
Meeting:	Rail North Committee
Subject:	East Coast Mainline Services and Infrastructure
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Sponsor:	David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 15 November 2022

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the revised East Coast Mainline (ECML) timetable proposal and progress with the development of infrastructure to facilitate further service enhancements.
- 1.2 To note the position on the Leeds Area Study.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the update on industry work to introduce a revised timetable on the East Coast Main Line and further infrastructure enhancements.
- 2.2 That Transport for the North writes to Department for Transport to seek inclusion of Transport for the North on the ECML Programme Board.
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the update on the Leeds Area Study.

3. Main Issues:

- 3.1 The East Coast Main Line is West and North Yorkshire's primary link to London and is the first and last leg of links for the North East to almost all other parts of the UK. However, it suffers from constraints and unreliability that places a limit on the number of passenger and freight trains that can serve the region and constraining future growth. Transport for the North, Transport North East and Local Authorities and businesses in the North East have been seeking an increase in the capacity of the York to Newcastle section of the East Coast main line for some time.
- 3.2 Various studies have identified infrastructure options to increase capacity. The Northern Powerhouse Rail preferred option included infrastructure to raise the current 6 trains per hour (tph) up to 9tph between Northallerton and Newcastle. Some elements of the plan are progressing towards delivery including works to allow larger freight containers to use the Northallerton- Eaglescliffe route to access Teesport rather than reverse at Darlington.

Timetable Development

- 3.3 In 2021 a revised timetable, planned to be introduced in May 2022, was consulted upon. It would have provided a third London North Eastern Railway (LNER) service per hour between London and Newcastle but at the expense of an existing northeast – northwest service which would have reduced connectivity across the north, had other impacts on local services, and reduced calling patterns at some stations in the North.
- 3.4 Transport for the North, with input from its partner authorities, made a robust response to the 2021 timetable consultation which contributed to the decision by the industry to develop alternative proposals.

- 3.5 In June 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued to Transport for the North and key partners a further draft East Coast Main Line timetable for review.
- 3.6 Transport for the North's consultants undertook a comparison between the previous timetable (issued in summer 2021) and the one issued for consultation in June 2022. This technical work concluded that whilst the most recent draft timetable provides additional connectivity benefits in some parts of the region, it did not deliver the requirements of all partners and stakeholders.
- 3.7 A Ministerial decision giving direction on whether the proposed timetable will go ahead in 2023 is, at the time of preparing this report, awaited. However, it is understood by Transport for the North that the proposal for May 2023 is to 'roll over' the December 2022 timetable with some minor amendments.
- 3.8 Transport for the North also understands that the next opportunity to implement a significant timetable change is no earlier than December 2023, subject to responses to consultation with stakeholders and timetable performance modelling.
- 3.9 In response to previous consultation there are calls from Transport for the North Constituent Authorities to see the 2tph Manchester to Newcastle service reinstated and for the restoration of the second Cross Country train per hour through South Yorkshire (Reading to Newcastle via Sheffield and Doncaster) to improve East West connectivity.
- 3.10 Governance of ECML infrastructure works is managed via the ECML Programme Board. The ECML Services and Infrastructure report to the May meeting of the Rail North Committee noted that Transport North East had written to the then Minister in relation to setting up an ECML Integrated Rail Programme Board (North East). DfT subsequently indicated that the main governance at officer level would continue to be through the ECML Programme Board and that Transport for the North should be able to participate in this.
- 3.11 Transport for the North and Transport North East (TNE) have co-funded with Network Rail the development of a Strategic Outline Case for a package of interventions needed to raise the capacity from 6 trains per hour to 7 or 8. The study has shown that the interventions required to uplift capacity to 7tph would also enable 8tph with no additional infrastructure works required.
- 3.12 The Strategic Outline Case has demonstrated that the economic case is challenging, however the case has been approved by DfT. The project is progressing to the Outline Business Case (OBC) and incorporated within the governance of the overall Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) development. Further work is required to drive down costs and enhance the benefits so that the OBC presents the best case possible. It is the expectation that the package of measures can be an early outcome of the IRP, enabling the full reintroduction of the two train per hour TPE services plus the capacity for an extra service yet to be determined.
- 3.13 From discussions with DfT, Transport for the North understand that infrastructure changes required on the ECML north of York are now included within the IRP Delivery Programme being delivered by the DfT and there is a commitment to deliver the 7th/8th path on the ECML to provide additional capacity.
- 3.14 The ECML between York and Newcastle is part of the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network and it is important that it is planned so that the Integrated Rail Plan NPR outputs can be achieved, and these are overseen by the NPR Sponsor Board to ensure consistency with the wider NPR Programme. The key difference between the IRP interventions and the NPR preference network is the reopening of the Leamside Line to act as a parallel Freight route thus freeing up capacity for a 9th path (identified as an NPR service in the NPR development work).

- 3.15 Transport for the North continues to support cross-industry work alongside West Yorkshire Combined Authority and City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council to increase the number of LNER services by up to 6 per day between Bradford, Leeds, and London. The plan remains for these services to be delivered in time for Bradford hosting UK City of Culture in 2025 and work on infrastructure changes to support this is ongoing.

Leeds Area Study

- 3.16 The Government's Integrated Rail Plan was published in November 2021 and commits to look at the most effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds including the most optimal solution for Leeds Station capacity and starting work on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System. The HS2 to Leeds Study will be guided by Terms of Reference set by the DfT. These Terms of Reference have yet to be published.
- 3.17 To support the study, West Yorkshire Combined Authority has established a Leeds Area Studies Board. The Board will steer and provide oversight for the studies covering extension of high-speed services to Leeds, Leeds station network capacity and better Bradford connections, as set out in the IRP. The Board is chaired by Network Rail and includes partners from West and South Yorkshire, Government departments, East Midlands Councils and Midlands Connect. Transport for the North plays a key role in this Board, recognising the importance of Leeds station to services across the north and further afield.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1 *Financial Implications*

There are no financial implications for Transport for the North as a result of this report.

4.2 *Resource Implications*

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

4.3 *Legal Implications*

Consideration will need to be given as to any potential consequential changes to the governance provisions in Transport for the North's Constitution to reflect the formation of the Leeds Area Studies Board, and the potential ECML Integrated Programme Board and the co-sponsorship arrangements as outlined in the report. There are no further apparent legal implications arising other than raised within the report.

4.4 *Risk Management and Key Issues*

This paper does not require a risk assessment, however, risks relating to the delivery of infrastructure will be identified, assessed, managed, and monitored by Network Rail. A risk is included on the Transport for the North Corporate Risk Register in relation to future timetable changes.

4.5 *Environmental Implications*

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. 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.

4.6 *Equality and Diversity*

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

4.7 **Consultations**

Consultations will be carried out by the appropriate body in development of the infrastructure works and on timetable changes through industry processes.

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 (*if applicable*)

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.

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| a) TPE | TransPennine Express |
| b) NPR | Northern Powerhouse Rail |
| c) ECML | East Coast Main Line |
| d) IRP | Integrated Rail Plan |
| e) Tph | Trains per hour |