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**Meeting:** Rail North Committee

**Subject:** Manchester Task Force

**Author:** Chris Mason, Interim Head of Investment Planning

**Sponsor:** David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director

**Meeting Date:** 15 November 2022

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**1. Purpose of the Report:**

- 1.1 Previous reports to the Committee covered the development of the Manchester Programmes narrative, delivery of the December 2022 Timetable change, progress on infrastructure upgrades, development of future service choices and dialogue with Network Rail on further strengthening governance and coordination.
- 1.2 This report is to provide members of the Committee with an update on readiness for the December 2022 timetable change and progress with infrastructure development in the short and longer terms.

**2. Recommendations:**

Rail North Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1
- 1) Note the progress on implementation of the December 2022 timetable.
  - 2) Note the continued progress with development and delivery of the infrastructure upgrades identified in the Blueprint in the short and longer term.
  - 3) Note the next steps including further development of the longer-term infrastructure requirements.

**3. Main Issues:**

December 2022 Timetable Readiness

- 3.1 Industry plans for the December 2022 timetable are now considered by the Manchester Task Force to be robust for implementation. Monitoring of the implementation is being undertaken and reported through the Manchester Task Force.
- 3.2 Northern has nevertheless prepared a mitigation plan to ensure a reliable service from the first day of the timetable change date, based on balancing the availability of traincrew resources to the planned timetable. This involves a 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.
- 3.3 Where possible this will be aligned to May 2022 service levels. Northern will communicate this to Transport for the North once finalised. Industrial relations issues currently continue to be a broader risk to operations.
- 3.4 TransPennine Express (TPE) is currently reviewing its training progress and plans for any short-term changes required to service levels. TPE will communicate this to Transport for the North once finalised and an update will be given at the meeting of the Committee.

- 3.5 Irlam platform extension works, brought late into the programme, will not be complete by the start of the new timetable. These will be completed approximately 10 days after the timetable change, but this will not stop implementation of the December 2022 timetable.
- 3.6 Network Rail has been working with TPE to determine what mitigations are needed to be in place at Irlam in the short interim period. They have agreed that:
- a) TPE calls will be made in the 'to Manchester' direction from the timetable change date; and
  - b) TPE calls in the 'to Liverpool' direction will be shown in the timetable from the 27 December 2022.
- 3.7 Calls at Irlam in the 'to Liverpool' direction are dependent on (a) Network Rail completing the platform works on time, and (b) the safety validation process confirming there remains no additional risks. The safety validation is planned for early in week commencing 19 December 2022.
- 3.8 TPE may be able to allow trains to call immediately after the safety validation, and for the remainder of that week. However, none of these calls would be in the passenger information systems until later as detailed above and the best means of informing passengers of the calls is being considered by the operator.
- 3.9 Platform extension works to allow the operation of 6-car trains have been completed at Oxenholme and Kents Bank and similar work at Staveley and Ulverston should be completed in time for the timetable change date. Expansion of the stabling facility at Barrow and upgrade works at Manchester International Depot also to allow for stabling and operation of 6-car trains are on track to be completed for the timetable change.
- 3.10 Short term works to improve accessibility and safety at platforms 13 and 14 at Manchester Piccadilly are also planned for the quieter period between Christmas 2022 and New Year 2023, with early works commencing from November 2022 and final works from Sunday 22 January to Monday 23 January 2023. These works will give the platforms an even surface, clearer line markings and raised platform edges to make them safer for visually impaired people, and a new drainage system will be installed. This follows renewal of the lifts earlier in the year to improve accessibility for passengers.
- 3.11 Due to the disruptive nature of these works, services will not operate through these platforms between Sunday 25 December 2022 and Tuesday 3 January 2023. A closure will also be required from Sunday 22 January until Monday 23 January.
- 3.12 A brief summary of important changes and impact on train services is as follows, although passengers are being strongly advised to check the arrangements for the specific service and day of travel:
- For most of this period trains that usually call at platforms 13 and 14 will not be able to stop at Manchester Piccadilly station and passengers are being advised to use Manchester Oxford Road or Manchester Victoria to start or end their journey;
  - TPE Services from the east will operate as normal, except the service from Leeds to Manchester Airport which will terminate at Manchester Victoria and will not go to Manchester Airport;
  - Some services from the North West will start/terminate at Preston, with onward connections via other services to Manchester, terminating at Oxford Road for much of this period;

- Rail replacement buses will be in operation to/from Preston, Bolton, Deansgate, Manchester Oxford Road and Manchester Airport for some or all of the period; and
- The hourly service between Alderley Edge and Manchester Piccadilly will not run for some of this period.

