

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

ITA EXECUTIVE BOARD

DATE: 26 FEBRUARY 2010

AGENDA ITEM NO: 6

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC RAIL ISSUES

Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1. This report provides information on the Northern Hub proposal launched by Network Rail and progress on the Department for Transport's plans for additional rail capacity.

2. INFORMATION

The Northern Hub

- 2.1. The 'Northern Hub' (previously referred to as the Manchester Hub) is the network of rail corridors in and around Manchester. Constraints on the Manchester rail network negatively affect rail connectivity across the whole of the north of England including the Leeds City Region.
- 2.2. A two phase study that offers possible solutions to the Manchester Hub problem was launched on the 16 February. Phase 1 of the study, carried out by Northern Way, was completed in 2009 and identified what a solution to the Manchester Hub problem could deliver for the North of England in economic terms. Phase 2 has been led by Network Rail and identifies the rail engineering solutions to help deliver the outputs identified in phase 1. It is intended that the proposals feature in Network Rail's investment plans for 2014 to 2019.
- 2.3. The key elements of Network Rail's proposal are outlined below:
 - A new section of railway west of Manchester city centre at Ordsall, to allow trains to travel from Manchester Victoria to both Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport stations;
 - Major improvements to Manchester Victoria allowing many more services to use the station and providing improved facilities for passengers;

- New tracks on the North trans Pennine line (4 tracks between Marsden and Diggle and a passing loop at Dewsbury) between Leeds and Liverpool to allow fast trains between the major towns and cities of the north to overtake slower trains.
- 2.4. For the Leeds City region, this should mean improved journey times and frequency on the North Trans Pennine route and quicker journeys for passengers travelling to Manchester, Liverpool and other destinations west of Manchester. Key service enhancements suggested include:
- 6 trains per hour in each direction between Leeds, Huddersfield and Manchester;
 - a 43 minute journey time between Leeds and Manchester;
 - Dewsbury would get a train in each direction every 15 minutes;
 - Direct journeys from Bradford, Halifax and the Calder Valley to Manchester Airport and destinations west of Manchester;
 - Additional all day services to Rochdale from Manchester and Leeds;
 - Direct services beyond Manchester such as to Manchester Airport and Wigan;
 - Increased frequency of services between Halifax and Leeds;
 - Capacity for services from Burnley via Todmorden.
- 2.5. It is recommended that the Authority welcomes the proposals, but stresses the need for all political parties to commit to future funding for the infrastructure, services and additional trains that will be required to realise the full benefits.

Additional Rail Capacity (HLOS)

- 2.6. HLOS is DfT's High Level Output Specification (published as part of a White Paper in 2007) for the capacity it requires to be delivered on the national rail network for the period up to March 2014. Metro and the other ITAs welcomed this as it formally recognised the levels of growth in the north and made provision to both cater for future growth and reduce crowding. Leeds City Region has seen the highest growth nationally in recent years and consequently some of the most crowded trains.
- 2.7. In 2008 DfT set out that for Northern Rail's allocation was likely to be 182 carriages across its franchise. The corresponding figure for TransPennine Express was 42 carriages. DfT indicated that the Leeds area would benefit from 60-90 additional carriages. In the autumn of 2008 DfT planned to order 200 new diesel train vehicles to create a pool from which the additional capacity for the North could be drawn.

- 2.8. Value for money analysis carried out by DfT in the early part of 2009 led to it concluding that it may not be possible to deliver all the 182 additional vehicles for Northern. This new assessment was driven by (i) lower passenger demand forecasts than had been used in the original HLOS work, and (ii) higher than expected costs for the proposed new rolling stock.
- 2.9. In July 2009, DfT suspended the order for the 200 additional diesel train vehicles and announced instead a policy of electrification of parts of the national network. Future needs for diesel trains on the network were to be met following progressive electrification. At the same time it was announced that a rolling stock strategy setting out how the additional rolling stock required to deliver HLOS was to be procured would be published before the end of 2009.
- 2.10. Following the cancellation of the diesel train order, the DfT effectively split the delivery of new carriages into two phases, with the first phase comprised of cascaded stock from elsewhere on the network:
- **Phase One:** The first phase of HLOS was to use all available and suitable carriages. The number of diesels available are constrained by requirements elsewhere on the network and overall the total number of carriages will be substantially short of meeting requirements set out in the White Paper.
 - **Phase Two:** DfT committed to a new analysis of the additional capacity required for Northern services over and above that provided for in Phase One. This has included a joint review with the PTEs of demand forecasts and the related value for money analysis.
- 2.11. In both cases the expectation is that additional capacity would be delivered before March 2014 in line with the original HLOS commitment in the White Paper.
- 2.12. Northern has submitted their proposals to DfT for how they will deliver "Phase One" of HLOS. As noted above this is constrained by the stock available. PTEs have pressed Northern to include a plan for refurbishment of second-hand vehicles, as many of the vehicles planned for Phase One will be 25-30 years old. In some cases modern electric trains will be replaced on peak services by much older ones cascaded from elsewhere (although the modern trains would be retained in West Yorkshire).
- 2.13. DfT has yet to define any proposals for Phase Two of HLOS. DfT has confirmed their agreement to the need for this second phase, but are unable to define the scope of Phase Two (i.e. how many extra carriages) until the forecasting work is complete. The planned Rolling Stock Strategy has not yet been published.

2.14. The key actions needed are:

- A quick resolution to Phase 1 of the deal for Northern, with at least the first additional carriages available quickly;
- If they have to be 'handed down' from elsewhere they should be refurbished to meet modern standards and include modern facilities such as CCTV;
- A firm commitment to a second phase of carriages (including new diesel trains if this is the only way of delivering the carriages needed) for Northern to meet the numbers promised in the White Paper.

2.15. A briefing note is being prepared for Northern MPs setting out the current issues in preparation for the inaugural meeting of a Northern MPs' Rail Group scheduled for 2 March 2010.

2.16. It is also suggested that the Chair of the Authority writes to the Secretary of State setting out the concerns outlined in the paper and seeking appropriate reassurances.

3. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. None as a result of this report

4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None as a result of this report.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. All rail schemes will be designed to meet equal opportunity requirements and regulations.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. That the Manchester Rail Hub proposals are noted.

6.2. That a letter is sent to the Secretary of State in relation to the issues identified in Section 2 of the report.

6.3. That MPs and other key stakeholders are briefed appropriately.

Director General
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive