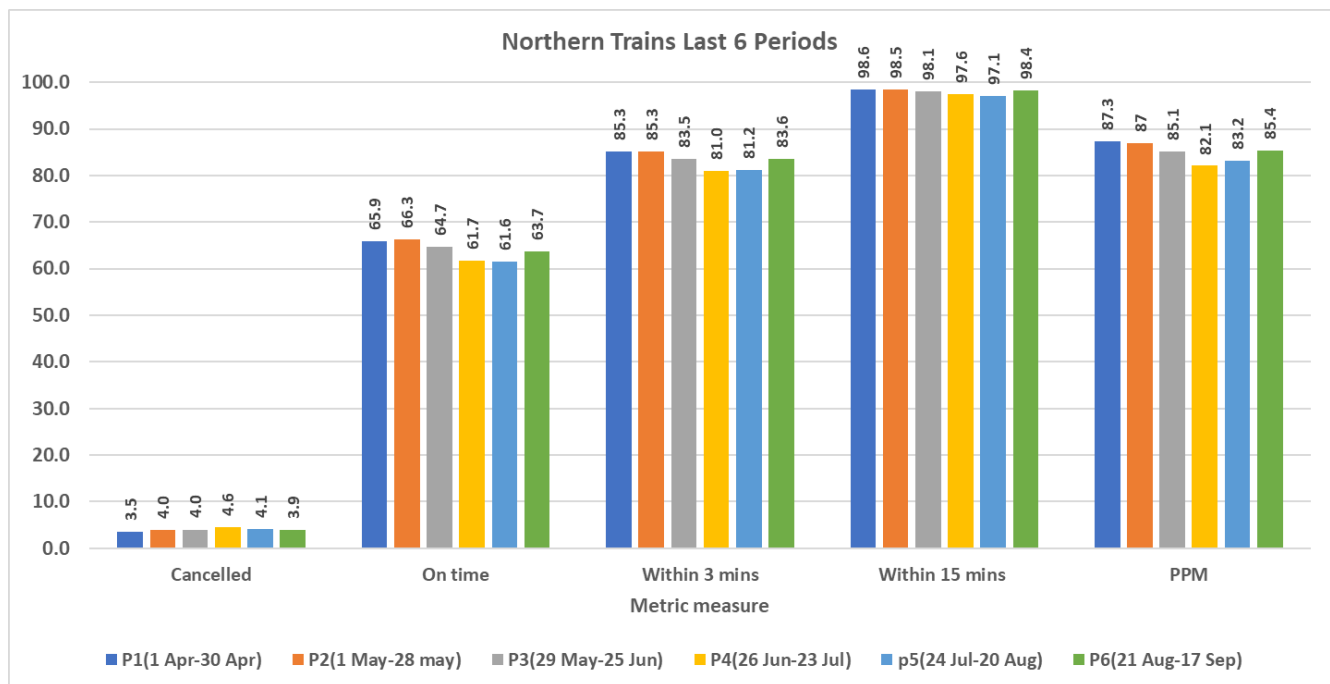
The data is reported under the new performance metrics:

- 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)

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 dates are included in the charts.

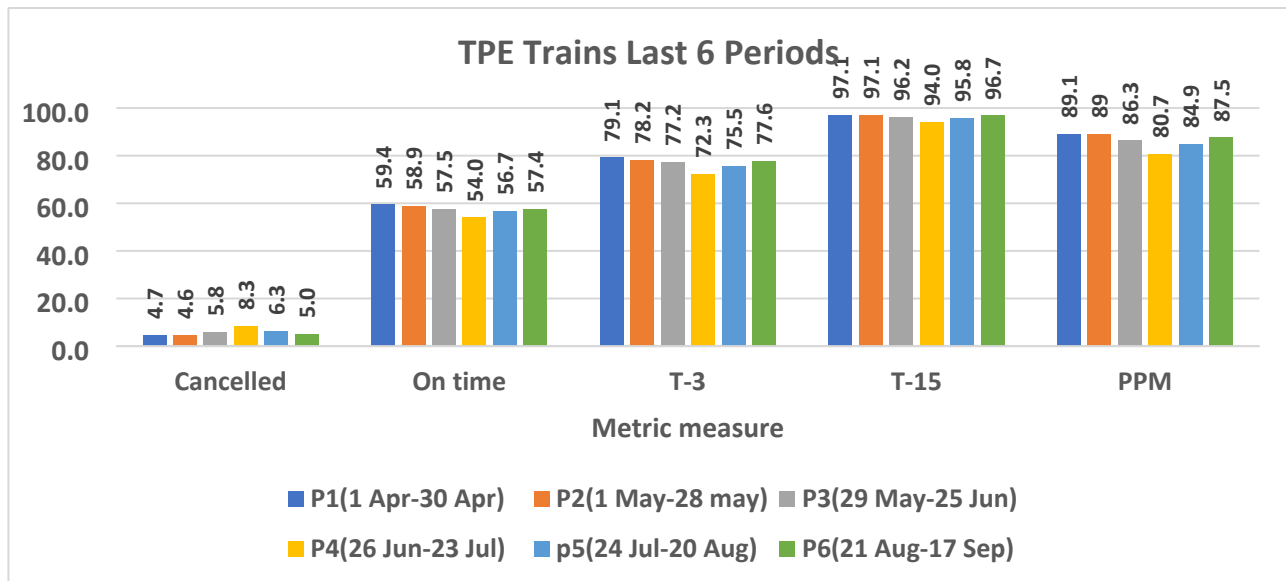
Northern



Performance has seen an improvement for all metrics compared to P4 & P5. T-15 remains consistently in the high 90%. Cancellations stands at 3.9% which is best result since P1.

Although PPM is no longer an official measure; analysis shows that the PPM currently sits at 85.4% which is a four period improvement since P2.

TPE



Transpennine Express performance has seen an improvement for all metrics since to P4. Notably cancellations on the day have reduced to 5%

T-15 has remained consistently in the 90% range throughout the past 6 periods.

TPE 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.