- 3.13 Maintenance works are also planned to the main roof at Piccadilly station. Work will be carried out during the closure over the Christmas period from Sunday 25 December until Tuesday 27 December 2022 and the station will be closed again to complete the £1.5m project from Sunday 15 January to Monday 16 January 2023.
- 3.14 This is to enable all of the work to be completed at once instead of creating further disruption for passengers if work was spread over a number of weekends during 2023. Operators are proposing a mixture of amended services and a bus shuttle service between Manchester Piccadilly and adjacent main stations such as Stockport. Northern's proposal to temporarily implement approximately 100 planned cancellations will assist with ensuring these mitigations operate reliably.

#### Infrastructure Progress

- 3.15 The current focus is on delivery of the critical infrastructure works to support the December 2022 timetable. These are nearing completion with the latest being some significant works at Dalton station to rebuild an entire platform where the engineering possession was handed back early.
- 3.16 Platform extension works have also already been completed at Oxenholme and Kents Bank with works underway at Staveley and works to commence at Ulverston. These works support operators running longer services and therefore providing more capacity on services into and out of Manchester. Issues with platform extensions at Irlam are covered in paras 3.5 – 3.8 of this report.
- 3.17 The report prepared for the September 2022 meeting of the Committee introduced the development by Network Rail of a Manchester Programme Narrative, describing how groupings of infrastructure enhancements in the different tranches combine to deliver a series of 'configuration states'. These will facilitate different train service options across and through the Greater Manchester area at defined points in time which work towards the longer-term requirements (including those specified by Transport for the North) and which are reflected in the Blueprint.
- 3.18 The report also highlighted that increasingly the outputs need to be considered alongside the other major programmes in deliver, specifically High Speed 2 (HS2), Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), and not necessarily attributable to one programme. Hence focus is moving from delivery of the three tranches of schemes to delivery of configuration states based on groupings of schemes across the tranches.
- 3.19 After the infrastructure works to support the December 2022 timetable are completed the focus will turn to the works for the next timetable change opportunity in 2024/25. In connection with this, final business cases are being completed for schemes at Salford and Manchester Victoria (including two turnbacks west of Salford Central, a 3rd platform at Salford Crescent, improvements to the passenger footbridge at Victoria and a turnback to the east of Victoria).
- 3.20 These, combined with Wigan – Bolton Electrification, and Manchester Victoria – Stalybridge Electrification being delivered by the TRU programme, will be the next opportunity for a timetable change as well as helping to support delivery of

transpennine services during the significant disruption anticipated during TRU works.

- 3.21 In 2023 (assuming investment approval is received from Treasury) Network Rail will move the schemes at Salford and Manchester Victoria towards delivery and in parallel commence delivery of Wigan – Bolton electrification and Salford Central Platform renewals.
- 3.22 It is anticipated this timetable change opportunity associated with this work will be in 2025, to make better use of rolling stock through maximising the benefits of electrification and the turnback allowing the potential splitting of services to improve performance.
- 3.23 The options for the timetable change and the balance between maintaining performance and additional capacity will be identified through the Manchester Task Force (MTF) and Rail North Committee will be asked to provide direction on priorities.
- 3.24 Business case development continues for the Manchester Oxford Road and Manchester Airport schemes with a target of submitting the final business cases to the Department for Transport in 2023. Both these schemes will allow for longer services to run with more seats and potential for additional 'on track' capacity. Their delivery will work towards a configuration state which would bring another opportunity to alter the timetable structure towards the end of the 2020s as indicated on the Blueprint.
- 3.25 Validation of the preferred option for Manchester Oxford Road will include performance analysis of Castlefield Corridor with a range of service frequencies and testing with and without Platforms 15 and 16 at Manchester Piccadilly. Again, the Task Force will work through the options of how additional capacity may be utilised to understand where it may require additional infrastructure and impacts on operators.
- 3.26 Business Cases will continue to be developed through the Manchester Programme with cross industry input to ensure a robust case can be made to Treasury for the investment. As for the previous configuration state this will be managed through the Task Force and be presented to stakeholders at an appropriate time. Network Rail senior management have confirmed that they will involve Transport for the North as well as other affected authorities in this work.
- 3.27 Infrastructure proposals for the Cheshire Lines Committee route from Manchester to Liverpool via Warrington will be progressed towards Outline Business Case in 2023 on the basis of a route upgrade (electrification and signalling) to enhance the capacity along that route with longer services and more services. Transport for the North will continue to engage with Network Rail to pursue delivery of partner requirements, particularly those in relation to cross-Warrington services, are considered as a core requirement for delivery by this work.
- 3.28 A series of industry workshops have looked at how and when the longer-term major infrastructure capacity schemes such as grade separation of junctions might be developed and delivered, taking into account supply chain capability, rail vehicle age, decarbonisation plans, signalling asset condition, availability of funding and the interface with other major programmes including West Coast Main Line, HS2, TRU and NPR. Further workshops are planned at dates to be confirmed, with Transport for the North and Transport for Greater Manchester to be involved.
- 3.29 Network Rail's Strategic Advice (due March 2023) will then inform the longer-term elements of scope in the programme and how the long-term requirements integrate with other major programmes. Network Rail have confirmed that they

will involve Transport for the North as well as other affected authorities in this work.

#### Next Steps

- 3.30 Resolution of the short-term operating arrangements at Irlam for calling TPE services and completion of the works to allow calls in both directions week commencing 19 December 2022.
- 3.31 Completion of the final business case submissions in December 2022 to the Department for Transport and Treasury for two turnback sidings, one in the Salford area and the other east of Manchester Victoria.
- 3.32 Development of service options facilitated by the schemes at Salford and Manchester Victoria in conjunction with Wigan – Bolton Electrification and Manchester Victoria – Stalybridge Electrification.
- 3.33 Continuation of development of the schemes and business cases for Manchester Oxford Road, Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly passenger improvements for submission to the Department for Transport in 2023, and associated service change options.
- 3.34 Development of Network Rail’s Strategic Advice by March 2023 to inform the longer-term elements in the programme and how they integrate with other major programmes such as HS2, TRU and NPR outputs.
- 3.35 A further report and an updated Blueprint to be brought back to Rail North Committee when the proposals for service choices for the next service change opportunity is at an appropriate stage.

#### **4. Corporate Considerations**

##### ***Financial Implications***

- 4.1 There are no financial implications for Transport for the North as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Investment decisions to allow Network Rail to deliver Tranche 1 schemes and develop and design Tranche 2 and 3 schemes are subject to Department for Transport and Treasury approval, noting the recent change in Ministerial team and potential Spending Review.

##### ***Resource Implications***

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

##### ***Legal Implications***

- 4.4 There are no apparent legal implications arising as a result of this report.

##### ***Risk Management and Key Issues***

- 4.5 This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the December 2022 timetable 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***

- 4.6 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 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 as part of the consenting process for those projects.

- 4.7 Delivery of the blueprint will encourage growth of travel by rail services and contribute to environmental targets through reduction in journeys by road.
- 4.8 Any specific environmental issues will be picked up by Network Rail in the development and delivery of individual infrastructure interventions.

***Equality and Diversity***

- 4.9 A full impact assessment has not been carried out because it is not relevant to the type of work referenced.

***Consultations***

- 4.10 Consultations will be carried out by the appropriate body in development of the infrastructure works and on timetable changes through industry processes.
- 4.11 A full public consultation was carried out by train operators on the detailed timetable proposals for 2022. This was open to any members of the public and Local Authorities to respond to.

**5. Background Papers**

- 5.1 There are no background papers to this report.

**6. Appendices**

- 6.1 None

**Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used (*if applicable*)**

- |    |     |                            |
|----|-----|----------------------------|
| a) | TPE | TransPennine Express       |
| b) | HS2 | High Speed 2               |
| c) | TRU | Transpennine Route Upgrade |
| d) | NPR | Northern Powerhouse Rail   |
| e) | MTF | Manchester Task Force      |